



RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

TRI-STATES - THEN & NOW



Perhaps the best Rhode Island Tri-State Team ever assembled was the team from 1955. Convening at Metacomet CC on October 1, 1955, the R.I. contingent featured nine players who had won or would go on to win the State Amateur Championship. Standing in the top row (L-R) are RIGA Secretary Ed Perry, Bobby Allen, Fred Newman, Bill Newman, Al Faenza, Bob Kosten, non-playing Captain Ralph Rooks, Fred Campanelli, Brad Oxnard, Angie Santilli, Frank McBride and Ronnie Quinn. Not surprisingly, the R.I. guys prevailed that day with 22 points followed by Connecticut with 13 1/2 and Massachusetts with 9 1/2.

Pictured below is the 1997 R.I. Tri-State Team which competed on October 2 at The Kittansett Club: (L-R) Charlie Blanchard, Bill Campbell, Mike Soucy, Don Wright, non-playing Captain Tim Harrington, Dr. George Pirie, Executive Director Joe Sprague, John Auclair, Brad Edgerton and Ted Tavernier. Not pictured are Norm Lutz and Joey Iacofano.



TEAMING UP FOR LOVE OF THE GAME

by Joe Sprague, Jr.



Thrill of Victory: 1997 U.S. Walker Cup Players hoop it up after their convincing win. Pictured left to right (standing): Steve Scott, Duke Delcher, Randy Leen, Joel Kribel, Downing Gray, Chris Wollman, Brad Elder, Jason Gore; (kneeling) John Harris, Jerry Courville, Jr. and Buddy Marucci.

Golf is usually a lonely pursuit. If things start going badly there's no manager to rescue you from your misery by calling in the left-hander. The coach can't send in a play if it's third and long. And if you fire one into the crowd, the ref doesn't blow the whistle and call a face-off. Golf is not like that. You have to keep playing your mistakes.

Occasionally, though, golf does become a team sport. There are no penalty-killing units or zone defenses, but the players do win or lose as a team. And sometimes the winning or losing isn't the most important thing. This year I was fortunate to be at a few of these special team events, and I'm not talking about the Ryder Cup.

While the Ryder cup has become a larger-than-life, sports-as-theater event, it really didn't have my interest this year. Not that I would've turned down a plane ticket to Spain mind you, but the hype that surrounds the Ryder Cup now has become larger than the tournament itself. If Tiger Woods were to hole out from the 18th fairway of the final singles match to beat Europe by a half point, then perhaps the drama would match the hype. But that's another story.

What I'm talking about here are three events which garnered almost no headlines this year - The Walker Cup Match, the USGA State Team Championship and, closer to home, the Tri-State

Matches. All three are amateur events and all three were quite special in their own way.

ROAD TO THE CUP

I figured that I had to make it to the Walker Cup this year. Quaker Ridge GC was only about two and a half hours from Providence and I had a good friend willing to let me stay at his house in Darien, CT.

The last time the Walker Cup was played in 1995 at Royal Porthcawl in Wales, the team from Great Britain & Ireland handed the United States only its fourth loss since the Match's inception in

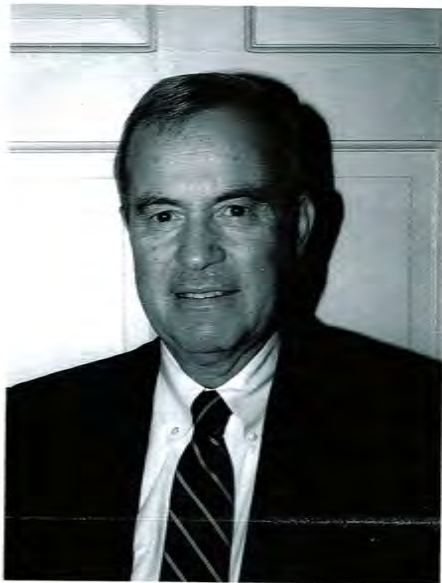
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Edmund M. Mauro, Jr.

