



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

American golf shone brightest during the first 40 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were pivotal to first introducing the game here and establishing its administration but, once that was done, the game flowered in its popularity, architecture and competitive excellence. While enthusiasm for golf was rampant it was not just wildly searching for direction. The quality of American competitive play, here and overseas, and the extraordinary distinction of the courses built during this time are unmatched in any other of our historical segments.

All of this, of course, took place before television and the money its audience and advertisers showered on golf - more precisely, on professional golf. The impact of televised golf from the 1960s forward is responsible for exposing the game to millions of viewers and spreading its allure from private clubs into everyone's living rooms. This expansion myopically and understandably emphasized professional performances not unlike our preference for professional actors in film or onstage. The precocity, pampering and entitlement of today's professionals extends from that point and can be found in nearly all sports, as it is in Hollywood and politics.

What golf left behind was a greater interest in the non-professional game that was played by the best amateurs of that time who frequently defeated the leading professionals, employed and produced the greatest course designers, and did this all with greater discernment and humility than has since been the case.

For these reasons, we give you more pieces of the dazzling stories that filled Marion Hollins' and Lawson Little's competitive lives:

**Marion Hollins**  
(1892 - 1944)

## The Greatest Sportswoman of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Marion Hollins was born into a privileged family which to someone less driven may have resulted in a comfortable, obscure life on the north shore of Long Island. Instead, her tightly-packed calendar never seemed to yield enough hours. What her 55 years did yield is staggering in its accomplishment. Her more memorable achievements include:

- Designing the 16<sup>th</sup> hole at Cypress Point.
- Creating three of the world's most revered courses: Cypress Point, Pasatiempo, and the Women's National Golf and Tennis Club (Glen Head, New York).
- Knocking out Jack Dempsey with the front door of New York's Sherry Netherland Hotel.
- Holding the reputation as America's best female polo player and leading four-in-hand whip - having driven a coach and four up the Champs-Élysée at the age of nine.
- Winning the 1921 U.S. Women's Amateur Championship; three times the Metropolitan Golf Association Championship; and eight times the Pebble Beach Golf Championship.
- Captaining the first Curtis Cup team.
- Competing in an automobile race - the first woman ever to do so.
- Amassing a fortune by speculating in oil exploration in the Kettleman Hills of California, which in 1928 was the largest oil field ever discovered. She died nearly broke; and

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Marion Hollins  
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Come April ...

• Employing and bringing to America Ernest Jones, a British golf professional credited with more championships won by his students than any other instructor in golf's long history.

David E. Outerbridge's laudable and important CHAMPION IN A MAN'S WORLD - THE BIOGRAPHY OF MARION HOLLINS (Sleeping Bear Press, 1998) does not betray his admiration for Miss Hollins and the vast accomplishments of her short life. Indeed, Mr. Outerbridge appears to have been moved to put them down lest the record might be forgotten. When golf historians visit the first 40 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is rightfully crowded with the names of Bob Jones, Alexa Stirling, Cyril Tolley, C.B. Macdonald, Lawson Little, Walter Travis, Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, John McDermott, Alister MacKenzie, Donald Ross, George Thomas, George Crump, A.W. Tillinghast and many others. Now Marion Hollins is called from the back row of those historical narratives.

Her obscurity, as Mr. Outerbridge writes, is part of her enigma, "... she was one of those rare human beings who find reward in the achievement itself, requiring no further external need for confirmation or applause. Said another way, she lived the graceful credo whereby accomplishment is its own reward; that accomplishment is *the* reward; and the applause, adulation, and attention are superfluous."

An excerpt about the 16<sup>th</sup> at Cypress Point:

*One stands on the tee and looks across the ocean to the point of land where the green is situated. In his original plans before he died, Seth Raynor had envisioned the green out on the point, and had routed the hole as a par 4. His successor Alister MacKenzie concurred with the conservative approach, which required a carry of less than two hundred yards.*

*Marion had disagreed, however. She argued that it should be a par 3, directly across the ocean. She wanted the hole to be an heroic opportunity. The men had told her that it was an impossible drive, but she thought otherwise. To prove her point, she teed up a ball and with a brassie sent it on its way across the water. Where the ball landed is today the center of the green.\**

*\* Alister MacKenzie in his autobiography corroborated this. "To give honor where it is due, I must say that except for minor details in construction, I was in no way responsible for the hole. It was largely due to the vision of Miss Marion Hollins (the founder of Cypress Point). It was suggested to her by the late Seth Raynor that it was a pity the carry over the ocean was too long to enable a hole to be designed*

*on this particular site. Miss Hollins said she did not think it was an impossible carry. She then teed up a ball and drove to the middle of the site for the suggested green."*

