

# The Centennial Anniversary of the Golf Course on Milton Harbor in Rye

1921-2021





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## Acknowledgements

As we hope you will see, this book has been a labor of love for many people who care deeply about the golf course on Milton Harbor that is now the home of the Rye Golf Club. Our home course has an interesting history and we hope you will find this book enjoyable and learn a few things. If we have done our job, a few conclusions should become clear: first, we are blessed to have access to this beautiful classic 100-year-old golf course right here in our home town of Rye; second, we owe a debt of gratitude to those who had the foresight to make it so; and third, we must each do our part to pass this gem on in good shape to those who will follow us.

The following people gave many hours of their valuable time to this effort: the Centennial Committee (Eliot Chait, Jim and Lois Codispoti, Donnie Dowd, Jack and Pat Geoghehan, Michael Harrington, Darren Johnston, Akhil Kumar and myself), the Rye Golf Club staff (General Manager Jim Buonaiuto, Assistant General Manager Chris Correale, Head Starter Brian Gillick), the other members of the Rye Golf Club Commission (Mack Cunningham, James Mulcahy and Angela Sposato), RGC members Terry Caffrey, Tom Codispoti, Dave O'Sullivan and Pieter van Vredenburg, Carl Friedrich, Christine Moore, the Rye Historical Society, Westchester County Historical Society and the Metropolitan Golf Association.

Thank you all!

Terry McCartney  
Chair  
Rye Golf Club Commission  
July 2021



Course Centennial Logo 2021

# History

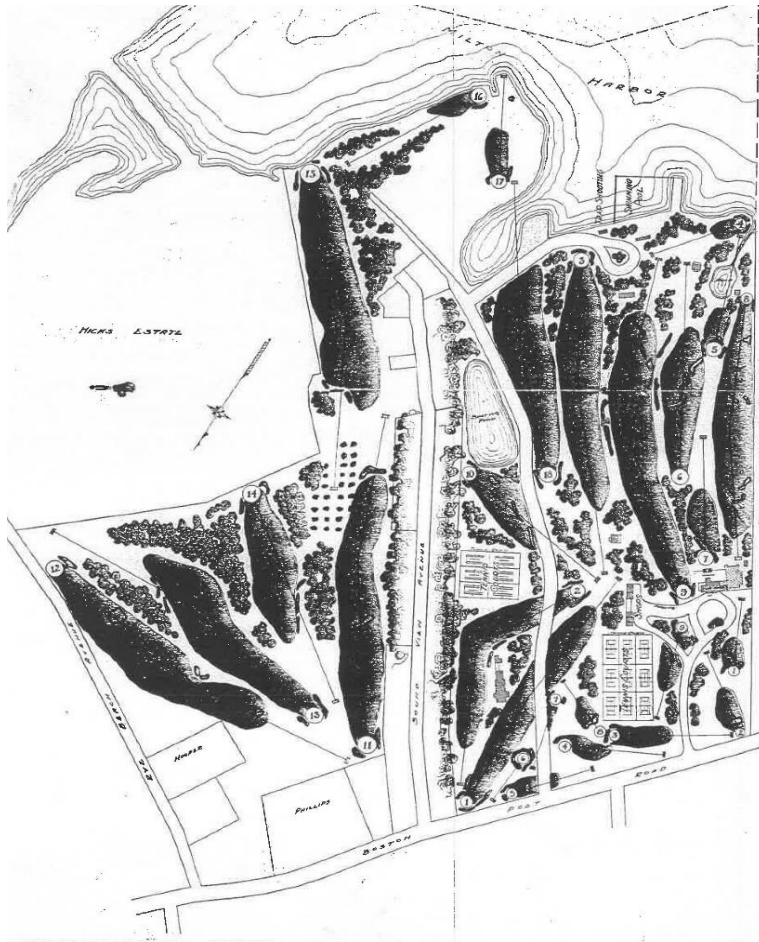
The golf course on Milton Harbor in Rye, New York, was established in 1921 and is unique in many ways. First, the course sits on the waterfront in one of the most expensive areas in the country. Second, despite the prior characteristic, the golf course is municipally owned and open to the community. Third, atop the highest point on the property sits a Gothic castle. The Centennial logo (opposite) was designed with those ideas in mind. Here is the story of 100 years of golf on this very special course.

The golf course on Milton Harbor has been the home of the Rye Golf Club for more than half a century but it had many other names in its early years. The course was originally conceived as an exclusive private country club during the “Roaring Twenties” period after World War I when the U.S. economy was booming and wealthy city dwellers wanted country homes and country clubs.

The golf course was designed and laid out by popular period architect Devereux Emmet and it is a classic Emmet design. He took great advantage of the physical landscape and the then “futuristic” concept that golf was evolving into a game played in the air - meaning that fine aerial play on the golf course would lead to greater scoring opportunities. Emmet routed and defended the course by maximizing the use of the natural terrain and water features, thus achieving a degree of phantom length, and requiring golfers to go airborne to achieve the greatest success.

In January, 1921 the founders of the Rye Country Club purchased the adjacent estates of George C. Park and William Porter Allen in Rye for \$300,000 to form a combined parcel of approximately 150 acres from the Post Road down to

Milton Harbor for their country club. The Club was to be one-of-a-kind in the United States and was modeled after the Ranelagh Club near London and the Glen Eagles Club in Scotland. The club charged a “nominal membership fee” of \$30 with additional charges for the various activities available. The Rye Country Club expected to have 1,000 members with facilities for playing golf, tennis, shooting sports, swimming, beach bathing and more.



Original Rye Country Club proposal, c. 1920



The former Park residence, known as Whitby Castle, became the clubhouse and a restaurant, ballroom, locker rooms, an indoor pool and a gymnasium were added over time. The waters of Milton Harbor were incorporated into the plan for the Club where there would be a salt water pool and 1200 feet of beachfront. The Rye Country Club officially opened on July 9, 1921.



Rye Country Club foursome, c. 1929



Rye Country Club, c. 1925

The Rye Country Club fared well for several years, occasionally hosting luminaries such as baseball icon Babe Ruth (who shot 75) and leading professional golfers of the day such as Gene Sarazen and Walter Hagen. When the Great Depression struck in 1929, like many golf courses in the United States, the Rye Country Club fell onto hard times and eventually filed for bankruptcy in 1936. The golf course itself managed to endure, however.

For about six years during the WWII era, from 1939 to 1945, the golf course was known as the Bayview Country Club. The course survived the tribulations of the Second

World War but was then nearly plowed under to create housing in the immediate post-war period. During that tumultuous time, the golf course was known as the Soundview Country Club (1945-46) and also the Glen Castle Country Club (1946-49).

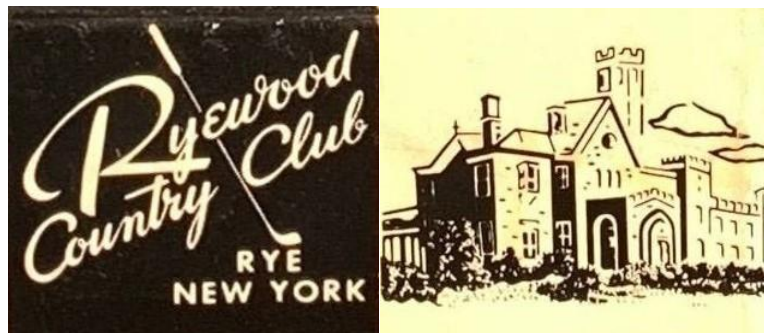


Glen Castle Country Club, c. 1947

According to an article in the Yonkers' Herald Statesman in June 1963, when Mr. Buddy Lee purchased the Bayview Country Club in 1945, he was not permitted to use the word "Rye" in the names of his golf club because there was still then existing stock in the defunct Rye Country Club. Nothing really noteworthy was reported during the brief

Soundview and Glen Castle eras. The Daily Argus of Mount Vernon ran a help wanted ad for caddies at Glen Castle C.C. in July 1947 offering “Guaranteed doubles \$5 per round.” In July 1948, the Rye Chronicle reported a break-in at the Glen Castle pro shop and the theft of \$1,000 worth of clubs, balls and clothing.

Eventually, Mr. Lee was able to reform, reorganize and rename the golf course and grounds the Ryewood Country Club in 1949. Ryewood prospered for a while, hosting numerous tournaments including a pro-member tournament in 1953 involving pros and members from Garden City, Quaker Ridge, Siwanoy, Ridgeway, Sunningdale, Old Oaks, Apawamis, Knollwood and Hampshire (many of which were also Devereaux Emmet designs). On the social side, the newspapers indicate that Ryewood hosted numerous “lavish parties and affairs” throughout the 1950s.



Ryewood also hosted a Metropolitan Golf Association tournament in 1959 to honor John R. Inglis, who was considered to be the dean of MGA professionals at the time. Thirty-four professional golfers played the golf course and Claude Harmon of Winged Foot and Ryewood pro Fred Annon teamed up to shoot 67 tying the team of pros from Sleepy Hollow and Meadowbrook, Gil Cavanaugh and Shelley Mayfield, for the low score. President Dwight

Eisenhower sent a congratulatory telegram to Inglis that was read to the assembled group at a post-tournament dinner at Whitby Castle.



Ryewood Country Club, c. 1960

As the turbulent 1960's began in America, Ryewood struggled financially and was hard pressed to stay afloat. The owner's greatest opportunity was to sell the property, likely to a real estate developer who could quickly realize a tidy profit in the late stages of the post-war building boom. However, an unplanned suitor appeared at Ryewood's door in the form of Westchester County.

The County had a great need for open space and Ryewood's location near the interstate highway, Rye Playland and waterfront access to Milton Harbor and Long Island Sound made it a highly desirable location. This chatter caused a stir among the local population who generally saw the loss of the Ryewood Country Club land to the County as a potential disaster to Rye's "way of life," an expression that was frequently used in the newspaper reports of the day. In losing the land, Rye would lose control of what could come next.

In the early 1960's, the City of Rye experienced a tremendous amount of community activism, which in many ways helped shape its future, and which continues to influence the community to this day. The two greatest political achievements of this time were, first, the successful campaign to oppose the proposed bridge connecting Rye and Oyster Bay on Long Island and, second, the successful acquisition and operation of the Rye Golf Club as a community course. The former had tremendous ramifications for the City of Rye and it can be argued without much serious debate that the latter has had a significant positive impact on the quality of life for the citizens of the community.

Had the proposed cross-sound bridge succeeded, Rye Town Park's waterfront, the County's Marshlands Conservancy, the Edith Reed Sanctuary and the Rye Nature Center would have been critically and irreparably damaged, to say nothing of the destruction of many homes and the suburban way of life in Rye in general. Preventing the bridge to Oyster Bay was a huge victory for Rye, and a rare and famous defeat for Robert Moses, the principal proponent of the project. It is difficult to appreciate how powerful a man Robert Moses was in the Metropolitan New York City and Long Island areas in the mid-twentieth century and defeating

him in court speaks to the combined will and strength of Rye's citizenry and leadership.



