



# RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

## Centennial Success

After his clutch birdie at the 33rd hole it looked as if Tiger Woods might beat Buddy Marucci. Halving the 34th with pars, Tiger was 2-up and dormie. If they halved the 35th it was all over. I wanted to see golf history up close but it was time to gamble.

The gallery was so big it was tough to get close to the play. All afternoon we'd been skipping ahead to get a better vantage point. I was with my wife, Lynda, and my friends Bill and Brenda. I said, "Let's go up to the 18th green. If Buddy can win the 17th we'll have a perfect spot to watch."

We found a spot up on the hill to the left of the green near where the members had their tent. I was straining my neck to see what was happening at 17, listening for the roar. It never came. They were going to 18 and we were in perfect position to witness a piece of golf history.

I felt my heart beat a little faster as both players entered the chute which is the 18th tee at Newport. Tiger was 1-up playing the 36th hole of the National Amateur. "This is what it's all about," I thought to myself. Then I heard myself repeating the words aloud to no one in particular.

Both players hit perfect tee shots, Marucci down the right side and Woods down the left side. As each player approached his ball I felt my stomach knot. "If I feel like this," I thought, "what must these two players be feeling?" I couldn't imagine the pressure.

Marucci was first to play. Watching from the hillside, it was like a slow-motion panorama as his shot approached the green. It landed just short and rolled up hole-high about 20 feet to the right of the flag. I was relieved for him. At least he'd given himself a chance.

Now all eyes were on Tiger. I put myself in his shoes for a second. Just drawing the club back seemed like it would be an accomplishment. When he hit the shot it didn't sound right to me. It didn't have that familiar sound of a crisply struck iron. As the ball hung in flight I wondered if he'd mis-hit it. From my view it looked like the ball was going long and right. Had he succumbed to the pressure?

The ball did land long, but only by about fifteen feet and right behind the flag. The ball checked and began spinning back, and when it stopped it was less than two feet from the hole. This time I did hear the roar. And that unfamiliar sound when Tiger's club struck the ball? I realized it was the sound of golf being ushered into the next century.

—Joe Sprague, Jr.



Twice as nice in '95: Tiger Woods is the first player to repeat as Amateur champion since Jay Sigel in 1982-'83.

### All Roads Lead To Q-School...

Continued from page 3.

playing the mini tours Rodney says, "It keeps you real sharp because all the money's on top. Financially, you just want to stay ahead of the game."

Rodney admits that his time playing as a professional has been a learning process. "The whole thing is learning about yourself and learning what you need to do," he says. "As a player, over time, you learn what you need to do."



Pat Sheehan also acknowledges that the mental aspect of the game is all-

important. "So many good players ruin themselves mentally," he observes. "They have the talent but mentally they're not there."

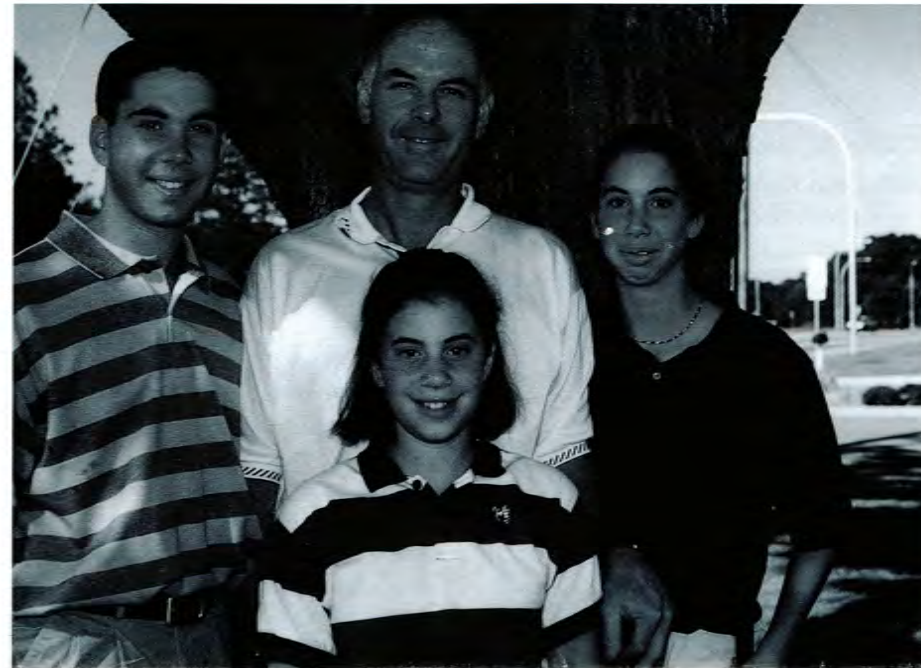
Winning the RI Junior Championship in 1987, Pat went on to have a fine collegiate career at the University of Hartford where he earned All-New England honors. He was twice runner-up in the RI State Amateur and turned pro in the fall of '92 at the same time as his friend Rodney Butcher. The two grew up playing at Potowomut and spent their first winter rooming together in Florida while playing in various tournaments.

