



## ANOTHER LOOK AT WISCONSIN'S GOLF HERITAGE

By Gene Haas

*Editor's Note: Why go 'across the country' when we have an excellent reprint piece right here in Wisconsin? Again this spring, the WSGA's Wisconsin Amateur Golfer's NEWSLETTER is jam packed with news and information about everybody involved in golf in Wisconsin. It is an epic publication, and it is singular in its effort to record the annual history of amateur golf at the state level. Gene Haas and the WSGA staff deserve high praise for the great job they do with it.*

One article in particular caught my attention as I was paging through the magazine at the USGA regional conference in Kohler. Gene took time to both look back and look ahead at the great players who play the courses we manage. It is an excellent historic piece that is both interesting and fun reading. It is reprinted here with permission of the author, and appeared originally on pp. 12 and 13, Volume 20, No. 1 of Wisconsin Amateur Golfer's NEWSLETTER.

Recently, I was reading a review of the golf history of the State of Georgia that appeared in an article in the *Georgia Golf Magazine*. It was written by Mike Waldron, the Georgia State Golf Association Executive Director, and it listed some of the great players that came out of the Georgia golf program. Some of those listed were **Bob Jones, Charlie Yates, Danny Yates, Davis Love Sr. and Jr., Allen Doyle, David Duval, Rosie Jones** and a host of others. Certainly Georgia has a great tradition of golfing greats.

In the spring of 1995 on a trip to Nashville, I stopped at the Tennessee Golf Association executive offices located in Franklin, TN. This old antebellum mansion was renovated and expanded to house the TGA's offices, Junior Golf Foundation, and the newly created Tennessee Golf Hall of Fame. Some of the inaugural inductees were legendary golfers **Cary Middlecoff, Mason Rudolf** and the late veteran

golf writer **Waxo Green**, along with other well known Tennessee golf personalities.

A recent visit a few months ago to the Texas Golf Hall of Fame at the Woodlands Golf Resort, located about 20 miles north of Houston, was most impressive. This edifice, containing about 15,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space, displays many photographs, portrait paintings, golf artifacts and other historical books and items that help tell the story of the game as it grew in Texas. There is even a short 15 minute film that quickly shows off some of the Texas greats and renders a hasty education of the growth of the game—Texas style.

A quick perusal of their Hall of Fame members is most impressive, starting with **Byron Nelson** and **Ben Hogan**, two contemporaries who are considered by most golf aficionados as arguably the greatest of all time. Both Nelson and Hogan started their pro careers in the early 1930s, along with another all-time Texas great, **Ralph Guldahl**. These three players would win over twenty major golf titles in their careers. Other Texas title-holders in the Hall of Fame are **Ray and Lloyd Mangrum, Jimmy**

**Demaret, Bo Wininger, Billy Maxwell, Gus Moreland, Jack Burke, Sr. and Jr., Don Cherry, Homero Blancas, Marty Fleckman, John Mahaffey**, and many others. Yes, Texas can certainly be proud of its golf heritage.

A quick glance to some of the other warm-weather climate areas such as Florida, California, Louisiana, Arizona, etc., which exhibit great golf-breeding grounds, shows that California has had many great ones—**Ken Venturi, Harvey Ward, Billy Casper, Johnny Miller, Crosby and Hope, Mark O'Meara**—and now perhaps the greatest-to-be—**Eldrick "Tiger" Woods**.

The purpose of this article isn't to exploit the golf talents of other states but to analyze how Wisconsin stacks up to the rest of the country. It's been pretty much of a written rule that the Green Bay Packers have a great football program, especially when the weather hovers around the zero temperature mark. We're also near the top in the number of deer killed each year and the world's record muskie was "fished" out of a northern Wisconsin lake. Golf? you say! Well, Wisconsin certainly hasn't

been on the lips of golf writers throughout the country—but, perhaps it should be.

A year ago we were visiting a central Florida golf resort and a major men's collegiate golf tournament was in progress. So, I ventured over to the site and introduced myself to some of the coaches hanging around the first tee as being from Wisconsin. For some reason when I mentioned Wisconsin all of the coaches' heads lifted and turned my way. They came over and one-by-one wanted to know if we had any young collegiate prospects coming up the ranks. They acknowledged some of the finer collegiate players of the past few years, i.e. **Steve Stricker**, **J.P. Hayes**, **Dave Miley**, **Mark Wilson**, **Tim Cantwell**, **Ben Walter**, **Ron Wuensche**, **Mario Tiziani**, and on, and on, and on! And now they're looking for more! This is far removed from the statement of a few years ago made by a former USGA Executive Director, who used Wisconsin as an example of where golf is not considered to be "big time".