Rye-Oyster Bay Bridge proposal, c. 1965

Rye Mayor Ed Grainger was particularly instrumental in both the defeat of the cross-sound bridge and the acquisition of the Ryewood property so it could become the Rye Golf Club. Mayor Grainger is viewed by many longtime residents of Rye as our greatest mayor because of those two monumental victories, against the odds, as well as many smaller but important accomplishments such as starting the Rye Little League and Babe Ruth League and for chairing capital campaigns for the Rye Historical Society and the Rye YMCA. Rye children still play baseball at Grainger Field and all Rye Golf Club members are eternally grateful to Mayor Grainger for his vision and leadership. Without his efforts, our course may well have been a county park or a residential development at the foot of a massive cross-sound bridge.

Another of the key players in making the Rye Golf Club a reality was fifth generation Rye resident Bill Ball. Bill



was a two term City Councilman, during the Grainger era, and was very active at RGC as well where he was a member for 40 years and served on the golf commission. Ball family members have followed in Bill's footsteps in local government and at Rye Golf.

Again, the timing of the fiscal problems of Ryewood and the possibilities of the bridge development cannot be underestimated in terms of the golf course on Milton Harbor. By 1963, when Ryewood's financial issues were beginning to be revealed, a group of concerned citizens, in conjunction with the Rye City Council, formed the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC set out to influence the outcome of what would become of the Ryewood property. This committee was made up of fairly prominent citizens of the time and was chaired by George Birrell, a member of the City Council, as well as a prominent attorney for the Mobil Oil Corporation. Their leadership and expertise were critical in both the early stages of the CAC's formation, as well as what would become the management oversight of the Rye Golf Club, initially known as the Board of Advisors (and now as the Golf Commission).

What became clear in the early stages was that the CAC strongly desired to maintain the property as a golf course for the benefit of Rye citizens. This was a unique concept at the time. While golf was still viewed as a game for the wealthy and elite, it was also gaining tremendous popularity among regular everyday Americans. Thanks in a good part to the national prosperity, "common man" heroes such as Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer and Lee Trevino and a general desire for outdoor recreation, the concept of a community golf course clicked with both those looking for a social outlet as well as those looking to preserve the Rye "way of life."



This inertia ran head on into the fiscal reality and responsibility of the City Council and Mayor Grainger, who were collectively not interested in levying taxes on the citizenry to undertake such a venture. Here the CAC and City Council got creative, creating an “enterprise fund” which would pay for the golf club, be responsible for its ongoing operational costs and would not cost the taxpayers any money or hold the citizenry liable in case of a fiscal failure. The expression “self-funding, self-liquidating” was incorporated and understood to mean that while the Rye Golf Club would be owned by the city, it also would not become a liability to the City if it failed like its predecessors. This became an important credo in the years of prosperity and hardship which would follow and one that demanded consistent and constant management of the Club.

A public bond was proposed in late 1964 for the initial cash outlay of \$1.8 million to purchase the property, which passed by a wide margin. The sale was completed in the winter of 1964-65 and the CAC and City Council set a goal of opening in the spring of 1965, just three months away. Committees were quickly organized to draft policies and procedures, set a budget, perform essential planning, establish operating relationships with vendors and hire a head golf pro.

Well-known local golf professional Steve Doctor was hired as the first head golf pro of the Rye Golf Club in the winter of 1965. Another critical transition was the phasing out of the CAC, which was always viewed as an advocacy group. The CAC was disbanded and the Board of Advisors, a leadership committee of appointees by RGC members who would be approved by and report to the City Council, was established. George Birell was again tapped to lead the Board of Advisors and this group went about the serious work of getting the Rye Golf Club ready for its first season.

Hard work and Mother Nature prevailed and in April 1965, golf balls were flying around the then 44-year-old golf course. As the initial popularity of the golf course played out in the community, plans were made to open up the pool for the summer season. A swim program was established and RGC appeared to be on its way into what would be a prolonged honeymoon era, lasting well through the first several years. The initial year provided a feeling out period between the Club and its members, both of whom sought to define themselves.

There appears to have been a hope for both a “country club” atmosphere, as well as a “public access” facility, as evidenced by many of the club events - dinner dances, golf tournaments, pool parties and social events geared toward both families and adults. The RGC pool facility became an immediate hit. While the golf course received much of the focus, the pool appealed to a wider group of people, and it, combined with an unusually hot summer in 1965, proved to be a natural and inexpensive gathering place for the community. Indeed, the highlight of the 1965 summer season was the Labor Day weekend “splash party” which provided a carnival like atmosphere for members old and young at the pool and was heavily attended that year and for years to come. The original pool program was headed up by Jerry Ambrose, who would stay on as Pool Director for five years, and who would lay the groundwork for a highly successful RGC pool program and swim team.

On the golf course, regular men’s and woman’s tournaments were held, as well as a Club Championship for men, woman and juniors. The Club Championships became a highlight of the golf season then and remain a focal point of the golf season to this day. By the end of 1965, the Rye Golf Club had turned a profit and the great experiment was on its way!

In the first decade that the City owned the Rye Golf Club, the club, its members and the City engaged in a feeling out period during which the character of the club evolved and its organization and survival were tested. From the earliest days, there was a strong sense of social involvement in the club. Social events including dinner dances with live music, pool parties and community events were regularly held at RGC throughout the summer season. After the season, events such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's parties were held during the early years. These events were well attended and gave the club a strong sense of social "being" in addition to the golf course and the pool facilities. Probably the biggest event of the year continued to be the Labor Day weekend pool party that would attract hundreds of members all day long. Diving, swimming and ballet exhibitions were held in the pool, fun events and all-day BBQs were the norm, followed by a dinner dance for the adults.

The pool and pool program held much of the attention of RGC members and it is clear that the pool was the focus of the club in the early days as opposed to the golf course. From 1965 through the mid-1970s it was not unusual for the pool to have over 1,000 visitors per weekend. Within the pool program, the youth swim team was the ultimate focus.

The RGC youth swim team quickly became one of the top programs in swim-happy Westchester County and a matter of great pride for the fledgling club. Under the direction of Jerry Ambrose, the pool program hired Barbara Leichweiss to develop, coordinate and coach the young swimmers. And how she did. In the period from 1965 through 1975, the swim team dominated the popular swim team competitions in Westchester including winning the Westchester Championships on multiple occasions. This early success was

a source of great pride of the members and continued for years to come.

The golf scene at RGC was also in the development phase in the early years. Members concerned themselves with the organization of the course, dealing with issues from how tee times were doled out to assessments for course improvements. Many tournaments were held each year and there was a clear effort to promote woman's golf and youth golf.

The architect of this effort was the new head golf pro Craig Shankland. Hired in 1966, Shankland quickly established a strong teaching program for women and children. This effort would pay off for decades to come, both for Shankland and the woman's and youth programs. He introduced golf to hundreds of people who before 1965 literally had no means of accessing it. The women's golf association that developed soon had enough members to hold nearly weekly tournaments all season long. Shankland also had a hand in developing many young golfers, some of who went on to tremendous golf success in life. As for Shankland himself, after leaving Rye Golf Club after the 1968 season, he steadily built a reputation as a teaching pro, especially for women. This steady rise ultimately landed him with his own teaching academy in Florida, where he is regularly listed as one of the top 100 teaching pros in America

James Corrigan succeeded Shankland in 1969, and would serve RGC faithfully until 1977. Corrigan continued in Shankland's mold, further developing a strong teaching program, with a specific emphasis on the woman's and junior programs. Corrigan, an enormously popular pro, was a prominent fixture in the life of the club and routinely participated in club social events to both show his support and out of his own good nature.



Rye Golf Club, c. 1976

On the course, in the period from 1965 to 1975, several members dominated the golf tournaments. The most well-known was perhaps Vic Iorillo. Vic won the club championship four times in the first ten years, including an impressive three in a row from 1966 to 1968. He would add his fourth in 1972, showing his staying power as an elite golfer in a community known for its golf. Two female golfers stood out in this period as well, Georgette Sullivan and Mary Anne Germond. Sullivan won the title at least three times (records not complete) and Germond won three in a row herself from 1971 to 1973 and finished second in 1975 and 1976.

Another big name from the early days was Len Shindo, who was big on the course and off. Len won the first club championship in 1965, and then finished runner up on several occasions, including as late as 1978. Additionally, Shindo would go on to be the first chair the Rye Golf Commission in 1978. Shindo's wife Marie was also an active member of the ladies' golf program and their daughter Carol won the first girls junior title in 1971. In Junior Golf, Elise Lewin was perhaps Rye Golf Club's first prodigy and strong evidence of the solid early groundwork laid by head golf pros Shankland and Corrigan. Lewin won the girl's junior tournament four years in a row from 1972 to 1975 and won the Met Junior title in 1974.

The first decade ended on a somewhat sad note, with the sudden death of Joe Inglis, the RGC starter and organizer of the caddie ranks. A tribute tournament was organized in his honor and ultimately a plaque erected in his honor was mounted on the rock outcropping behind the 14th green, which remains there to this day.

On the management front, after a strong run of initial popularity, RGC struggled financially in 1969-70 and the City Council expressed its concern often citing the "self-funding, self-liquidating" credo of the club. Fees needed to be increased to keep the club fiscally stable, which caused a good number of members to call for a change to its operating policies and demand a more open process in decision-making. This desire was clearly an issue in City Council elections and many candidates advocated for a board of advisors for the club. This debate would continue on for several years and ultimately two camps emerged: those wanting a city appointed board of advisors to lead the club and, the other, a member elected panel with a professional manager. The latter idea prevailed in the end.

During the 1970s, Whitby Castle became a popular place for young people during the summer. Rye resident and local businessman Angelo Badaloto was awarded a concession to run the catering operation at Whitby Castle and one of his most successful ideas at the club was "Rye Night." On Tuesday nights during the summer, the Whitby Castle ballroom and lounge turned into a full on 1970's disco with live music for 500 plus college-aged kids from all over Westchester County and Southern Connecticut. Despite regular noise complaints from the club's neighbors, Rye Night was "the place to be" for local young people for many years. Many current members of the club were regulars at Rye Night back in the day.

As the calendar turned to the 1980s, the fuel crisis and Iran hostage situation was in the rear-view mirror but gas prices remained high. The financial issues from the late 1970s at the club carried over. During the 1980-82 seasons the eighth and ninth holes were closed for renovation as Milton Harbor was dredged and additional land fill was brought in to raise the fairways. A 16-hole course was just not attracting enough golfers and in 1982 the club recorded a \$40,000 deficit.

Preben Jessen, the club manager at that time, working with the Golf Commission, discussed several alternative sources of revenue such as midyear memberships and fully opening the course to the public. In the end, they decided to maintain the current system and what was a deficit in 1982 was turned into a \$75,000 surplus in 1983. The return to an 18-hole layout was credited for the upswing and also the fact that, with traveling more expensive, many people were looking for alternative local recreational activities. Both reasons led to the highest number of memberships sold since

the club was established in 1965 and, fortunately, that trend continued for several years to follow.

With the higher level of usage, the proximity of the 12<sup>th</sup> hole to the swimming pool was causing an ongoing problem. The swimming pool was considered to be within the danger zone, or 'limit of hazard' path of golf balls and a number of people had been hit, fortunately no one was seriously injured. In a survey conducted in 1986, 35 balls landed dangerously near the pool within the pool enclosure. In an attempt to alleviate the problem, a 40-foot-high nylon net was strung between the boundary of the pool and the golf course.