Pat is no stranger to the mini-tours either. In addition to the Space Coast, Gold

Coast and Tommy Armour Tours, he played the Canadian Tour in '93. He's had a half dozen wins in various tournaments and nearly captured this year's RIGA-A.T. Cross Open if not for Dana Quigley edging him out in sudden-death.

Pat is currently playing the Gold Coast Tour full-time while preparing for this fall's Q-School. But what if the dream doesn't come true? Pat doesn't flinch when confronted with the prospect. "I love playing so much," he says, "but I won't be a lifer down here. I won't be someone who plays the mini tour til the end of time."

But, chances are, we won't be waiting that long to see Brett, Rodney and Pat hit the big time.



All in the Family: The Schicks from Point Judith Country Club (pictured left to right) Paul, Fred, Allison and Amy. Fred took low gross and low net honors at the RIGA Parent & Daughter Championship with Amy (15) and Allison (11), and missed capturing the Father & Son with Paul (18) by a single shot. Paul, a former RI Junior Champion, recently began his freshman year at his father's alma mater, Rollins College.

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Another year is winding down but what an exciting and busy year it has been for all of us in Rhode Island. Some of the obvious highlights: The Centennial U.S. Amateur at Newport with its great golf, great weather and great crowds.

The RIGA's State Amateur at Green Valley – it was our first time ever holding this championship at a public facility and what a great week we had.

The Parent-Daughter Championship at Foster CC – the start of a new tournament which we know will grow in popularity in the coming years.

The RIGA-A.T. Cross Open at Crestwood with the exciting finish and sudden-death play-off.

The Ryder Cup with one of our own, Brad Faxon, on the team.

All in all it was a great year. As golf continues to grow so too does the RIGA. We continue to receive excellent cooperation from our member clubs which makes everything possible for our continued growth.

Our newsletters have been well received by our membership, and we're striving to keep them entertaining and informative to all.

And what about our terrific weather this season? Golfers had a ball, but our golf course superintendents had many anxious moments with the lack of rain. All in all, I think they did a fantastic job.

Traveling around the state, I continue to hear that golf rounds are up at most of our area courses which further demonstrates the game's popularity.

As long as the weather cooperates, keep swinging. We may be winding down '95, but we're already winding up for '96.

— Joseph J. Sprague

## RHODE ISLAND WINS TRI STATES



*Victory Smiles: RI Team (pictured L-R: standing) Andy Young, Joe Henley, non-playing captain Tony Paolino, Sr., Norm Lutz, Tom Goryl, Jim Stallman, Jim Bjorge. (Kneeling L-R) Kyle Phelps, Joe Fogarty, John Davis, Executive Director Joe Sprague, and Frank Rampone.*

Not unlike the Europeans at the Ryder Cup, Rhode Island was the underdog in the 82nd playing of the Tri State Matches. The top players from Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts squared off at Pawtucket CC on Friday, September 22nd, and RI claimed the victory for the first time since 1989 and only the seventh time since World War II.

The matches are played over 36 holes with the format being foursome matches in the morning and singles matches in the afternoon. A player can win a maximum of three points — one point for each nine holes and one point for the overall match. Halved matches and nines are worth a half point each.

Rhode Island trailed Massachusetts after the morning foursomes matches by 1½ points. In the afternoon singles matches RI amassed 35 points surging past MA and nipping CT by two points. The outcome wasn't decided until the final hole in the final match of the day. With the players from all three teams looking on, John Davis knew he needed birdie at 18. After playing his second shot to twelve feet, he stepped up and rammed his birdie putt home to bring the James R. MacColl trophy back to Rhode Island.

