

Les Kennedy

He was perhaps the greatest of the many long-time club professionals in Rhode Island. The son of a police officer from Lynn, Mass., he made waves as one of the first New Englanders to play on the then-fledgling PGA Tour. He was the rookie of the year in 1942 while also serving as a club professional for much of the year. He worked at Sagamore Spring, Rockingham Country Club and Fresh Pond Golf Club before taking the job as both head pro and course superintendent at Pawtucket Country Club in 1944. He spent the next 40 years at Pawtucket, much of it as superintendent as well as pro. He also continued excelling as a player. He led the 1949 U.S. Open after one round at Medinah and finished 19th in the championship. He captured the New England PGA a record five times, a mark since tied by Dana Quigley. Kennedy also won the Vermont Open twice and the Maine and New Hampshire Opens once each. He also competed in the 1950 Masters. Among his other accomplishments, he set the Pawtucket course record with a 61, had the Sagamore record with a 64 and equalled the record at Pinehurst No. 2 when he shot a 66 to take the first day lead in the 1942 North and South Open. He was named to the NEPGA Hall of Fame in 2000 and was the inaugural inductee in the Pawtucket CC Hall of Fame. He died last year at age 83.