The pool at Rye Golf Club, c. mid-1980s

Eventually, the 12<sup>th</sup> hole was shortened by nearly 200 yards during the three months of the summer pool season to create a 125-yard par 3 instead of the usual 304-yard par 4. During that period, complaints were raised that member handicaps should be adjusted to reflect the then sub-6,000 yard course.



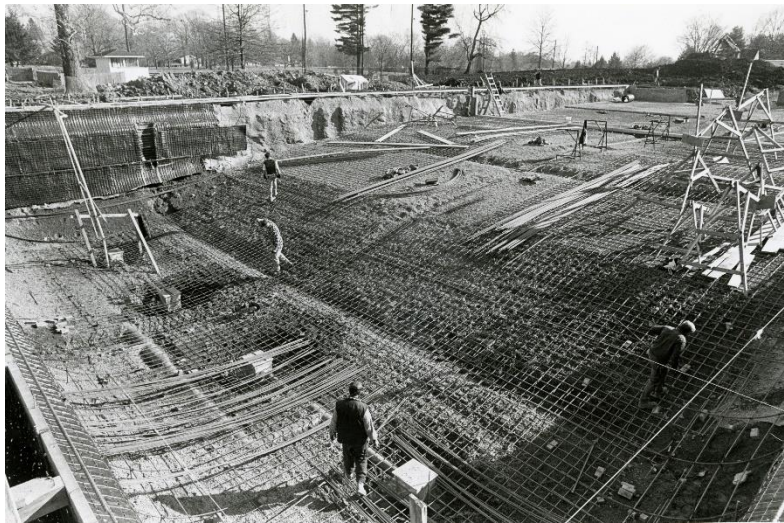
That plan worked for a while, but it became obvious that a more permanent solution was needed. The club was now generating a \$250,000 annual surplus and discussions were begun between the golf club commission and Rye City officials on how to raise funds for necessary improvements. In 1989 their plan was presented to the public. By a 3-1 margin, Rye voters approved a \$2.8 million improvement plan for the City's "community country club." In an unusual summer referendum, voters authorized a \$2 million bond issue to allow the city to replace the deteriorating pool complex and improve the quality and the safety of the golf course.



Rye Golf Club, c. 1986

Peter Gundell, then the chair of the golf commission, said “We’re just pleased as can be. We worked on this thing for four years. I hope the vote means citizens think it’s a good deal. The plan to upgrade the County’s “most affordable country club and preserve its open space is not expected to cost the taxpayers anything.” Harry Dunning, then the club manager, was quoted as saying, “For the last 5 years, the club had generated about \$250,000 annual surplus. We needed to prove to the city that we could generate the money needed to cover the repayment of the bonds.”

A brand-new Olympic style swimming pool, diving areas, kiddie pool, concession and play areas were built and moved safely away from where the infamous gully is on the 12<sup>th</sup> hole to its present location.



Rye Golf Club Pool, c. 1990

The pool complex became a major membership draw for young families moving into Rye during this time period and remains true to this day. Sunny days between Memorial Day and Labor are always busy at the RGC pool.

While things at the club were now running smoothly the Whitby Castle was causing concern. The physical structure of the building was deteriorating. In 1920 when Whitby Castle was converted from a private residence to a clubhouse for the Rye Country Club, a large unsympathetic addition was built on the southeast side of the building. This addition had not aged as well as the original building. In addition, the caterer who operated a public restaurant/bar and catering facility continuously until 1994 went out of business, causing the facility to be operated on an interim basis for the next nine months before finally closing at the end of the 1995 season.



Rye Golf Club, c. 1995

What to do? In its regular meeting of March 19, 1997, the Rye City Council voted to approve a plan to fund improvements to Whitby Castle citing:

*“The Whitby Castle should be preserved as a continuing part of the National Register Boston Post Road Historic District. The Rye Golf Club and the City of Rye continue to own this important building, but major repairs and improvements will be required to make it financially viable. Absent a financially viable use, the long-term preservation and availability of this historic building to the public cannot be insured.”*

*The proposed renovations and improvements would rehabilitate the Castle, replace an existing insensitive addition to the building with a sensitive and appropriate addition, and enhanced landscaping will also improve the appearance of the site, both internally and from viewing points off the site, in particular the Boston Post Road. It will also provide superior views of the golf course and the near and far shores of Milton Harbor for restaurant, bar and catering facility patrons as compared to the current facilities in the building.*

*The project will enhance the desirability of this major recreational facility. The proposed additions to Whitby Castle, the modifications and additions to the parking facilities, improvement of the internal pedestrian and vehicle circulation patterns and enhanced landscaping will improve user comfort, safety and enjoyment of this very special open space, recreation area and historic site.”*

Rye voters approved a \$5.4 million bond as part of a \$6.15 million restoration project. Frank Adimari, a member of the Rye Golf Club commission and Chair of the Whitby Castle committee said “We are looking forward to it. It’s going to refurbish an old building and make it a viable part of

the community.” Diane Moran, Chair of the City’s Landmark Committee said “It’s going to renew this magnificent historic resource for community use. I think it’s really important for the city to offer that for the public. It will be affordable and accessible for everybody.”

The project rebuilt the existing castle porch and enclosed it to become part of the restaurant. An expansive back deck overlooking the 18<sup>th</sup> green with views of the harbor were added, the heating, air conditioning and plumbing systems were replaced, and the interior marble floors, fireplaces and windows were all upgraded. Renovation started in 1999 and was completed during the 2001 season.

In the late 1990’s a group of Irish born RGC members and their American born fellow members started one of the most unique traditions at the Club, the Rye-der Cup. Modeled after the real Ryder Cup event played by the tour pro’s, RGC members on both teams battle it out over three days in foursomes, fourballs and singles matches and the drama is real. In 2021, the Rye-der Cup will play its 25<sup>th</sup> year at RGC. Other than the Club Championship, it is the oldest member tournament at Rye Golf.



Rye-der Cup players and supporters, c. 2020

As the Rye Golf Club entered the new millennium, 2002-07 was a period of active tournament committees. Former head pro Dick Santucci, new head pro Mike Rapisarda, Tournament Committee Chair Bill Black, Handicap Committee Chair Jim Codispoti and Women's Golf Association President Adrienne Belluscio were all instrumental in developing and adding to the RGC tournament golf schedule. Along with the continuing annual Club Championships, many new tournaments were established for men and women. Two season long match play events, the Players and Governor's Cup, were added and remain very popular to this day. The net Handicap Tournament, the Member/Member, Member/Guest, Senior Championships and the Player of the Year Award also began during first decade of the new millennium.

Unfortunately, the years 2012-16 were a low period for the club in some respects. RGC was in the news but for the wrong reasons. In 2012 it was discovered that the then Rye Golf Club general manager had used a shell company, fake employees, and false invoices to embezzle more than \$250,000 over a five-year period. He had set up a staffing company which he used to bill the City for services supposedly rendered to the Club. He then submitted invoices for services rendered by employees working in "administration," "restaurant" or "operations" capacities at the club. None of the employees ever existed. He was subsequently convicted and incarcerated. RGC member Leon Sculti, later the Chair of the Golf Commission, was instrumental in bringing the scandal to light.

Then, in 2015, just as the Golf Club and the City were trying to put the financial fallout from the scandal behind them, the club was forced to close all of the greens on the course because a commonly used fungicide product was killing the turf. The club closed the damaged areas at the beginning of June and placed temporary greens on the

fairways. As could be expected, members were unhappy, a lot of uncertainty existed, blame was thrown around as to what caused the closure and demands for refunds were made. The Rye Golf Club works on an annual membership basis with a strict no-refund policy, which is clearly stated in all membership contracts, and it was enforced.

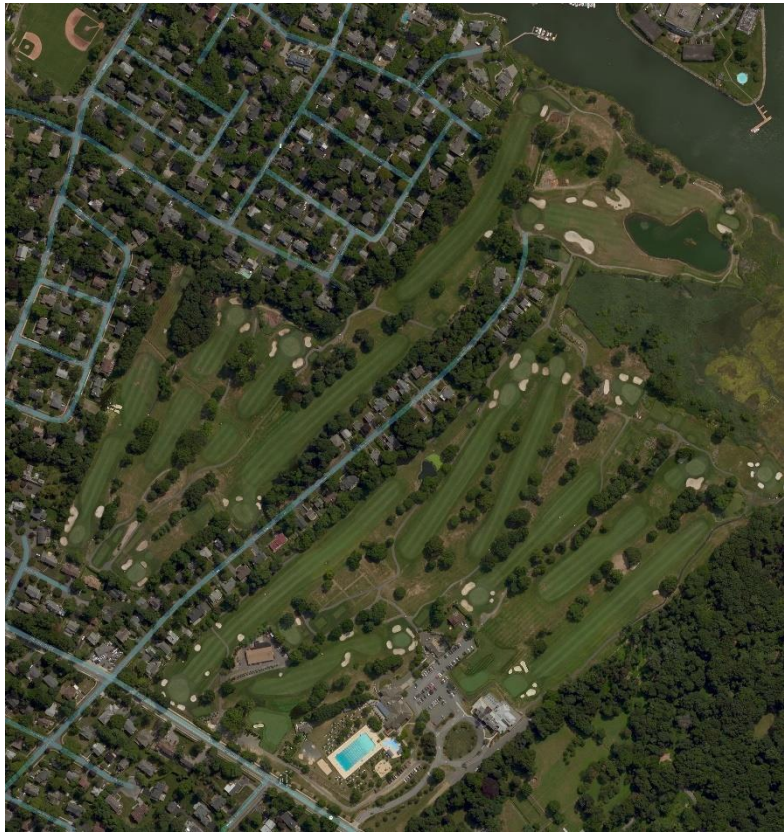
Several other golf courses in the country, primarily in the Northeast, also reported deteriorated turf after using the same product. Ultimately, the company that produced the defective fungicide that killed RGC's greens recalled its product and accepted full responsibility for the damage it caused. The groundskeeping staff, ably led by course superintendent Chip Lafferty, painstakingly aerated, reseeded and watered the damaged areas until the greens fully recovered and were reopened in the beginning of September.

City Council and Rye Golf members Terry McCartney, Kirstin Bucci and Richard Slack, Club Manager Jim Buonaiuto and his staff, working with the Golf Commission, were instrumental in reaching a significant financial settlement with the manufacturer which included not only the cost of fixing the greens, but also compensation for the loss of greens fees, cart fees as well as reputational damages and long-term effects on our membership. Club members were given a significant discount on their dues the following year to try to make up for the months of lost access in 2015. The settlement was also used to finance numerous course improvements such as multiple green expansions, new drainage and a 12,000 square foot Short Game Area that was installed off of the 12<sup>th</sup> fairway.

Under the experienced and tireless watch of superintendent Chip Lafferty, many major improvements were made to the golf course during the decade of 2010-20. From 2009-10 the 15/17 tee complex was expanded and leveled with the 17th hole now playing around 200 yards from



the elevated back tee. In 2013-14 the 7<sup>th</sup> green to 8<sup>th</sup> tee transition was expanded and the 8<sup>th</sup> tee complex was completely rebuilt, expanded, and leveled from what was an old narrow crowned tee box. In 2018, greens expansions of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> holes were completed as well as a complete reconstruction to create a brand-new 3<sup>rd</sup> green. The castle practice putting green was expanded and repositioned as was the practice putting green near the 1<sup>st</sup> tee.



