

The Ray Billows-Tommy Goodwin rivalry was renewed in 1946 at Yahnundasis Golf Club in Utica with the Winged Foot GC star an easy victor 8 and 6, the worst loss in the Poughkeepsie golfer's illustrious career in state competition.

It was a payback for a 1927 11 and 9 rout that was the widest margin of victory at that time. It was Billows' second title of seven and came a year after losing to Goodwin in a tight match that went an extra hole. That was Tommy's second state victory of four.

Goodwin was victim of another blowout in 1938 when Willie Turnesa of Elmsford won 8 and 7.

The medalist in 1946 with an even par 71 was Al Ackley of Oneida. Billows followed at 75, Doug Ford of Harriman at 76 and Goodwin at 77. A face from the past, 1926 champ Al Brodbeck of Bronxville, qualified for match play but went out in the first round losing to Dr. Rocco Impaglia of Auburn.

Goodwin had only one close match as he advanced: 5 and 3 over Tony Langan of Syracuse, 1 up over John Snell of Utica, 5 and 4 over Larry Murphy of Utica, and 3 and 2 over Ford in a 36-hole semi-final. Billows fell 8 and 6 in the final.



Ray Billows

It was a five hole margin after 27 and Tommy sailed home winning three straight by scoring 5-3-4 and his third title.

Dick Meyer, 23, from Winged Foot, came out of the pack in 1947 at Westchester GC, Rye, to win 4 and 3 over Stan Kowal, 28, of Utica. Goodwin didn't defend because of illness. Nearly 200 were in the field as this tournament gained rapidly in popularity.

The medal was shared by Mal Galletta of Douglaston, a building contractor, and Stan Banacek, a Syracuse fireman, with 71's. It was the third time Galletta had tied for the medal and he came in as North-South and Long Island champion. Doug Ford shot 73, Mayer 74, Al Brodbeck and Billows 76.

Billows lost in the quarter-finals to Jack Lyons of Garden City after he ousted Frank Strafati, the Metropolitan champion. Lyons was the victim of Kowal.

The scoreboard read for Mayer: over Ray Farkey, Oak Hill; 19 holes over William Kuntz, Larchmont; 2 up over Mortimer Jaffee, Port Chester; 2 and 1 over medalist Banacek and 4 and 3 over Kowal.

Mayer, who soon turned pro and won the U.S. Open in 1957, took the lead after two holes and held it at nine, added another hole at 18 and still another at 27. The scores were 37-38 at 9, 73-75 at 18 and 34-35 at 27. When the match ended Mayer was even par for the 33 holes.

Another future national champion emerged in 1948 at Brookfield CC, Clarence, when Sam Urzetta of Rochester's Midvale CC defeated Lloyd Ribner of White Plains 5 and 4.

Alex Banacek of Syracuse, one of four brothers competing in this event, set a qualifying record with a 33-33-66. A brother, Stan had tied for the medal in 1947. Mayer, the defending champion, shot a 74 and Alex Stevenson of Niagara Falls, the 1942 winner, was at 75.

Ray Billows and Willie Turnesa of Elmsford were not in the tourney probably because they were competing in the U.S. Amateur at Memphis, Tennessee. Turnesa, the 1938 national winner, defeated Billows 2 and 1 in the finals, a battle of former New York State titlists living only 60 miles apart in the Hudson Valley. It was the third time Ray had reached the national finals only to lose.

Stevenson made a valiant try for the title, ousting Mayer 1 up (19 holes) and future champion Billy Shields of Albany before losing to Urzetta in the quarter-finals.

Urzetta's record: defeated Tom Christian, Fulton, 6 and 5; Stan Woods, Syracuse, 4 and 3; Tony Durante, Syracuse, 2 and 1; Stevenson, 2 and 1; Gar Miller, Hamburg, 2 up and Ribner, 5 and 4. Ribner had won from Mike Jaros of Endicott 3 and 2 to reach the finals.

Sam was too steady for Ribner and gained a 5 up lead at 18 and was only one over par when the match ended. Urzetta was to win the U.S. crown in 1950 over Frank Stranahan of Toledo on the 39th hole in Minneapolis.

Ray Billows was to win his seventh and last title in 1949 at Syracuse Yacht and Country Club where Mort Reed of Rochester tied the medalist record with a 35-31-66 with one putt on nine greens. Alex Banacek had set the record the previous year.



This is another chapter in a series from Frederick W. Box's manuscript, "The 20th Century NYSGA". Mr. Box of Elmira is the New York State Golf Association's first and long-time historian, now retired.

NYSGA History: Chapter 6

Sam Urzetta started his defense with a 71 and Billows shot 72. John Ward of Syracuse, the eventual finalist, had ended Sam's hopes of repeating 4 and 3.

