

# TOM ROBBINS AGAIN LEADS THE SENIORS

Monterey Peninsula  
Attractive Site

Characteristically, all who play in the USGA Senior Amateur Championship qualify as "veterans." They must have reached their 55th birthday and earned handicaps not exceeding ten strokes.

If the term "veteran senior" were not redundant, however, Thomas C. Robbins would qualify. Now 65 years old, retired and living near Pinehurst, N.C., he is certainly a veteran among seniors.

When Tom Robbins, who didn't start playing until he was 31, entered senior golf, he nearly ran away with the show. He won the championship of the United States Seniors' Golf Association in 1951 and 1952, the championship of the American Seniors' Golf Association in 1951, the old Masters Tournament in 1951, 1952 and 1953 and whole series of senior events at the Winged Foot Golf Club, in Westchester County and in the Metropolitan New York area.

In the fourth USGA Senior Amateur Championship this fall, Tom Robbins was the third oldest of the thirty-two who qualified for match play, but he proved he can still hold his own with the best by going all the way to win his first victory.

The championship was held at the picturesque Monterey Peninsula Country Club, in Pebble Beach, Cal., and in the minds of many Californians, had been made to order for "young" John W. Dawson, of Palm Desert, Cal., the 1949 Walker Cup player, who had turned 55 earlier in the year and already had won the championship of the United States Seniors' Golf Association in his first year of eligibility. Of course, J. Clark Espie, of Indianapolis, 59, also was a man to be reckoned with, since he was defending Champion, as well as runner-up in 1956.

Tom Robbins met them head-on, as becomes a Champion. He disposed of Espie in the semi-finals, 2 up, and Dawson in the final, 2 and 1. Against Espie, he scored a 76, four over par. Against Daw-

son, he did the seventeen holes in one under par. Dawson's victim by 2 and 1 in the other semi-final was 56-year-old Ross McDade, Jr., of El Centro, Cal., former Louisiana Champion and a frequent competitor on the Monterey Peninsula.

Although close all the way, the final really broke at the 372-yard eighth hole, where Tom Robbins sliced his drive into a ravine and then, with his ball lying in a shallow stream, played a magnificent No. 4 iron 160 yards through guarding trees dead to the hole for a birdie 3. It gave him a lead he never relinquished, and he has since donated the iron to the USGA Museum in "Golf House" to perpetuate the memory of the shot.

It was apparent that the seniors, who seem to have a good time everywhere, had an especially good time on the Monterey Peninsula. The Country Club's course, which measures an interesting 6,236 yards, threads through pine woods and along oceanside sand dunes to provide spectacular variety. And near-by in the Del Monte Forest are the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links and the Cypress Point Club. Most of the seniors took time to play them, too, although there were also, at the Country Club, consolation match play flights of sixteen for non-qualifiers and an 18-hole consolation stroke round for all who were beaten in the first round of match play.

In addition, the social amenities were exploited to the full, not only at the customary USGA Players' Dinner but in other ways. On the Sunday evening before play started, the California Seniors Golf Association entertained at the hill-top home of Col. and Mrs. Warren J. Clear and the hospitality there was as breath-taking as the view of Monterey Bay. On Monday morning, as each player teed off, he was presented a silver money clip, suitably engraved, as a gift from the California Seniors. As the players moved over the course they found eager

and friendly "fore-caddies" behind almost every hill and tree, all members of the 200-man senior association which operates within the membership of the Country Club and organized by Rear Adm. Clifford W. Eshom.

Clark Espie opened his defense by winning the qualifying medal with a one-under-par 35-36—71, the lowest score in the comparatively brief history of the event.

Eight players tied at 79 for the last of the thirty-two places in the Championship, and the early darkness which fell with the return to standard time forced a postponement of the play-off to the following morning. Then, playing through heavy dew, Vincent Fitzgerald, of Garden City, N.Y., made a solid par 4 on the first and a twelve-foot putt for a birdie 3 on the second to take the place.

Adrian McManus, father of the semi-finalist in the recent Amateur Championship in San Francisco, was a local favorite since in the preceding week he had successfully defended his California Senior Championship by scoring two 70s on this same course. It was, therefore, a mild surprise when he was beaten by James H. McAlvin of Lake Forest, Ill., in the first round.

For 68 year-old Chick Evans, of Chicago, the former Amateur and Open Champion, this fourth Senior Amateur Championship carried a special thrill. For the first time, he qualified for match play, with a fine 77, and then won two matches before bowing to Espie, 4 and 3, in the quarter-finals. Evans was one of those who assisted in establishing a USGA Championship for seniors.

## SENIOR GOLFERS — AND CHAMPIONS, TOO



—Julian P. Graham Photo

John W. Dawson (left) turned 55 this year and made his first attempt to win the USGA Senior Amateur Championship at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club, in Pebble Beach, Cal., but he was turned back in a par-breaking final by Thomas C. Robbins (right), who is 65 and has learned a trick or two about senior golf.