Since 1950, golf has been played with increasing protection from the elements and generally greater comfort. The following illustrates how much tougher and exacting it once was:

*In 1941 in another remarkable round, Marion entered the women's championship tournament at Cypress Point. Out of a field of 40 entries, only four finished, with Marion the champion. On the final day of the tournament, torrential rains triggered by mid-winter cyclonic movements over the Pacific descended onto the Monterey coast. The drenching downpour never abated. Marion and her fellow competitors played on. One of the foursome (sic) Mildred Yorba MacArthur, described the afternoon:*

*"It was Marion who shot the golf that day. She never lost her swing for an instant, because she didn't try to keep from getting wet, like the rest of us. She wore no hat, windbreaker, scarf, or other hindrances that the rest of us resorted to. Instead she wore two slipover cashmere sweaters, and now and then she'd stop and wring them out, laughing heartily as the water poured into her already soaked shoes.*

*"Her beloved dog 'Ganz' started out with us. At the third hole she looked back and saw the miserable creature making his way through the downpour. She spotted a workman nearby and called to him, asking him if he'd mind taking the dog to the clubhouse in his vehicle. As she carried him to the back of the pickup she said, 'This is no kind of weather for a dog to be out gallerying.' It wasn't but we learned a lot of golf that day.*

*"She used a two iron for almost every shot, including putting on the flooded greens. She allowed as much as forty or fifty feet for wind drifts as she started her shots out, that ultimately found their way to the greens. Marion shot a heroic 91 that day, while the rest of us went well over the hundred mark and still finished in the money."*

**LAWSON LITTLE'S AMERICAN & BRITISH  
AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIPS 1934 & 1935  
by Laurence Viney †**

An astonishing feat in the 1930s was that of Lawson Little of Presidio, California, in the American and British Amateur Championships of 1934 and 1935. From the first round of the British Amateur at Prestwick in Scotland in May 1934 to the final of the American [sic] Ama-

teur at The Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio, in September 1935, he was unbeaten in 31 consecutive matches in the four championships. [EDITOR'S NOTE: This piece first appeared in THE GOLF LETTER in the early 1990s before Tiger Woods established perhaps his most remarkable record of three consecutive U.S. Junior Amateur followed immediately by three consecutive U.S. Amateur match play victories - 1991, '92, '93, '94, '95, '96.]

This succession of wins was the more remarkable for it is often the case that a great player comes up against a competitor in an early round, who plays well above his normal form; but Little produced golf which invariably bettered the best thrown at him. His commanding presence, his broad shoulders and intimidating look could not fail to unsettle his opponents. He was capable of out-driving them all, yet he had a fine delicate touch around the green and was forever holing vital putts.

In 1934 the format of the American Amateur was altered when sectional qualifiers, 185 in that year, came to The Country Club at Brookline, Mass., to find the winner by match-play. This meant six rounds of 18 holes with the semi-final and final each played over 36 holes. The finalists thus played ten rounds in six days.

At The Country Club, Little won all his matches by comfortable margins, as indeed he did the next year at The Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio. None of his matches in either year went beyond the 16<sup>th</sup> or 34<sup>th</sup> hole. His opponents included Walker Cup players Willie Turnesa, Johnny Goodman, George Voight and Walter Emery. Turnesa and Goodman went on to be Amateur Champions later, while Goodman had already won the U.S. Open in 1933, being one of five Amateurs over the years to have defeated the Professionals. The other four

† Laurence Viney, an Englishman who died in 2001, was the former editor of THE ROYAL & ANCIENT GOLFER'S HANDBOOK and was a leading historical authority with a proclivity toward timely and entertaining observations. He was an exchange student in the class of 1938 at Phillips Academy, Andover, was injured in a wartime glider accident, and edited and authored many golf books and notable club histories. He is the only third party whose writing has ever appeared in THE GOLF LETTER.

were Jerome De Travers, Francis Ouimet, Chic Evans, Jr., and, on four occasions, Bob Jones. In the finals, Little beat David Goldman at Brookline and Walter Emery at Cleveland.

In 1934 Little had come to the U.K. with the Walker Cup team, which easily beat the British at St. Andrews 9½ to 2½, winning both his 36-hole foursome match [partnering] with Johnny Goodman against Cyril Tolley and Roger Wethered by 8 & 6 and his single with Tolley by 6 & 5.

