



The Golf Chronicles

The story of golf at Reading Country Club and in Berks County



The Slammer Goes Low

Of all the greats who played at RCC, **Sam Snead** shot the lowest score, a 63 in the first round of the 1949 Reading Open. The Slammer's competitive record still stands.

In the photo above, Sam is congratulated by fellow pros Henry Ransome (left) and Jack Grout.

Byron Nelson also shot 63 during his tenure as RCC pro. Nelson recorded his score in a 'friendly,' not a competitive match, on August 24, 1937. He bested his record of 65 shared with Lighthorse Harry Cooper.

He played there?

Yep. He sure did. So did she.

The greats of golf have played Reading Country Club.

Byron Nelson. Henry Picard. Cary Middlecoff. Sam Snead. Ben Hogan. Art Wall. Walter Hagan. "Lighthorse" Harry Cooper. Henry Picard. George Fazio. Bobby Locke. Betsy King. Tommy Armour, the Silver Scot himself. Lawson Little. Lloyd Mangrum. Craig Wood. Vic Ghezzi. Clayton Haefner. Miller Barber. Jerry Barber. Billy Casper. Don January. Gay Brewer.

Near as can be determined, 99 major championships (15 on the senior tour) are represented by golfers who have played at Reading Country Club. And that does not include Chip Lutz, who won the British Senior Amateur Championship in 2011 and 2012 and the RCC club championship in 1979 and 1990.

We can also claim Johnny McDermott (U.S. Open 1911 and 1912) as a visitor. McDermott, a Philadelphian and the first American-born player to win the National Open – as it was then named – was a spectator at the 1949 Reading Open, a tidbit reported in the *Reading Eagle*.

Where's Arnie? Every Masters champion from the tournament's inception in 1934 to 1960, save three, played at RCC. The no-shows are Gene Sarazin (1935), Ralph Guldahl (1939) and Arnold Palmer (1958 and 1960).

Alas, we cannot claim 21 green jackets for our RCC visitors. The traditional symbol of Masters' supremacy was first awarded to Sam Snead in 1949.

Two of golf's foremost course architects are on the guest list. Alex Findlay designed the course; let's assume he hit a few shots. George Fazio, the first of the renowned Fazio line of golf architects, played at RCC more than once.

Here are the major champions who golfed their ball at Reading Country Club.

- Sam Snead – 13 (PGA '42, '49, '51; Masters '49, '52, '54; British Open '46; PGA Seniors '64, '65, '67, '70, '72, '73)
- Walter Hagan – 11 (PGA '21, '24, '25, '26, '27; U.S. Open '14, '19; British Open '22, '24, '28, '29)
- Ben Hogan – 9 (PGA '46, '48; Masters '48, '51, '53; U.S. Open '48, '50, '51, '53; British Open '53)
- Betsy King – 6 (LPGA '92; Dinah Shore '87, '90, '97; U.S. Open '89, '90)
- Miller Barber – 5 (PGA Seniors '81; U.S. Senior Open '82, '84, 85; Senior TPC '83)
- Lawson Little – 5 (U.S. Amateur '34, '35; British Amateur '34, '35; U.S. Open '40)
- Byron Nelson – 5 (PGA '40, '45; Masters '37, '42; U.S. Open '39)
- Bobby Locke – 4 (British Open '49, '50, '52, '57)
- Tommy Armour – 3 (PGA '30; U.S. Open '27; British Open '31)
- Billy Casper – 5 (Masters '70; U.S. Open '59, '66; U.S. Senior Open '83; Senior TPC '88)

