

This is one of a series on the history of the New York State Golf Association taken from the manuscript "The 20th Century NYSGA", written by Frederick W. Box, NYSGA Historian.

NYSGA History: Chapter 4

By Frederick W. Box, NYSGA Historian

Ray Billows of Poughkeepsie made a strong bid to repeat in 1936 at Bellevue CC, Syracuse, where 176 entries sought the title that was eventually won for a second time by Tommy Goodwin of Winged Foot.

Billows won the medal play with a 33-36-69, one under par. Bill Stark of Syracuse was at 71, Dick Chapman, also of Winged Foot, and Howard Tryon Elmira were at 74 and Goodwin, 23, had a 75.

Goodwin's victims were: E. Litchenbort, Tuscarora CC, Camillus; Bill Chapin, Rochester, 4-3 with a hole-in-one on 14; Billy Ward, Tuscarora CC, 2 up; Dick Chapman, 19 holes despite a Chapman chip-in on 18, and Billows 1 up.

Billows took a 3 up lead on the morning front nine with a 36 and he remained 2 up at 18 when Goodwin had a 33 to Ray's 34 coming in. Goodwin was all even at 27 with a 35 to Ray's 37. Tommy came out of a bunker on 34 for a birdie as they each played 33's on the front nine.

These two fine players matched strokes again in 1937 at the Oak Hill East Course in Rochester but Billows reversed the result winning by the largest margin of victory, 11 and 9, up to that time.

Bill Holt of Syracuse won the medal with a two-under-par 70. Goodwin shot a 76 and Billows 78.

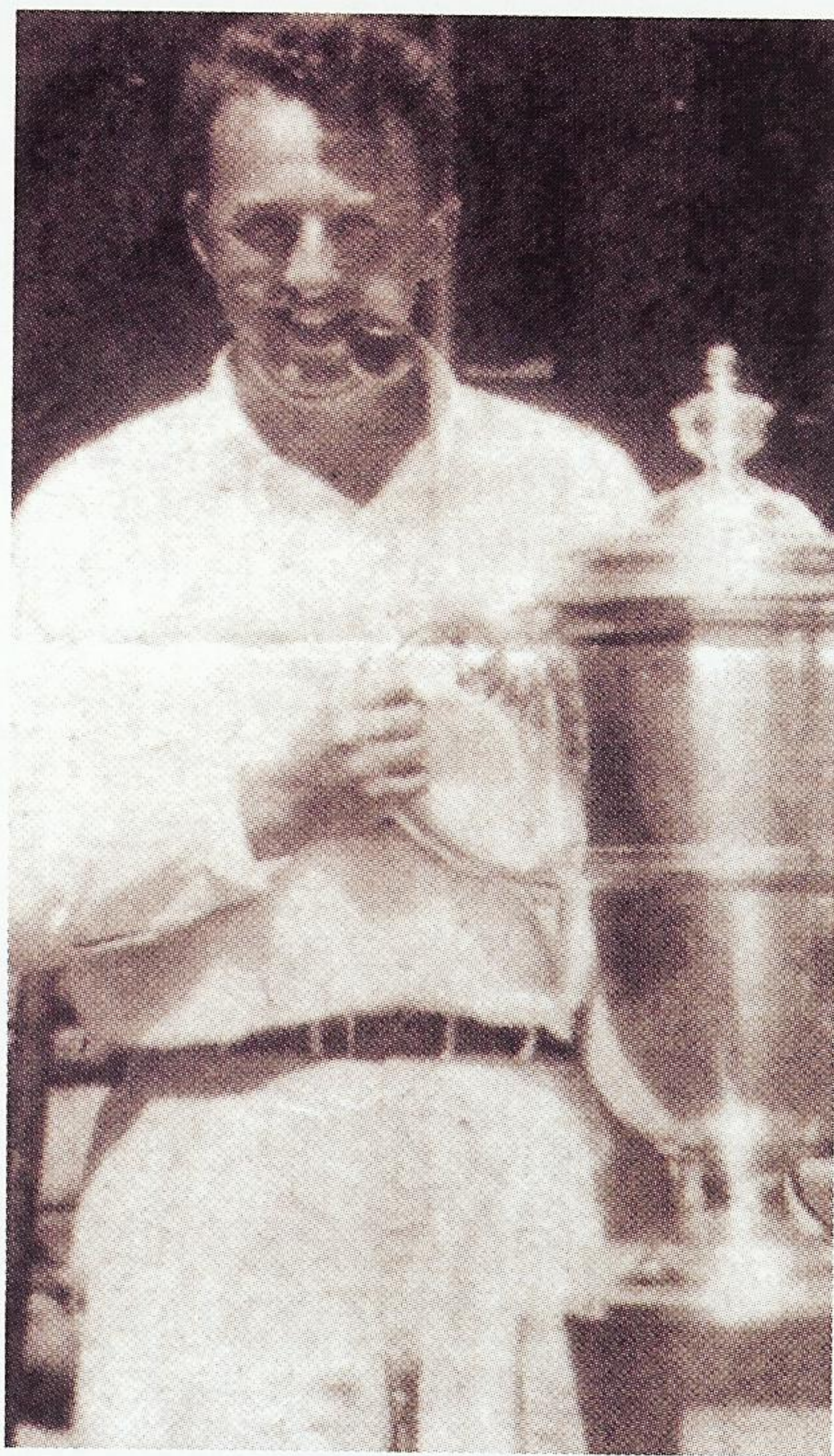
The Poughkeepsie star had this effort: Wesley VanBenschoten, Poughkeepsie, 2 and 1 in heavy showers; Dudley Ward, Rochester, 1 up; Bud Drexilius, Rochester, 5 and 3; Holt, 1 up, and Goodwin, 11 and 9.

