
100 YEARS OF THE CPGA



Notable professionals Dugan Aycock, Purvis Ferree, Grant Bennett, and Grady Shumate

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Mister Golf

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He charmed James B. Duke out of \$5 caddie tips as a young boy.

He teamed with Sam Snead to win a professional tournament and once hit 114 shots across 10 miles from Lexington to Thomasville.

He helped spread the game of golf by smuggling clubs into Italy and North Africa in World War II.

He helped Charles Sifford break the color barrier at the Greater Greensboro Open in 1960 and raised money to help a fellow pro like Skip Alexander recover from physical mishaps.

He answered to the nickname of “Doog” and to the appellation of “King of the Jungle” for his frequent trips to the forest in search of his wayward drives.

There was certainly never a more colorful and influential figure in Carolinas golf in the mid-1900s than Dugan Aycock, the longtime head pro at Lexington (N.C.) Golf Club and for at least 15 years the president of the Carolinas PGA.

As life in the United States settled down following World War II in 1945, Aycock was at the epicenter promoting the game of golf.

“Dugan Aycock was Mr. Golf in the Carolinas for a long, long time. If you wanted to get something done, Dugan was the man,” Don Padgett

Sr., the director of golf at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club, said upon Aycock's death at the age of 93 in 2001. "There is no way to gauge the pleasure this man provided for the men, women and especially children he introduced to the game. To him, golf was almost a religion, and he was a great missionary. He will be missed but never forgotten."

"Dugan did more for golf around here than anybody else," Greensboro pro Aubrey Apple added.

Aycock was born in Charlotte in 1908 and was the middle of seven children. His father died when Dugan was 12, so he used his caddie fees at Charlotte Country Club to help his mother with expenses. His infectious personality surfaced early in life, and among those taking a shine to him was Duke, the tobacco and utility magnate who provided the seed money for Duke University. Duke routinely gave Dugan a healthy tip, spawning a passion Aycock carried through his life for Duke University and the Blue Devil athletic teams.

Aycock became an assistant pro at Charlotte at the age of 17, and his early career as a club pro included stops in South Boston, Va., and High Point before being hired to design a new course for Lexington Golf Club. The course opened in 1938 and Aycock stayed on as head pro, a job he would hold for some four decades.

Aycock took a leave to serve in the Army in World War II, and he spread the gospel of golf in Italy and North Africa. He helped smuggle golf clubs into those countries in a shipment of kitchen fixtures and worked to rebuild courses there and organize a tournament for Army personnel.

Aycock was renowned in Davidson County and throughout the Piedmont for welcoming all juniors to the game, regardless of their ability to buy clubs and balls and pay for greens fees, and he frequently helped fellow club professionals in times of personal or professional need.

One of his most celebrated fund-raising efforts came in 1947 when the March of Dimes chapter in Lexington was working feverishly

to raise funds to combat polio. Aycock decided to play one “hole” of golf 10 miles along Hwy. 29 from Lexington to Thomasville, with citizens contributing money to guess how many strokes it would take. He was allowed to tee up every shot except those which found water or a ditch, and those he lifted with a penalty stroke. Before the event, Aycock predicted his score, wrote it down and put it in an envelope.

With an entourage of six forecaddies, two scorers and a caddie named Bill “Earthquake” Smith, a former football player at the University of North Carolina, Aycock set off and finished the marathon in 114 strokes.

He had predicted 115. And he raised more than \$5,000.

Aycock always had the heart and energy to help his fellow pro in need.

Fellow pro Skip Alexander had enormous hospital bills after suffering third-degree burns on 70 percent of his body in a 1950 airplane crash. Aycock staged a match in Charlotte and raised \$11,000 to help Alexander. When Nick Guzdan, a Beaufort, S.C., pro lost an arm to cancer, Aycock went to work and raised more than \$10,000 for Guzdan, recruiting Arnold Palmer, Mike Souchak and Billy Joe Patton, among others, to help. When Clarence Owens was battling cancer, Aycock and fellow club pro Purvis Ferree raised more than \$7,000 to help with the medical bills.

Aycock befriended a crack young golfer in his hometown of



Charlotte and watched as Charles Sifford tried to forge a golf career during an era when blacks were not allowed at most golf and country clubs. When the Greensboro Jaycees and officials at the Greater Greensboro Open decided in 1960 it was time to broach the color barrier on the PGA Tour, Aycock suggested they invite Sifford to play in the GGO that spring. Aycock extended the invitation and served as Sifford's chaperone as Sifford survived death threats and finished fourth. The Caucasian-only clause was stricken from PGA by-laws six months later.

Aycock was president of the Carolinas PGA from 1948-58 then again from 1966-68 and led the ascension of the section into one of the strongest in the nation. He also served several terms as a national vice president of the PGA, was a member of its executive committee, served on the PGA's Ryder Cup committee and officiated at the matches more than once, and in 1957 he was named Golf Professional of the Year nationally. He is in the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame, the Carolinas Golf HOF and the Carolinas PGA HOF. The Davidson County Amateur is named in honor of Aycock.

"Dugan kept up his interest in the affairs of the PGA right up until his death, and he set standards and was a role model for the rest of us," said Will Mann, Carolinas PGA president from 1992-93 and national PGA president in 1999-2000.

"Leadership is what he was all about. The Carolinas Section would not be what it is today without the leadership of our old friend Dugan Aycock," added John Derr, former executive director of the Carolinas PGA.

The Carolinas PGA plans to honor Aycock by naming the upcoming perpetual Section Championship trophy after him. The Dugan Aycock Trophy or "the Doog" as it will be referred, will be a lasting testament to his dedication to the section. The Carolinas PGA has hopes of presenting the new trophy at this year's Carolinas PGA Professional Championship at Wachesaw Plantation Club later this

June.



LEE PACE is a Chapel Hill-based golf writer who has written about the history, architecture and great golfers of the Carolinas over four decades. He has written more than a dozen club histories and in 2021 released along with UNC Press his book, "Good Walks--Rediscovering the Soul of Golf at 18 Top Carolinas Courses."



PGA

Carolinas Section

100 YEARS

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