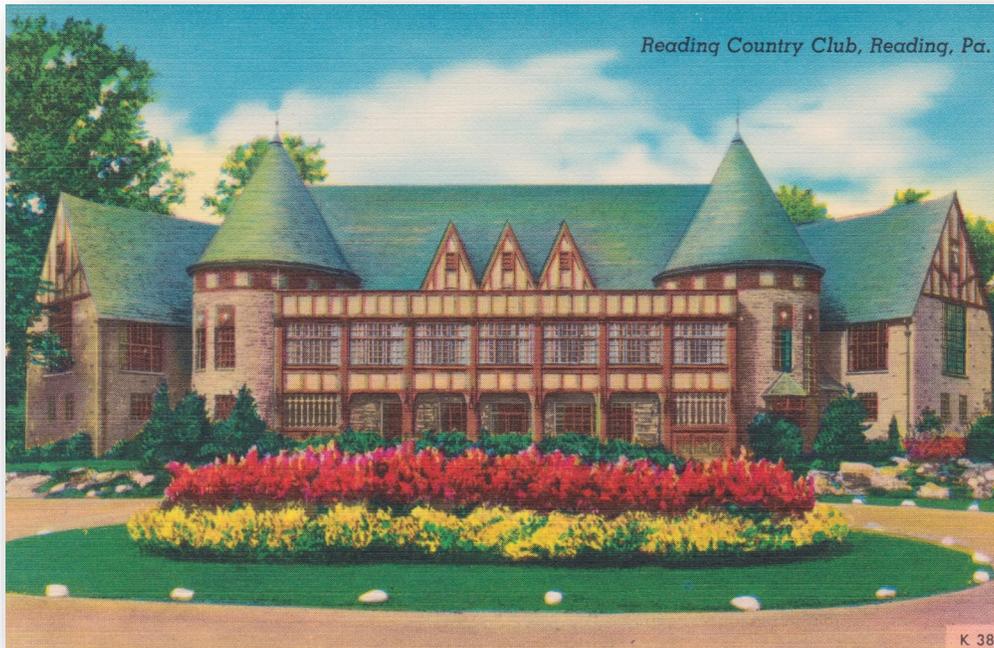


Celebrating Our Heritage, Preserving Our Future



**RCC Heritage Tournament
July 11, 2020**

Start Spreading the News

Golf was new to Berks County in the 1920s. Berkshire Country Club built the county's first golf course in 1898 near Carsonia Park and the Galen Hall resort hotel opened nine holes designed by Alexander Findlay in 1911. The game caught on quickly to the point that Reading Country Club was chartered in 1922. The announcement was greeted with great interest in the Berks community.

RCC held its first membership dinner on March 15, 1923, at The Berkshire Hotel in Reading. Alexander Findlay, the golf course designer, spoke to the members as did former Governor William Sproul and Mayor John Stauffer.

These articles are just a few of the stories about RCC that appeared in the *Times* and the *Eagle*.

Reading Times, May 24, 1923

CITY BRIEFS

GOLF COURSE READY

At a meeting of the board of governors of the Reading Country club, the golf committee announced that in addition to the temporary course of three holes now in use, three holes of the regular course would be thrown open for the use of the members in the near future, probably on Memorial Day. The professional, A. W. Brown, is on hand daily to give instructions to the members.

Reading Times, September 5, 1922 →

Home Looted, Ball Missing

On August 7, 1929, the *Reading Times* reported a theft at the home of John Rader, a professor at Reading High School, who said his home was entered while he was away. Although the home was ransacked, Rader told police only one item was missing: a golf ball.

But not just any golf ball. Rader had the ball mounted on a plaque after he used it to make a hole-in-one at RCC. Rader was club champion in 1931 and '32.

The Galtere Family • Be Awesome, Exeter!

COUNTRY CLUB'S NEW GOLF LINKS

Over 100 workmen were busy all last week grading and leveling the ground on the new golf course of the Reading Country club along the Philadelphia pike. The entire land is being ploughed and furrowed and the entire 18 holes will be built at once. It is planned to have the seed in the ground this fall, in order that the course may be ready for use next spring. The course will cover 133 acres of the 239 acres now owned by the club.

The directors hope to have several holes in the course ready this fall in order that some practice can be held for the tournaments which will be held next year. Three or four holes are completed in the meadow where the land was not ploughed, there being a nice bed of grass covering the field.

CLUB HOUSE SOON READY.

The club house is now being papered and painted and will be ready for use within the next two weeks. The installation of the water system has started and will be finished when the house is ready for occupation. The club has on its premises a water supply with a capacity of 250 gallons per minute.

The interior of the club house is being completely refurnished. The present membership of the club exceeds 100 at the present time.

The board of directors will hold their next meeting on Tuesday evening, in the Chamber of Commerce rooms.

Reading Times, November 4, 1922

NEW COUNTRY CLUB HOME IS COMPLETED

The club house of the Reading Country club has been completely finished and is elaborately furnished. It is now being used by the members of the club. The club house, which is a stone building, renovated temporarily until the new building is completed, presents a very cozy appearance with its attractive furnishings and open hearth fire places. A number of parties have been held over the Halloween season.

Work will continue on the golf course until the cold weather sets in. Nine of the 18 holes have been finished and will be ready for use in the early part of spring. Three more are almost ready for use, and will also be opened during the spring, while the remaining holes will be finished during the warm weather.

There are at the present time 150 business men of the town who are members of the club, and rapid progress is being made to increase that membership to include all the business men of the town.

Reading Eagle, May 28, 1924

MEMORIAL DAY TO MARK OPENING OF THE READING COUNTRY CLUB LINKS

The Reading Country Club will open its new nine-holes golf course on Memorial Day, with an attractive program of events for both men and women.

In the morning, a driving followed by an approach and putting contest will be the feature, with prizes to the winner and runner-up. In the afternoon a flag tournament, a handicap affair, nine holes, will attract a large entry list to the course in Exeter township bordering the Philadelphia pike.

Great interest in the various events among the Reading Country Club members, assures a large entry, which is very gratifying to the club's Green Committee, Robert Ferguson, chairman which is working hard to make this opening golf event, a success.

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Published in July 2020 by the Exeter-Reading Country Club Partnership, a not-for-profit organization that is independent of the ownership and management of Reading Country Club.

www.erccpartners.org

A Berks Tradition, An Exeter Gem

This book is dedicated to the men and women who have made Reading Country Club a venerable Exeter Township institution. Since its opening in 1923 to its place today as a municipally owned golf course, RCC continues to challenge golfers of all skill levels. From the era of hickory-shafted spoons, brassies, mashies and niblicks to today's metal clubs and computer-designed balls, Alexander Findlay's classic design stands the test of time.

Confirmed: RCC's Place in History

Reading Country Club's inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places confirms what golfers always knew: the Exeter Township golf course is an historic gem. The listing, approved on May 31, 2018, recognizes the historic significance of Alexander Findlay's golf course design and Reading architect Harry Maurer's clubhouse.

Findlay is credited with designing more than 200 golf courses. As far back as 1922 he was considered "the father of American golf" for introducing the game into this country starting in the 1880s when he emigrated from Scotland. Findlay had a profound impact in Berks Country. His Berks work includes the original nine holes at Galen Hall, Manor Golf Club and the defunct Riverside Golf Club. He also consulted on the design of Berkshire Country Club's current golf course (*Reading Eagle*, May 27, 1923, page 6).

Findlay's design at RCC is among the best examples of his work and one of the few Findlay courses that has maintained his design with little change. The following comments are from Jim Nagle, Registered Landscape Architect. Mr. Nagle is a design associate at Forse Design, Inc., Hopwood, Pa.,

a firm that specializes in design for new golf courses and course restoration.

"Findlay used a combination of mounds and bunkers independently of themselves and in combination. His use of the mound and bunker complexes around greens was unique and genius at the time of his most expert work.

"Like most architects of that era, Findlay's design work evolved as the game grew in the United States. His work in the late teens and early 1920s are very fine examples of classic golf architecture (1900-1960 era). Much of his work in the eastern U.S., New England and upstate New York is worthy of study and makes for enjoyable, challenging golf. I believe his work at Tavistock C.C., Haddonfield, N.J., is his best example of strategic design, expert greens complexes and genius design and locations of bunkers.

"What I have always found fascinating at RCC are the 3rd, 5th and 7th greensites and their bunkers. Having been involved with restoration efforts at two prominent Findlay courses, Lebanon (Pa.) C.C. and Tavistock, I have looked at these holes for inspiration.

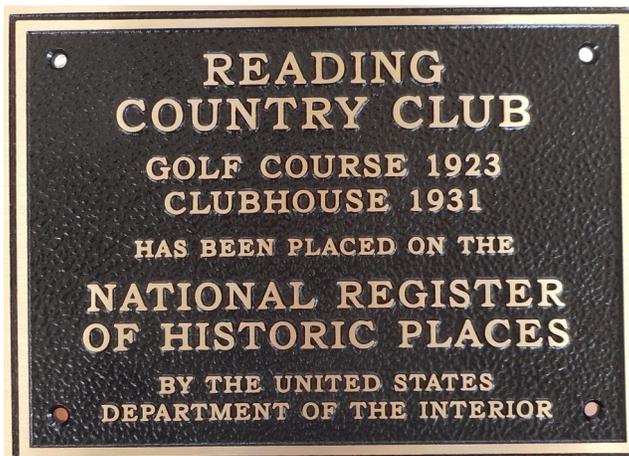
"Findlay, like many of his peers of the classic design era, used the land much more naturally than today's golf architects. They had an ability to minimize the influence of man upon the land and create golf courses that transitioned seamlessly with the land. Findlay would make some very abrupt features on his courses that at first glance may seem unnatural. As you study the features and their surrounds,

you begin to appreciate their natural feel and appearance. Many of Findlay's greens flowed beautifully into and out of the natural hillsides and low lying lands upon which they sit."

In Good Company

Of the approximately 90,000 properties on the National Register of Historic Places, fewer than 100 are golf courses. Those on the register include:

- Foxburg Golf Course, Foxburg, Pa., the country's oldest golf course in continuous operation, opened in 1887
- Hershey Country Club, Hershey, Pa.
- Merion Golf Club, Ardmore, Pa.
- Oakmont Country Club, Oakmont, Pa.
- Augusta National Golf Club, Ga.
- Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N.J.
- Ridgewood Country Club, Paramus, N.J. (RCC and Ridgewood have a strong connection. In 1937, RCC hired Ridgewood's assistant as its new head golf professional. Fellow by the name of Byron Nelson.)
- Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Southampton, N.Y.



In loving memory of Ronald Woodring.
"In our hearts forever."

A New Golf Course Takes Shape

The *Reading Eagle* reported on June 19, 1922, that “A charter has been granted by the court to the new Reading Country Club...”. The article goes on: “...work will be started on the location along the Philadelphia pike, near Wamsher’s Mill, in a month or more.”

The article noted that Mr. Findlay had been hired to lay out the golf course. An article in the *Reading Eagle* of April 15, 1925, reported that the club had 413 members. The club was initially owned by the members, who purchased stock for \$200 per share and paid a \$100 initiation fee.

RCC’s founders had grand plans to make the club a premiere facility and to that end, they consulted with people who had expertise in building and managing country clubs. They hired Alexander H. Findlay, one of the most celebrated golf architects of his day, to design the course.

Helping hand. The board of governors was also most appreciative of the counsel they received from the members of Berkshire Country Club “...for their courteous and helpful assistance in many ways. The new club has much to learn from its local seniors and welcomes all assistance by suggestion or criticism.”

By October 1922, nine holes had been built, with the greens and tees shaped and seeded. Work was progressing on the remaining nine holes.

A temporary five-hole golf course had been open for members in 1922. The track was described as “...not a good course but sufficient to afford golfing novices an opportunity to ‘get their eye on the ball.’”

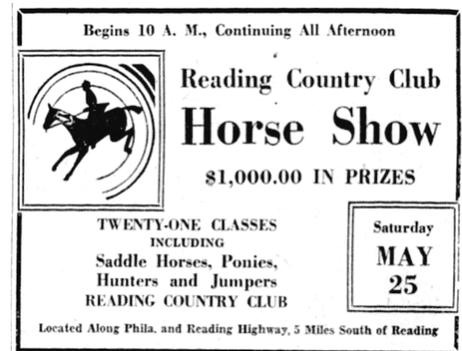
Here are some of the board of governors’ plans and dreams from the October 22 article.

- **Family time.** Club management intended to create a club for the entire family: “Along the upper stretches of the creek there is a splendid glen in which the club may construct a playground for the kiddies. Parents who desire to play golf will be able to take the children along to the club. The children can be taken care of at the playground.”
- **Tennis, anyone?** “To the west of the site of the proposed club house an area has been set aside for the construction of a number of tennis courts.” The courts were located in the area between the current first and the former 10th fairways in what is now the driving range.
- **Go for a swim?** “In the meadow near the creek the club plans, in the near future, to construct a regulation size swimming pool of concrete. The pool will be supplied with fresh water directly from the creek and will be constructed that the pool can be protected from flood water and all pollution.” This pool was never built but the *Reading Eagle*, February 22, 1970, reported that RCC would build a pool in the caddy area. The pool opened in July 1971.

Getting horsey. The grounds included the Reading Country Club Riding Academy, established in 1925. RCC did not operate the stables, rather it leased the business. The first stablemaster was Frederick W. Hannon, who had been master of the Detroit Riding and Hunt Club. Mr. Hannon and his wife cared for horses and gave riding lessons.

The club constructed a barn with a green Swiss roof. A spring fed a reservoir atop a nearby hill that provided water for the stable and the house in which Mr. and Mrs. Hannon lived.

RCC staged its first horse show, The Autumn Leaf Horse Show and Gymkhana, on October 17, 1925. According to the *Reading Eagle*, this show represent-



Reading Times, May 22, 1929.

ed “...a revival of horse shows in the vicinity.” The event attracted 1,200 spectators and featured seven classes of competition. The RCC horse shows continued until 1934. The stables were last operated in the early 1970s, when the club sold the stable site for a housing development.

Depressing. From its equity-based beginning, the club fell into bankruptcy during the Great Depression and World War 2, and in 1944, a group of 20 local businessmen bought it. The club was sold several more times.

In 2005, Larry Beans, RCC’s owner, announced an agreement to sell the land to a developer, who intended to build 525 townhomes on the property. To forestall the project, Exeter Township purchased the club through eminent domain in January 2006. This ushered in RCC’s public course era.

Proud RCC Supporters
Dave and Jackie Speece and Family

RCC Takes the Suburban League Title

In 1979, RCC golfers did something no other Berks county club had done previously and none has done since. They won the Golf Association of Philadelphia's team match championship, known then as the Suburban Golf League. RCC won the four-team playoff by one-half point over Huntington Valley C.C., 80¾ to 80¼. Philmont C.C. was third at 66½ with Tavistock C.C. fourth at 55¾. Huntington Valley had won 12 of the previous 14 titles.

Each club hosted a match, which consisted of singles and better-ball-of-partners competition. RCC racked up 33½ points at home, 16¼ at Huntington Valley and 15½ at Philmont and Tavistock.

Reading players were Hugh McCullough, Dick Hason, Bruce Kline, Chip Lutz, Corky Lott, Dick Arms, Don Sowers, Fred Borchers, Ken Springer, Mike Heller, Jack Murphy and Al Ruffner.

Kline's 25-foot par putt on the 18th green at RCC earned three-fourths of a point to clinch the victory. Full points were awarded for winning the front and back 9 holes and for winning the 18-hole match. One-quarter point was awarded for each hole won.

RCC earned a playoff birth by winning the Section IV, Division A championship with a 3-0 record, the club's sixth consecutive championship. The RCC team clinched the title with a resounding 61½ to 11½ victory over Berkshire C.C.

A Championship for the Ages

RCC's 1977 club championship was one for the ages. It featured players who would win 25 RCC titles between 1954 (Corky Lott) and 1998 (Mike Heller).

In the first round, Herman Fry and Chip Lutz battled back to defeat Mike Heller and Don Sowers, respectively. Fry, the reigning Berks Amateur champion, won 1-up, while Lutz, who won the Philadelphia Amateur earlier in the year, prevailed by 3 and 2. Other first-round winners were Dick Arms over Rick Bausher, 3 and 2; defending champion Fred Tyler over Fred Borchers, 3 and 1; Hugh McCullough over Dick Hassen, 4 and 3; Ken Springer over Corky Lott, 2 and 1; Dutch Yoder over Ed Kroner, 6 and 5; and Bruce Kline over Steve Norton, 3 and 2.

A first-time winner was assured after the quarter-final round was completed. Springer defeated Tyler, 2-up, while Arms won against McCullough, 2 and 1. Fry bested Yoder, 1-up and Lutz ousted Kline, 3 and 2.

The championship final pitted Arms, who defeated Fry, against Lutz, the victor over Springer.

