



The Golf Chronicles

Golf Stories from the Pennsylvania Heartland



Number 75 • May 22, 2018

Youth Movement

Fifteen-year-old **John Rader**, captain of the Reading High golf team and the reigning Reading Country Club champion, led a field of 100 first-day qualifiers with a score of 81, five over par for the Berkshire course. **Bob Dinsmore**, Berkshire, was a stroke in arrears.

The youthful Rader toured the front nine in 43, six strokes over par. A birdie 3 on the 10th hole steadied his game. He played consistent golf thereafter, with a birdie on number 15 and a double bogey on the 16th to finish even par for the back side.

Rader's score didn't hold up. The following day, **Hawley Quier**, playing his home course, shot a two-over-par 78 to take medalist honors in the championship flight. Quier won the Berkshire club championship earlier in the year. Ralph Jennison tied Rader at 81. Qualifying scores ranged from Quier's 78 to **F.R. Stump's** 141.

John Rader was not the youngest player in the field. That honor went to **Bobby Keppelman**, the 13-year-old Berkshire protégé. The youth defeated **Daniel Anona**, 6 and 4, in the semi-final match of the fifth flight. In the finals, he bowed to **Dr. Robert Alexander**, who won 1-up.

The elder Keppelman, **John**, won the third flight from **Sam Anewalt** in 19 holes when Anewalt played a shot from a greenside trap over the green.

Girl Power

Edith Quier, Hawley's sister, won the 1923 Central Pennsylvania women's championship on June 22 at Lancaster Country Club. Edith advanced to the finals by defeating her mother, **Mrs. E.A. Quier**, making a birdie 3 on the 19th hole. She dispatched **Mrs. G. Howard Bright**, a Berkshire clubmate, 7 and 6 in the finals. Miss Quire also won in 1925 and 1928.

She won the putting contest by negotiating the 9-hole course in 19 strokes. The second place finisher, **Mrs. C.F. Hager**, had an ace on the final hole, but also suffered a three- and a four-putt for a score of 20.

Alas, Miss Quier's feats did not garner first-page treatment.



Hawley Quier, left, and **Ralph Jennison**, shown as they are about to tee off in the final match of the Central Pennsylvania amateur championship on July 23, 1923, at Berkshire Country Club. The two also met in the final of the Berks County amateur in 1929, also at Berkshire. Quier won both matches.

New game in town. Golf was relatively new to Berks County in 1929. In the dying days of the Roaring '20s, most Berks golf was played at three private country clubs: Berkleigh, Berkshire and Reading. Berkshire led the way, establishing a six-hole course in Carsonia in 1898. The course was used only one year because the property was prone to flooding. Berkshire's second golf course, a 9-hole, 2,253-yard affair, was laid out just west of Wyomissing. In 1922, an 18-hole, 6,556 yard course was completed at Berkshire's present site.

The first nine holes at Reading opened in 1923, with the full 18 playable the following year. Berkleigh opened as a nine-hole course in 1926.

Public golf was limited. A nine-hole layout opened at the Galen Hall Resort Hotel in 1911. Berks County's first public course, Manor Golf Club, opened in 1928 even though construction began in 1917. The now-defunct Riverside course in Muhlenberg Township opened in 1931 and the nine-hole at Rich Maiden Golf Club opened in 1932.

Each club had its own championship tournament. Golfers could also play in the Central Pennsylvania amateur, which for decades was a premier event for the golfing set. The first tournament was played at Harrisburg Country Club in 1920. A women's championship was added in 1921.

All Berkshire final match. **Hawley Quier**, representing Berkshire, won the Central Penn tournament in 1923, defeating fellow Berkshireian **Ralph Jennison** in the final match, 3 and 2. The fact that the championship was played at Berkshire certainly helped the home-standing golfers. That this was a big event is evident by the fact that the article in the *Reading Eagle* appeared on page 1. There was also a family member's name on page 2: **Edwin A. Quier**, vice president of the *Reading Eagle*.

Berkshire again hosted the men's championship in 1925. Quier's attempt to win for a second time on his home course ended with a semi-final loss to the eventual champion, **John Hiemenz** of Lancaster C.C. Quier rallied from four down after four to one down after 14. Hiemenz took the 15th and 16th holes to close out the match.

Interclub matches were also popular for men and women. Golf teams from Berkleigh, Berkshire and Reading often crossed sticks with teams representing clubs in Chester, Lancaster, Lebanon and Montgomery counties.

Hawley Quier Wins Berks Golf Diadem

Berkshire Club Star Tops Jennison, 2 Up, in First County Play

Here's an easy question. What came first, the Berks County Golf Association or the Berks Amateur golf championship? If you favor the BCGA, good guess! Good, but wrong.

The first Berks Amateur was contested in 1929. The BCGA was formed in August 1934 for the purpose of supervising play in Berks County amateur events, developing players and promoting golf in Berks.

It is that inaugural contest that consumes this issue of *The Golf Chronicles*. The first tournament garnered the headline shown above in the *Reading Times*, September 4, 1929. A diadem, by the bye, is a jeweled crown worn as a symbol of sovereignty. The term was popular among sports scribes of the 1920s and '30s.



