



How Do You Do! A 62!

Michael Vital Breaks Sam Snead's 70-year-old RCC Record

The Golf Chronicles 100th entry has to be big. It must have a headline-grabbing, historic, eye-catching wow factor. That's why we have saved this story for nearly a year.



Michael Vital with his course-record scorecard.

Because it's big. On April 17, 2021, Bethlehem's Matthew Vital, age 15, topped Sam Snead's Reading Country Club course record with an eight-under par 62. Snead, a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, winner of seven major championships and 82 tour events, tied with Tiger Woods, shot 63 in the first round of the Reading Open in 1949.

Two others have posted 63. Byron Nelson, RCC's pro from 1937 to 1939, shot 63 in a casual round on August 25, 1938. In May 1990, Scott Orr bagged his 63 in RCC's member-member tournament.

Vital shot a course-record, 8-under-par 62, to win the Philadelphia Junior Tour event by 14 shots. He posted nine birdies, eight pars and a bogey to break Snead's mark by a stroke on the 6,162-yard layout.

The Liberty High School sophomore started with a par before making birdie on three of the next four holes to shoot a 3-under 31 on the front side. Vital birdied holes 10 and 11 before making bogey on the 360-yard, par-4 12th hole. He responded

with birdies on holes 14, 16, 17 and 18 to complete the historic round to win the boys 16-18 division.

"Anytime your name is mentioned in the same breath with legends like Byron Nelson and Sam Snead, you know you accomplished something very special," Vital said. "I was 2-under-par through 3 and I knew then this might be a special round of golf, but I stayed patient, calm and played smart golf."

"I was really happy that I was able to share the moment with my brother Michael and my dad. I did not understand at first the significance until the PGA tournament director and the Reading Country club director of golf told me I made history."

The course Snead played in 1949 and Vital played 70 years later are nearly identical. Today's front nine is slightly longer. The 10th hole is now a par 3; Snead played it as a 258-yard par 4, the fairway being today's practice range. Snead played number 12 as a 451-yard par 4; Michael as a 360-yarder. We don't know what club The Slammer used on the 220-yard 15th hole, but Michael hit a 5-iron. In Snead's day, the 17th hole was a 400-yard par 4. The hole is now a 512-yard par 5.



Sam Snead's course-record 63 stood for 70 years. Snead posted his score in the first round of the 1949 Reading Open. Cary Middlecoff won the championship over Snead by one stroke.

| April 17, 2021 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Hole | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Out | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | In | Total |
| Blue Tees | 371 | 386 | 365 | 203 | 523 | 159 | 426 | 183 | 326 | 2944 | 169 | 391 | 360 | 407 | 510 | 220 | 304 | 512 | 345 | 3218 | 6162 |
| Par | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 34 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 36 | 70 |
| Matthew Vital | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 31 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 31 | 62 |
| July 9, 1949 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hole | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | Out | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | In | Total |
| Blue Tees | 326 | 345 | 320 | 175 | 512 | 150 | 422 | 194 | 305 | 2749 | 258 | 394 | 451 | 399 | 510 | 218 | 300 | 400 | 340 | 3270 | 6019 |
| Par | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 34 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 36 | 70 |
| Sam Snead | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 30 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 33 | 63 |