The first time I saw the Ryder Cup competition was in 1979 at the Greenbrier Resort Hotel in Charleston, West Virginia. Daily attendance never reached 5,000 even though many tickets were given away. This year I was fortunate to be one of the 30,000 spectators at the Valderrama course in Sotogrande, Spain. Another 700 million people viewed the event on television over the three-day competition. Golf is surely on a roll!

There are a lot of opinions as to why our team lost. In my view it was simply

based on the age-old golfing axiom . . . "no putt, no win."

Granted, the course took the driver out of the hands of our players who were generally longer. Granted, the European team members knew the course better because Valderrama is the site of the annual Volvo Masters. And granted, the European crowds out-cheered us. But these are world-class players who can and *do* perform magnificently in short order under all conditions.

Brad Faxon played well throughout the competition. But again, like most of his teammates, the putts didn't fall. Brad's fame now goes well beyond the boundaries of the United States. He was recognized and enthusiastically applauded even by European golfing fans. Among his peers, including the European team members, there is a very deep respect for Brad.

Five thousand miles away from home the announcement, "Brad Faxon of Barrington, Rhode Island" made this Rhode Islander very proud.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It's hard to believe that I've just finished my 12th season with the Rhode Island Golf Association. The time has really gone by quickly which is usually the case as we get older and are enjoying the experience.

The game's popularity and growth are still very much in evidence on the national scene as well as in Rhode Island. Contributing factors, undoubtedly, were the excellent golfing weather and the continued success of our local PGA pros on their respective tours. Both of these factors impacted the RIGA with the result being another banner year in terms of interest and participation in our events.

At the same time, unfortunately, there's been the downside as well. Fred Malcolm, my good friend and official scorer of the Association for 19 years, passed away in July, and Evelyn Cottam, my office manager, was on medical leave for three months during the height of our season. It has not been easy, but with help from RIGA Past President Bill Cooke and the hiring of Kathrina McCurry, we are making a recovery with our paperwork.

We're already looking ahead to the '98 season; some changes in a few of our major events are planned as well as a possible new twist for our Weeklies.

Thanks for supporting the RIGA, and we'll continue to strive to improve our services to our clubs and members.

—Joseph J. Sprague

FRED MALCOLM 1915-1997



Fred Malcolm never really liked the spotlight. As the official RIGA scorer for 19 years, he just loved being around the game and the players. Whether he was printing names at the State Amateur or collecting scorecards at a Weekly Invitational, Fred took pride in whatever he did. And he did it all with an understated grace and sense of humor.

After a brief illness, Fred Malcolm passed away on July 26th. Even when he wasn't well and could not attend the tournaments, Fred still insisted on preparing the score sheets at home. And he was always eager to hear from his friend, Joe Sprague, who would call him in the evening to tell him who shot what.

Before joining the RIGA, Fred worked for 41 years as a draftsman, 31 with General Electric. A devoted family man, Fred was married to his wife, Gert, for 51 years. They had two daughters and two grandchildren, and Fred was proud of them all. When not working at an RIGA tournament, Fred looked forward to his rounds of golf with his cronies at West Warwick CC as well as with his grandson, Tim. He was also devoted to his church — Woodridge Congregational in Cranston.

Fred was a very good player in his day, too. A longtime member at West Warwick Country Club, he shot a course record 63 (including a front nine 29) which still stands today. He played in numerous State Amateurs, Four-Balls and Senior Championships and competed well.

It was somehow fitting that Fred passed away the day after Ben Hogan. Both men were passionate about the game. Both men quietly went about their business. While Hogan's celebrity extended far beyond his home in Fort Worth, Fred Malcolm of Cranston will be remembered as equally great a man in his corner of the world.

ASSOCIATION NEWS & MISCELLANY

Quidnessett's Mike Capone capped a great summer by winning the Stroke Play Championship in record-setting fashion. His 54-hole score of 203 eclipsed Billy Andrade's previous record of 206 set back in 1984. Firing rounds of 66-68-69, Mike won by a whopping nine shots over runner-up Don Wright. Even torrential rain and a one hour weather delay during the third round couldn't stop Capone. Suited up with rain pants and rain hat, Mike birdied his first hole after the delay — Crestwood's 14th — to end any comeback hopes of his pursuers.



