

# FLORENCE JUNIORS PRODUCE A WINNER

BY

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In 1953, during the Junior Amateur Championship in Tulsa, Okla., Grant Bennett predicted: "I may bring you a winner in 1958, but I'm not sure what his name will be."

Since Bennett, who is professional at the Florence Country Club, in Florence, S.C., conducts an outstanding junior golf program at his club and often escorts strong contingents to junior championships, his remark made an impression.

The mystery about the winner's name was puzzling, however.

"The fact is, I have two or three boys who are thirteen and playing remarkable golf," he explained. "It might be any one of them."

Well, five years passed, and 128 boys of 17 years or less, the cream of the nation's junior golfers, assembled at the University of Minnesota Golf Course, in St. Paul, Minn., last month for the 11th USGA Junior Amateur Championship. They fired away at each other in 18-hole matches, and after three days only four were left.

Two of them, true to Bennett's word, were from Florence, S.C., a quiet little tobacco town of about 30,000 persons. In one half of the draw was Gordon (Buddy) Baker and in the other his fellow-member of the Florence Country Club and classmate and teammate at McClenaghan High School, Billy Womack. Both were 17 and in their final year of eligibility.

## Mentor Flies Overnight to Watch

And flying through the night in the hope of seeing them meet in the final was Grant Bennett.

The dream match did not materialize.

Baker came through his semi-final nicely, playing fifteen holes in two over par and beating Kenneth (Tom) Finke, 17, of Tucson, Ariz., a quarter-finalist the year before, 4 and 3.

Womack, however, encountered problems in his semi-final. Lacking the touch he had displayed in earlier matches, he played eighteen holes in 74, three over

## NEW MEMBERS OF THE USGA

### Regular

Auburn Country Club,	Ind.
Beeville Country Club,	Texas
Brunswick Naval Air Station Golf Course,	Me.
Capitol City Country Club,	Texas
Cooperstown Country Club,	N. Y.
Country Club of Grinnell,	Iowa
Dalhart Country Club,	Texas
Earlington Golf Association,	Wash.
Encanto Women's Golf Association,	Ariz.
Flying Hills Golf Club,	Cal.
Fox Lake Golf Club,	Wis.
Gillespie Country Club,	Ill.
Groton Country Club,	Mass.
Hancock Park Golf Association,	Texas
Henderson Golf & Country Club,	Ky.
Indian Valley Men's Golf Club,	Cal.
LaCumbre Golf & Country Club,	Cal.
Long Island Country Club,	N. Y.
Monterey Bay Golf & Country Club,	Cal.
North Plains Country Club,	Texas
Oak Leaf Country Club,	Ill.
Olivia Golf Club,	Minn.
Paris Mountain Country Club,	S. C.
Patterson Country Club,	Conn.
Ponce de Leon Golf Club,	Fla.
Pompano Beach Country Club,	Fla.
Range End Golf Club,	Pa.
Snow Hill Country Club,	Ohio
Walnut Hills Golf Club,	Ohio
Wanamassa Golf Club,	N. J.
Westover Golf Course,	Mass.

par, and lost on the nineteenth to R. Douglas Lindsay, 17, of Bethesda, Md., a member of the Bethesda Country Club and a recent graduate of Bethesda-Chevy Chase Senior High School. Lindsay holed a 30-foot putt on the nineteenth for a birdie 3.

## Great Scoring in Final

It was, therefore, Baker versus Lindsay, in the final. For nine holes they were sensational. They hit the turn in 32 and 33, and all even. Baker had needed fifteen putts and Lindsay only twelve. Balls were dropping from fifteen to forty feet, and in one stretch Lindsay one-putted four successive greens.

Then Baker displayed his greater staying powers and drew away to win, 2 and 1, with a card which was two under par for the seventeen holes.

A solid, albeit fast, swinger and a com-



Grant Bennett (third from left), professional at the Florence Country Club, Florence, S.C., with his three proteges at the Junior Amateur Championship held at the University of Minnesota Golf Course, St. Paul, Minn. They are, from left to right: John D. Orr, who reached the third round; Billy Womack, semi-finalist, and Gordon (Buddy) Baker, the winner.

petitor who can catch fire when necessary, Baker has been a boy to watch all three years he has qualified. It seems reasonably safe to predict that he will go on in golf.

Although he got a jump on his Florence buddies in the Junior this year, there is really little to choose between Baker and Womack, and even among Baker, Womack and John D. Orr, the third member of the 17-year-old triumvirate from the Florence Country Club, who lost in the third round but stayed to cheer on his club-mates. At home Baker and Womack trade honors from tournament to tournament, and Orr, an outstanding putter, gets a share, too.

