

HISTORY OF THE NALG

It appears that the one of the first organized lefty tournament occurred in New England in 1925; the exact date is unknown. There were approximately twenty aspirants who dared the scorn and derision of their right-handed brethren by attending such an event.

The following years saw more left-handed tournaments in various parts of the United States, but still only regional tournaments. It wasn't until 1934 that Ben Richter, an active left-handed Golf Professional, Triple A Golf Club in St. Louis, Missouri, staged a tournament at White Sulphur Springs Golf Course in West Virginia.

Ben and his Missouri amateurs pursued the notion of establishing a national organization encompassing all lefty golfers throughout the United States. This vision of a national organization became a reality with the inauguration of the First National Left-Handed Championship Tournament at the Norwood Hills Country Club, St. Louis, Missouri in September of 1936. Ben Richter did his own promotion to attract all left-handers in the land. He mailed requests for names to 1,300 fellow professionals at their home clubs; he enlisted representatives of golf equipment manufacturers to carry blank forms in their sample cases and to fill them out whenever they found a left-hander. Altogether, he secured about 5,000 names and sent them invitations to participate in the First Left-Handed Championship Tournament.

One hundred and forty-seven lefties assembled to play September 1936 at Norwood Hills. One hundred and forty players from 24 states participated in the second National Championship at Olympic fields Country Club, Chicago Illinois. The field included representatives from all walks of life: bankers, lawyers, doctors, insurance executives, clergy, teachers, and factory workers.

In 1939 the late Robert (Bob) Romberger of Toledo, Ohio joined Ben Richter as a promoter of left-handed golf and became the first Executive Secretary of NALG. Bob was connected with the City Schools in Toledo and devoted much of his time and energy in promoting southpaw golf. He originated and edited the "National Left-Hander" from 1940 through 1956, and through this news media, Bob did an outstanding job in encouraging left-handers throughout the country to play more and better golf.

Many interested lefties organized State and local groups to play for the Championship of their area. This resulted in more interest in the National Championship and Bob was besieged with invitations from the leading clubs throughout the country offering their facilities for the National Left-Handed Championship.

At the National Amateur at Hickory, North Carolina in 1956, Romberger resigned as Executive Secretary and was replaced by John Murphy of Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In 1957, the Board of Governors rewrote the Constitution and By-laws of the NALG and established an office of the Executive Vice-President, and W.W. Sharp, JR was elected to this position at the annual meeting in Dallas, Texas in 1957.

A Senior Division for those over 50 years was established in 1947 and at that same time it was decided that the President each year should come from the area where the annual National Tournament was being played. In 1961, a Junior Division was added for youngsters less than 18 years of age. Starting with the 1973 Tournament, the age of the Senior Division was raised from 50 to 55 years.

In 1960, Uncle Mike Freedman, founder and owner of DeSota Lakes Golf & Country Club, Sarasota, Florida, proposed to the Board of Governors at a special meeting at Sedgefield Country Club, Greensboro, North Carolina, to sponsor a National \$10,000 Open Tournament at his club for a period of five years. The Board unanimously accepted his proposal, and the first National Open Tournament was held at DeSota Lakes Golf & country club in November 1961. Thirty-two Professionals and 160 amateurs participated in the first open, Harry Shoemaker won the first National Open Championship with Thorne Wood, Professional, as runner-up.

By 1960, the left-handed golfers were beginning to take their place in many of the leading tournaments throughout the world, but they were still short of one requisite so essential to the individual's success in this great National pastime – the producers of golf equipment had not developed the quality or type of equipment for the southpaw. After considerable research and requests to the producers of golfing equipment, the First Flight Company of Chattanooga, Tennessee agreed to produce the type and quality of equipment recommended by the NALG. Jack Harkins, founder and President of this outstanding golfing equipment company, negotiated a contract with the NALG to produce golf equipment under the label “NALG APPROVED EQUIPMENT”. Through the

efforts of the professionals and amateurs of our organization we have now developed the “NALG APPROVED CLUBS” that are equal in quality and design with the best produced for right-handers, and we can all enjoy the pleasure of playing with precision built clubs for the southpaw. We are deeply indebted to the entire staff of First Flight Company for developing the fine clubs available to southpaws today.

In 1960, the Board of Governors opened the membership to southpaw professionals and this division now has a membership of over 50 individuals, including the great BOB CHARLES of New Zealand.

In 1961, we let our right-handed friends in on a good thing when the Carolinas Division of the NALG proposed a National Lefty-Righty Championship Tournament. This was the Third National Tournament added to our schedule and we are deeply indebted to our former President, Pinky James and Vice-President, Ted Stone, for their untiring efforts in making this one of the outstanding tournaments of the NALG. The Carolinas Division has been given the responsibility of hosting this popular tournament for the first ten years. More than 100 teams compete each year at the beautiful Catawba Country Club, Hickory, N.C., and the Mimosa Hills Country Club, Morgantown, N.C. – the strongholds of the Carolinas Left-Handers.