It's official. Mike Capone is the 1997 RIGA Player of the Year. It was a neck-and-neck battle most of the summer between Mike and State Amateur Champion Joey Iacofano of Metacomet, but Mike finally prevailed by a slim 15 points. Mike accumulated a record 695 points to Joey's 680. Their closest rival was Mid-Amateur Champion Bill Lunnie of Wannamoisett who collected 490 points. A complete tournament recap and Player of the Year summary will appear in the upcoming Annual Issue of RIGA NEWS.



Mike Capone



The RIGA is pleased to announce that the site for the 1998 State Amateur Championship will be Point Judith Country Club. With the renovations to the golf course, the state's best players should find Point Judith to be a great match play course. The ponds which have been added on the first three holes to accommodate previous drainage problems are very much in play! Hole #4 has been changed from a par-3 to a par-4, and the tees have been moved forward on hole #10 making it a demanding par-4.

Other tournament sites confirmed for '98: Mixed Foursomes — Warwick CC; Four-Ball — Triggs Memorial GC; A.T. Cross Open — RICC; Mid-Amateur — Cranston CC.



Nowhere is golf's booming popularity more evident than at the USGA. Golfers are entering their championships in record numbers. Excluding the men's and women's Amateur Public Links Championships, the USGA had a total of 31,626 entries for 1997. California clocked in with the highest percentage of total entries with 11% followed by Florida, 10%; Texas, 9%; and Ohio, 6%.

Rhode Island had a total of 126 players file USGA entries with 15 advancing to the tournament proper. No surprise that Florida had the most entries for the U.S. Open. With its bulging population of tour players and tour player wannabes, the Sunshine State claimed 17% of all entries into golf's most brutal examination.



Speaking of USGA championships, Rhode Island had two of its best women players compete in the final national championship of 1997. Julie Greene and Nancy Chaffee, both of Rhode Island Country Club, made the trip to Charleston, S.C. for the 36th USGA Senior Women's Amateur which was held at the Yeamans Hall Club on October 20-25.

Julie and Nancy both advanced through stroke play qualifying to gain a berth in the 64-player match play draw. Nancy did it in steady fashion, firing rounds of 79-82, but Julie was a little more dramatic, coming back with an even-par 72 after a disappointing 85. In match play, Nancy was ousted in the first round by eventual champion Nancy Fitzgerald of Carmel, IN. Julie won her first match, but was defeated in the second round.

The two players decided to stay in the area after the U.S. Seniors and play in the Eastern Senior Women's Amateur. It was definitely worthwhile. Nancy finished 11th, and Julie, with rounds of 78-74-72 took home the winner's trophy. Congratulations to both!

Teaming Up (cont. from page 5).

One thing to remember about Arizona in September is the heat. The notion of a dry heat is nothing but a myth. When it's 103 degrees outside, it's just flat hot. Only players were allowed to drive a cart so I bounced around from group to group to follow our three players. I rooted them on and told them what the other guys hit into a par-3. (Under the Rules of Golf it is permissible for a captain to give advice in a team event.) I helped look for balls when an errant shot went into the desert. I fetched gatorade when the supplies ran low. Beyond that, I just tried to stay out of their way and let them play golf.

All in all we had a good time. The Rhode Island guys finished tied for 31st, about middle of the pack. We placed third among New England teams; Connecticut nipped us by a shot and Vermont beat us by four and they finished 21st. We even managed to beat the host state. The Rhody women finished 34th. Oh yeah, that John Harris guy capped off a pretty good summer. He helped his Minnesota trio to the team title.

TRI-STATES

When the Tri-States rolled around on October 2nd, most of the players were probably wishing they were in Arizona. The temperature at 8:00 a.m. at The Kittansett Club in Marion, MA was around 40 degrees. With the wind blowing from the north, it felt more like 25-30. Winter toques and mittens were selling like hot cakes in the pro shop. Noses were running, eyes were tearing and fingers were freezing. It was not an ideal morning for golf.