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Berks Amblings

- Competitors in the inaugural event who would win the title include **Carmi Hicks** (1930), **Dr. A.L. McDowell** (1931 and '36), and **Bob Dinsmore** (1934, '35 and '37).
- The most entries was 286 in 1931 at Berkleigh. The golfers were grouped into 18 flights. **Dr. A.L. McDowell** defeated **Earl Biehl**, 1 up, for the championship.
- The Berks amateur was suspended in 1943, '44 and '45 because of World War 2.
- The championship was not played in 1992 because of a dispute involving RCC, the tournament site, and one of the participants. An unsanctioned event was held at Galen Hall G.C.
- **Johnny Markel**, at age 16, is the youngest winner. He defeated **Lefty Faber**, 3 and 2, in 1938 at Berkleigh.
- Faber turned the tables on Markel the following year, winning 1 up at RCC, becoming the first player to win the Berks Puiblinks and Amateur championships. **Byron Nelson**, RCC's head professional and newly crowned National Open champion, served as the walking referee for the match.
- Public links players were allowed to play for the first time in 1931.
- **Booming Bob Dinsmore** was the first public links player to win, taking the title in 1934, playing out of the now-defunct Riverside G.C. He had been a Berkshire member. He was back at Berkshire when he won in '35 and '37 and was the first repeat winner.
- **Lefty Faber** was the first public course player without previous private course membership to win the Berks Am. He played out of the now defunct Riverside Golf Club.
- **Chip Lutz** has the most wins with nine (1979, '80, '81, '82, '83, '88, '89, '91 and '93) and the most consecutive wins with five.
- **Johnny Markel** won seven: 1938, '40, '41, '47, '53, '54 and '60.
- The highest qualifying medal score was 86 by **Billy Bair** and **Earle Biehl** in 1931 at Berkleigh, which was a 9-hole course at the time.
- **Buddy Lutz's** 67 in 1954 at RCC was the lowest qualifying medal.

Golf explodes in Berks. That background is important for understanding why the Berks County amateur golf championship was created. Interest in the game had grown and Berks' clubs were turning out skilled players. It was time.

That first Berks County amateur championship was established by the members of Berkleigh, Berkshire and Reading. The GC's research finds that the championship was opened to public course players but, with limited options for honing their skills, few public golfers had developed into top-quality players.

The contestants played a qualifying round at Berkshire on either August 30 or 31. Players were grouped into flights based on their scores; the flights were contested at match play. Because of the large number of entrants, flights six through eight were played at RCC. Each flight consisted of 16 players, save the eight golfers in the eighth flight. That's a total of 136 entrants, not bad for a first-year tournament.

Youth was not served. The first round of match play began the morning of September 1. For some reason, Quier, the qualifying medalist, played Rader, the second-low qualifier. In today's world, the two would have been on opposite sides of the bracket and could not have played one another until the final match, if both won through. No matter. The experienced Quier dispatched young Rader, 4 and 3.

The vanquished Rader played through the championship flight's Beaten Eights, where he beat **Jack Shounders**, 2-up, and went on to take the measure of **Earl Biehl**, 3 and 1, in the finals. His round was highlighted by a sensational eagle 3 on the 464-yard 15th hole.

In the afternoon round, Quier played the first eight holes even par and trounced **Allen Hill**, 5 and 4. The other semi-finalists were **Herbert Larsen**, **Robert Jennison** and **Carmi Hicks**, the only RCC member to advance.

Playing what was described as sensational golf, Quier went on to take the first Berks amateur championship, defeating Ralph Jennison, 2 and 1. Quier easily defeated Herbert Larsen, 5 and 4, in the morning semi-final match. Quier took an early lead and was never threatened.

Jennison was extended in his morning match by the RCC star, Carmi Hicks. Hicks won the first three holes with two pars and a birdie. He led 1-up on the final hole, but drove his ball behind a tree. Jennison evened the match and won with a par on the first extra hole.

Quier's comeback. The championship match swung toward Jennison early. He took a 1-up lead on the second hole when Quier missed a tying 15-foot putt. Quier evened the match on the third but on the next hole, Jennison hit a spectacular spoon 225 yards to within two feet of the pin for a birdie that put him in the lead.

Both the *Reading Eagle* and *Reading Times* reported that Jennison's heroic shot came after slicing his drive onto the third fairway, which was considered out of bounds. That means he was hitting three when he launched the spectacular spoon. By today's rules, he would have re-teed, hitting three. Although not stated in the press, the only way he could have made a birdie 4 was if the penalty was one stroke from the point the ball crossed the out of bounds line. The GC turned to its magic research machine and discovered (www.ruleshistory.com) that the rules of golf approved by the R&A in 1920 called for a one-stroke penalty and a drop from the point where the ball departed the field of play. The golf world reverts to this rule on January 1, 2019. Hallelujah!

Both players carded 40 strokes for the first nine holes and Jennison held a 1-up lead.

Hawley takes charge. Quier's hopes sank when he made an 8 on the 12th hole as Jennison took a 6. Quier fought back with a birdie 4 on the 13th hole to even the match. He took his first lead with a par 4 on the 14th and won the 16th to go dormie two. A halve on the penultimate hole won the crown for Quier, his only Berks amateur championship. He lost in the 1932 finals to **Kenneth Perkins**, 5 and 3, at Berkshire.

He wasn't done with golf, however. In 1962, he founded Moeslem Springs Golf Club on 225 rolling, scenic acres of Berks County countryside on land owned by his family. The golf course, designed by **George Fazio**, opened July 1, 1964. Since 1978, it has hosted the Hawley Quier Memorial, a tournament that features the elite of Berks County's golfers.