Rye Golf Club, c. 2018

It bears mentioning at this juncture that long time RGC member and former City Councilman Mack Cunningham has distinguished himself over the last quarter century by



selflessly serving on the golf commission for many years, several times as the chair, through some very difficult times in the club's existence. Mack's keen knowledge of RGC's history, operations and finances have proven indispensable in keeping the golf course in good shape and the club running well (with a surplus, no less) through good times and bad. Mack's love for the golf course as well as his gentlemanly but tough demeanor exemplifies the typical Rye Golf Club member of this era.

Club players of note during this time included Peter Bisceglia who won four Men's Club Championships and Billy Van Dolsen and Charles Seward who both won twice. In the Women's championship Melissa Maurer won five in a row and Peggy Flanagan won seven titles in a row. James McHugh, the 2016 Club Champion, also holds the modern course record with a score of 63.

Since the early days, Rye Golf Club has had many excellent women golfers and ladies have been a major part of the club's golf membership. The RGC Ladies Association was formally established over 30 years ago. It started with a few ladies playing a variety of weekly tournaments every Tuesday from May through October. As the women's golf membership at the club grew over the years, so did the Ladies Association. In addition to their regular weekly events, a club Championship for all playing levels, a Governor's Cup tournament and other major tournaments were established.

In 2004, RGCLA was recognized and welcomed into the Women's Metropolitan Golf Association, the second oldest women's golf association in the U.S. This was a significant accomplishment for the ladies of Rye as it demonstrated the playing ability of our women members and put Rye Golf Club on the map as competitive club in the tri-state area. Since joining the WMGA, the Rye Ladies have been represented by teams on many different levels. Our

Ladies A team has advanced from the 8<sup>th</sup> series all the way up to the 1<sup>st</sup> series, now playing against clubs such as Westchester C.C., Winged Foot and Sleepy Hollow.

In 2007, the ladies made another significant change by playing all of their major tournaments during the golf season at the same time as the men's tournaments. The Rye Ladies have come a long way. The RGCLA currently has over 50 active members and is competing at many different levels on our course and many others across the metropolitan area.

In 2015, another new tradition was begun at Rye Golf in the form of the President's Cup tournament. Every year, a team of American born RGC members represents the USA against a group of foreign born RGC members, known as the International Team, in the same golf formats played by the PGA golfers in their President's Cup event every two years. The event typifies the diversity of Rye and the Rye Golf Club and the camaraderie and sportsmanship displayed in the tournament is always exemplary.

Another popular annual tournament established during this decade was the member-run charity event known as the "Memorial Day Hundy" to observe the Memorial Day holiday in a meaningful way as well as to raise money to benefit the local veteran's group, Rye American Legion Post 128. Funds raised by RGC members at the event are used by Post 128 in the community to support local veterans' causes as well as to fund several annual scholarships and prizes awarded to deserving Rye High School students.

In 2020, as the course reached its 99th year, the Covid-19 global pandemic struck and things changed drastically at the club. Rye was not immune from the fallout nor the strict federal and state stay-at-home regulations. After a normal early season, the club was shut down for two weeks in April. Under the leadership of General Manager Jim Buonaiuto, working with the Golf Club Commission and the City, the

club navigated the mandated Federal, State, County, City, USGA, MGA and CDC protocols and persevered to keep the club open and functioning.

After it was determined that golfers could safely play while adhering to the social distancing rules, Rye Golf Club became an oasis and a necessary outlet for members being quarantined inside most of the day and provided a few hours of exercise and relative normalcy amid the chaos. The demand to play golf was overwhelming. The tee sheet was completely booked from 7:00 in the morning until after 7:00 in the evening. The number of rounds played totaled over 38,000, a huge increase from the 24,000 rounds played the year before. The pool side of the club was also booked solid as competition for admission soared. The pool was limited to three sessions per day with only 150 families per session as the club tried to balance demand with the mandated restrictions in place. Somehow, once again, the club endured.

The Centennial year of 2021 started under the same restrictions as the year before but there was a renewed optimism as the Covid-19 vaccination rates rose and the number of cases receded. The club had high hopes that 2021 would be a better year and a new beginning post-Covid and welcomed a new head golf professional, Kyle Baehler, and a new assistant pro, Preston Shortell. Kyle brings an impressive playing and teaching resume to the club and recently qualified for the 2022 PGA Club Professionals Championship. Preston has started several promising new programs for young golfers.

The golf course has never looked better, but the work is never ending. Rocks were removed from the berm on the 17<sup>th</sup> hole to assist with the drainage project on holes 9 and 10 while also improving the view. Extensive tree work continued as suggested by the head agronomist at the USGA Northeast following his visits to the club. That work has allowed for better sunlight and air flow, strengthening the greens and

fairways, while also allowing for more expansive views of Milton Harbor and the Sound, both now visible on 12 of our 18 holes.



Rye Golf Club, c. 2021

As Carl Freidrich mentioned in his original research on the Rye Golf Club, which forms the basis for much of this chapter, our “community country club” has continued to make a significant positive impact on the quality of life for the citizens of Rye. We are blessed to play this wonderful old golf course and look forward to the next hundred years!

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# Whitby Castle

The building we know simply as “The Castle” was originally designed by famous and influential New York City architect Alexander Jackson Davis as a country home for his bachelor friend William P. Chapman. Davis and Chapman were both fond of the New York theater and there are many theatrical touches in the house - the dramatic octagonal marble entrance hall, the dramatic masks used as corbels in that hall as well as the high vaulted conical ceilings are a few examples. The notable features on the exterior include the five-story octagonal tower and crenelated turrets and stained-glass rosette windows. The building is faced with stone quarried in Greenwich with a Welsh slate roof.



Built in 1852-54, the building is an excellent example of a Gothic Revival style villa of the period. A.J. Davis was a leading designer of country houses at the time and was especially known for his Gothic Revival works. Davis was also the architect of Lyndhurst Castle in Tarrytown, which,

along with Whitby Castle, are on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. Drawings and records of Whitby Castle can be found at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and in the Avery Library at Columbia University.

William Chapman, originally from a wealthy Connecticut family who made his own fortune as a Wall Street stock broker, had the mansion designed after Whitby Abbey<sup>1</sup>, a church in North Yorkshire, England that dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, and named it accordingly. Whitby Castle is said to include stones from Whitby Abbey. For many years, the Chapman estate was referred to simply as “Whitby” then later “Whitby Towers” and eventually “Whitby Castle.” Many current Rye Golf Club members just call it “The Castle” now.

The Chapman estate originally consisted of about 40 acres and ran from the Boston Post Road down to the water (encompassing approximately holes 15 through 18). In 1878, the property was sold to Joseph Park. The advertisement of the sale mentions:

- “a Gothic Stone Mansion on an eminence commanding magnificent views of Long Island Sound and surrounding country, built in the most substantial manner and in perfect order”
- “Forty acres of land handsomely laid out and planted with Evergreens and other rare trees of large size”
- “There is a fine fish pond supplied by never failing streams of pure water, which has a stone ice house on its margin filled with 75 tons of ice and a rustic summer house nearby”

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<sup>1</sup> Whitby Abbey has an interesting history of its own having been confiscated by Henry VIII when he was dissolving the Catholic church in England in the 1500’s and later serving as a setting in Bram Stoker’s novel “Dracula” in 1897.

- “At the water’s edge, a fine stone dock, 175 feet in length”
- “The location is perfectly healthy and entirely free from mosquitoes or any annoyance of any kind whatever”
- “For further particulars, enquire of Chapman, 18 Wall St.”

The second owner, Joseph Park, founded the very successful grocery and importing firm, Park & Tilford, which had four large luxury grocery stores in Manhattan. Park made his money in the city but preferred to live in the country and at one time owned 1400 acres in Rye and Harrison. His holdings eventually included Whitby Castle where he lived with his wife Mary and their two sons, George C. Park and Hobart J. Park.

The Park family lived in the Castle until 1920 when it became the clubhouse of the Rye Country Club. As discussed in the History chapter, the Park property was combined with a large adjacent parcel to create the full acreage needed for the golf course.





Park Avenue, the residential street across the Boston Post Road from the golf course, was named after Joseph Park and originally served as his own private horse-drawn carriage road to the Harrison train station. Many of the current homes on Park Avenue still have similar granite blocks lining the road placed there during the Park era.

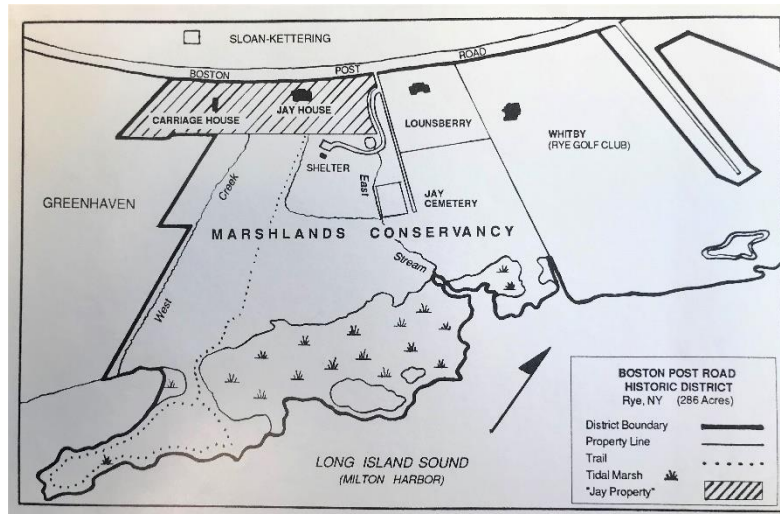
Whitby Castle has undergone a few renovations but the essentials of Davis's original architectural design remain. It remains one of the very few fine Gothic Revival villas left in America. Overlooking Rye Golf Club's 18<sup>th</sup> hole and Milton Harbor in the distance, Whitby Castle is currently one of the most scenic and sought-after wedding venues in the New York City Metropolitan area.



The Rye Golf Club and Whitby Castle are part of the larger Boston Post Road Historic District. The district was first listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The U.S. Department of Interior later nominated the Boston Post Road Historic District for elevation to National Historic



Landmark status, the highest federal designation, and that status was granted in 1993. The entire 286-acre district includes five properties: Rye Golf Club and Whitby Castle, the Jay Estate, the Jay Cemetery, Lounsbury (aka Lounsberry; the Parson's Estate) and the Marshlands Conservancy.