Arms won his only RCC title by defeating Lutz, 1-up. He led by 2-up after nine and stretched his lead with a birdie on 10. Lutz won 12 and 15, closing to within one. Arms could have won the match on 17 but he missed a birdie putt from three feet. He steadied himself on 18, making the par he needed for a 1-up win and the championship.

Lutz would win the title in 1979 and '90. He also won two of his record nine Berks Amateur titles at RCC, in 1980 and '89.

Byron Nelson

J. Elmer "Buddy" Lutz Jr.

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The Architect's Voice

There is the opportunity to hear from the golf course architect whose design was completed in the 1920s. But we have just that opportunity by examining a newspaper account of Reading Country Club's construction. The architect is Alexander H. Findlay. The article was published in the *Reading Eagle*, October 22, 1922.

The changes made over the years take nothing away from the Scotsman's design. The course plays pretty much as he described in 1922. RCC was a challenge in the era of hickory-shafted brassies, mashies and niblicks and soft-cover, rubber core balls. The golf course remains a challenge in today's age of over-sized, exotic-metal clubs and computer-designed balls. Alex Findlay's genius stands the test of time.

Here is Reading Country Club in Findlay's words:

The beauty of this course is unsurpassed. All the greens and pins are visible from the tee, there are no blind pitches and all face the shot. Players are ever eager to have the 9th and 18th holes at the club house. This we will have, plus the 6th and the 16th, which are within 50 yards of same. No one can miss a shot at any one of the 18 holes and make amends; therefore, as a matter of fact, Reading Country Club links are first-class in every respect.

Getting Started

No. 1, 385 yards – Slightly dog-legged, a good tee shot will land on a beautiful plateau, a nice iron shot should reach the green which is nicely contoured. Terraced on a rock ledge, deep trays for the slice and pulled shots are at each side. The fairway is wide; a pulled drive

will reach the base of a huge gully; an easy par 4 should be recorded.

No. 2, 365 yards – The tee is elevated in order to give the player a chance to see his ball sailing in the middle of a nice valley paralleling the Philadelphia Pike. A large mound will catch the topped or half-topped iron shot to the green, which is built up within close touch of a cluster of trees. No player should find any difficulty in registering a par 4 at this easy hole. There are numerous nicely placed sand traps near the green, not too difficult to play out of.

No. 3, 330 yards – Calls for a well-placed drive up a slight incline. The second, an iron shot, should reach home. The putting green is very large and rolling, surrounded by grass and sand mounds. There are a few nice fruit trees at the sides, it is well elevated and one of the nicest holes to play. The first three holes are roomy and quite long enough, giving players a chance to limber up, and minimizing congestion.

No. 4, 265 yards – The drive may effect the weak-hearted mentally, inasmuch as the shot must be placed between large trees, 50 feet apart and over a nice wide babbling brook; both hazards being at least 300 feet from the tee. A mashy pitch should be lobbed onto the green, where a 4 will be recorded. This is the easiest par on the links, providing the tee shot is hit. Birds will be made and also eagles. The drive reaches a flat and the pitch to a nicely trapped green

by the "Old Mill Dam site." (*Now played as a par 3 between 200 and 165 yards.*)

No. 5, 520 yards – The long hole calls for a drive, a brassy over the creek and a pitch onto a large terraced green over the wide part of the stream. A vista cut out of the woods shows the green surrounded by water. A long hitter may be tempted to reach home with a long second shot, but he won't be in a hurry to attempt it a second time. The mouth of the green is narrow and calls for an accurate pitch, a 5 should easily be registered, which is par.

No. 6, 160 yards – An iron shot over the stream and valley to the hill-top, large trees to right, deep trap in front and pits at each side of green. A well placed shot will reach the flag on the fly, a grand test of golf and a nice par 3.

No. 7, 445 yards – A good drive will land on a plateau within 30 yards of the stream, a clean brassy should reach the green, which is nicely placed in the meadow, elevated and surrounded by an array of shallow sand traps and mounds. This hole will help the long hitter to score a bird below par 5. (*Now played as a par 4.*)

No. 8, 180 yards – A midiron shot, the creek rushes by at the foot of the green, which will catch topped tee shots. Trees will kill the pull, also hurt the slice. A nicely placed tee shot will land on the putting green, and with the orthodox allowance of two putts, one should experience little difficulty in scoring a par 3.

The course Findlay describes would yield the following score card:

Outward 9

Par 4 4 4 4 5 3 5 3 4 – 36 (2985 yards)

Inward 9

Par 4 4 4 4 5 3 4 4 4 – 36 – 72 (3300 yards; 6285 yards total)

Continuation and Success for Reading Country Club in the Future of Exeter Township.

Gary and Julienne DeTurk

Near the Club House

No. 9, 335 yards – A drive should be placed on a nice reach at the top of a huge hill, and a well played mashie pitch will reach the pin; this green is quite adjacent to the club house; hole is slightly dog-legged, with huge trees as a background, traps at sides, and in front of the green, a first-class hole and nice to look at from the tee. Par 4.

No. 10, 295 yards – Tee in front of club house, a nice drive and pitch hole with few obstacles in the way. The putting green is scientifically trapped and lies within close touch of a beautiful cluster of trees. Par 4. *(Now played as a par 3.)*

No. 11, 400 yards – An extreme dog-leg two shotter, a drive and full spoon or cleek shot will reach the pin; each shot must be placed with unerring accuracy in order to secure a par 4. The green is large, as all two full shot holes should be; nice mounds protect the corners and there are numerous traps all the way home.

No. 12, 430 yards – Over an old patch of pasture land and through an apple orchard, quite a wide fairway. The scratch or plus player should reach the pin nicely with a well-placed second or brassy shot. This is one of the most difficult par 4 holes on the course, but a joy to play. *(Now played at 360 yards.)*

No. 13, 385 yards – A plain easy drive and a midiron will place one near to score par figures. The green nestles at the foot of very large trees, numerous fruit trees skirt the fairway boundary. One must play straight, as punishment awaits the wayward. Par 4.

No. 14, 510 yards – Two screaming wood shots will reach foot of the green; a mashie niblick pitch is necessary in order to overcome the numerous difficulties surrounding the pin. The green is scooped out of the face of a large hill and faces the pitch; a very sporty hole to play but just about impossible to get

home in 2, owing to the hog back fairway in front of the green; the third shot is one of the dog-leg order. This is one of the nicest long holes in the United States. Par 5.

No. 15, 175 yards – The third and last of the one shot holes, the tee is at the top of a high hill, the green is over a stream. Numerous picturesque trees are at sides and back thereof, is well built up and quite undulating. The triumvirate of iron shot holes compare favorably with that of the famous Tavistock Country Club, Tavistock, N.J., and that is going some as Tavistock when two years older will be one of the finest tests of golf in this golfing country; in fact it is not yet two years old and a gem to play. Reading Country Club in a year or two will be likewise blest. Think it over! Trouble galore awaits the misplaced tee shot whereas a good shot will net anyone a par 3.

Beauty Unsurpassed

No. 16, 340 yards – A drive over the creek and a nice iron shot will land on the green, which is up a nice gradual sloping hill nicely trapped on all sides. If in match play, one wins by 3 and 2, one simply struts through the woods to the club house, which is less than 50 yards away from the green. The 16th is an easy par 4.

No. 17, 420 yards – A fine two shotter, a delightful view is afforded one standing on the tee; the drive is down hill; a long straight brassy will reach home, which is open and wide, inviting a wood shot to the pin; the green is properly bunkered and calls for accurate golf. Par 4. *(Now played as a 500-yard par 5.)*

No. 18, 345 yards – Drive and an iron shot to the hole; the green is on an up-grade, located quite near trees and the club house, making a fine finish to this splendid course. The green is well trapped and mounded. Par 4.



Alexander Findlay shows his form in this photo from the Philadelphia Inquirer, July 11, 1924. The newspaper credits Findlay with building America's first golf course in 1887, but that is incorrect. The first-golf-course-in-the-U.S. title is much debated but the honor most likely goes to the Oakhurst Links, White Sulphur Springs, W. Va., which dates to 1884.

Below, advert from the Reading Times, August 29, 1922

Help Wanted
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An Impressive New Home

When RCC opened in 1923, members dined and changed their shoes in the stone building known as the Bishop house that still stands at the club entrance. The building, now repurposed as an office, was the residence of John Bishop, who in 1761 purchased the grist mill located in the area of the fourth green. When RCC acquired the property, it included a stone fort with rifle openings in the walls, a reminder of the French and Indian War of 1754-1763. The fort was razed in the 1990s.

This was always to be a temporary clubhouse. To accommodate the club members, a wing was added to the stone building. The addition housed a dining room, kitchen and locker rooms. The first event in the new wing was a dinner-dance on June 24, 1924.

Findlay's vision. An article in the *Reading Eagle* on October 22, 1922, described the renovations to the historic stone building and the plans for the new structure. The site for the permanent clubhouse was selected by Alexander Findlay, who designed the golf course. It has a background of woods and rocks and a magnificent view south across the Schuylkill Valley. In Findlay's words, the site is "...as charming as any in the country."

RCC members celebrated the opening of the new clubhouse in May 1931 with a week of parties, balls, dinners and dancing. Newspaper coverage included a preview article, photos of the new building, a story about the opening festivities with interior photos and an ad recognizing the contractors and suppliers. The timing was fortuitous as a fire the previous October

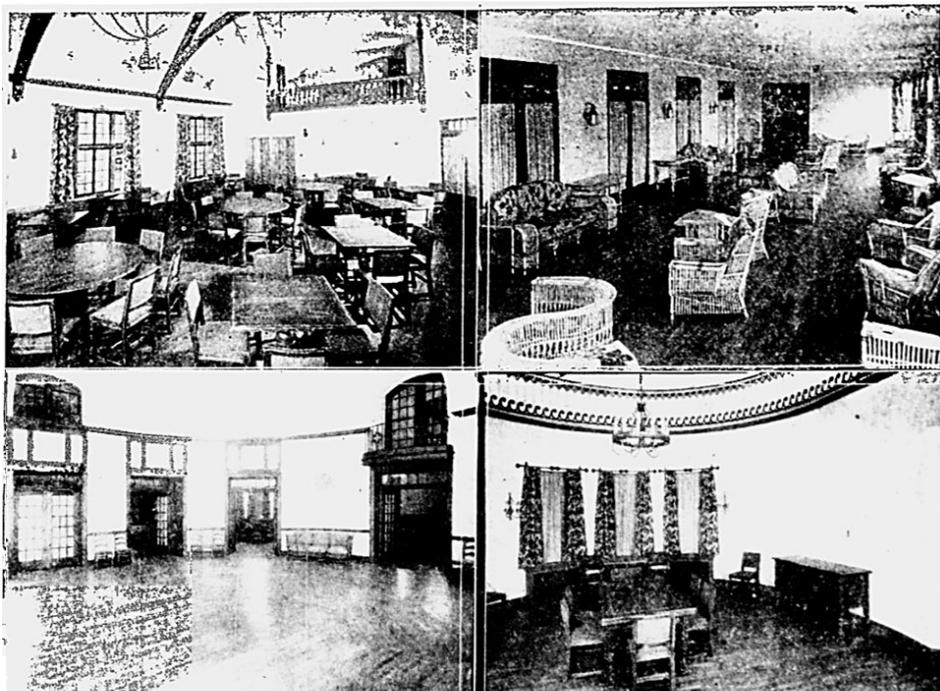
destroyed the dining and locker room wing of the temporary clubhouse.

The new clubhouse required a course re-routing as reported in the *Reading Eagle* on April 26, 1931. The current first hole had been played as the 18th, which makes sense because the temporary clubhouse was at the entrance on Rte. 422. Playing the current first hole as 18, the golfers would enjoy a short walk down to the clubhouse after the final putts were holed. The routing would have been reset in 1931 to the layout as it is played today and as Alex Findlay designed.

The clubhouse retains the same look as when it opened in 1931. An all-weather room added to the front of the building in 2015 blends with the existing stone and stucco exterior. The interior

renovation in 2015 retains the traditional club look and feel of the original design. The bar was enlarged, large-screen TVs were added and the walls and floors were refreshed. The ballroom and meeting rooms on the second floor retain their original look and feel.

On May 31, 2018, the National Park Service listed the clubhouse on the National Register of Historic Places. The building is recognized as an outstanding example of the late 19th and early 20th century revival of the Norman/Tudor revival style of architecture. Harry Mauer, a Reading architect and RCC's second club champion, designed the building. Maurer also designed the Frank D. Yuengling Mansion in Pottsville which was added to the National Register in 1979.



Reading Eagle, May 3, 1931. Upper left, the main dining hall; upper right, sun parlor; lower left, ballroom with balcony; lower right, small dining room.

In memory of Coach Roy Underhill
Exeter High School Golf Team • Sponsored by a Patron

Builders of the New Reading Country Club

IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE TO

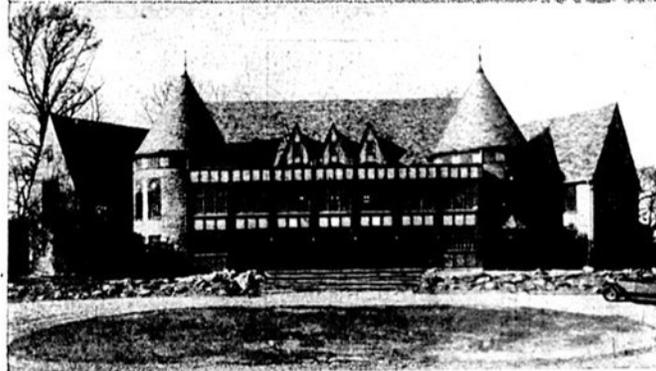
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Sunday, May 3, 1931

General Contractor

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Reading Country Club



Charles H. Schlegel

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Byron Nelson Brings the World to RCC

John Byron Nelson. Winner of five major golf championships: Masters (1937 and '42), PGA (1940 and '45) and U.S. Open (1939). Sixth on the all-time PGA tour winning list with 54. Member of the World Golf Hall of Fame. Honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom. Posthumously honored with the Congressional Gold Medal. In 1945, winner of 18 of 35 PGA tournaments including 11 in a row. Both records are yet to be beaten.

Oh, and by the bye, Byron was the head golf professional at Reading Country Club in 1937, '38 and '39.

If you want to read about Byron's career, go to Wikipedia. Buy his book, *How I Played the Game*, which includes a chapter about his years in Reading. We're going to use our space on these pages with stories and anecdotes about Lord Byron's time at RCC.

Go big or go home, right? So we'll start with Byron at his biggest. During his tenure at RCC, Byron won two major championships: the '37 Masters and the '39 National Open.

Of all Byron's accomplishments in 1937, securing the RCC position may be the most significant. Byron was 24, having served as the assistant at Ridgewood, N.J., Country Club in 1935 and '36. His salary was \$400 for the season, April 1 to Labor Day. He also earned \$2.50 for each lesson, which he figured added about \$100 per week to his bank account. In 1935, he won the New Jersey State Open, his first professional victory, and \$3,246.40 in tournament play. He won the Metropolitan Open in 1936, which led to his best year on tour with winnings of \$5,798.75.

Nelson got the Reading job the old-fashioned way: through a personal con-



Byron Nelson, left, welcomes Ed "Porky" Oliver, Wilmington, Del., to RCC during the 1938 Central Pennsylvania Open. Nelson won in '37, his first of two CPO titles, while Oliver, the defending champion, finished tied third. Reading Eagle, August 9, 1938.

tact. Stanley Giles, president of RCC, called George Jacobus, the head pro at Ridgewood, for a head professional recommendation. Jacobus tabbed Nelson. Giles interviewed Byron in February. Nelson accepted a salary of \$3,750 and could keep the profits from golf shop sales and lessons. Newspaper accounts reveal that Giles selected Nelson over Ben Hogan.

Mastering Augusta. Before taking over at RCC, Byron had one final event on the winter tour: the Masters. Nelson's 66 on Thursday stood as the Masters opening round record until Ray Floyd shot 65 on his way to victory in 1976. Byron shot 66 by hitting every par 5 in two shots, every par 4 in two and every par 3 in one for 32 strokes. He took 34 putts, which he considered pretty average.

In the final round, he played the

12th and 13th holes in five strokes, going birdie-eagle on two-thirds of Amen Corner. He gained six strokes on Ralph Guldahl, who led going to 11. Nelson defeated Wood by two strokes for his third professional win.

Byron played round 4 with Wiffy Cox—Wilfred Hiram Cox—the head professional at Congressional Country Club from 1936 until his death in 1969 at age 73. In *How I played the Game*, Byron wrote that Wiffy encouraged him after Byron birdied the 10th hole. "Kid," said Wiffy, "I think that's the one we needed." Indeed it was.

Lord Byron. Nelson wrote on page 68 of his book that O.B. Keeler, sports-writer for the *Atlanta Journal*, interviewed the new champion after the Masters win. Keeler said: "Byron, I watched you play the back nine today, and it reminded me of a piece of poetry

**In Memory of Don Sowers
The McKeone Family**

that was written by Lord Byron when Napoleon was defeated at the battle of Waterloo." The nickname took flight in Keeler's headline: "Lord Byron Wins the Masters."

