



# RIGA NEWS

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

## Changes for 2000

The major championship season will be here shortly, and the RIGA has made some changes to several tournaments. These changes were made to try to improve the tournaments, and in many cases the changes are a direct response to input from players.

- **FRED MALCOLM MEMORIAL** - "The Malcolm" as many players started to call it after only two years will not be contested in 2000. Lack of entries in '99 and the ongoing challenge of securing tournament sites were the main reasons for it not being included in the schedule.

- **JOHN P. BURKE MEMORIAL** - The inaugural Burke was a great success in '99 despite the weather. While the team aspect to the tournament was an attraction from many, logistically it proved to have more minuses than pluses. The plan for 2000 is to have two divisions - one gross and one net - and the players will choose the division in which they want to play when signing up. The field will be limited to 100 players per division, and each division will play in the same rotation (i.e. All players in the gross division will play Wanumetonomy on day one and Newport on day two. Players in the net division will play just the opposite.) There will be no handicap limit in either division - e.g. a player with a twelve handicap could play in the gross division and conversely, a player with an eight handicap could play in the net division.

- **FOUR-BALL** - The Four-Ball will go back to being played at Better-Ball Stroke Play after two years at Match Play. The five-hole play-off scenario employed to determine a winner and adding a third day to the championship were the major detractors for many players.

- **Fleet OPEN** - The Open this year will be 54 holes played over three days instead of two. The only reason for this is the design of the championship's site, Agawam Hunt. Because Agawam's 9th hole does not return to the clubhouse, it would be very difficult to get a full field of 156 to start on both the 1st and 10th tees in both a morning and afternoon wave. Play will commence off the 1st tee only in groups of three, and there will be a cut after each of the first two days. We will only use this three-day schedule when the host course does not have its 10th tee near the clubhouse.

- **SENIOR AMATEUR** - The championship division will remain unchanged with the low 32 scores qualifying. Instead of most of the remainder of the field qualifying for a match play division based on score and age bracket (55-64 or 65+), there will be just two other match play divisions. However, these two divisions will qualify 32 players each and use a percentage of a player's handicap during match play. See entry forms in the spring for more details.

- **PLAYER OF THE YEAR POINTS** - There has been further fine-tuning of the RIGA Player of the Year Points System, but the biggest change will be the Stroke Play Scoring Average not counting for points. There were enough inequities with it to warrant that it not be included as part of the points structure in 2000. The Scoring Average will still be calculated and the player with the lowest average at the end of the season will be recognized with a separate award.

## MAJOR TOURNAMENTS

<b>MAY 3-4</b> Wed.-Thurs.	<b>JOHN P. BURKE MEMORIAL</b> Newport CC Wanumetonomy G & CC
<b>MAY 16</b> Tuesday	<b>USGA OPEN (LOCAL QUALIFYING)</b> The Misquamicut Club - Watch Hill
<b>MAY 17-18</b> Wed.-Thurs.	<b>ED PERRY SENIOR FOUR-BALL</b> Fenner Hill - Hopkinton
<b>JUNE 5</b> Monday	<b>STATE AMATEUR (PRE-QUALIFYING)</b> Green Valley CC - Portsmouth Montaup CC - Portsmouth
<b>JUNE 7</b> Wed.	<b>STATE AMATEUR (PRE-QUALIFYING) (Non-affiliated)</b> Foxwoods CC at Boulder Hills - Richmond
<b>JUNE 27-28</b> Tues.-Wed.	<b>PARENT &amp; DAUGHTER</b> Lincoln CC - Lincoln
<b>JULY 3-7</b> Mon.-Fri.	<b>STATE AMATEUR</b> Triggs Memorial GC - Providence
<b>JULY 18-20</b> Tues.-Thurs.	<b>NEW ENGLAND AMATEUR</b> Waterville CC-Waterville, ME
<b>JULY 24-26</b> Mon.-Wed.	<b>Fleet OPEN</b> Agawam Hunt- Rumford
<b>JULY 31-AUG. 4</b> Mon.-Fri.	<b>JUNIOR AMATEUR</b> West Warwick CC- West Warwick
<b>AUGUST 1</b> Tuesday	<b>USGA AMATEUR (SECTIONAL QUALIFYING)</b> Quidnessett CC - North Kingstown
<b>AUGUST 7-8</b> Mon.-Tues.	<b>MID-AMATEUR</b> Pawtucket CC- Pawtucket
<b>AUGUST 15-16</b> Tues.-Wed. (August 15, Sr.; August 16, Jr.)	<b>FATHER &amp; SON</b> Valley CC- Warwick
<b>AUGUST 22-23</b> Tues.-Wed.	<b>NEW ENGLAND JUNIORS</b> Wyantenuck CC Great Barrington, MA
<b>SEPT. 12-13</b> Tues.-Wed.	<b>FOUR-BALL</b> Kirkbrae CC - Lincoln
<b>SEPT. 18-19</b> Mon.-Tues.	<b>NEW ENGLAND SENIORS</b> Vermont National CC South Burlington, VT
<b>SEPT. 19-20</b> Tues.-Wed.	<b>STROKE PLAY</b> Wannamoissett CC - Rumford
<b>OCTOBER 2-6</b> Mon.-Fri.	<b>SENIOR AMATEUR</b> Foster CC - Foster
<b>OCTOBER 10-12</b> Tues.-Thurs.	<b>MIXED FOURSOMES</b> Crestwood CC Rehoboth, MA