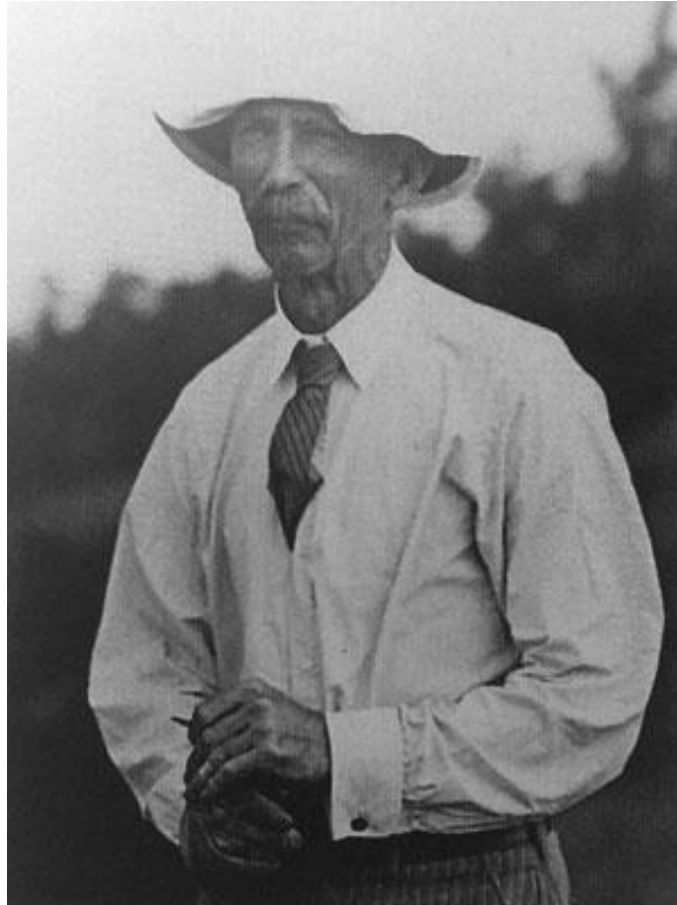


This unique district received National Historic Landmark status because of the site's association with founding father, John Jay, who grew up and is buried within the district, and also because of the architectural stature of the three pre-Civil War estates. This American treasure has been further recognized as an archaeologically sensitive zone by New York State's Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service because of its cultural affiliations.

The Boston Post Road is one of our nation's oldest roads. It was originally a mail delivery route covered by post riders on horseback between New York City and Boston. The Post Road became one of the first major highways in the United States and bears the designation US 1.



## Devereux Emmet



### **The Architect**

Influenced by his close friend and golf course designer, Charles B. Macdonald, who designed the exclusive National Golf Links of America in Southampton, New York, Devereux Emmet was a lover of the links courses of Scotland and Ireland that embraced natural landscape features. Links courses there were historically near the water because the

sandy land wasn't good for farming and viewed as only good for grazing sheep.

Emmet helped Macdonald survey numerous courses in the British Isles simply to help his old friend prepare for his design at National. He didn't even start his own golf course architecture business until 1908 after he had already laid out several courses, including the course in Garden City, which was initially called the Island Golf Links. For the next 20 years, Emmet became one of the most prolific architects of his day, designing well over 150 courses in his lifetime. Most of his courses are "within 150 miles of Wall Street" according to one biographer, perhaps alluding to his wealthy patrician upbringing in Pelham.

Devereaux Emmet's most famous designs are: Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, Garden City Golf Club, Cherry Valley Club, St. George's Golf & Country Club and Bethpage State Park (Green), all on Long Island, Wee Burn Country Club in Darien, Connecticut and Leatherstocking Golf Course in Cooperstown, New York. In addition to our own course in Rye, Emmet designed many other courses in Westchester including: Bonnie Briar Country Club, Pelham Country Club, Bedford Golf & Tennis Club, Hampshire Country Club, Mahopac Golf Club and Willow Ridge Country Club (originally called the Green Meadow Club, an offshoot of nearby Apawamis Club; the course was recently purchased by the Town of Harrison).

We can only imagine that, in 1920, when Devereux Emmet first saw our pretty green tract of land on the Milton Harbor waterfront in Rye with its gently rolling hills, creeks, ponds and marshlands, he must have imagined he was back in the Old Sod.

## ***Rye Golf Club's Historical Connection to Ireland***

*By David O'Sullivan*

*Rye Golf Club member since 1979*

*It's a long way from Rye Golf Club to Ireland but there are enduring links between the two places. First, in this Centennial year of our Club, a significant percentage of the current active golf members were either born in Ireland or native-born Americans who trace their ancestral heritage to the Emerald Isle. However, there is perhaps a more durable connection that shapes a fascinating link between the two countries that lies deep in history.*

*We all know the importance of the year 1776 in American (and world) history. It is the year that marks the birthdate of a new nation's struggle to lift the yoke of English rule. But, just 22 years later in Ireland, a similar struggle modeled on the successful revolution in America, occurred in Ireland. Sadly, Ireland's armed struggle for freedom was not successful at that time. It would be another 125 years before that freedom would be won.*

*The leaders of that 1798 Rebellion are as famous in Ireland's history as George Washington is here in America. Robert Emmet (always only one "t") was hung, drawn and quartered in Dublin for his leadership of that effort. His brother, Thomas Addis Emmet, who was deeply involved in planning the rebellion escaped execution by the narrowest margin. He fled Ireland to America and ended up in New York.*

*Thomas Emmet, a Trinity College trained lawyer, built a successful law practice in Manhattan founding what became the largest law firm in New York at that time. He later served as the Attorney General of New York State and argued many cases before the United States Supreme Court. His great-*

*grandson is Devereux Emmet, the renowned and pioneering American golf course architect who is believed to have designed more than 150 courses worldwide, including, of course, the golf course on Milton Harbor in Rye which later became our beloved Rye Golf Club.*

*Devereux Emmet was born in 1861 in Pelham, New York and was educated at Columbia University, graduating in 1883. A New York aristocrat, Devereux Emmet was a sportsman who made numerous golfing trips to Scotland and Ireland before the start of the 20th century. In 1898, he staked out his first golf course, Garden City Golf Club on Long Island. As indicated above, many of Emmet's courses remain important in American golf. Unfortunately, one of his best, the Pomonok Country Club in Queens, which hosted the 1939 PGA Championship, did not survive beyond World War II years. Devereux Emmet died in Garden City, New York in 1934 at the age of 73.*

*Emmet's golf course design work reflected his experiences in Scotland and in Ireland. His courses incorporated great variety, and he accomplished this in numerous ways: varying the length of holes; and mixing up the size, shape and positioning of the bunkers, among his favorite devices. It was said of him, that he liked to subject golfers to "blind" shots, par-6 holes and other popular features of his age that have since fallen out of favor. His routings often featured "triangulation" with three-hole loops, allowing the golfer to experience the elements from all directions. Emmet understood angles and believed in width to allow for playability and choice.*

*An attractive characteristic of Emmet designs, many golf course architecture students aver, is that Emmet worked with the landforms presented to him by nature. In his fairways,*

*sight lines are often diminished because he wanted natural contours to rule the day. In addition, his greens often flow from their natural grade - so those unique front-to-back tilts can fool the unwary golfer.*

*In 1921, he was entrusted with the task of sketching the plans for a magnificent new waterfront links layout in the then-bucolic little village of Rye, 25 miles north of Manhattan. The land comprised 126 acres of the former George C. Park and Allen estates, nestled along the shores of Long Island Sound. It was to be a private club named Rye Country Club - later Ryewood Country Club. Financial difficulties presented the opportunity for the leaders of the City of Rye at that time, in a bold and far-sighted maneuver, to acquire the beautiful tract. It was renamed Rye Golf Club in 1965.*

*Emmet was a talented amateur golfer. He made the quarterfinals of the 1904 British Amateur and won the Bahamas Amateur at the age of 66. In 1916, after he won the father-son tournament at Sleepy Hollow Country Club with Devereux Emmet, Jr., the United States Golf Association instituted the so-called architect's rule that barred golf course architects from competing as amateurs in tournaments.*

*And, to cement the connection to Ireland and come full circle, it was at Congressional Country Club, a Devereux Emmet-designed course near Washington, D.C., perhaps his most famous of all, that a young Irishman, Rory McIlroy, would win his first U.S. Open Championship.*





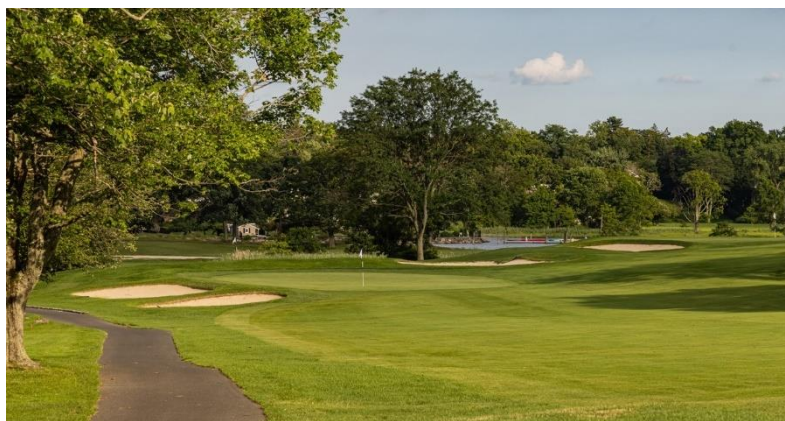
# The Course



## Overview

The course challenges golfers with substantial elevation changes on holes routed through rolling hills rising from Milton Harbor on Long Island Sound. The first seven holes have more of a parkland feel while the last eleven bring to mind a seaside links course. The breezes that attract sailors to the yacht club across the harbor keep golfers guessing about club selection on the picturesque holes throughout the course but especially on the ones along the water. Devereaux Emmet's clever design rewards players who can control their ball off the tee and hit precise, often blind, approach shots to well-bunkered greens. The undulating, often tilted, surfaces of the green complexes provide numerous difficult pin positions to test your short game and putting while the finish up the 18<sup>th</sup> hole to scenic Whitby Castle is unmatched anywhere.

**One.** The course welcomes you with a very challenging opening hole. A long gentle dogleg left par 4 with a fairway falling away from the tee with a big old ash down the right that punishes errant drives and a pond hidden among trees down the left waiting to catch those trying to cut the corner. Views of Milton Harbor and the Long Island Sound provide a glimpse of the holes to come while a breeze off the water hints of tricky club selection decisions ahead. The green is framed by a mound on the right allowing golfers to bring their shots in from the right and avoid the two deep bunkers on the left.



**Two.** The par 5 second offers a chance to score if one is able to climb or carry the hill on the drive. Out-of-bounds all down the left side keeps golfers to the right and adds yards to a hole reachable in two by long hitters. For those who choose to lay up, make sure your second shot stays in the fairway as the rough can be thick. Take an extra club to fly into an elevated green with your approach shot, or the result could be the false front returning your ball 30 yards back down to the fairway.





**Three.** The par 3 third may only be a short iron but long or left can be out-of-bounds or unplayable and the large greens pronounced back to front slope makes a two-putt par a strong score here. Judging the wind is critical in club selection on the tee box. Look up high in the treetops for wind direction. Keeping the ball below the hole is preferable on the thumbprint green with many difficult pin positions available.



**Four.** The 4<sup>th</sup> hole is a par 4 that falls 50 feet down to a landing area that runs to a creek crossing. The fairway is framed by tall trees on both sides. The approach climbs back another 30 feet to a green with subtle right to left slope. Check the pin position on the green before selecting your club off the tee. Having the right angle for your approach shot makes all the difference to an elevated green that slopes right to left.



