By Vern Putney

Jimmy Jones isn't much bigger than a dozen hefty divots, but the Cape Elizabeth resident rates the heavyweight "Maine Greenkeepers' Greenkeeper" handle.

For 60 years, the golf professional-course superintendent has shaped stubborn earth in Maine's most mercurial weather.

His contributions to the game, which he discovered in 1917 as a caddie at Augusta Country Club, were recognized in 1986 by the Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association. Jones received that group's Distinguished Service Award.

Jones didn't rest on that coveted laurel. He continued his many years of mowing and maintenance duties at nearby Purpoodock Club as an aide to his course superintendent son Gary.

Jones tapered off a bit last summer. He oversaw operations at Salmon Falls Golf Course in Bar Mills, one of five Maine courses he's helped design and build, and he's active there again this year.

Austin Kelly, veteran pro-super at Bangor Municipal Course, says, "I learned more from Jones in one day than from anyone else in months. I have tremendous respect for his talents."

A man on a back injured while wresting a timber from the old Purpoodock clubhouse is kicking up. The 110-pound frame lost that tug-of-war.

Jones was the Maine Golf Course Superintendents Association's first president, in 1940, and from the early 1930s to the mid-'50s was a tournament threat. He shot 225 yards was my longest tee shot," confesses Jones, "but I was accurate and had a sharp short game." Dr. Ray Lebel of Falmouth, several times Maine Amateur champion, termed Jones "the best putter I know."

Oddly, Jones remembers most a 4-iron shot on the 381-yard eighth hole at Portland Country Club. This dramatic eagle during the 1936 Maine Open propelled him into third pro place, behind host pro and playoff winner Ernest W. Newnham, and Eddie Bush of Norway Country Club.

Jones also was third in the Panama Open in 1938. He paired with Doug Doane of Cape Arundel Country Club in Kennebunkport, and Tony DeNucco, Oakdale Country Club in Mexico, for state pro-pro tourny titles, edged Norway pro Jim Browning in a Hi Ricker Memorial tourny playoff at Augusta Country Club, and set a course-record 66 at Wilson Lake Country Club in Wilton, to lead his pro-amateur team to a prize sweep.

However, minimizing divot damage, raking traps, grooming fairways and nursing greens were much more in vogue for pros in Jones' heyday. Especially if you presided over a nine-hole layout. You hung out the greens were much more in vogue for pros in Jones' heyday.

Jones had no such headaches when, as a 9-year-old caddie, he struggled with his first golf bag at Augusta. His big worry was getting to the Manchester course from his Litchfield home, about 25 miles away.

The next family move, to Manchester, was convenient. By the time Jimmy was a junior at Augusta's Cory High, giving golf lessons afternoons. Augusta pro and three-time Maine Open champion Frank Gilman taught in the morning, then played.

Jones, a 1927 Cory High graduate, was Gilman's assistant for two years. His first