None of us was around at the beginning of the last century to witness the exploits of The Great Triumvirate, Harry Vardon, J.H. Taylor and James Braid, who combined for 16 British Open wins and 12 second-place finishes between them from 1894-1914. But as this new century dawns we are privy to something very special when we watch Tiger Woods. He has already claimed a piece of amateur golf history, and it is history again that he pursues as a professional. Tiger knows the chase is on and there's only one man he wants to catch - Jack Nicklaus.

After Jack Nicklaus was named Player of the Century in 1988 it would have been difficult for anyone to imagine that his playing record would ever be challenged. With 70 official tour wins including six Masters, five PGA Championships, four U.S. Opens plus three British Opens and a host of other wins worldwide, how could anyone have thought that there would be a player with even a chance to enter the same orbit as Nicklaus? The fact is, no one could have predicted Tiger Woods.

In only his third full season as a professional Tiger won the PGA Championship plus seven other PGA Tour events including two of the three World Golf Championship events. He won "only" one tournament in his first 11 starts in '99, but proceeded to win seven of his last 10 events including four in a row to finish the season. And we all know how he started 2,000 - by seeming to will putts into the hole to outlast Ernie Els at the Mercedes Championships and by finishing eagle-birdie par-birdie to come from seven shots back with seven holes to play to win at Pebble Beach.

Before we get into any real comparisons between Nicklaus and Woods it's only fair to note that both have their share of detractors. When Nicklaus exploded on the scene in the early 1960's Arnie's Army was in full force. There were plenty of people who wanted to see Nicklaus fail early on because this fat kid from Ohio dared to tarnish The King's crown. For many people Arnold Palmer will always be The King. And why not? He changed the face of the game with his swashbuckling style and charisma to spare. All Nicklaus knew how to do was win.

So it is the same for Tiger Woods. Everyone will acknowledge his prodigious talent, but with his fist-pumping displays and scowling demeanor on the golf course many are quick to add that he has no couth. That he's lucky to have all those seven figure endorsements; Nelson, Hogan and Palmer never made that kind of money. They'd rather see Freddie Couples, Davis Love or Nick Price winning all those tournaments. Truth be told, they'd rather see anybody but Woods. No question Tiger has made his share of mistakes since joining the tour in late-'96, none more glaring than his unwillingness to sign a golf ball for Billy Andrade that was to be used for the Faxon/Andrade Charities for Children. Tiger has matured over the past three years, though, and his faux pas are becoming fewer and fewer. He's learned what's expected of him, and he is more comfortable in that role. What is most impressive is the level of play that he has been able to sustain in the face of such media scrutiny. It is a testament to his awesome talent.