**Five.** The 5<sup>th</sup> hole is a sledding hot-spot in the winter, giving an indication of the severity of the hill golfers must climb. The tee shot forces decisions on club selection as length brings several bunkers on the right side into play as well as a rock outcropping on the left. You can play a shorter tee ball and give yourself a flat lie for your second shot or go for length off the tee and have an uphill blind approach with a shorter iron. The green is protected by bunkers on the right side and grass mounds along the left.





**Six.** Much like the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, club selection on 6 will be determined by pin position for the best angle of approach. The tee shot drops 50 feet down into the valley, but the hole's length provides long hitters the chance to carry the creek and leave an uphill wedge approach. From the flat short of the creek, the golfer again has a blind approach and there is a subtle ridge just short of the green that gathers many balls. Approach shots landing on the green are often taken to the back of the green as the slope is significantly front to back.



**Seven.** The 7<sup>th</sup> is the longest par 4 on the course and deservedly the number 1 handicap hole. The dogleg left 7<sup>th</sup> leads golfers out away from the out-of-bounds running all the way down the left side while the fairway is defined on the right by grass mounds making this a long and difficult tee shot for most players. An exceptionally long approach is made more difficult as a substantial hill crosses the fairway from the left and poses yet another blind shot. The green has a runway for short shots to roll up close to the green which is large enough to accept long approach shots. The green slopes from right to left making a two-putt here a good result.

This is where two former national PGA champions battled for seven extra holes in the 1964 Westchester MGA Championship until Jim Turnesa's par won the match. (That story is included in the next chapter.) Suffice it to say that par is a great score on this hole and birdies are rare indeed. Some have called RGC #7 one of the most difficult holes in Westchester County, which says a lot, with Winged Foot and Westchester Country Club just down the road.





Look out on Milton Harbor and the Long Island Sound from the 7<sup>th</sup> fairway and take a moment to capture a mental picture. The view from there, across the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> holes and the water in the distance, never gets old and always reminds us how blessed we are to play on this special old golf course in our wonderful old home town of Rye.



As you finish the difficult 7<sup>th</sup>, the good news is that the golf course starts to open up as you play the holes with spectacular views of the water to close out the front nine where you will be rewarded for taking risks.



**Eight.** One of the most demanding tee shots on the course, the 8<sup>th</sup> tee provides a view of Milton Harbor, the Rye marina and those enjoying the water. The fairway is just a sliver from the tee although it opens up to the right side. Too far right or long brings a large pond into play. The view from the fairway is of Milton Point and the American Yacht Club, a distraction to the shot facing golfers especially when the wind is up. The green slopes from back to front with pin placements available in both back corners which make the flag look like it's on the Sound. The Throgs Neck and Whitestone Bridges can be seen in the distance on clear days as you walk off the green.



**Nine.** The 9<sup>th</sup> is a short, drivable par 4 for a long ball hitter when the wind is at your back, a perfect example of risk versus reward. Keeping the ball in the fairway sets up for a nice short approach shot to a small green complex that yields a fair number of birdies. Know that if you're facing the wind on the 8<sup>th</sup>, the 9<sup>th</sup> will be down-wind. The fairway narrows so laying back is an option that still permits a wedge into a green where putts will all have some break.





**Ten.** The 10<sup>th</sup> is a slightly uphill par 3 with a tree affecting shots down the left side and well-placed bunkers front-right and right. Once again, the wind off the Sound can play a factor in club selection on the tee box. A slight miss to the left of the green may get a favorable right bounce toward the green. The green is spacious but don't short side yourself with your tee shot, as that will lead to a tough up and down for par.



**Eleven.** The 11<sup>th</sup> is a true par 5 for even the longest ball strikers and a demanding three shot hole to reach the green in regulation, especially when playing into the wind. Long in yardage and longer still as it climbs 50 feet to the edge of the property on the historic Boston Post Road. After a good drive, you must decide whether to go for it and hit a shot up a narrowing fairway with bunkers pinching on both sides or lay back and leave a longer iron into a massive green with a number of swales that makes a two-putt par a very good result here on the number 2 handicap hole.



**Twelve.** The 12<sup>th</sup> hole appears to offer a birdie opportunity but a bunker splits the fairway making the golfer decide whether to lay up or attempt to fly it. Emmet's signature necklace bunkers surrounding the green on all sides eliminate any chance to run up a pitch so you must come in high and soft. After your round, take a seat in one of the greenside Adirondack chairs and enjoy watching golfers come through as they try to navigate the smallest green on the course that slopes back to front and always makes for tricky putts.





**Thirteen.** Like the adjacent 1<sup>st</sup> hole, the 13<sup>th</sup> is a long gentle dog-leg left with a tree lined fairway sloping from right to left. This is where most matches start to get interesting as you begin the last six holes of your round. A right to left tee shot is the preferred ball flight here. One of the hardest greens on the course where good approach shots are rewarded and bad ones punished by deep greenside bunkers, a false front and run-off areas on the left, right and back. A miss long could leave your ball in deep rough 20 feet below the green. From the green, enjoy the views of Milton Harbor and know that you'll be playing exposed to the wind on your finishing holes.



**Fourteen.** The 14<sup>th</sup> is a short par 3 but uphill and blind. While you can see the bunkers short left and the flagstick, you cannot see the green nor that it extends well to the right. A shot to the right side can catch the slope and roll down to left side pins. A shot pulled left hopefully catches the bunker, otherwise your miss leaves you 25 feet below the green and near the marshland hazard. Although this is the number 18 handicap hole, play it smart, as you can make anything from a tap-in birdie to a triple bogey if you miss the green.





**Fifteen.** Position off the tee is critical on the par 4 mid-length 15<sup>th</sup> hole. It appears to be a straight-away hole from the tee complex but the fairway pinches in from both sides in the landing area with mature trees blocking approaches from the thick rough. The green is severely sloped back to front and nearly all pin positions will test the best of putters. Leave the ball below the hole and putt uphill at all costs.



**Sixteen.** The 16<sup>th</sup> hole is a long scenic par 4 that starts a tough closing three hole stretch to finish out your round. A drive to the top of a steep hill gives you a view of the green complex below. A rock outcrop can catch balls down the left side and mounds block the view of those who play to the fairway at the bottom of the hill. The green is 30 feet below the upper fairway and a hole cut middle or right is protected by a strategic bunker short right of the green. Approach shots into the front left of the green will funnel toward right side pins.



**Seventeen.** The downhill 17<sup>th</sup> is a signature hole that is played from a variety of tee decks - all of which expose you to the elements. Depending on where the tee markers are placed on this multi-level tee complex, club choice largely depends on distance and the wind coming off of the Long Island Sound. The green has a mound middle back which makes two putts a solid result. One of the toughest tee shots on the course, especially when your match is on the line with two to play.





**Eighteen.** The par 5 18<sup>th</sup> is a classic finishing hole where many a match has been won or lost. The tee deck is adjacent to the marshlands and gives you one last view of Milton Harbor. A good drive is the key to setting up a second shot to a green well-guarded by bunkers for the long hitters. You can take your line off the American flag above the Castle. The Marshlands Conservancy runs along the entire left side of the hole. For those who choose to lay up and play the hole as a traditional par 5, your third must be carefully placed for many tough pins on this large green that slopes from back to front.



An audience on the terrace of the 167-year-old National Landmark Whitby Castle is a great way to finish your round at the golf course on Milton Harbor in Rye. It's time to join them!



Enjoy the spectacular view down the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway from the Castle patio. The specimen trees on the left were originally planted over 150 years ago when the Castle was a private residence. The pond down by the tee held fish and the rustic cottage above it was a place to enjoy the water views and watch the local fauna. The foundation stones for the cottage as well as the old stone dock are still there.

*Editor's Note: The hole descriptions in this chapter are the fine work of golf commission and Centennial Committee members Akhil Kumar and Darren Johnston (two very good golfers – see the Champions chapter) and the amazing photographs of each hole were painstakingly taken by Pieter van Vredenburg (another very good golfer who may well win the Club Championship himself someday). However, on behalf of the mediocre golfers with double digit handicaps among us, I did the editing so hopefully the how-to-play-the-hole narratives are meaningful to all of us, sticks and hackers alike.*

*Terry McCartney*

## Head Professionals and Course Superintendents

### **Head Professionals:**

1930's	Duncan Barr, Rye C.C.
1940's	Pat Tiso, Glen Castle C.C.
1950's	Wild Bill Horn, Jr., Ryewood C. C. Fred Annon, Ryewood C.C.
1960's	Jim Turnesa, Ryewood C.C.
1965	Steve Doctor, Rye Golf Club
1966 - 68	Craig Shankland. Rye Golf Club
1969 - 77	James Corrigan, Rye Golf Club
1977 - 2003	Dick Santucci, Rye Golf Club
2003 - 20	Mike Rapisarda, Rye Golf Club
2021 - Present	Kyle Baehler, Rye Golf Club

### **Course Superintendents:**

1965 - 70	Bob Alonzi
1970 - 2002	Dick Gonyea
2003 - Present	Charles "Chip" Lafferty

Jim Turnesa, the head golf pro at Ryewood Country Club, was easily the golf course's most accomplished professional player. Turnesa was the 1952 PGA Champion and played on the U.S. Ryder Cup team. Turnesa won the Westchester Professional Golf Association Championship twice, in 1956 and again in 1964. His 1964 win over the defending champ Doug Ford, another national PGA Champion, was epic.

Turnesa was hosting the WPGA event at Ryewood that year and ended up in a tie with Ford at the end of regulation play. After playing even for the first six extra holes, according to the New York Times account, the two pros both sliced their drives on the long par 4 7<sup>th</sup> and were short of the green in two. Turnesa hit his third 25 feet past the cup and Ford played his to 5 feet below the hole. The Ryewood pro dramatically rolled in his long curling downhill putt and Ford was unable to match him lipping out his short putt.

Turnesa was a golf celebrity of his time and regularly played in charity tournaments in the Metropolitan area to draw public interest and raise money for many good causes.