Completing the five-year contract with the DeSota Lakes Golf and Country Club in 1965, the Board of Governors decided to find a new location for the National Open. The interest in this great tournament requires facilities of at least two golf courses and a sponsor to finance the professional prizes for the event. The Bottler's of Coca-Cola were very receptive to the idea of promoting the National Open and we were very fortunate in landing this national firm as our sponsor for the 1966 Open at the beautiful Diplomat Golf And Country Club, Hollywood, Florida.

During the first 30-year history of the NALG, we became one of the outstanding golfing organizations in the world, and it was both fitting and appropriate that we celebrated our 30th birthday by taking the National Amateur to foreign soil for the first time in the history of our organization. We are deeply indebted to the British Columbia Division and their leaders, Willard Gilmour, President of NALG, and Milton Dow, Chairman of the 1966 Tournament and Secretary of NALG, for their efforts in encouraging southpaws to visit the great city of Victoria in 1966.

In 1968, the Constitution and by-laws were brought up-to-date and amended to divide the United States into six regions with a Regional Governor to generally supervise and organize the Left-Handers of his region into Divisions of the NALG. Each Regional Governor is ex-officio member of the Board of Governors of the NALG thereby establishing a stronger link in the chain with National Headquarters.

In April 1973 Colonel Frank Elder was persuaded by Bill Sharp to become Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the NALG. Colonel Elder remained in this position until July 1982 when Kenneth Ahrens of Houston, Texas succeeded him. The National Association is greatly indebted to Frank Elder for his many years of service. During his tenure, the Association grew in stature and recognition and witnessed the beginning of closer ties with our lefty friends from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

As a direct result, the first International Left-Handers Tournament was held in Sidney, Australia in 1979. The second International (WALG) Tournament followed this outstanding event with 130 players coming from the United States and Canada in 1981 held in Hawaii. The third International event was held in 1983 in New Zealand, and the fourth (1985) in Canada. As noted, Frank's effort has helped unite and strengthen the ties that bind all fun-loving lefty golfers together. The NALG prospered with new associations under the leadership of Ken Ahrens in the USA... and Douglas Crosby of the World Association.

In recent years, the NALG has had many volunteers as board members to lead the organization. Wallace Jones (GA) served as Executive Secretary for many years...and currently, the office is held by Jim Bradley (NC). Since the 1990, the NALG tournament has been held in Canada, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Ohio.

In September 2010, the NALG of the United States hosted its 75th annual tournament and the 20th World Association of Left-Handed Golfers Tournament at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Frank Hunter was the tournament director and host of this tournament. In 2010, John Dourgarian and Walter Perog formed a new state organization in New Jersey. In May 2011, NALG Executive Secretary, Jim Bradley, and the Carolina Lefties organization hosted the 76th annual NALG's four-day tournament in Wilmington, NC. The 77th annual tournament was held in Monterey, CA at the Black Horse/Bayonet Courses...hosted by the NorCal Lefties. The 78th annual tournament (June 17-20, 2013) hosted by the NJ Lefties

was held at the Ballamor Golf Course (Egg Harbor, NJ) near Atlantic City, NJ. The following years the tournament was held at St. Louis, MO, Sarasota, FL and Niagara Falls, NY. The 2017 NALG Tournament will be held in Gautier, MS at the Shell Landing GC. See www.NALG.org for information and entry.

Amateur left-handed golfers of all levels are invited to participate in competitive events of golf. There are three sanctioned National events: The Dave McCall Southwest Shootout – a lefty-partner event – held in May in Albuquerque, NM; the Lefty – Righty tournament held in Lenoir, NC hosted its 50th annual tournament in 2013...and the annual NALG Tournament held in a different location each year.

State tournaments are generally held in California, the Carolinas, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, and Texas. An active city organization can be found in Cincinnati, Ohio – the Cincinnati Lefties.

The National Board meets annually at the Annual tournament. The following individuals serve on the Board of Governors.

The Current Board of Governors include:

Joe Brogdon (GA)

John Dourgarian (NJ)

Jon Flowers (OK)

Frank Hunter (NC)

Don Lightburn (NM)

Dick Martin (TX)

Terry Martin (NC)

Jim Mason (WV)

Wally Mattson (CA)

Jim Pfrogner (FL)

Rick Rodriguez (CA)

Paul Sprunk (FL)

Bob Wolf (MI)

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Information on all current tournaments can be accessed on the National website – www.nalg.org and the World Association – www.walg.org for the 25th Annual World Tournament in Melbourne, Australia.