So what of all this talk of Nicklaus vs. Woods? It's easy to dismiss Tiger Woods' chances of ever approaching the scope of Jack Nicklaus' accomplishments. His critics would say Tiger is immensely talented, but he's just on a great run right now. There are too many good players out there and he's going to come back to Earth. He goes after the ball too hard so he's bound to be plagued by injuries as he gets older. With all his millions in the bank he'll lose motivation. These are all fair assessments and any of those scenarios is possible. I think the only real x-factor is injury. Nobody can predict if any athlete will have the good fortune to stay healthy over the long haul.

Nicklaus was fortunate in that department. He had back and hip problems, but they were never serious enough to hamper his playing. Only in recent years has he succumbed to injury with his ailing hip.

Without getting overly philosophical let's consider Woods and Nicklaus at the same junctures in their careers, apples to apples you might say. Nicklaus turned pro in 1962 at the age of 22 after having won two U.S. Amateurs and one NCAA Championship. Woods turned pro in late-'96 four months shy of his 21st birthday after having won his third consecutive U.S. Amateur. By winning the U.S. Juniors in '91, '92 and '93, his string of six consecutive years of winning USGA championships is second only to Bobby Jones (eight years). Also, Woods joined Nicklaus and Phil Mickelson as the only players to win the U.S. Amateur and NCAA in the same year.

Tiger won two events in eight starts on the PGA Tour in '96. And of course he won the Masters in '97 in record fashion plus three other tour events. At the end of the '97 season - at the age of 21 - Tiger had collected six official titles including a major. So he had a little more than a year head start on Jack.

In 1998 while he was retooling his swing with Butch Harmon, Tiger (age 22) only managed one win. In 1962 in his first year on tour Jack Nicklaus (age 22) won the U.S. Open for his first professional victory, and he added two more before the year was out. In 1963 Nicklaus (age 23) won the Masters, PGA and two other tour events. In 1999 Tiger (age 23) won the PGA and an astounding seven other tour events. With the dust settled and the numbers tallied, Nicklaus had won eight events including three majors while still just 23 compared to Woods' 15 wins and two majors.

Tiger turned 24 this past December 30th while Jack Nicklaus turned 24 on January 21, 1964. We all know how Tiger began his 2000 PGA Tour campaign. Coincidentally, Jack won the same

Tournament of Champions to begin his 1964 season. Nicklaus went on to win three more times in '64 plus the Australian Open but no majors. So Tiger has an appreciable lead in total wins at the same juncture in their careers and a chance to match Nicklaus in majors with a win in 2000. Nicklaus wasted no more time in his pursuit of major championships as he went on to tear the next three years by winning two Masters, a British Open, a U.S. Open and eight other tour events. And he completed the modern grand slam by winning all four majors at least once by age 26.

Tiger Woods has a lot of work ahead of him if he hopes to catch Jack Nicklaus. Not only must he stay healthy, but he also must stay motivated. If anyone has a chance, though it's Tiger. Most players who reach number one in the world become uncomfortable with the rarefied air that goes with it and they, predictably, come back to Earth. Tiger, on the other hand, doesn't have that problem. He loves being number one. While others wilt under pressure, he thrives on it with a competitive fire that is a veritable inferno. With a swing retooled through hard work and, according to Butch Harmon, built to last, the man has no fear and very few peers. And that's not even factoring in the deadly short game that has an uncanny flair for the dramatic.

Is it realistic to think that Tiger Woods can match Jack Nicklaus, the greatest golfer of all time? Put it this way, did people think Bobby Jones could win all four majors in 1930? Could anyone have imagined that Hogan would play much of his best golf after his 1949 car crash? For that matter who could have predicted Jack Nicklaus' career? The answer is that none of us really knows and that's what is most exciting. The 21st century is a clean slate full of uncharted territory, and while Vardon, Taylor and Braid may never have imagined it, we have a front row seat. Full speed ahead, Tiger. Let the chase begin.

## The Chase of the Century

by Joe Sprague, Jr.



Jack Nicklaus holds the hardware after winning the 1962 U.S. Open, and Tiger Woods does the same in '95 after winning his second U.S. Amateur at Newport CC

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## President's Message

A very Happy New Year and Happy Millennium to fellow golfers and their families. As I write this message the temperature outside is three degrees and I know we are all looking forward to the beautiful, warm temperatures and blue skies of spring and summer.



