

John P. Burke

Introduced to the game as a caddy at Newport Country Club, he was hailed as the most talented player ever produced in the state when he began competing in the 1930s. He earned that reputation early, twice winning the R.I. Junior Championship, the first at age 15. Known for his genial temperment and matching swing, he went on to win four State Amateur titles in five years, beginning in 1934. His only loss in that stretch came in 1937 when he missed a tee time. In that same stretch, he also won the State Open in 1936 and 1938, making him along with Mike Bobel, Bobby Allen and Brad Faxon as one of only four players in state history to win the Junior, Amateur and Open. When he won the 1938 Open, he lowered the tournament record from 291 to 284. In 1938, as a student at Georgetown University, he won the National Intercollegiate championship and the Metropolitan Amateur. His career was tragically cut short by World War II. He was killed in the North African campaign in 1943. He was so highly regarded, both on and off the course, that the Caddy Scholarship program in Rhode Island was named in his honor. That program has since helped more than 700 students with their college education.