



The Golf Chronicles

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



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Sam Snead's RCC course-record 63 has withstood challenges from pros and amateurs alike for 67 years.

Scott Orr Ties Snead's 63

Sam Snead's 63 was equaled in May 1990 by Scott Orr. Playing in the RCC Member/Member tournament, Orr shot a respectable 33, one under par, on the front nine.

Orr blistered the back 9 with birdies on 10, 12, 14, 16, 17 and 18 for an incoming six-under-par 30. He had no bogies.

Orr and his partner Drew Fegley won the better-ball event with rounds of 63-67—130. Fred Tyler and Jim Rutter were second at 136.

The Slammer Rests Easy

Matt McKeone Challenges the 67-Year-Old Record

Records are made to be broken. Sam Snead surely knew that. But you have to think the Slammer was feeling edgy on Friday afternoon, April 15. Income taxes had nothing to do with it.

No, the Slammer was fidgeting because his Reading Country Club course-record 63 was in jeopardy. Sam's record had withstood a tying 63 shot by Scott Orr in 1990 (see sidebar).

In 2016, Matt McKeone, playing in a foursome with his father, Guy, and Dave and Alex Seelig, came within a whisker of tying the 63 Snead shot in the first round of the 1949 Reading Open, played on July 7. Snead used 27 putts, his final stroke a 10-footer for birdie on the 18th green, which was surrounded by a large gallery. Slammin' Sammy's record round was witnessed by his playing partners Jack Grout (74), Harrisburg, and Henry Ransom (68), St. Andrews, Ill. His first-round heroics propelled him to a one-shot lead over Lawson Little, who shot 30-34. Little's try for 63 was thwarted by an uncooperative ball, as his eight-foot putt on the final hole hit the back of the cup but refused to drop. Both Snead and Little bested Byron Nelson's competitive RCC course record of 65. Two other pros shot 64 in 1949: Pete Cooper, Ponte Vedra, Fla. in the third round and Jim Turnesa, Elmsford, N.Y. in the fourth.

Alas, the record round was not enough for Snead, as he followed with rounds of 71-66-67 for a 267 total, one shot behind Dr. Cary Middlecoff, the tooth-treater from Tennessee, who won with rounds of 67-68-65-66—266. The Slammer missed a four-foot birdie putt on the final hole that would have pitted him against the dapper dentist in a playoff. Middlecoff won \$2,600 from the \$15,000 purse. Snead earned \$1,900 for his second-place finish.

Sam Snead's round

Snead out	443 343 423 — 30
Par out	444 443 434 — 34
Snead in	344 443 443 — 33 — 63
Par in	444 453 444 — 36 — 70

The 31-year-old McKeone, a Berks native now residing in Mt. Arlington, N.J. with his wife Kelli, is a graduate of Holy Name High School and Methodist University, Fayetteville, N.C. He is a member of Moselem Springs Golf Club and Panther Valley Golf and Country Club, Allamuchy Township, N.J.

Matt and Scott played an RCC golf course nearly identical to the one that challenged Snead, Little, Middlecoff and the PGA touring pros in 1949. The major differences are the 10th hole, now a par-3 that was a 260-yard par 4; the 12th hole, still a par 4 but about 80 yards shorter; and the 17th, a 510-yard par 5 that was a 400-yard par 4. The course in 1949 played to 6,001 yards; today's course is 6,162 yards from the blue tees. Other than that, Sam, Matt and Scott played the same course and putted on the same greens.

Matt McKeone's round

McKeone out	344 353 433—32
Par out	444 353 434—34
McKeone in	334 343 453—32—64
Par in	344 453 454—36—70