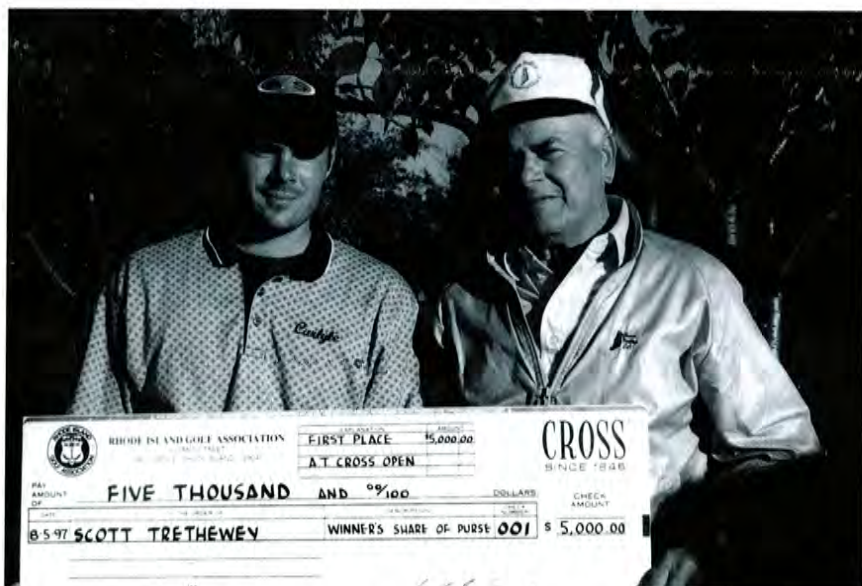
But play on they did. The format for the morning was four-somes. Each group featured a two-man team from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Each team played a nassau-type match against the other two teams with both nines being worth a point each, and the overall match worth an additional point. A halved nine or match would be worth a half point.

After the morning matches, the Massachusetts team led with 22½ points followed by Rhode Island (17) and Connecticut (5½). The weather turned warmer and the ocean breezes gentler for the afternoon singles matches, but, alas, the fortunes of both the Connecticut and Rhode Island teams did not improve. Massachusetts proved too strong for the second straight year. They compiled a whopping 63½ points for the day compared to R.I.'s 36½ and Conn.'s 35. Kirkbrae's John Auclair turned in the day's best performance of all 30 players competing. Teaming with Dr. George Pirie in the morning, John won 5½ of a possible six points. In the afternoon singles, John shut out both his opponents taking all six points.

Since 1907 the Tri-States have been played 98 times with Massachusetts coming out on top on 51 occasions. Connecticut has won 31 and Rhode Island 14. But, like the Walker Cup, winning is not the most important thing at the Tri-States. Team spirit and camaraderie among the players from all three teams has always been what the Tri-States are really about. Toasting your opponents at dinner is as important as draining a 20-footer to close out a match. U.S. Captain Downing Gray probably put it best during the closing ceremonies at this year's Walker Cup: "It's for the thrill of the game and love of the game that we get together here."

A.T. CROSS OPEN

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Champion Scott Trethewey (L) and Manny Raposa.

After being the first public course to host the R.I. State Amateur in 1995, Green Valley followed up by successfully hosting this year's A.T. Cross Open. Green Valley owner and architect, Manny Raposa, and his son, Ron, along with course superintendent Gary Sykes worked long hours to get the course in championship condition.

The hard work paid off because it proved to be an exciting tournament from start to finish with local favorite and former State Amateur Champion, Rodney Butcher, battling head-to-head with Pleasant Valley assistant pro Scott Trethewey for the entire final round. When the dust had cleared after 54 holes, both players were deadlocked with a one-under par score of 212. Trethewey went on to win in a sudden-death play-off.

The golf course proved to be a formidable test for New England's best club pros. Trethewey and Butcher were the only players to break par. And Bill Campbell of Wanumetonomy did the amateurs proud by firing a second round 68 and claiming the 36-hole lead. His final round 74 left him alone in third place, just two shots out of the play-off.

Teaming Up (cont.)

1921. Downing Gray captained the U.S. team in their losing effort two years ago, and having been given a second chance as captain, he didn't want to lose again, especially on home turf.