Dr. Douglas Mellion

The RIGA has a full schedule of events in 2000 including 12 major tournaments and 26 weekly invitationals. I'd like to welcome two new member clubs to the RIGA - Louisquissett Golf Club and Fenner Hill Golf Club.

I would also like to report that we have hired a new Director of Competitions, Robert

Ward. Robert will be of great assistance to Joe this coming season and hopefully for a long time to come.

I would like to address a subject that is very important to our entire golf association and that is Button Hole. I have been in contact with Co-Chairman Ed Mauro and he reports that the project is still in need of more than \$600,000. He would be grateful for any donations, but a three-year pledge commitment of \$25-\$50 per year would help the project surpass its goal.

Finally, I want to pass along best wishes for a continued recovery to our Immediate Past-President Hank Richard. Unfortunately, Hank had a difficult year health-wise during his year as President so we look forward to seeing him out at some tournaments when he's feeling better in 2000.

Best wishes for an enjoyable golf season, and as always, if any member of the Association needs assistance, please contact our office.

## RIGA Hires Director of Competitions

Robert Ward has recently been hired as full-time Director of Competitions for the Rhode Island Golf Association. Bob will replace Tournament Director Ron Treanor who worked part-time during the '99 golf season. Ron will continue to serve as Secretary on the Board of the RIGA.

Bob had been working at the Henry Barnard School in Providence as a physical education teacher prior to joining the RIGA. Since 1993 he also worked at Triggs Memorial Golf Club during the golf season. He was responsible for golf shop operations and organizing tournaments including the RI Public Links Championship. An accomplished player himself, Bob has competed in the State Amateur and Four-Ball Championships.

Bob will work directly with Executive Director, Joe Sprague, Jr., in setting up and conducting championships. He will also be active with course rating and club relations. Bob, 34, lives in Coventry with his wife, Jennifer, and their two daughters. He hopes to be playing in the RIGA Parent & Daughter Tournament in a few more years.

## RIGA Elects New Officers for 2000

At its Annual Meeting in December the Rhode Island Golf Association elected new officers headed by President Dr. Douglas M. Mellion of Ledgemont CC; First Vice-President, Donald F. Clair of RICC; Second Vice-President Robert J. Holmes of Valley CC; Secretary Ronald J. Treanor of Lincoln CC and Treasurer Donald L. Lamb of Montaup CC.

## Executive Director's Report

Just when we thought we were in for the mildest winter ever, Mother Nature jumped up and said, "Hold on a minute." Public and private courses alike were crowded with golfers enjoying the unseasonably warm weather until the deep freeze set in. I'm sure many of you have been fortunate to escape to some place warm and maybe sneak in a little golf, but the rest of us have had to settle for watching golf on TV while huddled in the warmth of our living rooms. Which is not all bad, I suppose. We'll just appreciate the spring that much more when it finally arrives.

I get asked quite often, "So what do you do in the off-season, go to Florida?" The fact is, the off-season is when I can catch up on the mountain of paperwork that accumulates over the summer and fall. It's also the time to prepare for the next season which always seems to creep up more quickly than I expect.

I want to congratulate former State Amateur Champion and RIGA Player of the Year, Mike Capone, on his first victory as a professional. Mike cashed the \$12,000 winner's check in early January in only his second event on the Teardrop Tour, one of several prominent mini-tours in Florida. Great playing, Mike, and continued success.

The USGA has updated its GHIN and Tournament Pairing Program (TPP) software to a Windows environment which will provide for more ease of use. Not only will players find it easier to post a score with GHIN, but golf professionals and tournament chairmen who have been using

TPP at their clubs will enjoy the many improvements to the system. The RIGA will be conducting its annual handicap meeting on March 30 at Metacomet CC, and all golf pros and handicap chairs are invited to attend. Steve Edmondson, USGA Manager of GHIN/PC Programming and Development, will be on hand to introduce all the changes to GHIN/TPP. Jules Cohen, RIGA Director of Handicapping, will be sending a notice with all the details.

