

During the past year coming up to this, the 40th anniversary issue of *FORE Magazine*, we have looked back at some of the highlights of the four decades of *FORE's* existence. In this column, I want to reflect on one area to which I have only alluded and then to look ahead at what you might see in *FORE's* near future.

In the SCGA's more than one century of existence, we have looked back on three eras that have often been called *golden ages*. The first was the 1920s and early 1930s, a span that saw some of the region's greatest golf courses built: Bel-Air CC, Lakeside GC, The Los Angeles CC, Oakmont CC, Ojai Valley Inn & Spa, Rancho Santa Fe GC and Riviera CC, to name just a few. It was also a time of great champions: Paul Hunter, George Von Elm, Norman Macbeth, Charles Seaver and Roger Kelly are just a few of the names that spring to mind.

The two decades following World War II were also an era of great champions: Johnny Dawson, Bruce McCormick, Dr. Frank Taylor, Al Geiberger and Dave Stockton, among others, many of whom excelled primarily in the amateur ranks since the great professional tour golf boom was only in its infancy during those years.

However, the last four decades have produced an unparalleled wave of great champions in Southern California. Since *FORE* began in 1968, SCGA members or alums have won five U.S. Opens, eight Masters, four British Opens and four PGA Championships. During that same time frame, SCGA members have captured nine U.S. Amateurs and more than 40 other USGA titles. In addition, 22 SCGA members have played on U.S. Walker Cup teams since 1968, including Rickie Fowler and Jamie Lovemark last year.

Two things are worth noting about what transpired during the past 40 years. One is that, while we have seen many players nurtured through the SCGA who have then gone on to greatness in the professional ranks, there are also many who turned pro only to return later to the amateur ranks and carved their own legends in our association's tournament annals.

Consider, for example, Mark Johnson, who in 1972 won the second playing of what we now call the CIF-SCGA Southern Regional Boys High School Championship and then turned pro after he graduated from high school. A few years later, he regained his amateur status and eventually won 14 SCGA-related titles, the largest number in SCGA history, including the 1996 California Amateur and the 1994 Pacific Coast Amateur.

Another in this category would be Tim Hogarth. In the early 1990s, Tim decided that his number-one golf goal was to play in the Masters and that he would have a better chance as an amateur than as a pro. He regained his amateur status, won the U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship and with it that coveted trip to Augusta. Tim would go on to win the 1999 California Amateur, 1999 SCGA Mid-Amateur and the 2004 SCGA Amateur — the "Southern California Triple Crown."

Other great golfers of our era never turned professional. Instead, they played amateur golf for all of their careers and some amassed significant records.

Craig Steinberg won four SCGA Amateur titles in a 10-year span (1987-1997), including back-to-back titles in 1990-91 (Steinberg did turn pro last year to take a fling at the Champions Tour). Scott McGihon has won three SCGA Amateurs since 2000, and having just turned 40, he may have another one or more in his golf bag. Kemp Richardson has won two USGA Senior Amateur titles, two British Senior Open Amateur crowns, and a Canadian Senior Amateur.

The other highlight of this era is the amazing phenomenon that is Tiger Woods. As a high school freshman, he won the CIF-SCGA high school tournament by 10 shots. He set single-round and 72-hole total score records in winning the 1994 SCGA Amateur. He won three consecutive U.S. Junior Amateurs and then three consecutive U.S. Amateur titles before turning professional, where his record is now 14 professional majors and still counting (assuming he recovers from his next surgeries). We who have been privileged to follow him continue to be awestruck.

What will the future bring at *FORE Magazine*? During the past couple of years, we have been working to shift the magazine's emphasis from tournament coverage to personality profiles, travel features and articles about golf courses. There will, for the foreseeable future, continue to be some tournament coverage in the magazine but more and more people are getting championship information from the Web sites that Assistant Director of Communications Katie Denbo has created for each SCGA-related championship, sites that include complete photo galleries, live scoring, history and stories each day. All of this is much more than we could possibly print in the magazine.

The future will also see improvements in photography, and the ability to have every facet of the publication cycle computerized will mean more timely articles. However, the magazine's charter will remain essentially unchanged: to be the voice of the SCGA and to help preserve and build amateur golf in Southern California.



*Robert D. Thomas
Editor and Publisher*

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