Nelson credits the confidence boost from getting his own club as a key to winning the 1937 Masters. He went into the tournament in a positive frame of mind and had a practical reason for wanting to play well. He needed the \$1,500 winner's check to buy merchandise for RCC's golf shop. Ralph Trout, his assistant, would have the shop open when Byron arrived from Augusta and he needed stock quickly.

The Reading effect. Bill Reedy, the *Reading Eagle's* sports editor, interviewed Byron for an article published on April 5, the day after he won the Masters. Nelson said he was spurred on to success at Augusta and the preceding tournaments by the prospect of taking over at RCC.

"I wanted to make good with Reading before I got to Reading," said Byron. "That fact put a little extra pressure on me, though, in the Masters tournament. I couldn't get away from frequent thoughts that my scores were being closely watched in Reading. Maybe it was lucky for me to have signed that contract in February. Have you noticed that I have been in the money ever since?"

Open champion. Byron won his only U.S. Open championship in 1939. The tournament was played at Philadelphia Country Club in Gladwyne and is the only Open played at a par 69. Nelson tied Craig Wood and Denny Shute at 284 after 72 holes. Byron was first to post 284. He came in just behind the amateur Bud Ward, Spokane, Wash., whose final-round 72, which featured a 30-foot birdie on the final hole, left him at 285.

Snead was next to stare down destiny. Destiny won and the Slammer's

Byron's club and ball are on display in the U.S.G.A. museum in New Jersey.



A monument on the 17th hole at Philadelphia Country Club commemorates Byron's eagle in the 1939 U.S. Open. The hole was number 4 in 1939.

18th hole failure is legendary. After a bogey on 17, Snead was still one shot ahead of Shute, who also bogeyed 17, and two better than Nelson and Wood. Snead believed he needed a birdie to win. Alas, he needed only a par 5. By the time he surrendered his ball to the hole, Slammin' Sammy carved out a triple-bogey 8. He never won the Open.

Nelson and Wood matched 68s in Sunday's playoff. Byron tied Wood with

a pressure-packed 8-foot birdie putt on the 18th green, then held his breath as Wood missed from about a foot closer. Shute was eliminated with a 76. On Monday, Nelson defeated Wood in the second 18-hole playoff, 70-73, to take the title. After 108 holes, Byron Nelson was the National Open champion.

Nelson won the Open with two glorious shots. He nearly holed his wedge shot on the 334-yard third hole, spin-



ning the ball to within a foot for an easy birdie. Wood spun his ball too much, pulling it some 35 feet below the hole. Three putts later, he was in with a bogey and a two-shot deficit.

Lord Byron left no doubt about the outcome with his play on number 4, a 453-yard nightmare. Outdriven by 40 yards, Nelson struck a thunderous 1-iron shot that, in his words, "...went straight into the hole like a rat."

Harry McLemore, writing for the United Press syndicate, noted, "Byron Nelson could stand on the fourth fairway of the Philadelphia Country Club and hit No. 1 irons for the rest of his life without sinking one for an eagle two." True enough. But when Nelson needed a great shot on golf's grandest stage, he did it.

Back to work. So, what does the newly christened National Open champion do? In 1939, Byron Nelson made the short drive from Gladwyne back to Reading to resume his duties as RCC's head professional. He gave lessons. He ran the golf shop. He played tournaments and exhibitions. He lost the final of the PGA Championship, played at the now-defunct Pomonok Country Club, Queens, N.Y., on July 15, to Henry Picard on the first playoff hole.

The Nelsons also entertained guests. Shortly after the Open, Ben and Valerie Hogan visited for a week. Ben and Byron practiced and played at RCC.

On August 5, 1939, the duo of Ben Hogan and Henry Picard defeated Byron and Frank Moore, 1-up, in an exhibition match at RCC.

Walking Ref. On September 4 of that year, Nelson served as the walking referee for the match to determine the 11th Berks County amateur champion. According to the *Reading Times*, "A large gallery overflowed the first tee when Referee Byron Nelson gave the boys the go-ahead signal..." There is no



Louise Nelson worked on her sewing as Byron won the second 18-hole playoff against Craig Wood. She picked a spot near the clubhouse where she could keep an eye on the scoreboard. The photo appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer, June 13, 1939.

indication that he was called upon to make any rulings.

Lefty Faber defeated Johnny Markel, 1-up, becoming the first player to win the Berks Publinks and Amateur championships. Markel was the defending Berks Amateur champion having defeated Faber the previous year. Markel is still the youngest Berks Am champ at age 16.

Byronisms. Nelson played the Open Championship two times. In 1937, the Open was played the week after the Ryder Cup matches, which the U.S. won,

8-4, Byron and Ed Dudley scoring a point in foursomes and Byron losing in singles to Dai Rees. In the Open at Carnoustie, Byron finished fifth, six behind Henry Cotton, winning \$125. He played at St. Andrews in 1955, carding 72-75-78-71—296, for 32nd place. Peter Thompson won at 281, 7 under par.

From his book, *How I Played the Game*: "Our boat tickets [in 1937] cost \$1020, plus I'd lost a month out of the summer in the shop [at RCC], so you can see why we didn't play the British Open much back then."

- Byron played the Central Pennsylvania Open at RCC three times. He won in 1937 and '39 and was second in '38.

- On September 15, 1939, Nelson became the first player to break 70 at Berkleigh Country Club. According to *Reading Eagle* sports editor Bill Reedy, Nelson took up the challenge of Alex Kagen, president of the Berks County Golf Association, who claimed no one could best 70. With a \$25 bet on the line, Nelson toured the Kutztown layout in 67 strokes, carding two birdies, an eagle and a single bogey.

- Byron taught the game to Betty Fehl and Buddy Lutz, two of Berks' greatest players. You can read about Miss Fehl on page 26. Buddy won a record eight RCC club championships and his sons, Chip and Putter, won two each. Buddy also won the Berks Amateur four times, while Chip holds the record with nine titles.

Bye, Bye Byron. Byron left RCC after the 1939 season. He and Louise moved to Toledo, Ohio, where Byron served as head professional at the Inverness Club until 1944. According to the Inverness web site, Byron beat out Ben Hogan—Again!—for the job. The *Eagle's* Bill Reedy reported that Inverness also interviewed Sam Snead.

Byron retired from the tour to his Texas ranch in 1946 at age 34.

Phil Harsh and Family

Lower than Low—RCC's Course Record

Who hasn't strolled into the golf shop and casually inquired, "Where's the first tee and what's the course record?"

The first newspaper account of the RCC record was August 14, 1927. Harry Markel, assistant at Berkshire, shot 70, one under par, surpassing Al Herron's 73. Heron was Berkshire's head pro.

Byron Nelson was thinking course record when he took the RCC job in 1937. Gordon Williams, in the *Reading Times*, February 18, reported that Byron asked about the record when he saw the course for the first time. Told that George Low, Jr. set the standard with a 68 in the 1936 Central Pennsylvania Open, Byron said, "There must be some reason why the pros haven't cracked 70 with consistency. I'll find out when I get here. It may take a week or so before I get below 74 or 75, but I will show you some scoring after that."

Byron backed up his boast on April 18, 1937. Two weeks after winning the Masters, he broke the Reading course record two times in a single day, albeit in casual rounds played with members.

He shot 67, in the morning to break Low's record. Byron's round included birdies at 7, 10, 12, 13 and 14. He lost a shot only at 18 with a bogey 5.

Nelson bettered his hours-old record that afternoon with a sizzling 65. His round featured a daring drive over the creek on the 5th hole and a 3-iron to eight feet. He missed the eagle putt, leaving a tap-in for birdie 4.

Going lower. A year later, Byron went even lower. On August 24, 1938, he bested the record 65 he shared with Lighthouse Harry Cooper, who turned the trick six weeks previous in an exhibition match. Playing in high winds, Lord Byron shot a pedestrian 33 on the outward nine, one under par, with a three-putt bogey 4 on the 4th hole. Byron's



Sam Snead's competitive course-record 63 has stood since 1949.

blazing seven-under-par back-nine 30 started with three consecutive birdies. He paused for a par on 13, then scored an eagle 3 on the 15th hole, which he reached with a titanic drive and a majestic 5-iron second shot. Byron completed the trek home with birdies on 15 and 18 for 63.

The competitive record was lowered to 65 in the 1941 Central Pennsylvania Open. Felix Serafin and Bruce Coltart each shot 65 in the first round.

The Slammer strikes. Nelson's 63 was equaled by 37-year-old Slammin' Sammy Snead, playing out of White Sulphur Springs, W.Va., in the first round of the 1949 Reading Open. Although each carded 63, Byron did the Slammer one better; he was eight under par, while Sam managed a measly seven

under. The 12th hole causes the discrepancy: Byron played the 460-yard hole as a par 5, Sam as a 4.

The Slammer carded 30-33, needing only 27 putts. He made seven birdies and no bogeys. In 1949 the 10th hole, now a par 3, was a 258-yard dogleg right par 4. The old fairway is now the practice range and the tee was under the large tree adjacent to the fountain. The 17th was a 400-yard par 4, played from today's gold tee.

Alas, the magic deserted the Slammer. His second round 71 left him tied with Vic Ghezzi, Deal, N.J., at 134. Dr. Cary Middlecoff, the 'transplanted tooth treater from Tennessee'—He was described thusly by *Reading Eagle* reporter Jerry Kobrin and don't you wish today's sports writers churned out prose like that?—was a stroke back. The Doc caught the Slammer in the third round, 65 to 66, leaving the duo tied at 200. Middlecoff won when Snead missed a four-foot birdie putt on the final hole that would have pitted him against the dapper dentist in a playoff.

Orr Outstanding. Nelson's and Snead's 63s were equaled in May 1990 by Scott Orr. Playing in the RCC Member/Member tournament, Orr shot a respectable 33, one under par, on the front nine. He blistered the back 9 with birdies on 10, 12, 14, 16, 17 and 18 for an incoming six-under-par 30. Orr and his partner Drew Fegley won the event with 63-67—130. Fred Tyler and Jim Rutter were second at 136.

So, who holds RCC's scoring record? It's a tough call. Snead shot his round in the heat of a PGA tournament. That the Slammer's record has remained unbroken for 70 years is a testament to RCC's design. Byron's 63 was in a casual round and credit to him for playing eight under par. Orr's 63 was in a competitive round and hasn't been equaled or beaten in 30 years. Let's call it what it is: a tie.



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The Gentleman from North Carolina

A banner headline in the *Reading Times*, October 20, 1939, tells the story: Henry Poe New Golf Professional at Reading. The article by Gordon Williams, the *Times* sports editor, introduced Berks County to the 24-year-old North Carolinian who succeeded Byron Nelson.

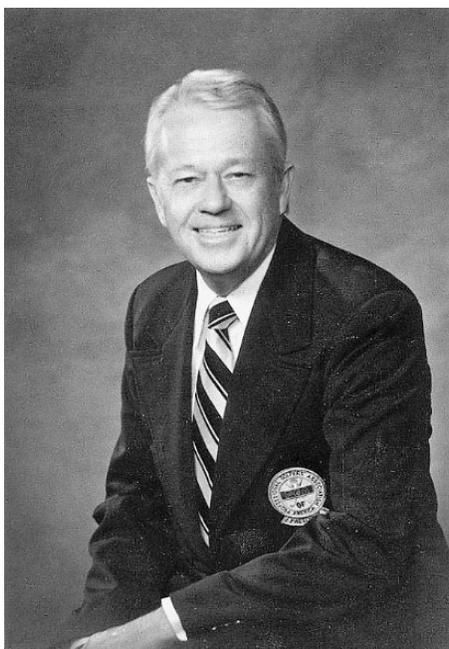
Poe was born to the game. His father, William Henry Poe, operated a public course in Durham for 20 years. Young Henry mowed greens and helped his father make and repair golf clubs. He attended Duke University, where, in his own words, he “majored in golf.”

Young Poe turned pro in 1937. In his first professional event played at the Mid-South course in Pinehurst, N.C., he tied with Dutch Harrison, carding 142 for 36 holes. Harrison won the playoff. Dutch also won the first Reading Open in 1947 at Berkshire CC.

In 1939, Poe was an assistant to Craig Wood at Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, N.Y. Wood it was who introduced Nelson and RCC to the 24-year-old Poe. Oh, the irony! Nelson defeated Wood in 1939 for the U.S. Open crown.

According to Stanley Giles, RCC’s greens committee chairman, Poe was

selected from among 175 applicants. The *Reading Eagle* sports editor, Bill Reedy, reported on October 21, 1939, that Ben Hogan, Nelson’s friend from Texas, was thought to have the inside track for the RCC job. Reedy wrote that Hogan, the assistant pro at Century Country Club, Purchase, N.Y., did not pursue the position. Hogan stayed at



Century as an assistant and then as the head pro until 1941, when he took the head job at Hershey, Pa., Country Club.

Poe played RCC during an October 1939 visit when he was in town to sign his contract. He shot a two-over-par 73 in his first look at the golf course. Poe was filling Lord Byron’s shoes in more ways than one. He played that round wearing Nelson’s golf spikes and swinging Byron’s clubs. He was impressed by the RCC layout. “It’s a fine golf course, very sporty and in excellent condition. The holes require accuracy off the tee and the par-threes are among the best I have seen.”

On that day in 1939, Poe could not have foreseen what lay in front of him. In a June 30, 1999, interview, he told *Reading Eagle* sports writer Mike

McGovern that he figured to stay two or three years, then move on. Poe became RCC’s longest-tenured golf professional, serving through 1966. He left Reading to work for the Vanity Fair Corporation in Alabama where he oversaw the design, construction and operation of three company-owned golf courses.

Poe was active in both the Philadelphia Section and the national PGA organization, serving as president of the PGA of America in 1975 and 1976. He used his time with the PGA well.

In 1955, the PGA enlisted Poe to supervise the construction of a practice putting green for President Eisenhower at his farm in Gettysburg.

In 1979, with the support of Jack Nicklaus, he spearheaded the change in the Ryder Cup matches to include golf professionals from all the European countries. Before that only professionals from Great Britain and Ireland opposed the U.S. team and the matches had become one-sided. The matches now are very competitive and attract as much attention as golf’s major championships.

Space does not permit a complete telling of Poe’s long career in golf. The following highlights from the *Reading Eagle* open a window into the man.

April 3, 1942—Poe arrived at RCC from his winter home in Durham to begin his third season at RCC. He expected his family to join him in their residence at 419 Douglass Street by early May.

Over the winter, Poe competed against the leading pros, so naturally, the *Eagle* scribe asked him to handicap the upcoming Masters tournament. “I like Byron Nelson, Ben Hogan and Sammy Snead, in that order.”

Poe was spot on. Nelson and Hogan tied at eight under par. In the 18-hole playoff, Nelson was down by three strokes after five holes. Lord Byron rallied to win his second Masters by play-

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ing holes 6 through 13 in six under par, defeating Hogan 69 to 70. Snead finished tied seventh.

April 25, 1946—Poe was welcomed back to Reading Country Club at a dinner attended by 300, including representatives of Berks County's eight golf courses. Poe left his position at RCC in 1942 to work in a factory in the south during World War 2. The rangy North Carolinian gave a brief talk, saying that he expected a big post-war golf boom.

Representing their golf courses were Harry Markel, pro at Berkshire CC; Bob Wallace, golf instructor at Berkleigh CC; Bob Middleton, manager of Galen Hall GC; Johnny Weitzel, pro and operator of Manor GC; Charles Wiperman, operator of Green Hill GC.; Jake Merkel, proprietor of Rich Maiden GC; Jim Wertz, owner and operator of Pleasant Hills GC; and William Crabtree, owner and operator of Riverside GC.

August 31, 1976—On returning to Reading for a golf exhibition, Poe said, "I came back to Reading with one thing in mind, to see Betsy King play golf. After all, I was the first man to put a club in her hand." Here's an interesting fact: Poe was Betsy's godfather.

Jack Nicklaus headlined the event at Berkshire Country Club, a benefit for Easter Seals. At the time, Nicklaus was well on his way to securing his status as golf's best ever. Poe was president of the PGA and King was low amateur in

that year's U.S. Women's Open.

King impressed the Golden Bear. "Betsy has a fine future, whether it is in amateur or professional golf. Berks County can be proud of this young lady," he said. Spot on, Jack.

June 30, 1999—In June 1999, Poe visited RCC during the Henry Clay Poe Member-Guest Tournament. In a wide-ranging interview with *Reading Eagle* sportswriter Mike McGovern, Poe commented on a variety of subjects.

"The first Big Bertha I saw, I thought you're not going to be able to give that away."

New technology—"The first Big Bertha I saw, I thought you're not going to be able to give that away. It looked like a balloon on the end of a stick. Obviously, I was as wrong as it was ever possible to be wrong." Poe said he was such a golf traditionalist, he didn't fancy the innovations introduced by companies such as Calloway and Ping. He played Wilson clubs all his life.