### **An Interview with Former RGC Head Pro Craig Shankland**

**by Carl Friedrich**

*Craig Shankland was the second pro at RGC after the City purchased the club. Shankland went on to become a noted golf teacher in Florida, golf teaching author and contributor to Sports Illustrated.*



***Where were you working prior to Rye Golf?***

*“At Scarsdale Golf Club, which was my first real job as a pro. I had been there a couple of years.”*

***What got you interested in becoming a golf pro?***

*“I got it from my father, who was a great pro from the UK. (Tony) Jacklin was one of his clients. I was always drawn to the teaching side, though I did some touring as well.”*

***Coming to RGC must have been a little out of the norm for a pro in the mid 1960’s- the concept of a community owned golf club. Was it a difficult decision for you?***

*“No, not at all. There was such tremendous community involvement; it seemed like a wonderful opportunity. I wanted to be more involved with the public and (Rye Golf) gave me that chance. For me it was a great opportunity.*

***In the 1960’s it was not uncommon for pros to play local or regional events, plus hold down full-time jobs at a club.***

*“We would play events in the south and west in the off-season, and come back up north to our clubs when that season got going. It was considered prestigious for a club to have a (so-called) touring pro.”*

***There were a lot of big-name pros in our area when you were at Rye Golf. Was there a good camaraderie among them?***

*“Yes, absolutely. Around us were great playing pros, such as Claude Harmon, Ford, and Turnesa. Among us we had a great relationship, and played together often.”*

*“The MET PGA event used to be a very big event- I actually have won it. That used to be a tremendous event each year.”*

***It seems to be a dying characteristic, the club pro who tours part time.***

*“Yes, it’s very difficult to do that sort of thing (today).”*

***You came to RGC early in your career and almost immediately began teaching programs for women and youth. In many ways, this defined a good deal of your career path and achievement.***

*“I really got that from my Dad but I gravitated to it at Rye Golf. Rye Golf Club was really a big push for me towards this.”*

***When the City of Rye bought the course, it made golf accessible to so many people, especially women and children who would not have had access to the sport otherwise.***

*“Absolutely. The huge community involvement made it a success. Rye was really on the forefront in this area, community owned golf courses, certainly ahead of its time.”*

***We had a range at that time, correct?***

*“Yes (laughs). We did. One day, into my office walks a dentist who lived across the street from the range. We hit short irons only towards the post road from near (Whitby). He shows me his corn flakes with a golf ball in it. The range had to go.”*

***So people hit shot irons towards the Post Road?***

*“Yes, though not everyone limited themselves to short irons, so we had a problem there. However, it was not unusual for clubs to not have a range - Apawamis didn’t, nor did Quaker Ridge.”*

***Do you remember much of the course? Can you tell me your thoughts on it?***

*“It is wonderfully designed, a real gem to play. It offers a great challenge. It’s not long, but very tight, with all the trees. The golfer leaves the course very well satisfied.”*

***Emmet appears to have made great use of the physical landscape, giving phantom length by forcing the golfer to drive into hillsides and tilted greens.***

*“Yes, this was a great concept and the course is underrated.”*

### **Memories of Dick Santucci, RGC Head Pro, 1977 - 2003**

*My first experience with Rye Golf Club was as a caddy in 1956-57. Back then it was Ryewood Country Club which was a private membership club. I remember the little green shack that the caddy master stayed and the small area with benches for the caddies. You stayed there until you were called to get bags and make a loop, that's what it was called back then. There were a lot of caddies so you didn't always get out but you sat there for most of the day. I already had a reputation as being a good golfer so the members would ask for me by name (free lessons). Did I know that I would eventually be the golf professional there for 26 years? No.*

***Turning Pro.*** *After attending college, I made the decision to become a golf professional. My first job as an assistant was at Hampshire Country Club in Mamaroneck, NY which led me back to Rye Golf Club. My first golf tournament was a Pro Lady at Rye (still the Ryewood Country Club). I was so nervous playing with the best lady players from Hampshire. On the 1st hole, I managed to hit a good drive and my second went into the hole for an eagle. Then I birdied the second and the third. Going to the 4th hole I passed one of the other golf professionals going to 6 and he said “how*

*are you doing Dick," so I said I was 4 under. He asked if went off the back 9 first and I said no I just played 3 holes. I went on to shoot 69 but finished 3<sup>rd</sup>. Jim Turnesa (1952 PGA Champion) shot 66 to win. After head professional jobs at Garrison Golf Club (then North Redoubt) and professional at Lido Golf Club in Long Island, I interviewed for Rye Golf Club in 1977 and was the golf professional/director for 26 years.*

***The Early Days at RGC.*** *There weren't many members at Rye Golf in 1977. We were playing 50 to 60 rounds on the weekdays and a little over 100 on the weekends. We needed more members including non-residents. We put ads in newspapers and magazines and slowly but surely the membership was building. Rye Golf was affordable and golfers realized that so filling memberships was not hard. It became the diamond in the rough. Soon we had so many members and rounds of golf that it made it almost impossible to control (44,000 rounds one season). We had to devise a starting system that could accommodate the players. We had players going off the front and back nine starting at 6:30 and went to 8:30 and then they would crossover from front to back and back to front.*

***Nature.*** *The golf course supplied an abundance of nature, every morning there would be six or seven deer on the 18th fairway and there were wild turkeys roosting in the pine tree next to the lesson tee. Seeing the coyote almost every morning coming back from hunting for food during the night he would stop at the top of the hill on the 16th hole and bark and the pups that were in the woods over the wall on the 18th hole would respond by barking back when he went to see them. The ospreys that would dive into the water at the marina and get a fish and fly up to the tree on the 17th hole and eat their catch, or the turtles that would lay their eggs in the sand traps*

*on the 10th and 14th holes. The baby whale that had to be rescued from the marina when it swam into the low water and couldn't get out. When I would fish off the rock on the 8th hole, there was a great blue heron that would come and stay by me until I caught a fish to feed him. So, the golf course offered more than those bad rounds of golf if you took the time to observe what was going on around you.*

**UFO.** *It was a hot humid day in August with not even the slightest breeze. Pam, myself and my son were waiting for the last car to come in so we could lock up and go home. I looked across to the 11th fairway and I saw a round object, about 3 feet in circumference in the sky descending at a very slow pace. It was moving so slow and when it got to the height of the house it stopped. We kept looking wondering why it stopped in midair; we looked at it for the next 10 minutes totally suspended in the air. At that point I was going to get a cart and go there to see what it was. Then the object started to move up very slowly, then in a matter of few seconds it burst upward so fast that it was out of sight in no time.*

**The End.** *There were many more experiences in my tenure at Rye Golf Club the success of the club was from the people who worked so hard to get there, people like Ben Jessen, Terry Silverman, Harry Dunning, Dick Gonyea and Leon Kaufman. The people who worked for Pam and I in the pro shop and on the golf course - Steve Marconi, Mike Belluscio, Emily Belluscio, Tommy Codispoti (Cody), Pete Vavasour, the Lyons brothers, Timmy O'Brien, Stu Smith, my son Rich Santucci. There were others in 26 years. Pam and I watched them grow up in Rye, graduate college, go on to be successful in business, get married and have children. Those were the best experiences, seeing them now and then and telling stories that would fill a book.*

**Reflections of Dick Gonyea, Superintendent, 1970 - 2002:**

*"I arrived at Rye Golf Club in the Spring of 1970. RGC was in the infantile years of becoming a public golf course. The maintenance building was an old, deteriorated horse stable filled with antiquated mowing equipment with a leaking roof and sagging floors. Without heat, we utilized portable kerosene heaters during the colder months. There was no irrigation system except a hand-held hose and sprinklers for the tees and greens.*

*In the years that followed, I was able to be a part of the team that modernized the facilities. New investments were made in the maintenance building and in the late 1970's we installed a single row satellite irrigation system to keep up with the growing demand of golfers. In the 1990's, this was further updated to be a double row computerized system. During the same decade, all the golf tees and sand traps were completely renovated in addition to the second green. One of the highlights of my days at RGC was working with a golf course architect to redesign the 8th and 9th fairways."*



### **Chip Lafferty, Superintendent, 2003 - Present:**

Living on the property with his family, Chip is almost never “off duty.” He is literally on the golf course 24/7. Before, during and after work, roaming the course with his two sheepdogs, Larkin and Wikki (who keep the Canadian geese off our greens), Chip has found many interesting, possibly ancient, rock carvings around the course.



Lafferty clan on 8; Compass on old stone dock near 17; “Viking runes” on 5; “Hooked X” on 18; “Box code” above 14 green.





# Champions

Unfortunately, we do not have very good records of all of the winners of our many tournaments over the years. The following lists were compiled based upon the best information available, typically the trophies and plaques around the clubhouse. We apologize for any errors but thought it was important to recognize the excellence displayed by these fine golfers on our home course over the years.

## Club Champions

1936	James A. Scully	
1965	Len Schindo, Sr.	Mrs. Allen Becker
1966	Vic Iorillo	Georgine Sullivan
1967	Vic Iorillo	Georgine Sullivan
1968	Vic Iorillo	Beth Moller
1969	Vic Iorillo	Dorothy Cowen
1970	Lou Santoro	Georgine Sullivan
1971	Mike Saracino	Mary Anne Germond
1973	Tony Demarco	Mary Anne Germond
1974	Mike Saracino	Mary Anne Germond
1975	Lou Santoro	Olga Slegar
1976	Todd Pike	Olga Slegar

1977	Mark Delzio	Olga Slegar
1978	Scott Drago	Mary Anne Germond
1979		Sue Rose
1981		June Scanlon
1983		Mary Anne Germond
1984	Len Schindo	
1985	Len Schindo	
1986	John Lish	
1987	Mark Delzio	Marie Martin
1988	John Lish	Marie Martin
1989	Mark Delzio	Kathy Ronan
1990	Len Braccio	Kathy Ronan
1991	Len Braccio	Kathy Ronan
1992	John Lish	Kathy Ronan
1993	Len Braccio	Kathy Ronan
1994	Len Braccio	Mary Ann Blake
1995	Pat Romano	Ayumi Koizumi
1996	Sean McGuigan	Ayumi Koizumi
1997	Pat Romano	Ayumi Koizumi
1998	Pat Romano	Ayumi Koizumi
1999	Declan Gallagher	Ayumi Koizumi
2000	Russ Healy	Yuri Ito

2001	Larry Antinozzi, Jr.	Danielle Castiglia
2002	Kevin Solomon	Danielle Castiglia
2003	Kevin Solomon	Pam Santucci
2004	Kevin Solomon	Lisa Black
2005	Kevin Solomon	Pam Santucci
2006	Marc Saracino, Jr.	Danielle Breen
2007	Evans Killeen	Lynne Murphy-Gere
2008	Jay Donovan	Angela Sposato
2009	Kevin Solomon	Peggy Flanagan
2010	Peter Bisceglia	Peggy Flanagan
2011	Billy Van Dolsen	Peggy Flanagan
2012	Billy Van Dolsen	Peggy Flanagan
2013	Peter Bisceglia	Peggy Flanagan
2014	Peter Bisceglia	Peggy Flanagan
2015	Chris Horgan	Peggy Flanagan
2016	James McHugh	Melissa Maurer
2017	Akhil Kumar	Melissa Maurer
2018	Peter Bisceglia	Melissa Maurer
2019	Charles Seward	Melissa Maurer
2020	Charles Seward	Melissa Maurer

### Senior Club Champions

2004	John Castiglia	
2005	Tom Battista	
2006	Rick Ciraco	
2007	John Castiglia	
2008	Jim Clinton	
2009	Jim Clinton	
2010	John Castiglia	
2011	John Castiglia	
2012	Richard Seid	Angela Giorgi
2013	Pat Romano	Joanne Ornstein
2014	Richard Seid	Michelle Foristel
2015		Lynne Murphy-Gere
2016	Francis Sevean	Joanne Ornstein
2017	Pat Romano	Lynne Murphy-Gere
2018	Richard Seid	Angela Sposato
2019	Jim Yong Kim	Angela Sposato
2020	Darren Johnston	Joanne Ornstein
2021	Brian Flanagan	Betsy Post

### Players of the Year

2004	Chris Maguire	Pam Santucci
2005	Kevin Solomon	Adele Saunders
2006	Phillip Klimerman	Laura Leach
2007	John Duffy	Adele Saunders
2008	Jay Donovan	Pam Santucci
2009	Jay Donovan	Sue Bisceglia
2010	Akhil Kumar	Kara Martin
2011	Peter Bisceglia	Peggy Flanagan
2012	Quinn Growcock	Angela Sposato
2013	Peter Bisceglia	Pam Santucci
2014	Chris Horgan	Angela Giorgi
2016	Brian Flanagan	Peggy Flanagan
2017	Francis Sevean	Melissa Maurer
2018	Akhil Kumar	Angela Giorgi
2019	Peter Bisceglia	Melissa Maurer
2020	Charles Seward	Lynne Murphy-Gere