A recent "overhaul" of the WSGA offices saw the Hall of Fame area being relocated. This afforded me another opportunity to glance over some of the legends of the past—and present.

The first Hall of Fame inductees in 1964 were great amateurs, **W.P. "Ned" Allis** of Milwaukee CC; **Billy Sixty, Sr.** of Blue Mound G & CC; **Wilford Wehrle** of Racine Meadowbrook CC; and **Lynford Lardner** of Milwaukee CC, who later

became a president of the USGA. In 1967 Madison's gifted golfer **Steve Caravello** was elected, along with **Ray Billows** of Racine CC, who twice was a finalist in the USGA Amateur. In 1968 **Harry Simonson** of Maple Bluff CC, considered by many to be Wisconsin's No.1 golf-fanatic of all-time, was elected. **Bowden Davis** of Tripoli CC and **Burleigh Jacobs, Jr.** of Westmoor CC, joined the Hall of Fame in 1970.

It wasn't until 1971 that professionals, public links players and female golfers were allowed to be inducted. This created a "catch-up" and in 1975 four all-time greats were elected. They were professionals **Manuel de la Torre** of Milwaukee CC, considered by many as one of the greatest teachers in the history of the game; **Francis Gallet** of Blue Mound G & CC, who was one of the pioneer golf professionals from Scotland who taught, crafted clubs and marketed the game to many; **Johnny Revolta** of Tripoli CC, who won the PGA Championship in 1935 and was one of the leading tour players in the mid-thirties; and **Joyce (Ziske) Malison**, who helped develop the LPGA tour as one of the leading players during the 1950s.

Other notable inductees were **Jim Milward** of North Hills CC, in 1977, who followed the ranks of the PGA tour in the mid- and late thirties before he settled down to the duties of a club professional. In 1978 all-time great **Bob Brue** of North Hills CC and Ozaukee, was elected. Brue has won more major titles in Wisconsin than any other golfer and recently "concluded" a ten year tour

on the PGA Senior Tour, where he consistently was in the Top-Twenty Senior Tour players.

**Thomas "Tommy" Veech** of North Hills CC, was inducted in 1979 after a tremendous career as an amateur and professional golfer. In 1980, the legendary "guru" of public links golf, **Archie Dadian** of Whitnall Park GC, became the first publisher to be inducted. Archie was honored as the USGA's public links player of the decade (1970s) having placed 2nd twice, 3rd once, and with two other top five finishes in the USGA Amateur Public Links Championship. Archie has won seven major WSGA titles in addition to numerous other major championships. **Steve Bull** of Tripoli CC, and **Carol (Sorenson) Flenniken** of Janesville CC, were elected in 1983. In 1964 Flenniken won the British Women's Amateur, Western Amateur and the Trans Amateur. She is also a member of the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame. Bull continues to play at a high level and is the current WPGA Senior and Senior Open champion.

In 1986 **Dick Sucher** of Ozaukee CC was elected. Sucher is a two-time WSGA Amateur and three-time Senior Amateur Champion, in addition to a myriad of other titles. Former touring pros **Don Iverson** of La Crosse CC, and **Dennis Tiziani** of Cherokee CC, and **Andy North** of Nakoma GC, were elected in 1988, 1989 and 1990, respectively. Tiziani has won numerous state PGA titles and is currently one of the leading college coaches and golf instructors in the country at the UW-Madison.

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Andy North won the WSGA Amateur title in 1969, the Western Amateur in 1971 and became one of Wisconsin's all-time heroes when he won two USGA Open Championships in 1979 and 1984.

**Mark Bemowski** of Johnson Park GC, who has won three WSGA Amateur titles and the Wisconsin State Open title in addition to many other championships, was honored in 1991. **Alex Antonio** of Ozaukee CC, who is considered by many to be one of the great shot-makers in Wisconsin golf history, was selected to the Hall of Fame in 1992. **Jeff Radder** of Sheboygan CC, who won three WSGA Junior titles along with a WSGA State Amateur title, became a Hall of Fame member in 1994.