Course set up—"I'm bitterly opposed to the U.S. Open setup. I like to see a golf course that takes skill to play, not brute strength. When you put rough around the greens and your ball lands two feet off the green into deep rough, there is no skill in that whatsoever. The punishment doesn't fit the crime. There's never been any rough at the Masters."

Rating the pros—Poe said the best player he ever saw was Ben Hogan. "Hogan just knew how to play golf. He was the best striker of the golf ball I ever saw. Jack Nicklaus was the best prepared to play major championships." Poe ranked Hogan, Nicklaus, and Byron Nelson as the best.

"Sam Snead said Nelson was the best driver he ever played with. Everybody raved about Byron's iron play, but he never had many difficult shots because he was always in the middle of the fairway. Putting was the worst part of his game. He hit so many greens, if he had been the best putter in the world, he'd have shot 50."

Poe rated Arnold Palmer and Seve Ballesteros the most exciting players he ever saw. "They were both gung-ho, bang, let 'er go. Nobody was better than Seve around the greens."

1999's top players—Poe tabbed Phil Mickelson as the next great player. "He's got the finest temperament I've ever seen. Wonderful short game and is long." He believed David Duval may have won too much too soon. "Here it is June and he's won over \$2 million. I can't believe that man is going to devote the effort to the game. When Don January won \$50,000, he went home. He said that's all the money he needed."

Tiger Woods—"No question about his skill, he can probably play as many golf shots as anybody living. I wish he would express his attitude like Mickelson." At the time of this interview, Woods had won one major championship, the 1997 Masters.

His love of RCC—"I'm thankful that the membership remembers me. It's awfully nice to come back to a place where you spent many hours and loved so dearly, and I really loved Reading Country Club."

RCC's Golf Pros

1923-1925	Alex W. Brown
1926-1936	James S. Young
1937-1939	Byron Nelson
1939	Frank Moore
1940-1966	Henry Clay Poe
1967-1972	John Yocum
1973	John Stasko
1974-1985	Bob DeMarco
1986-1987	Mike Torey
1988-1991	Joe Dahl
1992-1994	Stuart Dickie
1995-2000	Jason Arnold
2001-2016	Tom Morgan
2017	Chris Conklin
2018-present	Derrick Sandritter



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Major Champions Have Played RCC

The greats of golf, male and female, have played Reading Country Club.

Near as can be determined, 99 major championships (15 on the senior tour) are represented by golfers who have played at RCC. And that does not include Chip Lutz, a two-time RCC club champion, who won the United States Senior Amateur in 2015, the British Senior Amateur in 2011, 2012 and 2016 and the Canadian Senior Amateur in 2011 and 2012.

We can also claim Johnny McDermott (U.S. Open 1911 and 1912) as a visitor. McDermott, a Philadelphian and the first American-born player to win the Open, was a spectator at the 1949 Reading Open, a tidbit reported in the *Reading Eagle*.

Every Masters champion from the tournament's inception in 1934 to 1960, save three, played at RCC. The no-shows are Gene Sarazen (1935),

Ralph Guldahl (1939) and Arnold Palmer (1958 and 1960).

Two of golf's foremost course architects are on the guest list. Alex Findlay designed the course; let's assume he hit a few shots. George Fazio, the first of the renowned Fazio line of golf architects, played at RCC more than once.

Here are the major champions who golfed their ball at Reading Country Club.

- Sam Snead – 13 (PGA '42, '49, '51; Masters '49, '52, '54; British Open '46; PGA Seniors '64, '65, '67, '70, '72, '73)
- Walter Hagan – 11 (PGA '21, '24, '25, '26, '27; U.S. Open '14, '19; British Open '22, '24, '28, '29)
- Ben Hogan – 9 (PGA '46, '48; Masters '51, '53; U.S. Open '48, '50, '51, '53; British Open '53)
- Betsy King – 6 (LPGA '92; Dinah Shore '87, '90, '97; U.S. Open '89, '90)
- Miller Barber – 5 (PGA Seniors '81; U.S. Senior Open '82, '84, '85; Senior TPC '83)
- Lawson Little – 5 (U.S. Amateur '34, '35; British Amateur '34, '35; U.S. Open '40)
- Byron Nelson – 5 (PGA '40, '45; Masters '37, '42; U.S. Open '39)
- Billy Casper – 5 (Masters '70; U.S. Open '59, '66; U.S. Senior Open '83; Senior TPC '88)
- Bobby Locke – 4 (British Open '49, '50, '52, '57)
- Tommy Armour – 3 (PGA '30; U.S. Open '27; British Open '31)
- Jimmy Demaret – 3 (Masters '40, '47, '50)
- Cary Middlecoff – 3 (Masters '55; U.S. Open '49, '56)
- Tommy Bolt – 2 (U.S. Open '58; PGA Seniors '69)
- Jack Burke – 2 (PGA '56; Masters '56)
- Doug Ford – 2 (PGA '55; Masters '57)
- Don January – 2 (PGA '67; PGA Seniors '82)
- Henry Picard – 2 ('39 PGA; '38 Masters)
- Horton Smith – 2 (Masters '34, '36)
- Craig Wood – 2 (Masters '41; U.S. Open '41)
- Jerry Barber – 1 (PGA '61)
- Gay Brewer – 1 (Masters '67)
- Walter Burkemo – 1 (PGA '43)
- Jim Ferrier – 1 (PGA '47)
- Ed Furgol – 1 (U.S. Open '54)
- Vic Ghezzi – 1 (PGA '41)
- Chick Harbert – 1 (PGA '54)
- Claude Harmon – 1 (Masters '58)
- Herman Keiser – 1 (Masters '46)
- Lloyd Mangrum – 1 (U.S. Open '46)
- Corey Pavin – 1 (U.S. Open '95)
- Art Wall – 1 (Masters '59)
- Lew Worsham – 1 (U.S. Open '47)



Ben Hogan, right, and Byron Nelson played and practiced at RCC when Lord Byron was RCC's pro. The two first competed as teens in Texas.

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RCC Club Championship Records

Reading Country Club's first club championship matches were played in 1924 on the 9-hole course. What follows are the records for the RCC championship play based on available information.

Results for 1926 and 1929 were not found. The tournament may not have been played in 1942 and 1943 because of World War 2. In addition, the match details for several years have not been found.

Match Play (36-hole final)

- Margin of victory: 10 and 9: Dick Hoffer over Barney Ollivierre, 1934; Gordon Williams over Dick Hoffer, 1942; and Buddy Lutz over Jay Gibney, 1957
- Longest match: 39 holes – Paul Hill defeated Buddy Lutz in 1956

Match Play (18-hole final)

- Margin of victory: Guy McKeone over Jim Christiana, 6 and 5, in 2017



- Longest match: 18 holes – Dick Arms defeated Chip Lutz, 1-up, in 1977 and Hugh McCullough defeated Fred Borchers, 1-up in 1978

Stroke Play

- Lowest 54-hole score: 206, -4, Herman Fry in 1985
- Highest 54-hole winning score: 228, +18, Pete Betz in 2005
- Largest 54-hole margin of victory: George Grafton, 17 strokes over Pete Betz in 1999
- Lowest 36-hole score: 141, +1, Mike Heller in 1981
- Highest 36-hole winning score: 149, +9, Chris Lucci in 2002
- Largest 36-hole margin of victory: Mike Heller, 11 strokes over Charley Faber in 1981

Most wins

- Buddy Lutz, 8 (1948, '49, '51, '57, '58, '59, '64, '66)
- Fred Tyler, 5 (1976, '83, '91, '92, '94)

Most consecutive wins

- Buddy Lutz, 3 (1957, '58, '59)
- Corky Lott, 3 (1960, '61, '62)
- Greg Galtere, 3 (2008, '09, '10)

Won match play and stroke play championships

- Joe Mullarkey (1970m, '72m, '73s)
- Mike Heller (1975m, '81s, '87s, '98s)
- Fred Tyler (1976m, '83s, '91s, '92s, '94s)
- Hugh McCullough (1978m, '80s)
- Greg Galtere, (2008m, '09m, '10s)

Youngest winner:

- Billy Eben, age 16 in 1935

Oldest winner: unable to determine

Of interest

- Buddy Lutz won his eight titles over a span of 18 years, from 1948 to 1966. Fred Tyler also won titles 18 years apart, from 1976 to 1994.
- Buddy Lutz played in nine match-play finals, losing only in 1956 to Paul Hill in 39 holes. Lutz came back in 1957 with a 10 and 9 win over Jay Gibney.
- Mike Heller has the longest time between wins. His first title came in 1975 and his most recent in 1998, a span of 23 years.
- Billy Eben, the youngest winner at 16 in 1935, played in the match play finals seven times, winning three.
- Guy McKeone won the first title in the public course era, defeating Blayne Hoffert, 1-up, in 2007.
- Nine players have defended their title:
 - John Rader, Jr. 1931 and '32
 - Buddy Lutz, 1948 and '49 and 1957, '58 and '59
 - Corky Lott, 1960, '61 and '62
 - Joe Malarkey, 1972 and '73
 - Herman Fry, 1984 and '85
 - Fred Tyler, 1991 and '92
 - Jimmy Ward, 2003 and '04
 - Greg Galtere, 2008, '09 and '10
 - Alex Seelig, 2018 and '19

Thank you, Brian Aherns, for 26 years of service to RCC. Your greens are the best!
From your golfing friends at RCC

The Guy Who Gets Pointed At

Winning a club championship is a golfer's dream. Whether the championship is won at an old-line club such as Baltusrol, Merion or Canterbury or the local muni that is lovingly referred to as Goat Hills, a club championship means something.

At the least, the winner's name is engraved on a plaque that adorns the clubhouse wall. That's cool. At some clubs, the champ gets a reserved parking space. That's so cool, it's hot.

The club champion is the guy who gets pointed at. You're on the range with your brother-in-law, who is something of an dolt but to keep peace in the family, you invite him to play in the member-guest tournament. Unfortunately, you can't find a suitable partner, so he's yours for the weekend. Before the first round, you espy a lean, slender youth at the end of the range, striking pure shot after pure shot with a 3-iron. You turn to George, point to the splendid splinter and say, "See that guy down there? He's the club champion."

Who wouldn't want to be that guy down there, the guy who gets pointed at? Here are RCC's guys who got, and for some, still get pointed at.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1924 Ernest J. Poole, Jr., defeated Harry Maurer, 4 and 3 | 1929 Not found | 1950 George Smith defeated Billy Eben, 4 and 3 (18 holes) |
| 1925 Harry Maurer defeated Ray Dengler, 8 and 7 (36 holes, first event on the 18-hole course) | 1930 Fred Krug | 1951 Buddy Lutz defeated Fred Leese, 8 and 7 |
| 1926 Not found | 1931 John Rader, Jr. | 1952 George Smith defeated Clarence Ulmer, 5 and 4 |
| 1927 Fred Krug defeated Wilson Rothermel | 1932 John Rader, Jr., defeated Dick Hoffer, 4 and 3 | 1953 Nick Shestok defeated Mickey Norton, 4 and 3 (18 holes) |
| 1928 Fred Krug defeated Wilson Rothermel, 8 and 7 (36 holes) | 1933 Fred Krug defeated Howard Kachel, 8 and 6 (36 holes) | 1954 Corky Lott defeated Bill Ciabattoni, 1-up (36 holes) |
| | 1934 Dick Hoffer defeated Barney Ollivierre, 10 and 9 (36 holes) | 1955 Nick Shestok defeated Sam Coccodrilli, 2 and 1 |
| | 1935 Billy Eben (age 16) defeated Larry O'Connor, 1 up (36 holes) | 1956 Paul Hill defeated Buddy Lutz, 39 holes (36 holes) |
| | 1936 Billy Bair defeated Earl Biehl, 2 and 1 (36 holes) | 1957 Buddy Lutz defeated Jay Gibney, 10 and 9 (36 holes) |
| | 1937 Larry O'Connor defeated Billy Eben, Jr., 4 and 2 (36 holes) | 1958 Buddy Lutz defeated Corky Lott, 4 and 2 (36 holes) |
| | 1938 Marshal Palmer defeated Gordon Rainey, 2 and 1 (36 holes) | 1959 Buddy Lutz defeated Bill Ciabattoni, 3 and 2 (36 holes) |
| | 1939 Charley Wentzel defeated Gordon Williams, 5 and 4 (36 holes) | 1960 Corky Lott defeated Earl Janaskie, 5 and 3 (36 holes) |
| | 1940 Gordon Rainey defeated Billy Eben, 1-up (36 holes) | 1961 Corky Lott defeated Bill Ciabattoni, 2 and 1 (36 holes) |
| | 1941 Billy Eben defeated Gordon Rainey, 8 and 7 (36 holes) | 1962 Corky Lott defeated George Smith, 8 and 7 (36 holes) |
| | 1942 Gordon Williams defeated Dick Hoffer, 10 and 9 (36 holes) | 1963 Earl Chrusciel defeated Glen Biesenbach, 5 and 4 (36 holes) |
| | 1943 Not found (may have been cancelled because of WW2) | 1964 Buddy Lutz defeated Bill Ciabattoni, 38 holes (36 holes) |
| | 1944 Not found (may have been cancelled because of WW2) | 1965 Gil Gilbert defeated Sam Codi, 1 up (36 holes) |
| | 1945 David Hafer | 1966 Buddy Lutz defeated Steve Norton, 7 and 6 (36 holes) |
| | 1946 Wilmer Faber | 1967 Steve Norton defeated Don Sowers, 4 and 3 (36 holes) |
| | 1947 Billy Eben | |
| | 1948 Buddy Lutz | |
| | 1949 Buddy Lutz defeated Billy Eben, 6 and 5 (36 holes) | |



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The Binkley Family

- 1968** Leroy Oudinot defeated Fred Tyler 6 and 5 (36 holes)
- 1969** Sam Codi defeated Dick Bausher, 4 and 3 (36 holes)
- 1970** Joe Mullarkey defeated Sam Codi, 2 and 1 (36 holes)
- 1971** Danny Vespico
- 1972** Joe Mullarkey defeated Dick Kauffman, 1-up (36 holes)
- 1973** Joe Mullarkey 209; Herman Fry 221; Don Sowers 221 (54 holes)
- 1974** Nick Meter defeated Jim Rutter, 2 and 1 (18 holes)
- 1975** Mike Heller defeated Hugh McCullough, 3 and 2 (18 holes)
- 1976** Fred Tyler defeated Dick Kaufman, 3 and 2 (18 holes)
- 1977** Dick Arms defeated Chip Lutz, 1-up (18 holes)
- 1978** Hugh McCullough defeated Fred Borchers, 1-up (18 holes)
- 1979** Chip Lutz 216; Hugh McCullough 219; Mike Heller 223 (54 holes)
- 1980** Hugh McCullough 220; Chip Lutz 221; Dick Bausher 228 (54 holes)
- 1981** Mike Heller 141; Charley Faber 152; Bruce Balthaser 153 (36 holes)
- 1982** Dick Hasson 144; Craig Hawk 148; Don Sowers 150 (36 holes)
- 1983** Fred Tyler 146; Dick Hasson 149; Don Sowers 150 (36 holes)
- 1984** Herman Fry 144; Craig Hawk 146; Mike Heller 147 (36 holes)
- 1985** Herman Fry 206; Mike Heller 215; Fred Tyler 216 (54 holes)
- 1986** John Franco 218; Mike Heller 224 (54 holes)
- 1987** Mike Heller 223; Steve Mittl, Jr. 224; Fred Tyler 226 (54 holes)
- 1988** John Franco 226; Dave Lindbom 227; Mike Heller 228 (54 holes)
- 1989** Dave Lindbom 221; Joe Klemmer 222; Fred Tyler 223 (54 holes)
- 1990** Chip Lutz 210; Dave Lindbom 214; Scott Orr 220 (54 holes)
- 1991** Fred Tyler 222; Greg Gottshall 225; Bruce Kline 227 (54 holes)
- 1992** Fred Tyler 217; Scott Orr 224; Bruce Kline 224 (54 holes)
- 1993** Putter Lutz 219; Fred Tyler 221; Mike Heller 221; (54 holes)
- 1994** Fred Tyler 216; Putter Lutz 231; Chris Butler 233
- 1995** Putter Lutz 220; Fred Tyler 221; George Grafton 230 (54 holes)
- 1996** Brian Psota 218; Brent Wiley 219; Putter Lutz 221; (54 holes)
- 1997** Dave Speece 219; Mike Heller 224; Fred Tyler 225 (54 holes)
- 1998** Mike Heller 218; Bruce Kline 224; George Grafton 230 (54 holes)
- 1999** George Grafton 218; Pete Betz 235; Chris Lucci 238 (54 holes)
- 2000** Bill Norris 221; Mike Heller 223; Fred Tyler 226; (54 holes)
- 2001** George Grafton 222; Pete Betz 228; Mike Heller 228 (54 holes)
- 2002** Chris Lucci 149; Fred Tyler 150; George Griffaton 151 (36 holes)
- 2003** Jimmy Ward 218; Pete Betz 226; Mike Heller 228; (54 holes)
- 2004** Jimmy Ward 136; Pete Betz 143; Fred Tyler 149 (36 holes)
- 2005** Pete Betz 228; Greg Gottschall 233; Bill Norris 237 (54 holes)
- 2006** No tournament.
- 2007** Guy McKeone defeated Blayne Hoffert, 1 up (18 holes)
- 2008** Greg Galtere defeated Denny Hess, 5 and 4 (18 holes)
- 2009** Greg Galtere defeated Bill Goad, 3 and 2 (18 holes)
- 2010** Greg Galtere 227; Tom Walker 239; Guy McKeone 241 (54 holes)
- 2011** Dave Seelig defeated Dave Seidel, 2 up (18 holes)
- 2012** Byron Whitman defeated Guy McKeone, 5 and 4 (18 holes)
- 2013** Matt Hadley defeated Greg Galtere, 3 and 2 (18 holes)
- 2014** Jon Dutcher defeated Bill Norris, 3 and 1 (18 holes)
- 2015** Greg Kleinert defeated Matt Hadley, 1 up (18 holes)
- 2016** James Furness defeated Guy McKeone, 2 and 1 (18 holes)
- 2017** Guy McKeone defeated Jim Christiana, 6 and 5 (18 holes)
- 2018** Alex Seelig defeated Guy McKeone, 5 and 4 (18 holes)
- 2019** Alex Seelig defeated Guy McKeone, 2 up (18 holes)



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The Central Pennsylvania Open

The Central Pennsylvania Open was a mainstay on the regional professional golf circuit. Pros from clubs in the tri-state area competed, as did leading amateurs. First played at Berkshire Country Club in 1924, the tournament moved around in its early years before finding a home at Reading Country Club in 1934.

