



### Bill Reedy Writes

In the run-up to the 1952 Women's Eastern Open, the *Reading Eagle* sports editor **Bill Reedy** offered up his opinions of the game. He noted that women were doing "incredible" things in golf, such as **Patty Berg's** recent competitive round of 64 on a 6,300 yard course in California. Reedy stated that the question of women players was a "delicate one" before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For example, Reedy cited a book from 1890 in which the author reluctantly concluded that women might have a right to play but should be confined to "a links of their own containing some putting holes, some longer holes admitting of a drive of 70 yards and a few suitable hazards." He did not identify the book or author.

The following is pure Reedy:

"Nevertheless, five years later **Mrs. C.S. Brown** won the first U.S. women's amateur title with a score of 132 for 18 holes...In the years following, the masterful males looked with some alarm on the dainty divot dolls who could break 100...As early as 1924, **Glenna Collett Vare** became the first of her sex to break 80 in a tournament....Last July, when the female trouperes waged their Eastern Open at the Berkshire for the first time, masculine spectators looked on with awe as 25-year-old **Betsy Rawls** took the long course apart with a 69."

Reedy went on with this anecdote: "The topflight girls now know, too, they can give the best male amateurs a bad time...They learned that on a trip to Great Britain last summer to play England's Walker Cuppers...**Max McCready**, who beat **Willie Turnesa** and **Frank Stranahan** in the British amateur, hunted up Miss Rawls the night before their match and advised: "You better get home early, Miss Rawls, because you'll only be playing 12 holes tomorrow"...He was quite discomfited the next day when playing from the back tees he lost to Betsy, 2 and 1."

Reedy' concluded, "I repeat if you want to see fine golf as well as feminine charm, don't pass up this Eastern Open."



**Babe Zaharias tees off at Berkshire in 1951 as Beverly Hanson watches.**

### The Tour Comes to RDG

Here's a story that needs telling. It's about the LPGA tournament played in Berks County for five years. No, not the Betsy King Classic contested at Berkleigh Country Club from 1996 to 2004.

This is the story of the Women's Eastern Open played at Berkshire Country Club four times. In this chapter, we'll look at the first two events.

**Babe Zaharias** won the tournament's first playing in 1949 at Essex Fells Country Club, New Jersey. **Patty Berg** took the title in 1950 at Woodland Hills Country Club, Newton, Mass, the first time the event was sanctioned by the newly formed Ladies Professional Golf Association.

On April 5, 1951, The Reading Eagle reported that the Women's Eastern Open would be played at Berkshire on June 29, 30 and July 1. The purse for the 54-hole tournament was announced at \$3,500, which was average for an LPGA event in 1951. Berkshire's executive undertook sponsorship.

Event organizers were hopeful of attracting the LPGA's top players because the tournament closely followed the Western Open at nearby Whitmarsh Valley Country Club. Among those expected to compete were **Patty Berg** and **Babe Zaharias**. In 1950, the LPGA's first season, the Babe won six tournaments and led the money list with \$14,800.

Also expected to compete were local amateurs **Betty Fehl**, Reading Country Club and the 1950 Pennsylvania amateur champion, and **Ellen Gery**, Berkshire, and **Edith Quier Flippin**, formerly of Berkshire who at the time was playing out of Merion Cricket Club.

The big pre-tournament news was that **Beverly Hansen**, the reigning U.S. amateur champion, turned pro and her first tournament would be the 1951 Women's Eastern Open at Berkshire. Her decision was a boon to the LPGA because Miss Hansen's decision signaled that women's professional golf was on the uptick. At that point of the LPGA season, **Patty Berg** was the leading money winner, having banked more cash than her male counterparts save two. Patty earned \$11,700 compared with \$13,873 for **Lloyd Mangrum**, 1946 U.S. Open champion, and \$11,720 for **Jim Ferrier**. Other leaders on the PGA tour were **Ben Hogan**, \$7,900, **Cary Middlecoff**, \$7,550, and **Sam Snead**, who missed several tournaments because of a hand injury, \$4,262. **Babe Zaharias** was second on the LPGA tour with \$9,487.

The 1951 Women's Eastern open attracted a field of 15 touring professionals and 22 amateurs. **Betty Jameson**, San Antonio, Texas, set the first-round pace with a two-under-par 70 to take a two stroke lead over **Babe Zaharias** and 18-year-old **Barbara Romack**, a California amateur. **Patty Berg**, the defending champion, was at 74.

Jameson posted 32 on the front nine with birdies on the first, fifth, seventh, eighth and ninth holes. She came home in 38, two over par.

Berks County players included **Betty Fehl**, 80, **Ellen Gery**, 81, and **Mrs. Edith Quier Flippin**, 84.



# The Golf Chronicles

## Golf Stories from the Pennsylvania Heartland



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**B**abe Zaharis grabbed the second round lead with a 70 for a 36-hole total of 142. Babe's steady play saw her record birdies on the first and seventh holes and pars on the other 16. Beverly Hansen, in her professional debut, also shot 70 to trail Babe by one. **Patty Berg** and **Betty Jameson**, the first-round leader, were both three back.