The Poughkeepsie veteran's victories were: Joe Calban, Syracuse, 1 up; Henry Lubke, Jr., Buffalo, 4 and 3; Jerry Dimmick, Binghamton, 4 and 3; O.M. Masters, Binghamton, 4 and 3; Tony Langan, Syracuse, 1 up (aided when the loser

kicked a ball accidentally on 16) and Ward, 1 up (39 holes).

Billows birdied 36 to even the match and escaped on 38 when Ward missed a 2-foot putt. He won 39 with a par as a disturbed Ward lost concentration. Ray led early winning four holes in a row from 8 to 11 to go 3 up. He remained two up at 18 but Ward gained ground in the afternoon and twice had Billows on the ropes only to fall in extra holes.

Administratively, the Forties began with Bill Stark of Syracuse assuming the presidency in 1940. Theodore J. Marcellus of Wheatley Hills, East Williston, L.I., serving 1941-44, Harry Harmon of Oak Hill, Rochester, 1945-46, and Duane Tower of Niagara Falls 1947-49. Added to the executive committee early in the decade were: George F. Handel, Rye; Gilman P. Tiffany, Plandome; James F. Breuil, Buffalo; Arthur Atkinson, Mamaroneck; Ray Billows, Poughkeepsie, and Frank Mitchell, Auburn.

The first woman to join the committee was Mrs. Ruth Torgerson of Garden City who won the women's title five times. Others added in 1947 included Noble Miller, Canandaigua, and Theodora S. Stacy, Binghamton.

During this period the stymie was abolished, a state law was adopted exempting caddies from unemployment insurance and the age dropped from 18 to 14 and liquor license fees moderated. When it was voted to continue play during the war, member clubs were requested to hold monthly tournaments to benefit the Red Cross and any state tournament profits to also go to the Red Cross. The state Senior Men's Championship was started but a pro-am was discussed but no decision was reached.

Earlier a mixed foursome tournament was held but was dropped the next year. All tournaments were restricted to members of clubs belonging to the association and to players having lived in the state at least six months. The exception was the Women's Amateur which continued as an invitational. Consideration of a publincs tourney for men was dropped.

So the association weathered the World War II years and grew in support upstate while gradually losing in the metropolitan region. Thus fewer and fewer tournaments were played downstate and more and more upstate supporters led the association.

In the late 40's the Metropolitan Golf Association threatened to withdraw its member clubs from the NYSGA because of financial disagreements. Our first president, Sherrill Sherman, was drafted to become treasurer and solve the dilemma. He instituted auditing of the association's accounts by an outside expert and that has continued thereafter. After serving in 1950 and 1951, Sherman resumed his place on the advisory committee.

In that same time frame the USGA complained about lack of cooperation and a committee headed by President Oscar Guilfoil of Syracuse brought the state body into line. For his efforts, he was awarded a gold medal.

The NYSGA moved its 1950 tournament into the Southern Tier for the first time and a local product carried off the trophy at the Binghamton Country Club. Mike Dudik of Endicott IBM Course pulled out a 1 up victory on the 37th hole.

Lloyd Ribner of White Plains, the finalist, and Larry Murphy of Utica shared the medal with 70's. Ray Billows did not defend but Sam Urzetta, former state and national champion, shot a 73, then lost to Bill Bogle of Poughkeepsie.

Dudik's record was: 5 and 3 over Tucker Campbell, Sleep Hollow; 2 and 1 over Joe Biasone, Syracuse; 2 and 1 over John Cwik, Poughkeepsie; 4 and 3 over Mike Bayus, Auburn; 1 up over Paul Kelly, Scarborough-on-Hudson, and 1 up (37) against Ribner. Dudik was two under par against both Bayus and Kelly.

Ribner, a printing plant owner, led most of the way, being 1 up at 9, 4 up at 18 and still 2 up at 27. The White Plains golfer shot a 68 in the morning to 72 for Dudik but lost his touch in the afternoon with a 77 to 74 for the lanky Endicott player.

Dudik won 29 and 30 to even the match but lost 31 with three putts. Ribner gave a hole away on 33 by hitting out-of-bounds. After winning 34 with a 20-foot birdie putt Dudik double-bogied 35 to even the match. Then both bogied 36 but Mike birdied 37 to pull the upset.

The championship match was scarred in a controversy over whether Dudik used a caddy. He had carried his own clubs in the previous matches and intended to do this in the finals. President Oscar Guilfoil of Syracuse was adamant that the dignity required a caddy and Dudik finally agreed when a caddy volunteered his services.



Sam Urzetta



Mike Dudik

