

# Schoolboy Tournament Event Great Stimulus For Golf

By JOHN M. BRENNAN



Tom Mullin and his wife, Eleanor, pictured after his team, Bayside High, beat Flushing, coached by his wife in the deciding match for the PSAL title of the New York district.

"This type of tournament does more to encourage youngsters to take up golf than all the pearly words poured into type," declared Richard O'Shaughnessy, textile tycoon and prominent member of the Wheatley Hills Golf club, as the annual Queens Interscholastic championship was unfolding last month for the 15th straight year at the Pomonok Country club in Flushing, Long Island.

President Bill Buchanan of Pomonok, an interested spectator as the kids were splitting the downhill, first fairway with deft tee shots, agreed with O'Shaughnessy's sentiments and suggested that similar tournaments should be encouraged by influential private clubs, which tend to neglect the members of tomorrow, in all parts of the country.

## Private Club Aid

"The kids deserve a break from the more fortunate private club members," suggested Buchanan. "A majority of the boys who tee off in this type of tournament play all year on congested municipal and public links and dream of the week they have to play in the Queens Interscholastic on a championship course of a private club. I feel that the vast strides made by Long Island and Met youngsters in junior and later senior circles is attributable to the schoolboy event held every spring in this section."

And Buchanan is so right. A perusal of the Met record books reveals that former scholastic luminaries who have gone on to win sectional crowns number Bill Edwards, current Met junior king; George Stuhler, Jr. of Notre Dame, former New York State junior champion; Johnny Humm, finalist in last year's Long Island amateur; Eddie Butler, Alick Gerard, Jr., son of the National Links of America veteran pro; Jack Gerlin, ex-Met junior king; Augie Boyd, another winner of the Met; Frank Strafaci, five-time winner of the coveted Metropolitan amateur and current Long Island king; Charlie Mayo, Jr., Frank Sieverman, Keenan Morrow, George Stuhler, Karl Karsh, Jack de Sevray and a host of others whose names have made headlines in the wake of their school days.

## Newspaper Sponsorship

During recent years this colorful Queens Interscholastic, which has developed into a misnomer inasmuch as boys from all parts of the world's largest city are eligible, has been conducted on an all-match basis. During the early days of the event, there was a tendency on the part of over-eager youngsters to envision sub-par scores, a condition that could only be corrected by the elimination of the medal round.

The tournament got its inception when Barney Dunn, an advertising executive of the old Daily Star which later merged with the Flushing Journal to become the Long Island Star-Journal, sold Bloomingdale's department store the idea of donating several hundred dollars of trophies, merchandise and other equipment for the schoolboy classic that was planned for the Hillcrest public course.

The first tournament attracted a field of 278 players, a turnout that astounded the sponsors. The next year, when the event was conducted at the same course, 301 teed off. A bigger course was needed the following year and Clearview at Whitestone was selected. Two years later, Walter Grego's Bayside Links, one of the best-conditioned fee courses in the country, was selected and for five years the locale of the tournament was on the Bayside layout.

The tournament eventually was shifted to Pomonok, where the kids got the thrill



Scene at Pomonok CC as Coach J. Eugene Thompson of Newton High presents Charles Vasoll of Jamaica High and member of Wheatley Hills GC the trophy emblematic of the Queens Interscholastic crown. Don Cook of Ft. Hamilton High of Brooklyn is at left. Carl Pfuell of Bishop Loughlin High is at the right and next to him is Jerry Nadeau of Ft. Hamilton, the runnerup.

of playing on the same course on which Henry Picard beat Byron Nelson in an extra-hole final for the National PGA championship back in 1939.

Pomonok has been a lavish host through the years. The kids have the run of the clubhouse, as well as the course and everything is done to give the scholastic event major circuit trimmings. The year Picard won the 1939 PGA crown he remained over a day to present George Stuhler with the championship trophy. That, perhaps, was the biggest thrill any of the kids got out of the tournament.

J. Eugene Thompson, coach at Newton High and a member at Pomonok, has been a tremendous help in putting over the tournaments of the past few years which have been jointly sponsored by the Long Island Star-Journal and Long Island Daily Press.

#### **Tournament, Big Stimulus**

"There is no doubt that golf would have faded from the Public Schools Athletic League program had it not been for the stimulus offered by the annual Queens Interscholastic event," said Thompson in discussing the scholastic links situation. "We have more teams in this section playing PSAL golf than ever before and it is directly the result of encouragement from the scholastic championship."

The kids, Thompson pointed out, engage in team competition all spring, then are let loose to play on an individual basis in the scholastic event. "It's like a home pro pointing to the national open, qualifying

and getting a chance to show his stuff. There is nothing like this tournament."

Joe Herschel, the indefatigable mentor of the Forest Hills High team, where the sport vies with tennis at the capital of the racquets world, hints the pattern used so successfully in promoting scholastic golf in the most congested and largest city can certainly be used as profitably in other sections of the country.

"The boys like the idea of the papers getting behind them," asserted Herschel. "We have been given the utmost cooperation from the papers and actually have them to thank for the advancement of scholastic golf in this section. A little more in the way of help from the PGA would help us in the drive to make golf a major sport."

#### **Game Grows From Schools Up**

Thompson, Herschel pointed out, has done more than any other teacher in building up the PSAL program. It was Thompson who led a successful drive to increase the number of boys on a school team in the PSAL from three to five. He made several other highly constructive suggestions that were given the stamp of approval of the Games Committee of the PSAL. Thompson, too, has conducted his own intra-mural tournaments, both spring and autumn at Forest Park Golf club, in an effort to encourage Newton students to probe the Royal and Ancient sport.

Tom Mullin, former St. John's University ace athlete, was placed in an embar-

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## Bermuda Golf Course Reopens



Reopening of the eighteen-hole Riddell's Bay G&CC course in the Warwick section of Bermuda highlights the preparations being made to provide ample sports facilities for the winter influx of visitors. Golf has long been one of the Colony's foremost outdoor sports and has been an important attraction for vacationists throughout the year.

Other well-known courses on which annual golf tournaments attracting star players from all over the world will be featured as they were before the war include the famous Mid-Ocean course in the Tucker's Town Section, the popular Belmont Manor and GC under the supervision of Canadian professional Harold Wells, and the St. George Hotel course in the eastern part of the islands.

## SCHOOLBOY TOURNAMENT

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rassing position this year when his Bay-side High team was compelled to match strokes in the deciding match for the PSAL title with Flushing. The Red Devils were coached by Tom's wife, Eleanor, a health education teacher at Flushing and an avid divot digger. Eleanor saw her No. 1 man, Bill Pianki, win, but the four other lads went down as the Commodores bagged the title with an unsullied record.

"Within a few years, these youngsters will be holding down responsible positions in the business world and will be casting about for a private club to join," observed Mullin. "They get invaluable training in the schools and experience playing in the PSAL and Queens Interscholastic championship. We feel that we are helping the game grow the way it should—from the schools up."

If such strides can be made in the greatest metropolis of them all, papers and schools of smaller cities and communities can get together to put on similar tournaments—for the good of the sport and themselves.