Let's look at some tournament color, courtesy of the *Reading Eagle* and *Reading Times*.

1924: Morris Talman was the only player to crack 40 in each of his four nines around the par 76, 6,600 yard Berkshire C.C. layout. He won by three strokes with 74-76—150. Hawley Quier, Berkshire course record holder at 70 and the Central Pennsylvania amateur champion, shot 81-87—168.

1925: John Schubel, Lu Lu C.C., led by three strokes after the first round with a splendid five-under-par 71. The magic deserted him; his second-round 83 left him at 154, tied 11th and out of the money. Ted Weiser, Williamsport C.C., won with 74-74—148.

1926: No tournament.

1927: Ralph Ebling, a one-armed golfer, finished in the top 20 at Berkshire on October 18. Ebling, originally from Wernersville and later a pro

REPLACE TURF								Galen Hall Golf and Country Club							
HOLES	YARDS	PAR	STKS	SELF	PART'R	OPP.	OPP.	HOLES	YARDS	PAR	STKS	SELF	PART'R	OPP.	OPP.
1	320	4	8					10	435	4	4				
2	140	3	17					11	145	3	16				
3	460	5	1					12	445	4	3				
4	350	4	7					13	205	3	12				
5	190	3	13					14	425	4	6				
6	300	4	9					15	215	3	11				
7	455	5	2					16	265	4	10				
8	165	3	15					17	190	3	14				
9	120	3	18					18	425	4	5				
Out	2500	34						In	2750	32					
								Out	2500	34					
								Total	5250	66					
								Handicap							
								Net							

Player _____
 Attested _____
 Date _____

STYMIE GAUGE

The Galen Hall course that Gene Sarazen played in 1929. The Squire shot 68.

in New Hampshire, shot 83-83—166 for 36 holes over the par 76 layout. Only 40 of the 60 starters finished. Many did not start the afternoon round when the wind-driven cold rain made the soggy links nearly unplayable.

Bill Leach, Overbrook C.C., won with 73-75—148, four under par.

1928: The CPO moved to Coatesville C.C., where the host pro Bill Cone prevailed.

1929: Joe Brennan won at Galen Hall with 71-67—136, six over on the par 34-32—66 course. His 67 was the day's best round. Galen Hall played at 5,250 yards, with seven holes less than 200 yards. The pros found difficulty playing the hard, fast greens.

J.L. Nelson, managing director of Galen Hall, announced that he was bringing Gene Sarazen to Galen Hall on August 9 to see if he could crack par. Playing in a foursome with Bob Middleton, the home pro, Al Heron,

Berkshire's professional, and CPO champion Joe Brennan, West Chester, the Squire carded 68, two over par. Middleton won the day with 67. Heron and Brennan trailed with 72 and 77, respectively.

Sarazen hit "the shot heard 'round the world" in the final round of the '35 Masters. On 15, the Squire holed out with a spoon—a 4-wood—from 235 yards for a double eagle, tying him with Craig Wood. The Squire won the 36-hole playoff by five shots.

1930: George Smith, Moorestown C.C., shot 138 at Galen Hall to win by two over Al Heron, Berkshire C.C., and two others. The best round was 67, one over par, in the second round by Jock Campbell, Old York Road C.C.

1931, '32 and '33: Records for these years were not found, indicating that the tournament was most likely not played. Gordon Williams, *Reading Times* sports editor, provided the strongest

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evidence of the CPO's three-year hiatus. In his column of May 16, 1934, Williams noted that the '34 CPO at RCC, was a revival of the event.

1934: Only one golfer, John Griffin, Marble Hall C.C., equaled par 71 in the CPO's first tour around RCC. George Smith, Spring Hill C.C., Angelo Paul, Valley Forge C.C., and Clarence Hackney, Atlantic City C.C., tied at 149, seven over par. Smith won the playoff with an even par 71. Paul posted 74 while Hackney skied to an 81. A gallery of 1,000 followed the match.

1935: Following victory on his first visit to RCC, Ed Dudley, the pro at Philadelphia C.C., was generous in his praise of the links. "The course is in marvelous condition and is ideal for the average golfer," he said. "What I'd like to see to make it a real championship course is a flock of back tees to give the boys something to shoot at in the big tournaments." In the first round, Dudley nearly drove the green on the 356-yard 18th hole. He chipped to four feet but missed the birdie. Putt for dough, Ed.

Dudley's 70-73-143 edged Felix Serafin, Scranton C.C., and Gene Kunes, Jeffersonville C.C., by a shot. Harry Markel, Berkshire C.C., was fourth at 145.

1936: Ed "Porky" Oliver, Wilmington, just two years removed from the caddy ranks, won with a record 139, three under par. In the first round, George Low, Jr., Plymouth C.C., set the competitive course record 68. He faltered in the second round with 75, his 144 total tied sixth. Oliver had to overcome his explosive temper. In the morning round, he broke his putter on the 10th green after missing a short putt. Porky eagled the par-5 12th hole in both of his rounds. Ed Dudley did not defend his championship.

1937: Byron Nelson, the reigning Masters champion, won \$150 for defeating Bruce Coltart, Woodcrest, N.J., in an 18-hole playoff, 68-75.

Coltart won \$75. Sam Byrd, a former major league baseball player who was the assistant at Philadelphia C.C., and Ed Oliver, the defending champion from Wilmington, tied third, winning \$35.

The par 15th hole proved challenging from the new back tee, stretching the par 3 to 205 yards. There were twice as many bogeys as pars for the two rounds. Ed Dudley, who finished nine strokes behind Nelson, double-bogeyed the hole twice, once with a ball in the creek and once missing the green to the left. The agony award went to Pete Strauss, Lehigh C.C. amateur, who took a 14 on his way to a first-round 89. His attempt to play from the creek proved disastrous.

In 1938, Byron Nelson won a driving contest with a blast of 273 yards.

Nelson and Dick Renaghan found joy on the par-5 14th hole. Playing into a strong headwind, both made eagle 3 in the morning by sinking long putts.

Bob Venables, Manor G.C., and Walter Work, Tyrone, Pa., were the last in, handing in their cards at 7:40 p.m.

Jimmy DeAngelo, Baederwood Golf Club, entertained the players in the locker room with his ukulele.

Bob Middleton, Galen Hall, was unable to play because he has a full lesson schedule in the morning.

RCC caddymaster D.R. Van Olinda had a busy day securing enough bag totters for the 79 players. The task was not as daunting for the second round after 16 withdrew.

1938: Lord Byron led after an opening 66, which set an RCC competitive course record. He faltered in the after-

noon with a 75, losing the title by one shot to Ed Oliver, who carded a steady 70-70-140. Nelson maintained a four shot lead going to the final nine holes. On 16, Nelson's tee shot hit a tree and bounded into "the devil's rock garden" to the left of the fairway, setting up the second of four consecutive bogeys for an inward nine of 40. Oliver's closing 35, two under par, featured an eagle 2 at the 10th hole. Oliver won \$125, Nelson \$75. Two hours after finishing, Nelson left for Cleveland to compete in a \$10,000 tournament.

1939: Nelson won \$100 for his second CPO title. Sam Byrd finished second, taking home \$60. George Fazio, City Line G.C., tied sixth, good for \$35, while Ben Hogan tied tenth and won \$10.

1940: Charles Sheppard, a native Californian playing out of Huntingdon Valley C.C., set the CPO scoring record. Sheppard toured RCC in 67-68-135, seven under par, breaking Nelson's 1939 mark of 68-69-137. In his first year as host pro, Henry Poe finished tied fourth with Ed Dudley, Philadelphia C.C., Fred Johnson, Philadelphia Cricket Club, and Gene Kunes, Holmesburg G.C., at 142.

1941: Joe Zarhardt, Jeffersonville C.C., won the last CPO with 138. four under par. In the first round, Felix Serafin, Scranton C.C., and Bruce Coltart, Seaview C.C., broke the competitive course record with 65s. Both posted 74 in the second round, good for a third place tie with Henry Poe, who scored 72-68. Harry Markel, Berkshire C.C., was second at 139.

The end. Writing in the *Reading Eagle* on May 3, 1942, sports editor Bill Reedy reported the first sign that tournament golf would be greatly affected by World War 2 came when Reading Country Club officers cancelled the Central Pennsylvania Open because of transportation difficulties. The tournament was not renewed after the war.

Tom Morgan and Family • Well played, RCC!

1949 Reading Open: The Doc Slams Sam

For one glorious week in July 1949, the eyes of the golf world were focused on Reading Country Club. The occasion was the third playing of the Reading Open, a PGA tour event that attracted golf's leading professionals. The tournament drew large galleries and garnered attention for RCC and Berks County through national news coverage.

The Reading Open was played five times between 1947 and 1951. The first two were contested at Berkshire Country Club. Berkshire's membership elected not to host the tournament in 1949, citing financial hardship. RCC then stepped up to ensure the tournament would have a home. The 1950 tournament returned to Berkshire and in 1951, the fifth and final Reading Open was played at Berkleigh Country Club.

The '49 tournament continued a year-long duel between Sam Snead, from West Virginia, and Dr. Cary Middlecoff, a Tennessee dentist, for golf supremacy. The duo captured the year's first three major championships. In April, Snead won the Masters and \$2,750. Slammin' Sammy then took the PGA Championship and \$3,500 at Belmont Golf Club, Richmond, Va., in May. A month later, Middlecoff ended Snead's dream of a threepeat, edged Snead and Clayton Heafner by a stroke to win the U.S. Open and \$2,000 at Medinah C.C., Medinah, Ill.

The rivalry heated up a week before the Reading Open when Snead bested Middlecoff by two strokes to win the Washington Star Open, Landover, Md. The \$2,600 prize boosted the Slammer's yearly winnings to \$16,460.83. Middlecoff's \$1,900 check brought him to \$16,149.57.

Sam strikes. Snead fired a warning shot—63 warning shots, to be precise—at Middlecoff in the first round, played July 7. The Slammer's 63 set a competitive course record, a mark that still stands. You can read about Snead's record round on page 11. Middlecoff won the tournament by one stroke when Snead missed a short birdie putt on the final hole. The Doc pocketed \$2,600 while Snead collected \$1,900. Snead would go on to win the money title with \$31,598.83.

The \$15,000
purse for the
1949 Reading
Open was more
than the Masters
and U.S. Open.

Snead may have left town disappointed but he got paid. In his August 21 column, *Reading Eagle* sports editor Bill Reedy reported that Snead received "an unusually high guarantee" to play.

The back story and sidebars are just as interesting as the tournament summary. Here are excerpts from the *Reading Eagle's* reporting.

December 31, 1948—Reedy reported that the Reading Open golf tournament may not continue in 1949. The decision was in the hands of Berkshire's board of directors, who faced opposition to promoting the \$15,000 event.

January 22, 1949—The Reading Open golf tournament will not be held in 1949, at least not at Berkshire C.C.

Officials of the club voted to withdraw their sponsorship for at least this year.

"It's possible that we may resume promotion of the tournament in future years, but club members feel that it should be dropped this season," said Frederick W. Nichols, club president.

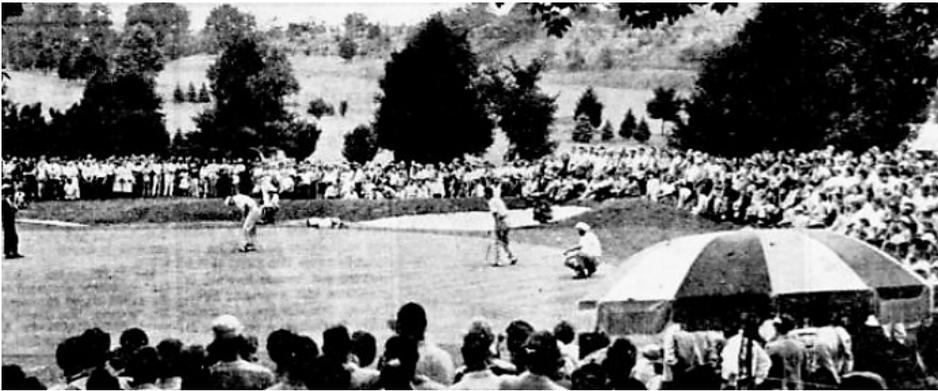
Allan M. Cullum, former club president who conceived the tournament, hoped to keep Reading on the PGA tour schedule. He said he would speak to representatives of Reading Country Club and the Berks Golf Association about picking up sponsorship.

April 14—Reedy reported that Byron Nelson would not play in the Reading Open. Nelson replied to Reedy in a personal letter: "Someone sent me a clipping from the column you wrote recently in regards to the chances of me playing in the Reading Open. It was certainly a nice article but I am sorry to say I will not be able to play. I will be in California at that time."

May 10—The first step in planning the 1949 Reading Open was taken yesterday when the Berks Golf Association formed a corporation. The board and executive committee included Alex Kagan, Berkleigh C.C., president; John Mohn, Berkshire C.C., vice president; and Ray Gaul, Reading C.C., secretary and treasurer. A.W. Golden, president of Reading C.C., and Allan Cullum were named to the executive committee. The board appointed Gaul and Cullum as tournament co-chairmen and approved honorary membership for Stanley Giles, Reading, Jack Shapiro, Berkleigh, and Hawley Quier, Berkshire.

May 12—The Reading Open tournament committee made two changes to the RCC layout. Hole number 12, usually played as a par 5, would be a par 4 and

Bud and Betsy Lewis



A hushed gallery watches as Cary Middlecoff, center, strokes the winning putt on RCC's 18th green. Reading Eagle, July 11, 1949.

the back tee would be used on the par 3 15th hole. The change to the 12th hole would reduce par to 70.

May 19—Former Masters and U.S. Open champion Craig Wood played RCC to get a preview of the golf course. Wood, representing a shirt manufacturing company, was in Reading visiting Henry Clay Poe, RCC's pro. Before succeeding Byron Nelson at RCC, Poe served as Wood's assistant at Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaronek, N.Y.

Commenting on the round, Poe said, "We played the course as it will be set up for the tournament, trying to be as critical as possible, but no scores were kept. Wood commented highly on the course and saw no reason to make changes except at the 12th hole where par will be changed from five to four."

Wood did not fare well in the tour-

nament. He withdrew after rounds of 69-74-73—216.

July 3—With the Masters and PGA champion Sam Snead and National Open kingpin Cary Middlecoff leading the field, more than 150 of the world's topflight golfers are ready to compete in the third annual \$15,000 Reading Open at Reading Country Club. The 6,001-yard RCC course, whose par is 70, is dotted with 34 sand traps, well-placed bunkers and a winding creek that crosses seven fairways.

The 1949 tournament was sponsored by the Berks Golf Association. The BGA intended to stay on as the sponsor, rotating the tournament between RCC, Berkshire and Berkleigh.

The winners of the first two Reading Open tournaments, Dutch Harrison and Ben Hogan, were not in the field. Harrison had a prior commitment and Hogan was recovering from a near-fatal auto accident in February.

