

History of the Vermont Open

THE NOMADIC HISTORY of the Vermont Open began in 1940 at the Burlington Country Club. It was sanctioned by the Professional Golfers Association, and sponsored by the Burlington Country club with the help of local merchants. The purse was \$3,000, big money on the professional golf circuit in those pre-World War II days.

The first tournament interested name golfers, and a number of hopefuls from New England. By the end of the tournament it was the name golfers who stole the show and the prize money. Mike Turnsea of the famous golfing family in Westchester, New York toured the 72 holes with a 284 to win the top award. Close behind were other stars like Horton Smith, Dutch Harrison, Pete Cooper, and Jim Turnsea, to name just a few. Bob Toski, a youngster from Northampton, Massachusetts, played in the first Vermont Open. He went on to win some of the greatest golfing titles in this country.

In 1941, another attempt was made to hold the Vermont Open, but the PGA was unable to work out a date that fit into its schedule. With the onset of the war the Open went into mothballs. It was revived in 1948, this time at the Rutland Country Club. The purse was only \$500, but it attracted 61 of the best professionals and amateurs in New England. Les Kennedy of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and Charles Sheppard of West Newton, Massachusetts tied at the end of the 36 holes tournament with 139s. The playoff went three holes, Kennedy getting a 4 on the third to Sheppard's 5. Tom Pierce of Rutland, seven times Vermont Amateur Champion, was low amateur with 143.

In 1949, the Open went back to Burlington. This was a two day tournament, with a \$500 purse. There was a torrential downpour on the first day and the course had to be closed, and the Vermont Open reverted to a 36-hole meet on the second day. Johnny Thoren of Hamilton, Mas-

sachusetts, won with a 135 and Charlie Sheppard was again second, scoring 137. Back at the course where he had played in one of his first tournaments in 1940 was Bob Toski, in third place with 140.

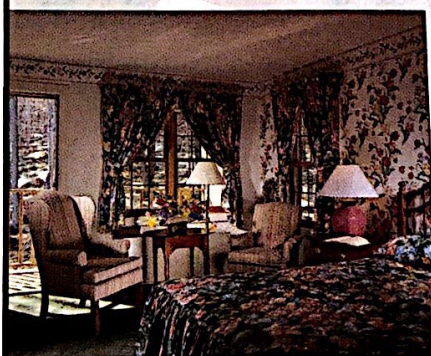
The Bennington Country Club sponsored the 1950 Open, again offering \$500. Thoren walked off with top honors, Sheppard still finishing in the second slot
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