



George Skinner



Fred Sappenfield

'59 Jaycee Tourney Site

Week's Not Complete Without Junior Event at "the Manor"

By Tom Fergusson

THE Junior Chamber of Commerce International Junior championship, which will be played at Elizabeth Manor G&CC, Portsmouth, Va., August 22-29 is a peak event in possibly the most active junior golf tournament program a club has conducted.

In the course of this program's development from an idea to encourage local high school golfers, the Eastern Amateur, with a field considerably beyond the junior range, was established.

Junior golf and tournament golf at Elizabeth Manor started on September 1, 1952 when Fred Sappenfield of Plymouth, N. C. took over the post of professional and course supt.

At the same time, another person also arrived on the scene. He was George Skinner who had returned to Portsmouth after five years in Iowa, his native state. George had been very active in Iowa as a player and in the Iowa State Golf Assn. He had entered the United States Navy in 1942 where he served as Welfare and Recreation officer for the Pacific Fleet.

Fred and George formed a perfect team. Both were experienced in junior and tournament golf. They immediately started planning what could be done to promote golf in the Tidewater area.

The area didn't have much interest in Junior golf although there were nine high schools sponsoring golf teams. The local high school (Woodrow Wilson) was extended the privilege of playing its matches at Elizabeth Manor.

Sappenfield gave weekly clinics for the younger set (aged six through 14). During 1953, Fred and George planned ahead (a five-year-plan, so to speak). They figured that the proper time for a club-sponsored junior tournament would be the first week following the school term.

Golf interest at the high schools was at a peak and a fitting finale of the school golf program would be a 36-hole medal play tournament after completing the school schedules.

Two things were necessary to get started on this plan: club approval and finding a sponsor for the first year. Both were quickly secured. The sponsor was Dr. Lem Mayo, a former University of Virginia athlete and Portsmouth surgeon. He paid all expenses for the tournament. This included all trophies and a luncheon for the boys.

Get High School Cooperation

Participants were secured by getting the names and home addresses of each high school's golf team. Further encouragement was given to prospective players by inviting them to play practice rounds

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Elizabeth Manor Juniors

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prior to the tournament.

That first year, 1954, a total of 55 boys participated in the Tidewater Junior Invitational. The same year saw the first of five successive Eastern District high school tournaments played with the State High School championship tournament being held at Elizabeth Manor in 1956 and 1958.

The second Tidewater Junior Invitational tournament was highly successful. Quantity and quality of the field greatly improved. The championship was won by Jimmy Flippen of Danville who won the state amateur crown in 1958.

At the conclusion of this event, Skinner and Sappenfield were sure that almost any junior tournament could be successfully presented at the club.

The Elizabeth Manor membership heartily approved the Junior golf program. It was then that Sappenfield and Skinner discussed the feasibility of holding a tournament on a larger scale — one that would be self-supporting and which, too, would receive the hearty support of the membership.

Through these two — Fred Sappenfield and George Skinner — the Tidewater Golf

Invitational team matches were inaugurated. Clubs represented included: Princess Anne, Virginia Beach; Sewells Point, Norfolk; James River, Newport News, and Elizabeth Manor.

During 1956, Junior golf definitely reached the upswing at our club. In addition to the Tidewater Junior Invitational, the district high school and district Jaycee tournaments were held at Elizabeth Manor and it was the scene of the State High School golf championship.

That year, when Dr. Mayo was president of Elizabeth Manor, and Fred and George were keeping the Junior program moving at a lively clip, the three of them discussed the possibility of holding a Junior tournament on a national scale, one that would mean a great deal for the entire community. They could see that such an affair would mean that Portsmouth and the surrounding area would be headlined nation-wide on golf news.

After Dr. Mayo gave the green light a small group met Skinner and Sappenfield to work up the details of the Jaycee Junior event. Those present were Buddy Taylor, Jim Sloane, Pat Leonard and Harry McCready. It was decided to go all out — either have a first class show or forget the whole affair.

Also, it was decided to make every effort to establish a big annual event, the tournament known as the Eastern Amateur.

The first year proved the toughest and hardest. It was the idea to treat the first participants right, and if this was done, they would all return the next year. Nothing was left undone in the way of southern hospitality. The invitation list was made up of gentlemen our members would be delighted to have as guests.

With the membership aware of the interest in the Eastern Amateur, it was quite easy to put Junior golf prominently on the agenda for 1958.

Leader in Junior Golf Program?

The fact is that no other club in the history of Virginia golf has done in one year what Elizabeth Manor did for Junior golf in 1958. This is perhaps true for the entire United States as far as junior golf is concerned.

Junior events sponsored by Elizabeth Manor in 1958:

Eastern District high school

Jaycee District

Virginia State high school

Jaycee State

Virginia State Golf Assn. Junior championship

Virginia State pro-amateur tournament
Along with these tournaments, was the second annual Eastern Amateur, Virginia's largest amateur tournament (274 entries). It was won by Walker Cupper Ward Wettlaufer.

Skinner is still working his head off in golf activities at Elizabeth Manor. Fred Sappenfield, however, is now in Richmond, Va., at a new club.

No doubt Fred will return to Portsmouth as a proud spectator at the International Jaycee Junior at Elizabeth Manor in August while his successor, professional Tom Strange, handles the host pro job.

Long Island Closings

There probably is more uniformity in Monday closings at Long Island private clubs this year than ever before. The majority of clubs on the Island are closed completely, setting aside Monday as caddy day. A small percentage of clubs close their dining facilities but keep the locker-room and course open for use. Only a very few clubs are completely open. Supts. find the Monday closings work very well into their schedules because major repair or construction work can be undertaken when the clubs are completely shut down.

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