July 6—U.S. Open champion Cary Middlecoff teed off in the first round at 10:29 a.m. with Craig Wood, the 1941 Masters and U.S. Open winner, and Berks amateur Buddy Lutz. Middlecoff shot 67, Wood 69 and Lutz 76.

July 11—The *Reading Eagle* provided extensive tournament coverage. Sportswriter Jerry Korbin did a fine wrap-up on Monday. Here are highlights:

- On accepting the \$2,600 winner's check, Cary Middlecoff remarked that it was the most money he ever won in a tournament.

- When Middlecoff sank the winning six-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole, he tossed the ball to the gallery. Six-foot nine-inch William Novatine, a Bethlehem resident, caught it.
- After Middlecoff dropped a putt on 14 for an all-important bird, he was so excited that he left his cigarette on the green. An amateur foursome coming up next ignored the butt. Snead, in the final threesome, picked it up and tossed it aside. It was retrieved by Bobby Geissinger, an 11-year-old of 1325 Locust St.
- According to Johnny Palmer, who was playing with Snead, the PGA champ committed his fatal error on the 12th fairway when he hooked his second shot to the left of the elevated green. His pitch was long, requiring two putts and a bogey five. Again, on No. 14, he missed an eagle by a margin thinner than an errant husband's alibi.
- Vic Ghezzi, tied fifth, noted: "This should help me get a bid for the Ryder Cup team." [He didn't make it.]
- Terl Johnson was the only pro to wear a white shirt and necktie while making his rounds.
- The crowd applauded when Lloyd Mangrum exploded out of a trap to within two feet of the cup on No. 16. "Aw, c'mon now," he blushed. "It really wasn't THAT good."
- Buddy Heckman, assistant pro at Berkleigh, finished at 287, low score among Berks entrants. Johnny Markel, playing out of Berkshire, received a silver platter for finishing top man among Berks "simon-pures" with 292. Other Berks amateurs who made the cut were Jack Weitzel, Manor G.C., 300, and Buddy Lutz, Reading C.C., 301. Robert Davis, Harrisburg, was low amateur at 284.
- Only the top 25 pros were paid. Tied 25th at 282 and winning \$110 each were Jim Ferrrier, San Francisco, Skip Alexander, Lexington, N.C., and Lloyd Mangrum, Chicago.

Joseph P. Dantas, CPA

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The Ryder Cup Rolls Through Reading

The Ryder Cup matches are big in every way. Big crowds. Big television audience. Big media coverage.

But with all that bigness going for it, the Ryder Cup offers the smallest prize purse in professional golf. Zero. The players do not compete for prize money, at least not in the traditional sense. A player's status as a Ryder Cupper certainly boosts his value in the endorsement and corporate outing markets; that's where the real money is made. Plus they get to keep those hideous outfits and golf bags.

Money has never driven the Ryder Cup. The matches are played to promote the game, for national pride and for bragging rights. But it takes money to stage the matches. These days, the funding comes from corporate sponsors and television rights.

It wasn't always so. In the 1940s and '50s, the Professional Golfers Association staged exhibition matches so the Ryder Cup players could earn some extra money. The 1953 event, a match pitting the U.S. Ryder Cup team against the PGA Challenge Team, was played at Reading Country Club on September 19 and 20. The competition included a

pro-am tournament at Berkshire Country Club on September 18.

Writing in the *Reading Eagle* on September 6, 1953, sports columnist Bill Reedy noted that the Berks Golf Association was pleased that the PGA chose Reading as the site for the challenge matches. He expressed surprise that a golf club in a larger market was not selected. Reedy reports that the matches were brought to Reading chiefly through the effort of Al Cullum of the Berks County Golf Association.

So, why were challenge matches played? According to golf historian and former RCC pro Pete Trenham, the Ryder Cup was a money loser in its formative years. The matches produced little or no income for the sanctioning bodies and no earnings for the players. At the time, prize money won on the golf tour was modest and most pros supplemented their income with club jobs. There was money to be made giving lessons, selling equipment and appearing in exhibitions. The honor of playing in the Ryder Cup did not replace the income lost by being away from the shop for several weeks.

Yes, the challenge matches helped the players sharpen their game but those on the team were top-level competitors to begin with. The \$15,000 purse was the attraction.

Day One—Pro-Am at Berkshire CC

The Ryder Cup exhibition in Reading kicked off with a Pro-Am tournament at Berkshire Country Club on Friday, September 18. Jack Burke Jr. fired a blistering 32-31-63, nine under par, to lead his team to victory. Burke's score, which included seven birdies and an eagle on the par 5 17th hole, was the lowest ever shot at Berkshire, but the record was considered unofficial. Ben Hogan set the official record with a 64 in the final round on his way to victory in the 1948 Reading Open.

Burke won \$350 from the \$1,500 prize fund. Other professional winners were Henry Clay Poe, Reading CC, and Doug Ford, \$225 each for a second-place tie; Johnny Palmer, Jim Turnesa and Tommy Bolt, \$150 each for tied fourth; and \$125 each to Sam Snead and George Fazio, tied fifth.

Day Two—Cuppers Dominate Fourball

Playing before an estimated 3,500 spectators, the U.S. Ryder Cup team thrashed the PGA Challenge Team, 4 ½ to ½ at Reading Country Club. The 20 professionals scored five eagles during the course of the matches.

Here are the match highlights:

- The Ryder Cup team of Fred Haas, Jr., and Jim Turnesa, winner of the fifth and final Reading Open at Berkleigh CC in 1951, led 1-up against Al Besselink and Doug Ford after the first nine holes. Birdies on 10, 11 and 15 propelled them to a 4 and 3 win.
- Eagles by Jimmy Demaret (par 4 12th hole) and Tommy Bolt helped the Challenge Team avert a shut-out as the duo halved against Walter Burkemo and Cary Middlecoff, who won the 1949 Reading Open at RCC. Bolt eagled the par 5 16th hole, which is now the 14th hole.
- Sam Snead and Lloyd Mangrum, Ryder Cup team, shot a five-under-par 29 on the front 9 in their 4 and 3 victory against Henry Williams Jr., and Pete Cooper, who scored an eagle 2 on the 268-yard 10th hole.
- Ryder Cuppers Porky Oliver and Dave Douglass each scored eagles as they defeated Lew Worsham and Johnny Palmer by a 2 and 1 margin. Oliver's eagle came on the 10th hole, while his partner chipped in for an eagle 3 on the 16th hole, today's 14th.
- Jack Burke Jr. sank a four-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole to give him and Ryder Cup partner Ted Kroll a 1-up victory over Claude Harmon and



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George Fazio. Burke and Kroll combined for seven birdies.

Day Three—The Cuppers Turn Back the Challengers

Enjoying a commanding 8-4 lead, the U.S. Ryder Cup team defeated the

PGA Challenge Team despite losing the afternoon singles competition, 5½ to 4½. The Cuppers added to their lead with a 3½ to 1½ win in the morning Scotch foursomes competition. The Challenge Matches concluded with the Cuppers prevailing by 12½ to 7½.

Winners in singles for the Challenge Team included Henry Williams, Jr. over Jim Turnesa; Claude Harmon over Sam Snead; Jimmy Demaret over Lloyd Mangrum; Tommy Bolt over Ted Kroll; and Doug Ford over Cary Middlecoff. For the Cuppers, Fred Haas Jr. defeated George Fazio; Walter Burkemo defeated Pete Cooper; Porky Oliver won over Al Besselink; and Jack Burke Jr. bested Lew Worsham.

Johnny Palmer, Challenge Team, and Dave Douglas halved their match.

The Cuppers each won \$850 of the \$15,000 prize fund. The Challengers won \$400 each. The remaining \$2,500 helped defray expenses for the trip to

England for the matches against the Great Britain and Ireland team.

The U.S. Hangs On

The Ryder Cup was played at Wentworth, October 2 and 3, 1953. The Americans took a commanding 3-1 lead after the first day's foursomes matches, which were contested over 36 holes. The winning U.S. pairs were Dave Douglas and Ed Oliver, Lloyd Mangrum and Sam Snead and Ted Kroll and Jack Burke, Jr. Walter Burkemo and Cary Middlecoff were defeated.

Great Britain rallied in the 36-hole singles matches, winning the day, 4½ to 3½. But it wasn't enough to overcome the U.S. team's two-point lead as the United States won the Cup, 6 ½ to 5 ½. U.S. winners were Burke, Middlecoff and Jim Turnesa. Snead, Kroll, Mangrum, Douglas and Fred Haas lost.

And to think, it all started at RCC.



Here is the course routing used for the 1953 Ryder Cup Challenge. Note that the back nine routing differed from today's course.

Complements of Elaine and Jim Bickel

When Betsy Met Betty

The evidence says the three best woman golfers in Berks history are Betsy King, Betty Fehl-Fegley and Edith Quier.

Betsy, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame golfer, won 39 professional tournaments, including six majors. She graduated from Exeter H.S. in 1973.

Betty was the queen of Berks golf, winning the county amateur championship an astonishing 33 times between 1936 and 1981. She was also a multiple RCC women's club champion.

Edith was much more than Hawley's sister. She played a national amateur schedule in the 1920's and '30s at a time when there was no women's professional golf. Edith was among the world's best, playing against the era's and the game's legends, including Glenna Collett Vare, Maureen Orcutt and Dorothy Campbell Hurd. Although these names may not echo through the ages, the name Vare should be familiar to golfers. The Vare Trophy, honoring Glenna Collett Vare, is awarded to the LPGA player with the year's lowest scoring average. Betsy King won the Vare in 1987 and 1993.

Each of these women deserve to have a book written about her life accomplishments, which for all three, extends far beyond the golf course. Perhaps another time.

Both King and Fehl started golf at RCC. Edith was a Berkshire member.

Betty had started playing golf when her mother scheduled a lesson with RCC's head professional, Byron Nelson. Betty so impressed Lord Byron that he wrote about her on page 77 of his book, *How I Played the Game*. So what if he misspelled her last name. The memory is what counts.

Betsy, too, got her start at RCC, taking lessons from Henry Poe.

The generations met in the mid-1970s when the duo played four times.

Their most notable match was at Heidelberg in the 1975 Women's Berks County amateur championship. Betsy was the two-time defending state junior amateur champion. Betty was undefeated in Berks competition. In the previous 32 years, she played 30 times and won all 30.

King an Ace. Betty advanced to the semi-final round by defeating Bonnie Shuman, 5 and 4. Betsy rode a hole-in-one on the 121-yard 13th to defeat Dot Woodling, 6 and 5. The other semi-finalists were JoAnne Matz, 7 and 6 over Wilma Holland, and Mary Ellen Remley, who ousted Carolyn Hatt, 4 and 2.

The Fehl-King dream match was set up when Betty defeated Joanne Matz, 7 and 6, and Betsy eliminated Mary Ellen Remley, the runner-up in 1974, 4 and 2.

Betsy won two of their three previous meetings. King defeated Fehl in the 1974 Central Pennsylvania championship and they split a pair of matches for the Heidelberg club championship.

Their games were as different as their ages. At 53, Fehl relied on a deadly short game to overcome her lack of length off the tee. The 19-year-old King, about to enter her junior year at Furman University, had the length to reach all the par 4 holes in two shots. Length was all-important at Heidelberg because the course was saturated by heavy rain. The balls were not rolling out.

Betty leads early. The wily veteran took a 3-up lead after nine holes, carding an even par 34 with a birdie on number 4 and a bogey on the seventh. Betsy



Betty Fehl, 15, takes a lesson from Byron Nelson at RCC. She won her first of many RCC club championships in 1937, Byron's first year as head professional. Reading Eagle, August 2, 1938.

was two down after four holes but then she dropped a 50-foot putt on the fifth hole for a birdie to draw within one. But she retreated back to three down with misses from six and three feet on 6 and 8, respectively, giving Fehl wins with pars. King shot 37 on the front side.

Betsy played to her length advantage on the back nine. She won the 10th and 14th with three-foot putts. Fehl took four shots to reach the carpet on the 386-yard 10th and three to get home on the 348-yard 14th. Betty shockingly shanked her approach shot to the 16th green and made a double bogey. Betsy evened the match with a bogey 5.

"I haven't done that in a long time," said Betty about that shot. "I had a feeling about it. I should have walked away but I don't do that."

The duo strode to the final tee tied. Betsy held the advantage on the 494-yard par 5 because of her length.

King skied her second shot and hit

her third into a trap. Betty was also short of the green in three. Fehl was first in, canning an 11-footer for bogey 6. Betsy stroked a seven-footer into the cup for the tying bogey.

Playoff bound. Back to the first tee they went.

"I never play well on the first four

An Unbreakable Record

Some records will stand forever. Such as...In 1974, JoAnn Williams, an Exeter High School senior, established three golf unbeatables.

She won the first Berks high school girls championship, the first PIAA District 3 girls championship and, for good measure, the first PIAA state high school girls championship.

She snared the first county crown, shooting 42-44—86 at Flying Hills Golf Club to edge Shelly Buchman, Fleetwood, who shot 41-46—87. Wilson High's Terry Leinbach was third at 92.

Joann took the first District 3 title, posting 80 at the Hershey Spring Creek golf course. Buchman, 89, and Leinbach, 92, were again second and third.

Williams completed the sweep, winning the first state girls championship with a come-back victory over Susan Ramonat, Freedom High. An opening 91 on the Penn State White Course left her three behind Meredith Marshall, Lower Merion. A second-round 91 gave her a 182 and the Pennsylvania title.

JoAnn was also a stalwart on Exeter's girls tennis team. Exeter did not have a girls golf team and back then girls could not play on boys teams.

If the name JoAnn Williams is not familiar, how about JoAnn Heller? JoAnn married Mike Heller, a fair golfer in his own right.

JoAnn was associated with Golden Oaks and Blackwood golf courses and was tournament director for the Betsy King Golf Classic, an LPGA tournament played at Berkleigh from 1996 to 2004.

She won the RCC women's championship eight times. Mike is a four-time RCC champion.

holes because they are so tight," Betsy would comment after the match. Although she drove into the right rough, the day was hers. She reached in two while Betty was on in three, some 10 feet from the hole. She would need as good a putt as she hit on 18 for par, but Betsy never gave her a chance. Her putt from 17 feet ran true, finding the bottom of the hole for a birdie 3. Betty Fehl's reign as the queen of women's golf was over. The new queen was a King.

Both players shot 77, seven over par on the tough Heidelberg layout. Fehl's consistent game—she had no three putts and four one-putts—could not overcome Betsy's length advantage. Betty never outdrove Betsy and she did not get home in two on any of the six par 4s in excess of 340 yards.

Another RCC player, Noreen Uihlein, stopped Fehl in the 1976 Berks amateur in a match that went 19 holes at Berkshire. Noreen had Betty down five holes after eight but Fehl pulled to within one after 12. Noreen reasserted herself and was dormie 3. But Betty was relentless and tied the match when Noreen three-putted the 18th. Uihlein fashioned a dramatic finish on the first extra hole, the par 5 first. She jarred a sand wedge from 60 yards for eagle three and the win.

The Big 33. Betty went on to win three more titles, her last coming in 1981 at age 58. She won her first championship as a 13-year-old in 1936. That's 33 titles over 45 years. Her record is even more remarkable considering there was no tournament from 1940 to 1947. She won 20 in a row starting in 1953. She did not defend in '73 but won in '74.

Only a loss to Mrs. Fred Morganstern in 1952 kept Betty from winning 28 consecutive titles.

Betty was more than a home-town golfer. She won the Pennsylvania Women's Amateur twice, in 1950 at Berkshire C.C. and in 1965 at Valley C.C., near Hazleton. Fehl also won the Central Pennsylvania championship 15 times, the first in 1938 when she became the youngest winner at age 15. Her final Central Penn title was in 1978 at age 56.

Fehl fell in '56. But the one that got away was in 1956 when RCC hosted the state tournament. Playing on her home course, Fehl was the people's choice to add a second Pennsylvania title.

Alas, it was not to be. After a resounding first-round 7 and 5 win over Mrs. Leo Caruthers, Coatesville C.C., Miss Fehl was on a razor's edge. She defeated Mrs. Arthur Wilkie, Cedarbrook C.C., in 20 holes, overcoming a 3-down deficit after five holes. She then won against Miss Alice Gray, Merion C.C., in 19 holes.

Maureen Riley, the qualifying medalist from New Castle, overwhelmed Betty in the semi-final match, winning 5 and 4. Fehl succumbed to Riley's withering four birdie, two-under 33 front nine onslaught to trail 4-down at the turn. She could not conjure her come-back magic and was closed out on 14.

Mrs. Arthur Dyson, Hazleton, won the title against Riley in a match that went the full 36 holes.

Betty died in 1986, age 63. She was survived by her husband, Howard Fegley, two step daughters, five step grandchildren and 11 step great-grandchildren.



Betsy King, a Berks County native and LPGA hall-of-fame golfer, founded Golf Fore Africa in 2007.