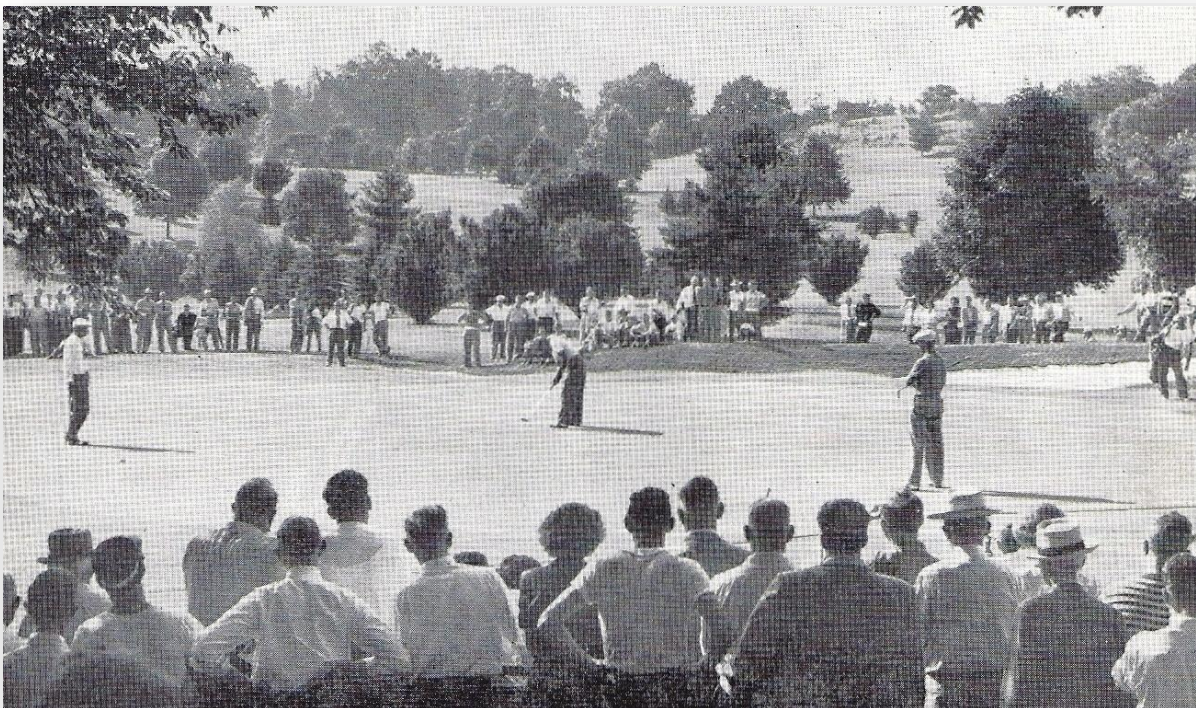


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- Jimmy Demaret – 3 (Masters '40, '47, '50)
- Cary Middlecoff – 3 (Masters '55; U.S. Open '49, '56)
- Tommy Bolt – 2 (U.S. Open '58; PGA Seniors '69)
- Jack Burke – 2 (PGA '56; Masters '56)
- Doug Ford – 2 (PGA '55; Masters '57)
- Don January – 2 (PGA '67; PGA Seniors '82)
- Henry Picard – 2 ('39 PGA; '38 Masters)
- Horton Smith – 2 (Masters '34 [first tournament, known then as the Augusta National Invitational], '36)
- Craig Wood – 2 (Masters '41; U.S. Open '41)
- Jerry Barber – 1 (PGA '61)
- Gay Brewer – 1 (Masters '67)
- Walter Burkemo – 1 (PGA '43)
- Jim Ferrier – 1 (PGA '47)
- Ed Furgol – 1 (U.S. Open '54)
- Vic Ghezzi – 1 (PGA '41)
- Chick Harbert – 1 (PGA '54)
- Claude Harmon – 1 (Masters '58)
- Herman Keiser – 1 (Masters '46)
- Lloyd Mangrum – 1 (U.S. Open '46)
- Corey Pavin – 1 (U.S. Open '95)
- Art Wall – 1 (Masters '59)
- Lew Worsham – 1 (U.S. Open '47)



New Course Record

Sam Snead drops a 10-foot birdie putt on the 18th green at Reading Country Club in the first round of the 1949 Reading Open, July 7. The Slammer birdied the 18th three of the four rounds. He needed only 27 putts for his round of 30-33—63, seven strokes under par.

The photo is from the 1950 Reading Open program book. That event was played at Berkshire Country Club.