The Weekly Invitational package program proved to be popular with the majority of players in '99, so we are going to continue with it for 2000. (See page 3 for details.) The major championships and tournaments are set to go. Please refer to the back page of the newsletter where details of changes in format, etc. are highlighted. Let me assure you that we haven't made changes to some of the "majors" just for the sake of change, but rather in an effort to continue to improve. Some changes have been made for logistical reasons while others have been implemented after listening to player comments.

Finally, I would like to echo the sentiments of our new President Dr. Doug Mellion in wishing our Immediate Past President Hank Richard a speedy return back to good health. I've been speaking with Hank on the phone quite frequently, and he's looking forward to being "back on the scene" in 2000.

-Joe Sprague, Jr.

## WEEKLY INVITATIONALS A CHOICE OF FIVE PACKAGES FOR 2000

The Weekly Invitational package program was a big success in 1999. With a few minor adjustments to the packages, the program will work the same for 2000. Once again, there are five packages from which to choose, and each one spans the entire golf season.

Sign-ups are by foursome only, and a foursome may choose one, two, three, four or all five packages. Every effort will be made to provide a package for every foursome that signs up before the deadline. It may not come to pass, but a foursome that has chosen all five packages could be asked to give up one if the program is sold out prior to the deadline and there are foursomes without a single package.

Each foursome shall designate its own "captain" who will be responsible for coordinating arrangements with the RIGA office. Each package will be limited to 25 foursomes per day and they will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Each foursome needs to indicate "day 1" or "day 2" on the application below in addition to preferred time - Early: 7:30-8:30; Mid: 8:30-10:00; Late 10:00-11:00. It is not necessary for a foursome to have the same four players each week, but all players must be RIGA members.

The fee for each package is \$125.00 per player, \$500.00 per foursome. Checks should be made payable to the RIGA. If a tournament is cancelled because there is inclement weather or no carts available, a \$100.00 refund check will immediately be issued to the "captain" of each foursome that was scheduled to play that day. If a player's home course is included in a package, a refund check will be issued after the player himself plays his course in the package.

The "captain" of each foursome is responsible for correctly filling out the application below, listing the names of the other three players and mailing the application with \$500.00 fee for each package.

The deadline for applications is Wednesday, March 22. Keep in mind that the packages will be filled on a first come, first serve basis, and that in 1999 all packages were filled prior to the deadline.

The RIGA office will confirm packages and tee times by telephone the week of March 27-31. If you have any questions, please call the RIGA office at 272-1350.

### Weekly Packages

Package 1		Package 2		Package 3	
Crestwood	May 23-24*	Ledgemont	April 24-25	RICC	May 1-2
New England	July 25-26*	Montaup	May 15-16	Potowomut	June 6-7*
Foster	Aug. 8-9*	North Kingstown	July 31 & Aug. 2*	Cranston	August 15-16*
Point Judith	Sept. 18-19	Sakonnet	Sept. 12-13*	Valley	Sept. 5-6*
Wannamoisset	October 3-4*	Alpine	October 23-24	Agawam Hunt	October 10-11*

  

Package 4		Package 5	
Quidnessett	April 17-18	Pawtucket	April 10-11
Triggs	May 31 & June 1*	Misquamicut	May 9-10*
Winnapaug	Aug. 21-22	Laurel Lane	June 12-13
Metacomet	Sept. 26-27*	Green Valley	August 30-31*
Warwick	October 16-17	Kirkbrae	October 30-31

Please note: Not all Weeklies are Monday & Tuesday. Those marked with an \* are scheduled for Tuesday & Wednesday (Exceptions: North Kingstown Monday & Wednesday, Triggs/Green Valley Wednesday & Thursday)

(Please clip or photocopy and mail to RIGA office by March 22 with check made payable to RIGA: Price per package is \$500 per foursome.)

PACKAGE 1 _____	DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2	TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
PACKAGE 2 _____	DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2	TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
PACKAGE 3 _____	DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2	TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
PACKAGE 4 _____	DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2	TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE
PACKAGE 5 _____	DAY (circle one): DAY 1, DAY 2	TIME (circle one): EARLY, MID, LATE

Captain's name and club affiliation	1) _____
Captain's daytime telephone number	_____
Other players in foursome	2) _____
(if known) & club affiliation	3) _____
	4) _____