Golf Fore Africa is working to bring clean, fresh drinking water to people in rural Africa and is committed to helping end the global water crisis by 2030. Betsy's desire is to enlist golfers around the world to join the cause by linking her passion for golf to compassion for children.

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Course Corrections

RCC has changed very little since opening in 1923. Golfers today are challenged by the same fairways, greens and hazards that befuddled our knickers-clad predecessors nearly a century ago. Here are a few of the changes.

Number 6 once played from a tee at the top of the ridge along Shelbourne Road. It is easy to find in the winter when the foliage is dormant. Stand on that tee and gaze across the valley to the green afar. Feel your knees shake at the prospect of this daunting shot, a carry of more than 200 yards. This was a grown-up par 3.

The Antietam Creek winds its way through five holes on the front nine. RCC lore says the creek was re-routed in the 1980s. Documentation is elusive. What we have are aerial photos from the 1930s and today's Google maps. A comparison shows that indeed the creek has shifted where it crosses the 7th fairway. The most feasible explanation for messing with Mother Nature is that golfers playing the 7th had difficulty hitting their tee ball over the creek; they were forced to hit a lay-up, leaving a second shot of 200 yards or more. The re-positioned creek provides more fairway and a shorter shot to the green.

Next is number 10, now a par 3. Alexander Findlay designed the hole as a short par 4. Findlay's tee is still in evidence, adjacent to the parking lot under a large tree. The current driving range served as the 10th fairway. A 1984 scorecard from the Bob DeMarco era (1974 to 1986) shows the 10th as a par 3.

Different dogleg. The program for the 1953 Ryder Cup Challenge shows the 11th hole as a dogleg right, with the fairway in the space that is now occupied by a medical building and a nursing home. The current 11th fairway was the practice area. In the '49 Reading Open, the hole played as it does today.

Number 12 originally played as a 460-yarder, with the par alternating between 4 and 5. Around 1986, the hole was shortened when Gibraltar Road was rerouted. You can see the original tee behind the gold tee on 18.

Findlay designed RCC's 17th hole as a 420-yard par 4. Today, the hole is a 510-yard par 5. The easy assumption is that the current silver tee was Findlay's tee. This is incorrect because the hole plays only 350 yards from there.

The original 17th tee was where the recently established gold tee is located. The proof is next to the gold markers. Just a few feet from the tee, toward the cart path, you can see an object that looks like a rock. It's not. It's a metal plate covering the hook-up for the original gravity-fed irrigation system.

When was the back tee built? Jimmy Hafer, a long-time RCC employee, recalls that the back tee was added by Henry Poe, probably after 1958. Henry's tee was small. Today's larger tee was built in the early '80s.

Other changes over the years include trees and sand traps that have come and gone. An aerial photo from the 1920s shows a nearly treeless golf course. Many of the trees that line the fairways were added after the golf

Hole No.	Blue Markers	Men's Par	W + L — H 0	White Markers	Hdcp. Strokes	Ladies' Par	Red Markers
1	365	4		350	5	4	330
2	375	4		360	9	4	275
3	340	4		324	11	4	316
4	180	3		170	17	3	160
5	520	5		500	1	5	455
6	168	3		155	15	3	145
7	435	4		410	3	4	365
8	194	3		175	13	3	140
9	315	4		305	7	4	266
OUT	2892	34		2749		34	2452
10	275	4		265	18	4	253
11	430	4		420	8	5	420
12	451	4		441	4	5	411
13	390	4		360	10	4	350
14	520	5		510	2	5	500
15	212	3		165 176	12	3	156
16	330	4		310	14	4	290
17	420	4		410	6	4	375
18	340	4		330	16	4	290
Σ	3368	36		3222		38	3045
TOT	6260	70		5971		72	5497
HDCP.							
NET							

A scorecard from the Henry Poe years.

course opened. Among the missing is a trap to the left of the first green, cross-bunkers in front of the 4th green, a trap in front of number 6, a trap about 70 yards short of the 13th green, a trap, now a grass mound, in the 14th fairway and a trap to the left of number 17.

Another significant change was course routing. When the 18-hole course opened in 1925, the clubhouse was in the stone building on Route 422. The course was re-routed in 1931 when the new clubhouse opened. Using today's holes as reference, here is how golfers played RCC before 1931:

Front: 2-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18

Back: 10-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-1



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Testing the Best—The Berks Am at RCC

The first Berks County Amateur Championship was played in 1929. Hawley Quier won his only title at Berkshire Country Club, his home course. In the early years, the tournament rotated between Berkshire C.C., Berkleigh C.C. and Reading C.C.

In the stroke-play era, no one has broken par for 54 holes at RCC. Only Gil Fritz, 210 in 1999, equaled par.

Here are the Berks Amateur championships played at Reading.

1930 Carmi Hicks defeated James W. Dodson, 3 and 2

1933 J. Clifford Harrison defeated Earl M. Biehl, 1 up

1936 Dr. A.L. McDowell defeated Billy Eban, Jr., 5 and 3

1939 Wilmer “Lefty” Faber defeated Johnny Markel, 1 up. This was a rematch from 1938, when Markel became the youngest Berks Am winner at age 16, defeating Faber, 3 and 2, at Berkleigh. What’s remarkable about the 1939 event is that Byron Nelson, in his final months as RCC’s head golf professional, was the walking referee for the match. Just two months prior, Byron won the U.S. Open at Philadelphia Country Club.



Lefty Faber, left, and Johnny Markel in the 1939 Berks Amateur at RCC. Reading Times, September 5, 1939.

1942 Johnny Weitzel defeated Gordon Williams, 4 and 3.

1946 Billy Eben, Jr., defeated Win Thomas, 3 and 1.

1948 Buddy Lutz defeated Walter Heckman, 1 up.

1951 Buddy Lutz over Rod Eaken, 1 up.

1954 Johnny Markel defeated George Patterson, 20 holes.

1957 Johnny Guenther defeated Johnny Markel, 4 and 3.

1960 Johnny Markel defeated Joe DeAngelo, 19 holes.

1963 Buddy Lutz defeated Gil Gilbert, 2 and 1. The last of Buddy’s four titles.

1964 Jim Rutter defeated Dick Bausher, 2 and 1. Rutter won despite posting bogeys on the final three holes.

1967 Ed Anewalt III won for the third straight year.

1968 Ed Anewalt III captured his fourth consecutive, and final, championship. His record stood until 1983 when Chip Lutz won his fifth in a row.

1971 Bill Breneman

1977 Not the Berks Am, but...RCC hosted the Golf Association of Philadelphia’s Tournament of Champions, an event open to GAP member club champions. John Truax, Melrose C.C., became the youngest winner at 21 and the first caddy to win the event, shooting 72, one over par. Fred Tyler, RCC and the defending champion, shot 77. Dick Arms, RCC champion, was at 78 and John Guenther, Heidelberg, C.C. shot 83.

1980 Chip Lutz won his second consecutive title, carding a three-round total of 215, two over par, defeating Herman Fry by two strokes. RCC’s par was 71 with the 10th hole playing to its original design as a 260-yard par 4.

1985 Dave Lindbom’s 212, two over par,

defeated Craig Hawk by five strokes.

1989 Chip Lutz, defending champion, shot 212, two over par, to defeat Bruce Shollenberger by four. Lutz’s seventh championship tied him with Johnny Markel. Chip’s first five wins came consecutively from 1979 to 1983. He is the most decorated Berks Am champion with nine titles.

1992 When RCC’s management informed the BCGA it would not accept former member Dave Lindbom’s entry, the event was cancelled.

1999 Gil Fritz shot 72-69-69—210, even par, to defeat Brian Psota by two strokes. Chris Storck shot an opening 66, four under par, the lowest score in the Am since Mike Heller’s 66 at the par 72 Galen Hall G.C. in 1990.

2005 Jimmy Ward and Jim Fick tied at 220, 10 over par, after 54 holes. Ward won the three-hole playoff, scoring two birdies and a par on holes 1, 2 and 3. Fick was one under par in overtime.

2013 Bill Schultz defeated Perry Landis in a playoff. They tied at 218, eight over par, after 54 holes. Schultz won the playoff on holes 1, 4 and 5 with par, birdie, par, while Landis carded three pars.

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The View from on High

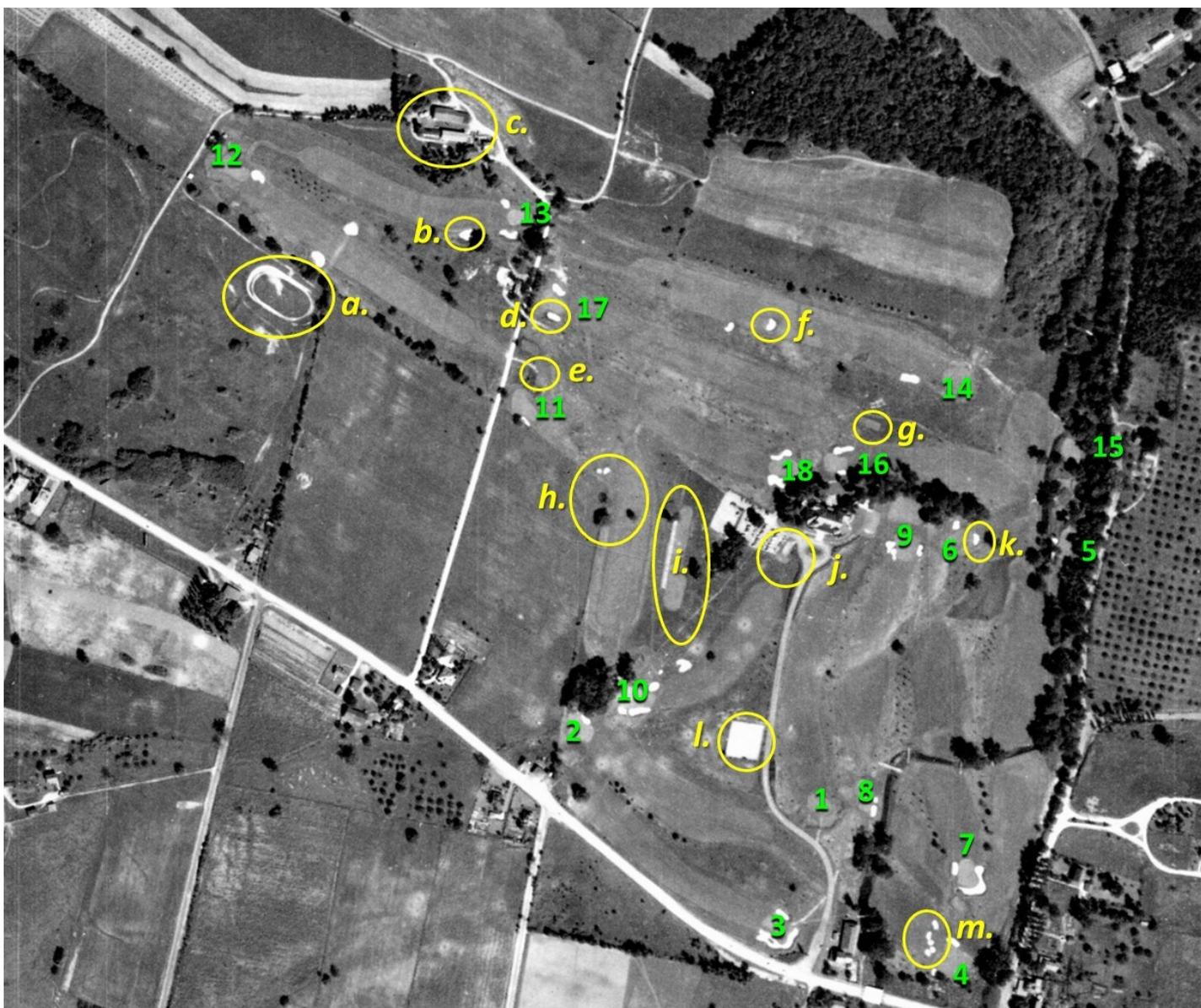
This aerial photo of Reading Country Club was taken on September 12, 1937, early on in the Byron Nelson era. Although the surrounding area has changed dramatically, the golf course looks remarkably

as it does today. A visitor from 1937 wouldn't find too many changes to the golf course.

Some of the differences between then and now are noted on the photo. The golf course is tighter now, what

with a large number of mature trees separating the fairways. This is clearly evident on holes 1, 7, 9, 14, 16, 17 and 18.

The hole numbers are indicated in green next to the greens.



Eagle-eye view of RCC in September 1937.



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Key to noted features

- a. Horse riding ring
 - b. There was a sand trap about 50 yards short of the 13th green
 - c. The RCC stables were leased to a vendor
 - d. The trap to the left of the 17th green is now a grass bunker
 - e. The original 12th tee; it's still there
 - f. This 14th hole fairway trap is now a grassy mound
 - g. Original 17th tee; it was in the area of the current gold tee
- 
- h. Traps and trees protected the 11th hole dogleg
 - i. Practice range; Byron Nelson taught here and Ben Hogan practiced here
 - j. The original 10th tee; it's still there and the fairway is now the practice range
 - k. A sand trap lurked at the bottom of the hill in front of the 6th green; good luck getting up and down from that pit of misery
 - l. Tennis courts
 - m. Sand traps protected the approach to the 4th green

Caddies Rule

Caddy tournaments were once all the rage. So were caddies. On August 17, 1960, RCC hosted the annual Berks County Golf Association caddy tournament. A field of 47 bag toters teed off under the watchful eye of Henry Poe, RCC's golf pro.

Earl "Red" Suchomelly succeeded Bob Hassler as the overall champion. He won a three-hole playoff against Herman Fry and Dick Adam to take the crown. Each finished at 76, five over par. A late afternoon thunder shower delayed the playoff for an hour.

Age 18 and Over

Dick Adam, Berkleigh	76
Fred Negri, Berkleigh	80
Larry Seaman, Reading	81
Robert Carroll, Reading	81
Ronald Knarr, Berkleigh	81
Bucky Burhanan, Reading	84
Paul Speck, Reading	89
D. Matthias, Berkleigh	89
Nick Yetto, Berkshire	98
George Tallierchio, Berkshire	98

Ages 16 and 17

Earl Suchomelly, Reading	76
Herman Fry, Reading	76
Edgar Bausher, Berkshire	80
Allan Ziemba, Reading	82
George Hollick, Manor	88
Dan Mayer, Rich-Maiden	91
Richard Boone, Reading	91
Clarence Swoyer, Reading	91
Robert Weiss, Berkleigh	95
Ronald Anastasia, Reading	101
Bob Arthur, Berkshire	111
Jim Phillips, Berkshire	115
Gary Correll, Reading	116

Ages 15 and 16

Barry Fries, Rich-Maiden	91
Billy Fry, Reading	95
Dick Zettlemoyer, Rich-Maiden	99
Dennis Hafer, Reading	105
Dennis Mayer, Rich-Maiden	106
David Mohn, Reading	127
David Hummel, Reading	129
Andrew Worrell, Reading	142
Joe Kretulski, Reading	154

Age 14 and Under

Lee Gommer, Manor	100
Lynn O'Neill, Berkleigh	105
Thomas Wolfe, Manor	108
Lester Hess, Rich-Maiden	109
Thomas Howell, Reading	111



The photo from the Reading Times, August 18, 1960, shows the top age-group scorers in the caddy tournament held at RCC. In the bottom row, from the left, are Bill Fry, Lynn O'Neil, Fred Negri, Lee Gommer and Barry Seiders, at 9 the youngest competitor. In back, from the left, are Dick Adam, Herman Fry, Henry Poe, RCC's director of golf, Earl "Red" Suchomelly, the overall winner, and Barry Fries.

Earl, Terry, Kurt and Julie (Ricards) Suchomelly

In memory of Steve Suchomelly (RCC caddy, 1950s) and Devin Suchomelly (Exeter H.S graduate).

The Peripatetic Pencil Pusher

Of all the players who golfed their ball at RCC—from major champions to club champions, from seniors to juniors, from members to guests—none has a more compelling story than Ralph Kennedy.

Kennedy (1889-1961) was on a historic quest when he visited Berks County on August 15, 1944. The 62-year-old New Yorker was endeavoring to play as many different golf courses as possible. By the time he put down his clubs, Kennedy had played 3,165 courses around the world, a record that is unmatched and likely to stay unmatched. Ralph was fortunate to combine his quest with his profession: he traveled the country as a salesman for the Eagle Pencil Company.

Kennedy played in all 48 states (look it up), all nine Canadian provinces and 12 other countries. By his estimate, he walked 15,000 miles in 42 years on the links. Alexander Findlay, the Scot who designed RCC, may have the highest course count after Ralph. A United Press article from October 1939 credited Findlay with 2,388 courses played.