## RULES CORNER



You've probably read about the Rules flap between Greg Norman and Mark McCumber which occurred at this year's World Series of Golf. Norman claimed McCumber tapped down a spike mark on McCumber's putting line which is a Rules violation. McCumber claimed he was simply removing a bug from his line. Nothing was ever proved and no penalties were assessed but it was an ugly incident. Norman, of course, went on to win the golf tournament, chipping in on the first hole of sudden-death.

Do you know what you can't touch in your line of putt? In case you're unsure, read Rule 16-1. Basically stated, you can not touch your line of putt except in removing sand, loose soil or loose impediments. You may pick them up or brush them aside with your hand or club provided you do not press anything down such as a spike mark.

Here are a couple of Decisions from the Rules which you may find interesting:

**Q.** A player removes loose impediments from his line of putt by brushing them aside with his cap or with a towel. Is this permissible?

**A.** No. Such action is in breach of Rule 16-1a, which permits the player to brush aside loose impediments on the line of putt with his hand or a club.

**Q.** A player walked on his line of putt. Did he incur a penalty for a breach of Rule 16-1a?

**A.** Yes, if he did so intentionally. No, if he did so accidentally and the act did not improve his line.

## ALL ROADS LEAD TO Q-SCHOOL

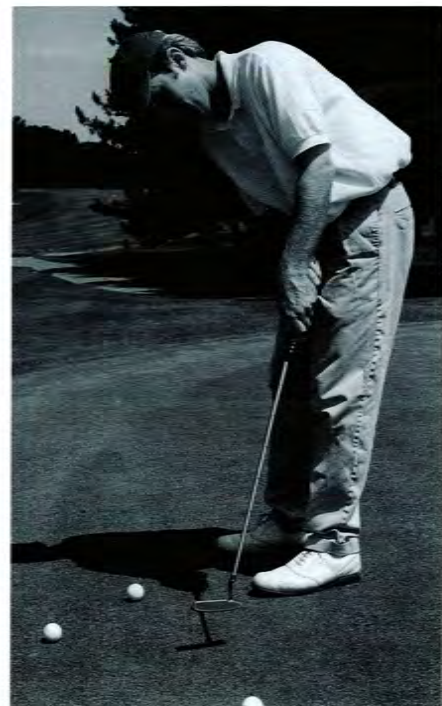


Pictured Left to Right: Pat Sheehan, Brett Quigley and Rodney Butcher at this year's RIGA-A.T. Cross Open.

For local pros Brett Quigley, Pat Sheehan and Rodney Butcher, the ultimate goal is to reach the stomping ground of the golfing elite – The PGA Tour. The only thing standing in their way is golf's equivalent of the torture chamber – the qualifying school.

The Q-School, as it is affectionately referred, has three stages. You must make it through the first to reach the second, make it through the second to reach the finals. The final stage is played over six mind-bending rounds with the low 40 players getting a one-year pass to the big show. Brett, Pat and Rodney will all enter the Q-School this fall, each having traveled a slightly different road to get there.

Brett Quigley possesses the golfing pedigree which tags him by many as a "can't miss" prospect. Son of Paul, nephew of Dana, Brett is a two-time RI Junior champ who also captured the National Junior Championship in 1987. A first-team All-American and Academic All-American at the University of South Carolina, he also won the coveted Northeast Amateur a month after completing his freshman year. He was the first Rhode Islander to win the Northeast since Ronnie Quinn in 1965.



Brett Quigley knows where all the money's made...

As a pro Brett has continued to improve. In 1991, his first season as a pro, he qualified for Pleasant Valley and made it to the Q-School finals where he eventually gained a Hogan Tour card for '92. He won the New England Open in '94

and has won several events while playing prominent mini tours like the Hurricane, Tommy Armour, North Atlantic and Dakotas. He recently won an event on the Hooters Tour where he collected \$15,000 for the top prize.

Asked what's the toughest part of playing the mini tours, Brett is quick with a response. "It's the day to day not knowing where you're going to be," he says, "and living and dying with each shot, especially during qualifying school."

Brett acknowledges that the mental part of the game is the most difficult to master. "I think mental is everything. Physically there's so many different ways to do it. At the top level everyone can shoot the low scores. Controlling your emotions is the big thing. For me, it's probably patience, too," he admits. "This game is frustrating. You play well one day play like a chump the next. No one is immune to shooting 80. I've learned I have no control over anyone else. All I can control is my game."