### Governor's Cup Champions

2003	Duffy/Stella	
2004	Sanet/DiGiacomo	Marconi/Santucci
2005	Lindblum/Mindlin	Murphy-Gere/Hobbins
2006	Lanza/Seacord	Belluscio/Bisceglia
2007	Sanet/DiGiacomo	Warren/Lyons
2008	Nye/Hull	Ornstein/Giorgi
2009	Altmeyer/Maguire	Breen/Kolasch
2010	Caffrey/Meehan	Sposato/Kolasch
2011	Frank/Beiger	Belluscio/Bisceglia
2012	Ghili/Cali	Gessing/Leach
2013	Caffrey/Maguire	Gessing/Leach
2014	Ulicny/Patel	Gessing/Leach
2016	Meehan/Cali	Gessing/Leach
2017	Costentino/Miller	Di Edwards/Henricksen
2018	Onelli/Sevean	Yurkovic/Belluscio
2019	Fortin/Labovitz	Macaluso/Park
2020	Onelli/Sevean	Maurer/Murphy-Gere



### Players Champions

2008	Francis Sevean	
2009	Peter Bisceglia	Amy Marconi
2010	Akhil Kumar	Linda Shearman
2011	Peter Bisceglia	Lynne Murphy-Gere
2012	Francis Sevean	Adrienne Belluscio
2013	Jim Codispoti	Pam Santucci
2014	Terry Caffrey	Adrienne Belluscio
2016	James Packes	Lynne Murphy-Gere
2017	Ed Fabiani	Melissa Maurer
2018	Richard Verile	Judy Yurkovic
2019	Francis Sevean	Melissa Maurer
2020	Kenneth Chen	Pam Garavano



# Memories

## **Ryewood Country Club, Patrick Ardis**

It was June 1964 - close to the ending of one era and the beginning of another. Harrison High was out for summer break. It was a special time and place in the world – summer in Westchester. Great things awaited: Oakland Beach and Pool, Playland, with the coming and going of gigantic boats from a place far away – New York City. A time of leisure and long days at the beach...until that summer.

It was also the year that my friends – the blue-collar boys of Harrison from the Brentwood, Franklin Park and another section or two of my home town – would undergo a rite of passage from childhood to manhood. For those of us born in 1950, it was the summer when we went to work outside of the neighborhood; the time to replace the idleness of youth with the real world. Undertaking the responsibility of making enough money to go to college or buy your first car.

Off we went in all kinds of directions and some of us decided to go into golf – the sport of frustrated men and women alike. The weekend escape for the wealthy and working class alike. Our golf, however, was of a different nature; it was the golf of a working caddy. You could make real money. A “rabbit” carrying a single bag would make \$5 a loop, while the bigger and stronger kids could carry a “double” – two bags for \$10 a round. This was real money to a kid who was used to making \$5 a week on a newspaper route.

My friends headed to Willow Ridge, Westchester Country Club and Winged Foot. However, a few of us headed for a place called Ryewood. An isolated piece of paradise that was protected from most of us by Osborne Road and Oakland Beach Avenue. The hills of those roads taught 14-year-olds

with one speed bikes clad with balloon tires how to ride the ‘Tour de Rye’ with its mountainous terrain. This was work only for the most fit or perhaps those without connections with the Caddy Master at the other clubs.

I learned a great deal that summer and in those that followed. I learned that not all golf courses had a front 9 and a back 9. I learned that this course had a front 12 and a back 6. I learned that the break was after the 12<sup>th</sup> hole which followed a torturous 11<sup>th</sup> hole, uphill and long. I learned that while I enjoyed the water, not the water holes – especially the one that had eels!! (No, we didn’t retrieve the balls for the players; that was their own misfortune). I learned the magic of a place built with a residential area in its center, with salt water and wildlife surrounding; deer at dawn or dusk were plentiful and beautiful. No wonder John Jay chose to build his mansion where he did.

Finally, and in hindsight maybe most importantly for my future, I learned a work ethic. At 90 pounds (funnily enough, no one ever disclosed how heavy those bags are), one bag was heavy, much less two. While my one loop traditionally paid \$5, more often than not, I received \$6 or more from a golfer that understood the value of working and wanted to help a kid get to college. Here, I learned generosity and kindness and that there was in fact a direct correlation between hard work and success. I have benefitted for a lifetime from a place of beauty and grace that just happens to have its own Castle.

### **Rye Golf Club, Jim “Coach” Codispoti:**

I moved to Rye in 1964 and first joined the club in 1965. I have had the pleasure of playing in groups that included Cliff Clinton, Jim Torrance, Lou Drago, Rocky Graziano, Bob Kozinski, Jack Nye, Marc Saracino, Sr., Marc Saracino, Jr., Mike Saracino, George Maier, Larry Antinozzi, Bill Black,

Ravi Sundaram, John Macy, Jim Clinton, Rich Verille, and most recently Pat Romano, Michael Palmer and Steve Dryer.

Here are some of my recollections of the course over the years:

The tree on the left side of the 16th fairway just past the top of the hill was an influencing factor on drives and second shots on this difficult hole. The tree has since been removed.

The tree hanging over the fairway on the left side of the 18th hole was a major factor on drives and second shots. I remember in a tournament round hitting that tree on my drive and having the ball kick out of bounds. The tree has been removed.

The old front bunkers on holes 3, 9, 17 and 18 greatly influenced the way you played those holes since it was difficult to run the ball on to the green.

Driving the ball straight was a priority since most holes were tree lined. Significant tree removal has made driving the ball more open and forgiving.

The soil that was removed from dredging the sound was used to level the fairways on holes eight and nine. There were long periods of time when you could not find a blade of grass on those holes.

There was a small driving range (for irons only with distance restrictions) located where the pool parking and part of the pool is currently located.

Because of the limited irrigation systems on the golf course, most tournaments did not include summer rules. Preferred lies in your own fairway was a typical local rule for all tournament play.

It was commonplace for the greenskeeper to whip the greens with a long pole to remove moisture while you were playing your round of golf

There was a period of time on weekends when players were teeing off on both 1st and 10th Tees with a crossover. It didn't last long because of the crossover delays.

There were years when you had to pay a golf surcharge for every round played to help pay for the improved irrigation system.

There was a green for chipping and putting located in the front of the Castle which was a popular practice area.

The pro shop was located in a room near the pool and the starter shack was located where the pro shop is now.

Due to tree removals, views of the water on Long Island sound have greatly improved over the entire golf course.

The stream crossing the fairways on holes 4, 5 and 6 was a wider, deeper and more challenging hazard.

There was a road crossing the 12th fairway leading to the equipment barn. As I was teeing off, I hit my drive just as a truck was entering the road and my ball hit and broke a side window. The truck was a rental and fortunately no charges were filed.

Because of the blind shots on holes 5 and 7, long poles with signs were located behind the greens with red and green sides at the top of the poles. Players were instructed to turn the sign to the green side to alert the next group to proceed to the green to speed up play.

There was a bunker located behind the green on the right side of the 7th hole which has since been removed.

Because there was no driving range and limited practice facilities, I remember playing the back six holes in the morning before going to work and in the late afternoon, playing the first two holes, going back to the putting green on the 1st hole, waiting for the tee to open up and replaying one and two over and over again until it got dark.

The Calcutta was a proper weekday event with great turnouts and competitive tournament play. Team captains were picked and teams were selected by handicaps for balance.

In 1993, the Club Championships and Senior Championships were played at the same time over 4 rounds of 18 holes. I finished in the top five and was the low senior player winning my first senior championship.

I was a senior player in the first Mayor's Trophy match played at Apawamis on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003. We lost.

### **Rye Golf Club, Carol Maurer:**

The practice putting green used to be in the circle in front of the Castle.

When you drove down the entry road to the club and turned left to the golf parking lot, on the right was a big old oak tree and underneath was a bench where a group of elderly male golfers would meet to chat each day.

There were a lot more trees on the course.

The sand traps were more dirt traps than sand traps.

The fairways were a lot thinner.

The whole course played a lot rougher.

There were fewer golfers on the course.



The pro shop where one could buy golf clothing used to be in the building next to where the snack area is located today.

Many holes have been reconfigured, e.g., the lady's tee on #17.

Many sand traps have changed locations (front of hole #3), some added and some deleted.

The Castle didn't have the big catering section added on. There was a bar and lockers downstairs and a nice sized room upstairs for events. We remember going to lots of nice end of year school sports dinners there.

**Rye Golf Club, Scott Dunn:**

Driving range toward the Post Road before the new pool.

Putting green in the circle in front of the Castle.

Starter's shack where the new admin building is.

The slopes of the 3rd and 18th greens.

Tree lined fairways on holes 2, 4, 5, 6 and 15.

Blue tee box with wood fence on #8 overlooking harbor and no houses behind 7th green

Pond in front of 18th tee with large fish swimming in it.

Was known in the 80's by some as the "Harrison Golf Club" as there were many Harrison members.

**Rye Golf Club, Robert Marrow:**

This isn't ancient history, but it did happen several years ago.

I was playing early by myself. When I got to 17, Steve Kladis was on the green with his munchkins. He saw me on the tee and gathered his students to the right of the green. My tee shot found one of the right bunkers. When I got there Steve and the kids were standing a few feet away. Steve said to his students, "Let's watch Mr. Marrow hit this bunker shot." Of course, I sculled it screaming across the green and into the hazard on the other side. Steve said to the kids, "What's the first rule when you're in a bunker?" They shouted in unison, "HIT THE SAND FIRST!"

#### **Rye Golf Club, Peggy Ryan:**

I remember when the lady's tee on 12 used to be close to where the putting green is now. They changed it because so many tee shots went into the pool area.

I remember the lady's tee on the 18th hole used to be right behind the pond and a man named Russ used to put on a wet suit and go diving for golf balls. When you least expected it, he would pop up from beneath the water. It was a good laugh.

I remember the path for the 17th hole used to be on the left side and, before golf carts were automatically slowed down, we could go "sailing" down the cart path.

The tee on 14, used to be on the hill to the right of current tee.

We used to have color score cards, with diagrams of the holes.

The bar used to be downstairs in the corner. Some singles club used to hold dances there every month and all those drinking at the bar, would dance also.

We used to have "enchanted forests" on so many holes: 2, 6, 7, 13, 15, 16 and 18. You got in one of those and there was no getting out.

Years and years ago, they held Wednesday "socials" for high school kids.

**Rye Golf Club, Al Vitiello:**

One of my favorite stories that happened at Rye Golf was when a Rye teenager named Peter Collins passed away. Many of the families that were affected by this tragedy were RGC members. Unselfishly, the Rye Golf Club staff offered an afternoon of golf for the grieving parents, friends and their families to come and be together on the golf course. It was a much-needed distraction and a great day of healing for the family and friends, one which I'll never forget and will always be grateful to Rye Golf and its staff for doing that.