The beaten quarter-finalists were:

Labron E. Harris, Jr., 16, of Stillwater, Okla., who dropped the last three holes to lose, 1 down, to Womack's 69. Harris' father is the famed coach of Oklahoma State golf teams who helped develop Bo Winger, Don January, George Bigham, Bob Goetz, Ab Justice and Jim Tom Blair and then finished twenty-ninth at 300 in

the Open Championship last June to beat most of them at the age of 49. Young Labron, who is entering his senior year at Stillwater High School and has yet to make a grade lower than A, was playing in the Junior for the first time but is a veteran of two Amateur Public Links Championships. He is the only quarter-finalist who will be eligible to play next year at Stanford University.

George G. Smith, Jr., 17, of New Bern, N.C., who lost to Lindsay, 3 and 2. Smith is a senior at New Bern High School and a member of the New Bern Country Club.

Charles Courtney, 17, of La Jolla, Cal., who bowed to Baker, 3 and 2. Courtney, who played spectacularly in his first Junior, is a graduate of La Jolla High School and expects to enter San Diego State this fall. He is a member of the La Jolla Country Club.

C. Barry Meerdink, 17, of Muscatine, Iowa, who lost to Finke, 3 and 2. A graduate of Muscatine High School, Butch has not yet made up his mind about college.

There was more material for future years, in the round of sixteen, however, since five of the eight losers will be eligible next year. George Boutell, now of Phoenix, Ariz., but originally from Minneapolis, is only 14 and a sophomore at Central Phoenix High School. Mickey McMahon, a junior at Carrollton, Ga., High School, and Bob Littler (no relation to Gene), a sophomore at Athens, Ohio, High School, are 15. Ken Folkes, a junior at Concord, N.C., High School and Ralph Johnston, of Garden City, N.Y., a senior at Brooklyn Tech, are 16.

#### **Familiar Faces Returned**

Once again the field of qualifiers was pleasingly studded with familiar faces. Three boys, all 17, were playing for the fourth year. They were John V. Barcello, III, of New Orleans, La., David B. Lawrence, Jr., also of New Orleans, and Marion C. (Sonny) Methvin, Jr., of Little Rock, Ark.

Seven others were in the Championship proper for the third time. They were Baker, Womack, Orr, Rick Casabella, of Louisville, Ky., Robert R. Kirouac, of Sharon, Mass., Eddie Schnurr, also of Louisville, and Curtiss Siegel, of Snyder, N.Y.

A five-year qualifier seems to be in the making in Kirouac. Bobby qualified for the third successive year in the Boston section, and has two remaining years of eligibility.

The fact that Florence, Louisville and New Orleans dominate these listings clearly reflects the excellent junior golf programs which have been carried on in those places over the years.

#### **Favorites Fade Early**

Four of the "veterans" dominated the advance discussions, but three went out with the echoes. Methvin, a semi-finalist

last year, lost in the first round, 2 down, to John Lotz, of Alameda, Cal. Casabella, also 17 and a semi-finalist last year, was eliminated in the second round by Ray Pierson, of Boulder, Colo., 4 and 3. Jon Hoffman, 17, of Windom, Minn., a quarter-finalist last year, won two matches but lost to Courtney, 1 down. Finke, a quarter-finalist last year, lasted to the semi-finals this year to make the best two-year record.

Forty-nine of the boys who were beaten in the first round visited the Minneapolis Golf Club for a consolation tournament the next day. All of them had a wonderful time in delightful surroundings, and Ralph Maverstein, of Lafayette, Ind., won a USGA silver medal with a 74. Methvin made a birdie on the second hole to defeat Dick M. Perry, of Upland, Cal., in a play-off to determine the disposition of the second and third medals after both had scored 75s. The Minnesota Golf Association then invited all the boys to luncheon as its guests, and several were so entranced with the course and the hospitality that they went out and played again.

The heart of the Junior Amateur Championship is not found in the records which tell who won and who lost, however. It is found in the little vignettes such as the one which took place after young Labron Harris, Jr., defeated George Boutell in the round of sixteen. Boutell, who is only 14, was properly disappointed in his performance, and as soon as he could discharge the amenities he ducked into the clubhouse, rented a large bucket of balls and headed for the practice range. A few minutes later he was joined by Labron Harris, Sr., who spent the next hour giving the young man his son had beaten advice which may enable him to turn the tables next year.

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### **COUNTRY CLUB OPERATIONS IN 1957**

(Continued from page 16)

ditions, replacements or depreciation), nor any fixed charges, such as real estate taxes, property insurance or interest on borrowed capital. The net cost of golf and grounds, after the addition of golf shop, caddy and tournament expenses and the deduction of greens fees and other golf income, was \$1,827 in the small clubs, compared with \$1,736 in 1956, \$2,295 in the medium-sized clubs,

compared with \$2,178, and \$2,650 in the large clubs, compared with \$2,435.

In conclusion, we wish to point out that the value of this study to a particular club is entirely dependent upon the ways in which the data are used. Since the "Uniform System of Accounts for Clubs" is followed in compiling the study, the results of those clubs already following the system will be most easy to compare with the operating results shown in this study.