Rodney Butcher had a remarkable college career at Florida Southern leading his team to an NCAA Div. II National Championship. He was individual runner-up in the NCAA's in both his junior and senior years while being named a 1st Team Div. II All-American all four years. To top off his amateur career, he won the RI State Amateur in convincing fashion just prior to turning pro in 1992.

As a pro Rodney has had a good deal of success. He won his first professional event he ever entered, a mini tour event on the North Atlantic tour. He's played the other mini tours as well – the Gold Coast, the Space Coast and the North Florida PGA. This year he won the Vermont Open and finished third in the Mass Open. He also qualified for the Ideon Classic at Pleasant Valley where he fired rounds of 68 and 72 in making the cut and collecting his first official paycheck from the PGA Tour.

Rodney has had three tries at the Q-School, making it to the final stage last year but falling short of the top 40. Of

*Continued on back page.*

## NOTES & QUOTES



Cinderella Story: Kyle Phelps talks to reporters after winning the RI State Amateur at his home course, Green Valley. Phelps edged Jim Stallman of RICC in the finals by a 4-3 margin. It was Green Valley's first time hosting a major RIGA event.

OK, Trivia time. Which state has hosted the most USGA championships? If you guessed Pennsylvania you'd be right. The Keystone State leads the way with total championships (64) and most championships at a single course (Merion – 15). The Country Club in Brookline, MA hosted its 15th USGA championship this summer with the Women's Amateur.



Now which Rhode Island golf course has hosted the most USGA events? The obvious answer would seem to be Newport Country Club with the 1895 Amateur and Open and the 1995 Amateur. You'd be wrong, though. Rhode Island Country Club can claim the honor with a total of four USGA championships – the Women's Amateur in 1924, '53 and '87 and the Senior Women's Amateur in 1975.



Not to be overlooked: Rhode Island had two representatives at the Centennial U.S. Amateur — Paul Quigley of Rhode Island Country Club and Mike Capone of Quidnessett Country Club. Congratulations to both players for being a part of this historic event.



Orlando Bound: (Pictured left to right) Kyle Phelps, Jim Stallman and Paul Quigley pose with their trophies at the Stroke Play Championship. They finished 2, 3, 1 respectively. Phelps and Stallman along with Green Valley's Andy Young will represent RI at the USGA Centennial Men's State Team Tournament at Lake Nona GC in Orlando, FL on October 26-28. Good luck, guys!

*"Everybody has two swings: the one he uses during the last three holes of a tournament and the one he uses the rest of the time."*

— Tony Penna,

*Recently deceased pro golfer and club designer.*

*"When I play my best golf, I feel as if I'm in a fog, standing back watching the earth orbit with a golf club in your hands."*

— Mickey Wright

*LPGA Hall of Fame Golfer*

# Centennial Moments



Runner-up Buddy Marucci from Berwyn, PA was a class act all the way. He also played some phenomenal golf.



Semi-finalist Mark Plummer from Manchester, Maine was a crowd favorite with his home-made swing.



As Hogan says, the secret to the game is "in the dirt."



At age 18, semi-finalist Steve Scott of Coral Springs, FL was trying to become the youngest winner ever.



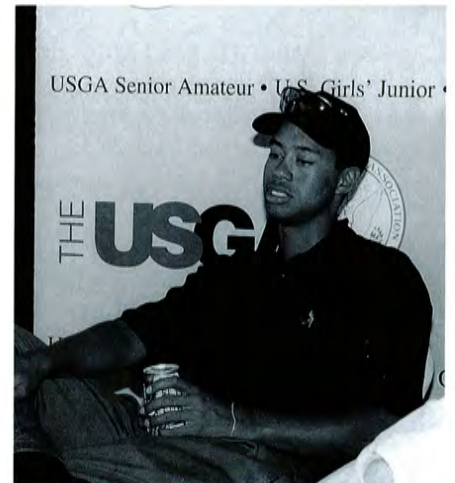
1993 Amateur champ and '95 Walker Cupper John Harris stands in front of Newport clubhouse after a practice round.



The lull before the storm.



Fred Ridley (L) and Jerry Pate at the championship dinner. Pate, of course, won the U.S. Open in 1976 after having won the Amateur in '74. Ridley, a member of the USGA Executive Committee, was the Amateur Champion in 1975.



Tiger talks to reporters in the media tent on Monday of tournament week.