

N. C. MORRIS, ELDER STATESMAN OF GOLF

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When Newton Cleveland Morris celebrated his 73rd birthday last September, Denver's "Mr. Golf" figured he was exactly "one over par." Golf and N. C. Morris are synonymous.

Morris, known since his collegian days at Colorado College as "Tub," is currently logging his 41st year as a regional golf official.

In 1919 he was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Colorado Golf Association and has been associated with the conduct of every major tournament held in Colorado since.

In 1939 he became the USGA's Sectional Affairs committeeman in Colorado. He now serves on both the Public Links and the Senior Championship Committees. When the first player teed off in the 1959 Public Links Championship at Denver's Wellshire municipal golf course, it marked a unique distinction for Tub.

Through Mr. Morris' efforts it was the first time the tournament was played on the same course twice.

Mr. Morris first attempted to bring the Public Links Championship to Denver in 1942. World War II, however, prevented this. The USGA Championships were postponed until 1946 and Wellshire was the site of the post-war Public Links renewal.

Mr. Morris, a late convert to golf despite his tenure, has contributed immeasurably to the sport in Colorado.

Since 1919 he has annually conducted or been associated with at least seven city and state tournaments. Without his unwavering devotion the game would not have attained the stature it now enjoys in Colorado.

The USGA has been particularly favorable to Colorado recently. The Public Links was played in Denver July, 1959, the National Amateur was held at the Broadmoor course in Colorado Springs last September, and the 60th National Open was played at the Cherry Hills Country Club, Denver, this year, in June. In 1962 the Curtis Cup Match will be played at Broadmoor.



N. C. Morris

Mr. Morris also assisted in bringing the touring pros back to Denver in 1958 after a ten-year absence.

Tub helped pull golf through some thin years. Striving for municipal and private course interests. Any attempt here to "sweeten" the account would not be in character with Tub.

He is a rare person, not given to lavish praise or vindictive criticism. He is rare in another aspect, too—a native Denverite.

Born September 28, 1886, Tub attended Denver public schools, graduating from West High School in 1905.

He started his formal sports career as a West "Cowboy," lettering in football, baseball and track for four years.

It wasn't until after his collegiate days at Colorado College in Colorado Springs that he took a golf club in his hands. In fact, he once razed his CC football coach for playing "an old ladies' game" because the coach relaxed on the links.

After being graduated in 1909 with degrees in history and economics, Mr. Morris launched a 41-year teaching career beginning at Rocky Ford High School and terminating when he retired from classroom duties at West in 1950.

It was at West that Tub first came into prominence as a sports leader. In 25 years of coaching his Cowboy prepsters won seven championships in football, a like number in basketball and three in baseball.

He rates his 1930 Cowboy nine as the "best high school baseball team I've ever seen."

That year Morris' boys played only one complete, nine-inning game, because of a league rule that terminated a contest when one team had a ten-run advantage. North's Vikings extended West and forced the Cowboys to play nine full innings before West won the championship game.

This was the type of team that appealed to Tub. Close them out as soon as possible. It was sound advice in baseball and although he didn't know it then, he was to carry out that same mercy killing theory in golf.

While a student at Colorado College he played four years at fullback, four as an outfielder and four years as a field man in track.

Tub threw a block on a momentous day in 1906 at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo., when CC's quarterback, Harry Fisher, passed to end Herb Sinton for a touchdown and the CC Tigers defeated Colorado University 6-0. CC's offense? The "T" formation.

Gus Dorais and Knute Rockne, who put Notre Dame in the nation's sports limelight with aerial proficiency, weren't to popularize the forward pass until 1913 when the Irish defeated Army 35-13.

Through four seasons as a Tiger fly chaser Tub didn't make an error until the final game of his senior year. And that bobble didn't have any effect on the outcome—CC won handily.

Still, Tub feels that single miscue spoiled a four-year personal goal. He can't forget it even now.

It wasn't until after he came to West High School in January of 1915 that Mr. Morris was pushed into his first golf game.

Charlie Sedgewicke, a sports shop manager, persuaded Tub to try the game. Tub

was a Sedgewicke customer and friend and in a "weak moment," gave golf a try. He played his first rounds at City Park, then an eight-hole course.

Three years later Tub was runner-up in the Colorado State Amateur championship.

By 1924 he was one of the Centennial State's foremost amateurs. That year he won both the Denver and the State titles. In 1927 he reclaimed the Colorado trophy.

One of Tub's greatest thrills came in 1928 when he defeated Harry Strassburger, a Coffeyville, Kansas haberdasher, for the Broadmoor Hotel's Invitational Championship.

Strassburger was one down to Tub going into the 12th hole of the tricky mountain course.

Strassburger hit his drive straight down the middle on the 12th, while Tub's errant tee shot trickled off the fairway into deep rough. The Kansan, hitting first, put his second shot less than four feet from the pin on the par four hole and it appeared he would even the match here.

But Tub, after surveying the situation, decided a bold shot was necessary. He ruled out the safe punch shot back to the fairway and took a four-wood from his amazed caddie.

Wise galleryites shook their heads. Strassburger's followers smiled. Tub's fans stared in disbelief.

All were even more shaken when Tub laced his shot straight for the pin, the ball flying out of the pesky long hair and rolling inside Strassburger's pin-high position.

The clothier proceeded to two-putt and Tub's birdie climax won the hole. Tub had the tailor neatly sewn up.

Other tournaments and other shots have dotted Tub's career, but his performance on the 12th that day tops them all.

Other honors have come to Tub, too. He has held an office with the Denver Golf Association since 1922 and has been a director in the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association since 1928.

Tub suffered a stroke early in 1959 and his clubs—except for putter—lie idle. Still Tub found the strength to accept a chore with the 1959 Public Links committee. It was closer to his heart than medicine.