Ray jumped to a 5 up lead at 18 and with accurate iron play and birdies on long putts shot a 32 on the third nine. He was two under par after 27 holes and his other birdies came on 19, 21, 24 and 25.

Later that year Billows made the first of three runners-up in the U.S. Amateur, losing in the finals to Johnny Goodwin, the 1933 U.S. Open champion, 2 down at Alderwood, Oregon.

Willie Turnesa of Elmsford' Briar Hills GC was medalist and the 1938 state champion at Oak Ridge GC, Mamaroneck. Later that year he also won the US Amateur defeating Buell F. Abbott 6 and 7 at Oakmont CC near Pittsburgh.

Turnesa shot a 70 for the medal while Goodwin had a 71 and Billows a 72.



Ray Billows

The Turnesa record: Charles Pettijohn, Rye, 3 and 2, even with par; Dave Scope, Mt. Vernon, 4 and 3, one under; Michael Ferente, Rochester, 7 and 6; Billows, 22 holes and Goodwin, 8 and 7.

Willie finally ended the Billows match when he canned a 25-foot putt for a birdie and Ray missed a four-footer. That was the longest semi-final up to that time.

Goodwin proved an easy match in the finals for the second straight year. He was down six holes after 18 and lost two more holes in the afternoon for the 8-7 result.



Willy Turnesa

Two of the founding members of the association died in the thirties, Ganson DePew of Buffalo in 1934 and Don W. Parker of Garden City in 1935. DePew served as second vice president and the association's delegate to the U.S. Golf Association and donated the championship trophy that still is in competition.

Parker, a Wall Street advertising executive, was the charter secretary-treasurer and long-time president serving from 1926 until his unexpected death. When the New York Open was dropped, Parker led the expansion into the Women's Amateur in 1930 and the Junior Boys in 1931.

E.E. Wyman of St. Andrew's CC, the nation's oldest golf club, was named president but his term was cut short when he was lost at sea during a Pan American clipper flight in the Pacific. Sherrill Sherman, who had also served as first vice president during Parker's regime, again filled in until Milton S. Bowman of Siwanoy CC, Bronxville, was elected with William Stark of Syracuse as first vice president.

The 30's closed out with another great champion emerging as Richard Chapman of Greenwich, Connecticut, but a member at Hickory CC, added the state title to the French Amateur at Siwanoy CC. Chapman added the U.S. Amateur in 1940 and the British and Canadian Amateurs in the 1940's.

Tommy Goodwin led the 143 entries in the qualifying with a 70 on the par 71 6,435 yard layout. Billows shot a 72 and Chapman a 76.

Chapman raced through the title flight: over Victor del Guercio, Westchester, 4-2; Edwin F. Callan, Westchester, 4-3; John Ayling, Siwanoy, 4-3; Billows, 2 up, and Arthur Atkinson Jr., Winged Foot, 9 and 7. Atkinson defeated 2 and 1 to gain the final.

Part of the final match was played in a downpour but Chapman still shot 69 in the morning to go 5 up and was even par on the front nine in the afternoon. An eagle 2 at 29 ended the match in dramatic fashion.

