GCSAA'S first winner still ahead of game

By Vern Putney

PITTSBURGH — First national golf course superintendent champion Ernie Jacob won’t be present for the 42nd event at Pittsburgh South Hills Club to mark the field as “perhaps less than 30.”

Jacob, now 84, and Art Snyder, past champ in 1970, remain atop the field, the field of competitors at the GCSAA’s National Greenkeeping Superintendent Tournament.

Last champs eye return to No. 1

By Vern Putney

PONTE VEDRA, Fla. — Both Roger Null and Dave Powell, who won in 1988 and ’89, had the rare good fortune to be raised practically next door to a golf course.

Jacob served a silver platter for his winning total of 146. Runnerup in 1959 to Don Boyd of Portage Country Club in Akron, he remained competitive over the years. But Emil “Mike” Masococchi, of the Owentsia Club in Chicago was too tough.

Masococchi won six of the seven tournaments held from 1949 through 1959. In 1960 at the Country Club at Pittsburgh, Jacob blazed home in 71 after a morning round of 78. Masococchi, then of Lake Forest (Ill.) Country Club, went 67-75 — 142. Players had risen to 60.

Jacob suffered a serious leg injury in 1951 that required a foot cast for several months. He rebounded well. He ended competition with his superintendent colleagues in 1988 at Palm Desert (Calif.) Country Club. He played 18 holes in November with Navy captain son Glenn.

Jacob saluted the efforts of Frank Lambright, superintendent at Aspetuck Valley Country Club in Bethel, Conn., in keeping their national test, when it was known as the National Greenkeeping Superintendents Tournament and received little media coverage. And “chaffeur” Snyder? He still plays frequently with son Jim, who succeeded him as superintendent at Paradise Valley Country Club in Phoenix, Ariz., and recently retired from a similar position at Skyline Country Club in Tucson, Ariz.

Snyder last played in the national event in 1987 at Canoa Hills Country Club in Green Valley, Ariz. He carded an 81, two strokes better than his age, but a couple of triple bogeys knocked him out of senior title contention. Jacob is “about 10 minutes” said Snyder in terms of GCSAA membership. Their applications were being processed in 1929. Jacob had the last-name edge alphabetically. He became member 589, Snyder 573.

They are as one in lasting friendship, and in wishing well the tournament they helped found.

Last 25 winners

1963 Chuck Fatum
1968 Art Donaldson
1970 Gene Stoddard
1971 Bob Martino
1972 Harry Cirata
1973 Bob Martino
1974 Ennio Lattini
1975 John Doughton, Jr.
1976 William Knox
1977 Vaughn Barker
1978 Theriot Hamilton
1979 Dan Meyers
1980 Thomas C. Hamilton
1981 Dan Meyers
1982 Mike Apodaca
1983 Roger Null
1984 Dan Meyers
1985 Dave Powell
1986 David Berke
1987 Mike Apodaca
1988 Dave Powell
1989 Roger Null
1990 Roger Null
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