If not for the *Reading Eagle*, Ralph's visit would have gone un-

Replace Turf						Insert Pencil Here																													
DATE						Level Footprints in pits																													
8/15/44						2420																													
HOLE						EVENT																													
YARDS	MEN'S PAR	LADIES' PAR	HANDICAP STROKES	W+	L-	HOLE	YARDS	MEN'S PAR	LADIES' PAR	HANDICAP STROKES	W+	L-	HOLE																						
1	382	4	4	9		10	294	4	4	14		11	422	4	5	5																			
2	368	4	4	12		12	462	5	5	4		13	369	4	4	8																			
3	327	4	4	13		14	519	5	5	2		15	178	3	3	16																			
4	186	3	3	18		16	300	4	4	7		17	424	4	5	6																			
5	509	5	5	1		18	356	4	4	10		OUT	2873	34	35	39																			
6	151	3	3	17		IN	3324	37	39			Total	6197	71	74	84																			
7	433	4	5	3		PLAYER						HANDICAP																							
8	201	3	3	15		ATTESTED <i>H.E. Williams Pro.</i>						NET SCORE																							
9	316	4	4	11		MEASURE						STYMI																							
1						2						3						4						5						6					

Ralph Kennedy's RCC scorecard included a stymie measure on the bottom.

ted and would have been lost to the arcane world of golf history. He shot 84 in the morning at Berkshire. The *Eagle* reported that Kennedy shot 35 at Reading, which would indicate that he played nine holes. Ralph's scorecard shows he went the full 18, posting a respectable 84. Ralph used a single club, a 3-iron.

This was no ordinary 3-iron. During the war years, caddies were in short supply so Kennedy toted his own bag. As Ralph aged, he found the bag a burden. His solution: the Novak adjustable club. Patented by Joe Novak in 1929, the adjustable iron allowed the player to set the club's loft angle. Ralph found the 3-iron loft to his liking.

His RCC scorecard is of great interest. Henry Clay Poe is listed as the professional but in 1944, Poe worked in a defense plant. In his absence, Henry Williams served as RCC's pro. Williams who was at Berkleigh Country Club from 1951 to 1975 and Moselem Springs Golf Club from 1975 to 1993. It's also the same Henry Williams who lost the 1950 PGA Championship to Claude Harmon,

father of teaching pro Butch, 4 and 3.

Kennedy, a 200 pound six-footer, was described as a short hitter whose handicap oscillated between 8 and 19. He did not wear a glove. He frequently played in a white dress shirt, a plaid neck tie, a Tam O'Shanter hat and plus-fours. Resplendent in his golf attire, Ralph graced the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* on August 31, 1935.

Ralph teed it up at golf's Sistine Chapels: Pebble Beach, Merion, Shinnecock Hills, Oakmont, Cypress Point and Winged Foot, where he was a founding member. He played Augusta National just months after the course opened in 1933.

Kennedy played his first round on July 9, 1911, at Van Cortland Park in the Bronx, shooting 113. Van Cortland, the country's first municipal golf course, opened in 1895 and still welcomes golfers. The 71-year-old Ralph played his final round, course number 3165, on September 27, 1953, at the Hamilton Inn Golf Club, Lake Pleasant, N.Y. a nine-hole course that no longer exists.



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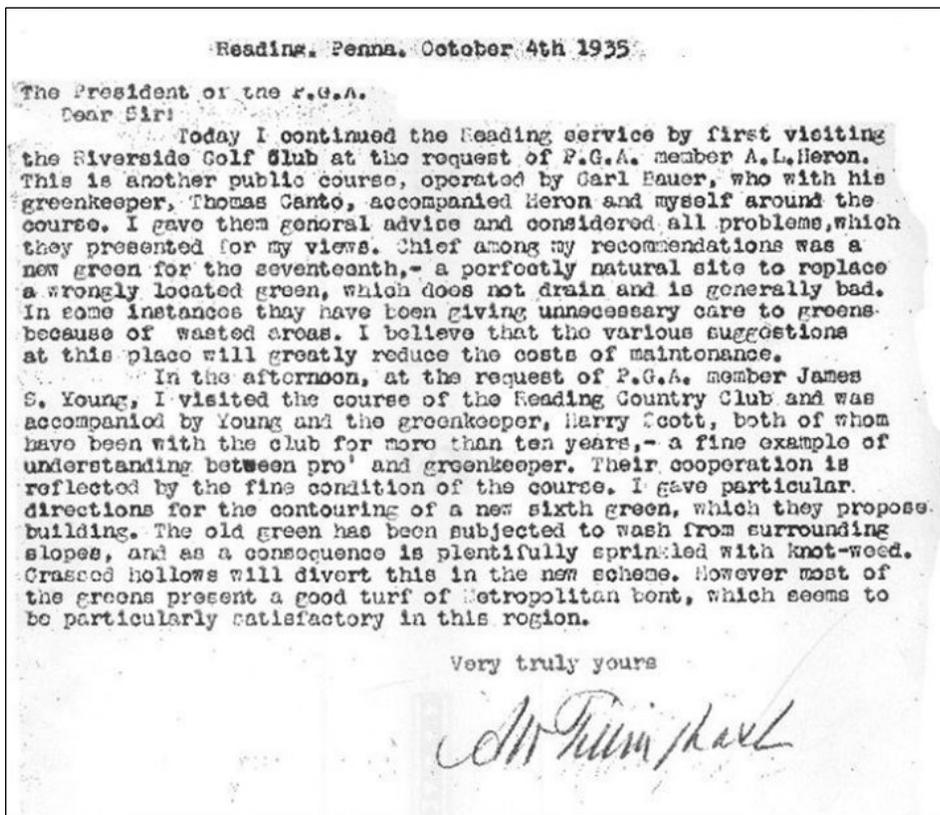
Tillinghast is Coming to Town

Albert Warren Tillinghast—known as A.W. or Tilly — is one of golf's renowned architects. He was born in 1874, the only child of a prosperous Philadelphia family. Many of his design principles were shaped in the 1890s during visits with his father to Scotland, where he learned from Old Tom Morris in St. Andrews. His first course, Shawnee on the Delaware in the Pocono Mountains, which opened in 1911, launched a career that produced some of the most acclaimed golf design work in the United States and, indeed, in the world of golf.

His designs include Winged Foot Golf Club and the Bethpage State Park golf courses in New York; Baltusrol Golf Club, Ridgewood Country Club and Somerset Hills Country Club in New Jersey; and in Pennsylvania, Sunnehanna Country Club and the Wissahickon Course at Philadelphia Cricket Club.

Tilly was no slouch on the course. He played in the 1907 and 1910 National Open championships (finished 25th in 1910) and qualified for the round of 32 in the U.S. Amateur championships of 1903, '04, '09 and '12.

Family fortune aside, Tillinghast became a rich man through his course



Tillinghast's letter to George Jacobus reports on his trip to Berks County.

design business; he claimed to have made more than \$1 million in the 1920s, a considerable sum in that era. But he spent excessively. He drank. He gambled. Tillinghast insiders say he lost heavily backing failed Broadway shows. What's more, Tillinghast lost his source of income when the golf design business dried up during the Great Depression.

That's what propelled Tilly to Reading in 1935. That same year, his friend George Jacobus, golf professional at Ridgewood Country Club, Paramus, N.J., and president of the PGA, hired Tillinghast as a consulting architect. Any golf club employing a PGA professional could request a visit from the traveling Tilly at no cost. He visited more than 400 private and public golf courses between 1935 and 1937. His mission was to recommend improvements to eliminate what he called "duffers headaches," features that were costly to

maintain and that made the game difficult and frustrating for amateurs.

Tilly traveled to Berks County in October 1935, visiting Reading Country Club and the now-defunct Riverside Golf Club. The key comment from the Tillinghast letter is "...a new sixth green..." . There is no evidence indicating that the current 6th green has been relocated from Alex Findlay's design. Aerial photos from 1932 show the 6th green in its current location. The contours around the green may have been revised, as Tillinghast suggests.

**In memory of long-time
RCC member
W. Russell "Russ" Yoder**

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Building a Strong Exeter Community

Reading Country Club has deep roots in Exeter Township and Berks County. RCC golfers are keenly aware that RCC is a valuable community asset and with that comes a responsibility to nurture the facility by reaching beyond golf. They express their appreciation by giving back to the community.

Since 2010, RCC golfers have contributed more than \$110,000 to support the local community. The money is raised through golf tournaments and outings. All funds go directly to charitable organizations that provide needed services for people in Exeter Township and Berks County. There are no administrative expenses and all support work is performed by volunteers.

RCC golfers have contributed more than \$45,000 to the Exeter Area Food Pantry. The Exeter Community Library is also an annual recipient, with donations totaling nearly \$16,000.

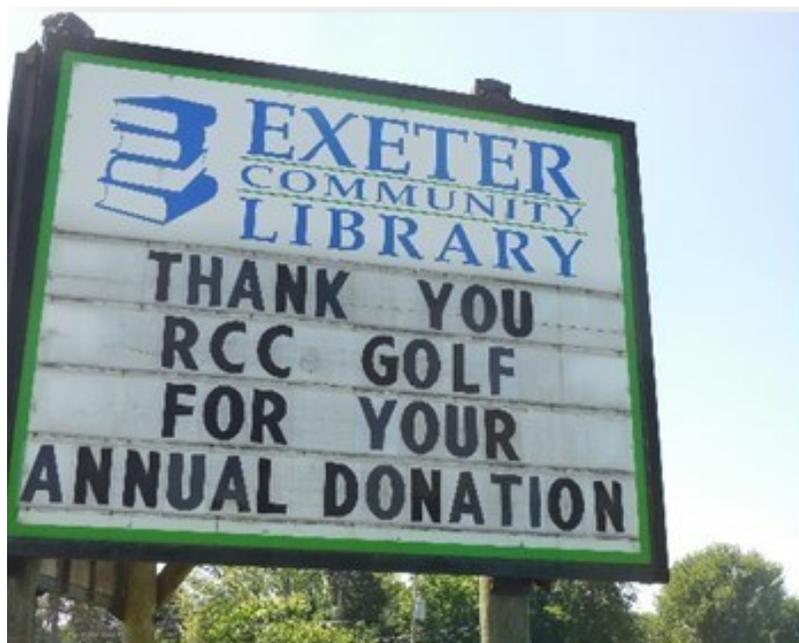
The golfers' contributions have supported these organizations:

Exeter Area Food Pantry provides groceries to families in need who live in the 19508 and 19606 zip codes. The Pantry, located at the Reformation Lutheran Church on Perkiomen Avenue, is open the third Friday of each month

Fond Memories

“From horseback riding to grass court tennis...swimming at the pool...playing golf...proms... family weddings...class reunions...parties...wonderful dinners and so much more...our families have enjoyed RCC and all it's had to offer for more than 50 years!”

**Suzy Sands and Ray Albert
and families**



RCC golfers give back to the Exeter community.

and helps from 200 plus families each month.

The Exeter Community Library is a source of knowledge in the Exeter community. It is a social center with activities such as family movie night, a knitting club, children's story telling and reading clubs for all ages. It provides connections for people who need access to the online world.

Blankets of Hope provides fleece blankets to homeless shelters and cancer and dialysis centers in Berks County. Blankets have been provided to YMCA, Berks Counseling Center, Opportunity House, Mary's Shelter and the Hope Rescue Mission. Blankets are distributed with the help of the Berks Coalition to End Homelessness.

The Exeter Community Education Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the education of students in the Exeter Township School District. The mission of the ECEF is to secure resources for our students to support programs for which sufficient federal, state and local funds are not available. These programs will promote

excellence in learning and mobilize community support for enhancing the quality of education in the Exeter Township School District.

A Smile from Jason Foundation awards scholarships for disabled children to attend the Assisted Therapeutic Horseback Riding program at Shady Hollow Assisted Riding in Birdsboro, Pa. The foundation also supports Aaron's Acres; Creative Health Services; Douglassville "Buddy Ball"; the Eastern Pennsylvania chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation; and Dad's My Angel Puppy Rescue "K9's for Kids" program.

The ERCCP College Stipend is awarded annually to the graduating member of the Exeter High School golf team who has the highest grade point average. The student may use the award for any uncovered college expenses. The stipend is funded by the Exeter-Reading Country Club Partnership, a not-for-profit community organization that is independent of the ownership and management of Reading Country Club.

Betty Brings the State Crown to RCC

The generations collided in 1950 when Betty Fehl, playing out of Reading Country Club, met Mrs. Harrison Flippin in the second round of the Pennsylvania State Women's Amateur Championship at Berkshire C.C. Mrs. Flippin, the former Edith Quier, was Berks County's first great woman player. She began her golfing career at Berkshire and in 1920, was a member at Merion C.C.

Betty, the youngster at age 28, defeated Mrs. Flippin, 5 and 4.

"I felt thrilled over the chance to play Mrs. Flippin and she was a great opponent," Fehl told Bill Reedy, the *Reading Eagle* sports editor. "But I also felt that this would be my exit from the tournament. I surprised myself in winning as I did. That match gave me just the confidence I needed. I could feel myself getting better and better from then on.

"I honestly didn't think I had a chance in that field. I just happened to play the best golf of my life."

Matching up against the Quier family was not a new experience for Betty. In the final match of the 1936 Berks County amateur championship, she won her first of 33 title, defeating Mrs. John Barbey, sister of Edith Quier.

Keystone Copper. Fehl won the state amateur championship with a 10 and 9 victory over Mrs. John Gessler, Whitemarsh Valley C.C. Betty took a

6-up advantage after the first 18 holes. Fehl shot 77 to her opponent's 84. The match ended on the 27th hole when Mrs. Gessler missed a four-foot putt.

The highlight of the match came on the 24th hole. Betty hit to within 18 inches on the par 3, while Mrs. Gessler stopped her ball seven feet from the hole. Both made their birdies. Too late for the Philadelphian, as Betty birded three of the match's final four holes.

Betty became the first Berks County state amateur champion since Edith Quier took the title in 1936. Later in 1950, Betty won her seventh RCC women's championship. Fehl would win the state amateur title again in 1965.

RCC Women's Champions

Records for RCC's Women's club championship are difficult to come by. Here is what has been found:

1930	Mrs. Helen Weis
1932	Callie Nistle
1933	Janet DeLong
1934	Mrs. Paul Metzger
1935	Mrs. Paul Metzger
1936	No tournament
1937	Betty Fehl
1938	Betty Fehl
1939	Betty Fehl
1940	Betty Fehl
1941	Betty Fehl
1942	Betty Fehl
1950	Betty Fehl
1951	Betty Fehl

1952	Betty Fehl
1955	Betty Fehl
1956	Betty Fehl
1977	Arlene Bausher
1980	JoAnn Heller
1990	Amy Beans
1991	JoAnn Heller
1992	Amy Beans
1993	JoAnn Heller
1994	Minhee Seo
1995	Brenda Wily
1996	Brenda Wily
1997	JoAnn Heller
1998	JoAnn Heller
1999	JoAnn Heller
2000	Becky Hafer
2001	JoAnn Heller
2002	JoAnn Heller
2003	JoAnn Heller
2004	Deb Psota
2005	Ruth Gross
2007	Ruth Gross
2008	Ruth Gross
2009	Ruth Gross
2010	Ruth Gross
2011	Ruth Gross
2012	Ruth Gross
2013	Dana Heins
2014	Dana Heins
2015	Dana Heins
2016	Dana Heins



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Summer of '68



Leroy Oudinot, resplendent in his RCC club champions blazer, is reunited with Rick Bausher, his caddy in the 1968 club championship. The photo was taken at RCC in August 2015.

The Golf Chronicles

Golf Stories from the Pennsylvania Heartland

The Golf Chronicles is devoted to the history of golf at Reading Country Club and in Berks County.

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Oudinot Takes the Title

When Leroy Oudinot won the 1968 RCC club championship, he was presented with a red blazer. In August 2015, he stopped by RCC with the blazer. Unbeknownst to him, Rick Bausher was also at RCC that day. These coincidental visits reunited the champion with his caddy from the '68 championship.

Leroy won the title by defeating Fred Tyler, 6 and 5, in the 36-hole championship match. Tyler would go on to win in 1976, '83, '91, '92 and '94. His five titles are second all-time behind Buddy Lutz with eight.

Oudinot qualified with rounds of 81-68—149. George Smith was qualifying medalist at 143. Other qualifiers in the championship flight included

Dick Bausher	145
Dick Kelly	146
Don Sowers	147
Fred Tyler	148
Dan Vespico	150
Russ Schiessler, Jr.	152
Tom Dobson	152
Buddy Lutz, Jr.	153
Jim Rutter	154
Steve Norton	154
Dick Hasson	155
Ed Chrusciel	155
Corky Lott	155
Joe DeAngelo	157

Leroy won his first-round match over four-time champion Corky Lott, 3 and 2.

Norton, the defending champion, decided to quality rather than take a spot as the defender. Norton had just completed his career at Exeter High School and was headed for the University of Maryland. He bowed out in the first round, losing to Don Sowers, 3 and 2.

A first-round eye-opener was Fred Tyler's win over Dick Hasson. Tyler closed out Hasson on the 10th hole, winning 9 and 8. Fred played the front nine in 30 strokes, carding four birdies and five pars.