Some of the leading women players who have been honored as members of the Hall of Fame are **Goldie Bateson** (1981), and **Paula (Clauder) Garzotto** (1984), both of Westmoor CC. **Mary (McMillan) Fossum** of Oneida G & RC was elected in 1990. In 1993, **Katie (Ahern) Falk** of North Shore CC and **Marilyn (Klumb) Williams** of West Bend CC joined the Hall of Fame. Falk won the prestigious Women's Western title in 1974 and Williams was a three-time WWSGA champion. **Mary Beth Nienhaus** of Winagamie GC, who won consecutive WWSGA State Amateur titles in 1968 and 1969, was elected to the Hall in 1994. **Martha Nause** of Sheboygan CC was the most recent inductee into the Hall of Fame, having been elected in 1995. Nause remains one of the leading players on the LPGA tour.

Who's the next person to be elected to the Hall of Fame? Well, first of all, the rules say you must be at least 40 years of age. So, some of the leading players today will have to wait a few years. One of the leading candidates is **John Pallin**, 45, of Kenosha CC. Pallin has won 14 major WSGA championships in addition to many other awards and is the current five-time WSGA Player of the Year. Other players who have performed admirably for many years are **Randy Warobick** of West Bend CC, who won the WSGA Match Play title in 1979 and was runner-up three other times. **Steve Paradise**, 47, of Kenosha CC, has won six consecutive WSGA Bestball titles along with another one in 1979 and has been a leading contender for the past 20

years. Another well-known veteran candidate is **Frank Tenfel** of West Bend CC, who annexed six WSGA Senior titles. **Bob Mann**, formerly of North Shore CC and now a leading golf club professional in Indiana, won two junior titles and played on the PGA tour.

Now, let's take a look at the "current crop" of golf standouts. Probably the leading candidate for future Hall of Fame consideration is **Steve Stricker**, 29, of Cherokee CC. Stricker has one three State Open titles in addition to two WSGA Junior titles and a WSGA State Amateur Championship in 1985. Stricker is now performing famously on the PGA Tour, having won two events in 1996—the Kemper Open and the prestigious Western Open title. Steve officially bankrolled \$1,383,739 in tour earnings in 1996, placing 5th overall, and collected huge additional earnings in "non-official" events. Stricker is well liked and highly respected by his peers and should remain a powerful force on the tour for years to come—if everything goes according to "plan."

Other Wisconsinites who continue to perform well on the "national" scene are **John (J.P.) Hayes** of Buttes des Morts GC, who finished 14th on the PGA Nike Tour. Hayes recently qualified at Tour School for his third "Fling" on the PGA Tour. Hayes won two WSGA State Amateur and two WSGA State Match Play titles. **"Skip" Kendall** of Brown Deer GC, captured a spot on the PGA Tour by finishing 9th on the Nike Tour. This is Skip's third try on the big one and he is recognized as one of the premier players on the Nike and mini tours. He now hopes to expand that recognition to the big tour.

**Jerry Kelly** of Maple Bluff CC appears to be the next "big name" on the PGA Tour. Kelly, a former WSGA Match Play champion, was the 1995

money leader on the Nike Tour and placed 59th on the PGA Tour in 1996 with earnings of \$336,748. He failed to win a PGA event in 1996, losing a playoff to **Loren Roberts** in the Greater Milwaukee Open.

Another hopeful who is currently displaying his skill on the mini-tour is **Mario Tiziani** of Cherokee CC, who just narrowly missed getting his PGA playing card at the Tour School. Former State Open and Amateur champions **Ben Walter** of Menomonee and **Tim Cantwell, Jr.** of Westmoor CC failed in their attempt to obtain a playing card in 1997 and will also play on the mini-tour. **Mark Scheibach** of Rolling Meadows GC recently won his first mini-tour event and looks to move up the ladder of pro golf. **Jim Schuman**, as assistant pro at Maple Bluff CC, won the 1997 State Open at Kenosha CC and then capped off the year with a strong record-setting victory in the PGA National Assistant Professional Championship.

Some of the collegians who are making a mark on the NCAA golf scene are headed by **Mark Wilson** of Oconomowoc GC and the University of North Carolina where he is the current Atlantic Coast Conference champion and is listed at the top of the NCAA men's individual list. **Joellyn Erdmann** of Fox Valley CC is the WAC Conference Women's champion as a member of the University of New Mexico golf team. The University of Wisconsin men's team is headed by **Dave Roesch**, **Chris Caulum** and **Ryan Helminen**. The Badger gas are led by **Rheba Mabie** of Timber Ridge CC.

Once again, an evaluation of the history of the development of the game of golf in Wisconsin, its past and present, reflects that we can be proud of our heritage—and look favorably into the future. 🍷

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