From St. Andrews the team travelled to Prestwick, the classic links course on Scotland's west coast and birthplace of the Open in 1860, for the British Amateur. Little dominated the Championship as none had ever done before. He won six matches with comparative ease until the semi-final, when he met a long-hitting English International, L.G. Garnett. All square after 18 he scraped through the 19<sup>th</sup>. The 1<sup>st</sup> hole at Prestwick has as daunting a tee-shot as any in Britain. With a stonewall and straight railway cutting exactly parallel and close on the right, a sliced or slightly pushed drive means inevitable disaster. It must be quite stultifying played as the 19<sup>th</sup>. Little survived; Garnett did not.

In the final, Little's opponent, James Wallace, a local player of no previous reputation, had played steadily and unobtrusively through the early rounds, collecting some notable scalps on his way, including Chandler Egan (U.S.), Tolley and George Dunlap (U.S.), all of who had played in the Walker cup the week before. A large crowd from Glasgow and nearby had arrived to support their hero who was no doubt as surprised as he was that he had made it to the final.

Little was mightily impressed throughout. At the end of the first 18 he was 12 up, being round in 66 with a great eagle 3 at the famous Cardinal 3<sup>rd</sup> hole and with every hole in a 3 or a 4. Wallace could do no better than halve six holes.

If Little had been a tiger in the morning, he was a roaring lion and quite devastating in the afternoon. Wal-



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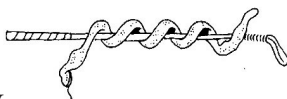
lace played the first five holes in par 4, 3, 5, 4, 3. Little was breath-taking with 3, 3, 4, 3, 3, winning at the 23<sup>rd</sup> by 14 & 13, the largest victory ever in the Championship. Such play in the final of the Amateur has seldom been matched and is a never-to-be-forgotten memory for those who were fortunate enough to be there.

Little returned in 1935 to defend his title at Royal Lytham and St. Anne's. He won again, but it was far from an easy process for him. If he was not at his commanding best, he was still an uncrackable nut, producing the telling shot when it really mattered. His matches were much closer this time, most of them going to the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>.

In the final he met Dr. William Tweedle, a busy country physician and week-end golfer, who had been Champion in 1926. Little outdrove him by 50 to 8- yards, with his opponent invariably playing the odd † †. The champion was 5 up after 11 holes, but Tweedle whose play was calm and steady especially with irons and his putter, fought back and was only 3 down at the break.

Still 3 down at the 26<sup>th</sup>, he holed good putts at the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> to be square. Little counter-attacked

† † *Playing the odd* is a match play expression which was often used by Bernard Darwin and others. It is defined as "playing one more stroke than one's opponent. With his [the opponent's] next stroke he will then 'play the like', then both players will have played the same number of strokes ... If you have played two more than one's opponent, with this next stroke he will be playing 'one off two'; if three more 'one off three' and so on".



For A.G.W.:

*"Churchill slowly came not only to accept but even value his distinctive way of speaking. A number of men whom he admired, from the Prince of Wales to the prince's close friend Colonel John Palmer Brabazon, could not pronounce the letter r, a defect that, because of the Prince of Wales, was considered fashionable in many circles. Churchill would admiringly recall Brabazon shouting, 'Where is the London twain?' and, when told that it had already left, demanding haughtily, 'Gone! Bwing another.'"*

Candice Millard  
THE HERO OF THE EMPIRE

with zest to capture the next two holes and the 16<sup>th</sup> was halved in par, making Little 2 up and 2 to play [dormie 2]. At the 17<sup>th</sup> Tweedle put his second shot into a shallow bunker by the green, but laid a delicate chip dead with a 5 iron, a shot which is seldom played today, when sand wedges are considered essential. Little could not match his 4, but only had to halve the 18<sup>th</sup> to keep the title. This they did in par 4, Tweedle's valiant putt for 3 just fading away off the line as it trickled past the hole. So ended an epic struggle in complete contrast to the previous year.

Little turned professional in 1936. He won the Canadian Open that year and a few professional tournaments before capturing the U.S. Open in 1940 at Cleveland [Canterbury G.C.] after a tie and playoff with Gene Sarazen. Thereafter his name disappears from the lists of winners but many still regard him as the Amateur supreme. Tweedle captained the 1936 Walker Cup team at Pine Valley and went on to be Captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews in 1961.

### Come April ...

The Masters issue of THE GOLF LETTER will be delivered via e-mail, as we have discussed for the past few months. The process will be as simple as we can make it. You will receive an e-mail and a connection to that month's issue, which can be easily printed from your device or read online.

Obviously, we must have your e-mail address in order to accomplish your delivery in April and going forward. Most of you have already furnished that information but many have not. If you are unsure or would like to send your e-mail address via e-mail, please send to:

[delivery@TheGolfLetter.com](mailto:delivery@TheGolfLetter.com)

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

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