

EMIL SCODELLER

Pekin, Illinois has a golfing heritage of which few Americans may be aware. After D. A. Points recently won the Shell Houston Open tournament he was touted as the best golfer from, Pekin, Illinois. Whoever made this remark probably didn't do their homework. In a galaxy far, far away the brothers Paul Scodeller, Emil Scodeller and Eric Monti, who all hail from Pekin, have each won a number of tournaments on the tour, of course these accomplishments may have been somewhat clouded with the passage of time. Emil's mother had seven boys, three of whom became professional golfers, but more important than their golfing accomplishments is that Mrs. Scodeller should be put up for sainthood. Seven boys?

The Lick Creek Golf Club in Pekin, occasional host to the senior tour, was sometimes considered the home course to the boys. There is an interesting side note as to the other course that they may have considered as their home. There were several migrations between Pekin and Santa Monica, CA as their older brother August assumed the roll of family patriarch taking this responsibility after the death of their father. Their local home was proximate to the Riviera Country Club. So just like any other red blooded American youth with a propensity toward golf, you can guess where they spent their time after school hours. Later as caddies there was no need to sneak onto the course. This earlier familiarization with Riviera paid huge dividends later as they took turns winning the L. A. Open which at the time was also played at the Los Angeles Country Club.

During one of his residencies in Pekin, Emil as a high school senior came in second place in the Illinois state high school golf tournament, which earned him a scholarship to Illinois State University. His education there was interrupted by being called up to the 149th Fighter Squadron of the Illinois National Guard because of the Korean War. After discharge Emil returned to California and served as an assistant at several courses, among them being the Wilshire Country Club, Alhambra Golf Club and Annandale Golf Club.

Sioux City, Iowa is where Emil first turned pro. Other professional golf tournaments in which he participated were the 1952 U. S. Open at Oakmont, the National PGA at the Athletic Club in Dallas, another in San Antonio, the Crosby in Pebble Beach, which by the way is his favorite course, and by the by, several L.A. Opens one of which he won over Ken Venturi at Rancho Park. The purses of yesteryear were barely a stipend to what players win today. The winnings for all events for the entire year barely equal the winnings of one of today's events. The point being, eking out a living on the tour then was quite an accomplishment!

Ingratiating himself with the membership at Annandale didn't hurt as that is where he was promoted and became club professional for 17 years after the previous pro stepped down. Later he became the pro at Mountain View in Corona. MacArthur said old soldiers never die they just pass away, apparently that holds true for old golfers as they just keep on giving lessons and teaching numerous classes of aspiring golf students at the Saddleback Junior College facility, at least this old golfers does, and thank God for that, as he has so much to offer. Emil recently accepted the SCGA Heritage Award on behalf of his brothers for the family contribution to golf.

An excerpt from a 2006 article Randy Youngman wrote for the Orange County Register, "Shooting his age is par for the course". Two or three times a week Paul Scodeller does something on a golf course that Tiger Woods has never done and can only dream about doing someday. Jack Nicklaus hasn't done it yet. Arnold Palmer has done it many times, but not lately. Gary Player has done it this year, but not often. Paul has done it three times in a row by having shot a 73, 73 and 72, shot his age or better, that is. The first time he did it was 6 years ago when he shot a 68 at the age of 68 at El Niguel. His career low was 64 at Waialea Country Club in Hawaii, site of the PGA Open back in the 1960's. When prodded he conceded he shoots his age pretty close to half of his rounds these days, and says he averages four rounds a week. And if he shoots his age 8 or 10 times a month, he probably does it at least 100 times a year. That's impressive!

Not to be outdone by his sibling, Emil who is in the neighborhood of 82 years young, seldom records a score in excess of his age. The estimate is in the hundreds as are the number of championship courses he has played. Myself, I expect that the intercept between matching my age and score will happen somewhere in the neighborhood of around my 117th birthday.



WOW!—Jokingly expressing amazement at Vice President Nixon's drive are, from left, Bernard Weinberg, Hillcrest Country Club president; Danny Kaye, Eric Monti and Danny Thomas. The round of golf followed a stag luncheon attended by Nixon at the club.

Times photo