

The Max Payne Junior Tournament

Some golf associations develop strong junior programs. Others have mature junior programs presented to them.

The Carolina Golf Association has both. It has, since World War II, conducted an excellent junior competition at Charlotte, N. C., but it inherited its oldest and most storied event.

Each June some 200 boys from all over the Carolinas assemble at the Greensboro Country Club, in Greensboro, N. C., for the Carolinas Junior Golf Tournament, and almost everyone refers to it as "the Max Payne tournament."

The Greensboro Junior Chamber of Commerce has conducted the affair since 1947, but it does it along the lines which the late Max Payne, of Greensboro, established from 1927 through 1946.

Max Payne was not a wealthy man, but he was vitally interested in boys and in golf. He and Fred Newnham, then professional at the Greensboro Country Club, originated the tournament in 1927, and Payne ran it as pretty much a one-man show until his death.

How Payne Worked

The promotion of the tournament became a year-round avocation for him. He was not satisfied with the 15 entries he had the first year, and he devoted himself continuously to developing interest in it. There was no money readily available to him for the necessary expenses, so he traveled throughout the Carolinas, soliciting contributions from interested individuals. His time was not entirely his own, so he arranged his vacations to coincide with busy days immediately before and during the play.

After Max Payne's death, in 1946, the competition was so well established that, by common consent and popular demand, the Greensboro Junior Chamber of Commerce was asked to assume responsibility for it. It has conducted the event since 1947 and maintained it on the same high

plane set by Max Payne. The costs of more than \$500 have been met from the profits of the Greater Greensboro Open, which has become a fixture of the winter tour.

The tournament has always been held at match play, and the players have been divided into flights according to their qualifying scores.

The age limit was 16 years until 1949, when it was increased to 18 in order to conform to the Junior Chamber of Commerce junior golf program and to permit the tournament to serve as a qualifying event for the Junior Chamber of Commerce tournament.

The number of participants was 213 in 1948, 201 in 1949, 193 in 1950, 233 in 1951 and 220 in 1952.

One of the most interesting aspects of the tournament is the "alumni" it has developed. The list of winners includes such well-known golfing names as Bobby Dunkelberger, Johnny Palmer and Harvie Ward. The list of entrants who never did win includes such names as Skip Alexander and Johnny Bulla. The first winner, in 1927, was Erwin Laxton, and he eventually became president of the Carolina Golf Association.

The rules of the tournament permit any boy to play his qualifying round any time during the week prior to the official qualifying day, except, of course, on Saturday and Sunday. Boys living in the immediate vicinity of Greensboro are requested to qualify in advance. This enables the Greensboro Junior Chamber of Commerce to handle a field of more than 200.

Boys of 12 years and older qualify at eighteen holes and are placed in senior flights. The championship flight consists of the thirty-two low qualifiers and the other flights consist of sixteen players each. Boys of 11 years and under qualify at nine holes and are placed in junior flights of eight each.

There is no entrance or green fee.