My friend, Bruce, and I arrived early the first day of the Match, Saturday morning, August 8th. We had to park and take a shuttle to the course. The crowds seemed fairly big but not unmanageable, and there was a certain feeling in the air—an electricity almost—which said this is not your run-of-the-mill golf tournament. This is big and it really means something.

The morning matches were played in four-somes, a format in which two players play against two other players in alternate shot with each side playing just one ball. We arrived in time to watch the last three of four matches tee off #1. There was not a lot of smiling going on. All the players seemed nervous, and if you asked any of them if they were having fun at that moment, the answer probably would have been a resounding, "No".

Quaker Ridge is a great golf course and the USGA had it set up very demanding. It was close to U.S. Open conditions with ankle-deep rough and greens which were rolling faster than formica counter tops. In fact, being able to adapt to the pace of the greens seemed to be the difference for the U.S. in the morning matches as they brushed their putts either into the hole or within gimme range. The GBI players, on the other hand, were trying to slam their putts into the cup which resulted in either power lip-outs or eight-foot come backers. Add frayed nerves to the mix and you had a recipe for disaster. Losing all four four-somes matches Saturday morning, Great Britain & Ireland dug themselves a hole from which they would ultimately not be able to recover. To their credit, GBI regained their collective composure and made a better showing in the afternoon singles, but the score after the first day was USA - 8½ and GBI - 3½.

U-S-A-, U-S-A!

After the U.S. went three for four in Sunday morning's four-somes matches, it was all academic. It would be just a matter of who would get the one clinching point needed in the afternoon to reclaim the Walker Cup. There was no patriotic cheering by the mostly American crowd, but before the singles matches began it felt like the two minute warning in the fourth quarter, and the home team had a three touchdown lead.

Sunday afternoon was hot so we decided to follow just one match rather than skip around. We decided to follow John Harris because his gallery wasn't that big. I'd gotten to know John a little bit over the past few years from the Northeast Amateur, and I knew him to be a nice guy and a class act. I had congratulated him the day before on his foursomes win as he followed another match around the course. He thanked me and said, "Isn't this great?" And he didn't mean how well he and the team were doing – he was talking about just being a part of the Walker Cup – be it player or spectator. He was talking about the team spirit and about representing your country.

Harris was machine-like Sunday afternoon, dismantling GBI



RIGA State Team (L-R) Charlie Blanchard, Joey Iacofano and Bill Lunnie.

opponent Michael Brooks in 13 holes. His victory was the one point the U.S. needed to secure the Cup. TV reporters, photographers and well-wishers swarmed Quaker Ridge's 13th green. Harris could not fight back the tears as he was bear-hugged by Captain Downing Gray. In addition to clinching the Cup, Harris also put his name in the record books by winning his sixth Walker Cup singles match against no defeats to surpass the legendary Bobby Jones who had gone 5-0 during his Walker Cup career. The champagne must have tasted twice as sweet that night for John Harris.

YES, BUT IT'S A DRY HEAT

The next time I saw John Harris was in Scottsdale, Arizona in September. This time it wasn't an international event. It was the USGA State Team Championship. John was playing for his state, Minnesota. I was doing my best Downing Gray impression as captain of the Rhode Island team – Joey Iacofano, Bill Lunnie and Charlie Blanchard. To be honest, I think Downing had a tougher job than I did. I likened myself more to a tour manager for a rock band, making sure all the air and hotel arrangements were tended to, and making sure the guys made it to the stage on time – in our case, the 1st tee.

The State Team was first conceived by the USGA to coincide with their Centennial celebration in 1995. It was supposed to be a one-off deal, but it proved so popular that they decided to have it again in '97. There is definitely not the pressure in this tournament that the players experienced in the Walker Cup. Instead of two teams there were 51, and this was stroke play not match play. The women also had their own tournament running concurrently at another course down the road. The R.I. women team was Julie Greene, Nancy Chaffee and Michaela Testa. We all ate together at the Players' Dinner on the eve of the tournament, and this was a big part of what the whole week was all about – getting golfers together from all over the United States to meet and have a good time.

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