**Barbara Romack** led the amateurs at 146, good for fifth place. **Ellen Gery** led the local contingent with 81-74—155, followed by **Betty Fehl**, 80-81—161, and **Edith Flippin**, 84-85—169. Beverly Hanson was no stranger to the winner's circle when she played her first tournament as a professional at Berkshire C.C. in 1951. She won the U.S. Women's amateur in 1950 and that same year won the Women's Texas Open playing as an amateur.

Sunday belonged to youth. **Beverley Hansen**, with a final round 72, won by three over **Babe Zaharias**, who finished with 76. **Betsy Rawls** finished five back and first-round leader **Betty Jameson**, **Patty Berg** and low amateur **Barbara Romack** trailed by eight.

Miss Hanson's win may have surprised some but shocked no one. She could play as she demonstrated in a career that saw her post 19 professional wins, including three major championships, on her way to the World Golf Hall of Fame, class of 2023.

Her winning 54-hole total of 215 was the only under par score. Miss Hanson cemented her victory by holing a 16-foot birdie putt on the final green to pick up the \$1,000 winner's check. After it was over, she told the gathered newspaper scribes, "I think I'm going to like being a pro. It's just as much fun as amateur golf and much more profitable."

The Babe collected \$600 for second. Betsy Rawls earned \$400 after setting a women's course record with a closing 69.

Other money winners were Betty Jameson and Patty Berg, tied at 223, \$200 each; **Louise Suggs** and **Alice Bauer**, tied at 225, \$187.50 each; **Marilyn Smith**, **Betty MacKinnon**, **Peggy Kirk**, tied at 232, \$150; **Betty Bush**, **Helen Dettweiler** and **Marlene Bauer**, tied at 238, \$75.

**Betty Fehl** led the local amateurs with 239, while **Ellen Gery** finished at 243 and **Edith Flippin** at 248.

**T**he 1952 edition, played June 6, 7 and 8, attracted only 12 touring professionals, the most notable absence being **Babe Zaharias**, who was recovering from surgery. Seventeen amateurs rounded out the field.

**Betsy Rawls**, the leading money winner with \$9,510.08, was the favorite to take the win.

Local amateur star **Ellen Gery** surprised the field with a 76 to trail **Patty Berg** by one after the first round. She was tied with

professionals **Louise Suggs** and **Betty Jameson**. Next at 77 were **Betsy Rawls**, **Betty MacKinnon** and **Alice Bauer**. **Marlene Bauer** posted 78. **Beverley Hansen**, the defending champion, and **Peggy Bell** were tied 80.

Miss Gery led the amateurs with her 76. She was followed by **Sonia Wise**, Your, Pa., with 79, **Barbara Romack**, Sacramento, Cal., 81, and **Betty Fehl**, Reading Country Club, 84.

Misses Rawls, 72, and Berg, 74, tied after the second round at 149, five over par. Three players were tied third at 152: **Louise Suggs**, **Marlene Bauer** and **Betty Jameson**.

The leading amateurs did not fare well in round two. Sonia Wise posted 83 for a 162 to lead the simon pures. **Ellen Gery**, who was one stroke off the lead when she teed off, stumbled to an 88 for a 164 total, tied with **Betty Fehl**. **Barbara Romack** was at 166 after a second-round 82.

The third round and the tournament belonged to the favorite, **Betsy Rawls**. Playing in windy conditions, she closed with a closing 77, she defeated **Louise Suggs** by two strokes. **Patty Berg** was next, three behind. Miss Rawls collected \$875 from the \$3,500 purse. Miss Suggs won \$630 for second place. Beverly Hansen, the defending champion, was well-back at 239.

**Betty Fehl**, Reading Country Club, won low amateur honors with a final round 79 for a 243 total. **Ellen Gery**, Berkshire, was second with 245 and **Barbara Romack**, who was low amateur in 1951 with 223, was next at 250. Sonia Wise, who led the amateurs after two rounds, skied to a final round 90 to finish at 252.

The pros left Reading for their next tournament, the Western Open, in Chicago. Following that, it was back east for the Inquirer Charities tournament at Bala Golf Club, Philadelphia.



**Betsy Rawls, left, won the 1952 Eastern Women's Open. With her is Betty Fehl, low amateur.**

### W omen's Eastern Open 1952—Final Pro Standings

Betsy Rawls	149-77—226
Louise Suggs	152-76—228
Patty Berg	149-80—229
Betty Jameson	152-78—232
Betty MacKinnon	155-78—233
Marlene Bauer	152-82—234
Peggy Kirk	156-82—238
Beverly Hansen	160-79—239
Alice Bauer	160-80—240
Betty Bush	160-82—242
Marilyn Smith	164-79—243
Betty Dodd	166-79—245