



Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame

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Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame announces 2021 Class

The connective threads linking the stories of the members of the 2021 Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame class are quite remarkable.

David Edwards grew up playing at Kickingbird Golf Course in Edmond, designed by Floyd Farley, where he was hired by Art Proctor as one of the course's first range rats, earning lessons and free play by working his tail off.

Danny Edwards, five years older, was a self-taught prodigy who went on to be a three-time All-American at Oklahoma State, inspiring David to do the same.

Now both the Edwards brothers, Proctor and Farley will be entering the Hall together in a class that also features long-time Edmond resident and one of the state's most accomplished professional golfers Scott Verplank.

"I think it will be one of the most unique classes that we'll ever have," said Tom Jones, chairman of the Oklahoma Golf Hall of Fame Executive Board and President and COO of Oak Tree National in Edmond. "First of all you have the Edwards brothers and the pro that was the influential reason they started playing golf. Then the architect that designed the course where they played and so many great public courses in the state.

"Then in Scott, you have a world class player who has played in the Ryder Cup, won the U.S. Amateur at Oak Tree and won a professional tournament as an amateur. I think it's a very impressive class and the storylines and the way they tie in together are pretty incredible."

The five will be inducted Nov. 21 at Oklahoma City Golf & Country Club. Sponsor table and tickets are available at www.oklahomagolfhof.org.

"I am thrilled beyond words," Proctor said. "I'm very seldom at a loss for words but when I was told about this I was flabbergasted. I'm just very humbled and very proud to represent the state of Oklahoma and it's great golf history."

Between Danny (5), David (4) and Verplank (5), this class has won 14 PGA Tour events. While our state boasts designs from Perry Maxwell, A.W. Tillinghast, Tom Fazio and other notables, it is the more than 20 entertaining public course designs of Farley that provide great entertainment and challenge to tens of thousands of Oklahoma golfers.

Proctor was instrumental in turning Kickingbird into one of the busiest courses in the country, averaging more than 60,000 rounds annually. He started a junior golf program that led to Edmond becoming known nationwide as a hotbed of junior golf talent.



SCOTT VERPLANK

One of the few golfers to win a PGA Tour event (the 1985 Western Open) before winning the NCAA Championship, which he did for Oklahoma State in 1986, Verplank has walked the summit of the golf world but also had to fight his way out of some deep valleys.

A Type 1 diabetic, Verplank long played with a pump to control his blood sugar level. He has battled numerous other wrist, elbow and shoulder injuries and lost the entire 1997 season after elbow surgery in 1996.

Still, he has won five events, including the aforementioned Western Open. Also the 1988 Buick Open, the 2000 Reno-Tahoe Open, the 2001 Bell Canadian Open and the 2007 EDS Byron Nelson Championship. He played on two Ryder Cup teams (2002 and 2006), two President's Cup Teams (2005-2007) and won more than \$27 million.

Verplank was a mainstay of the "Oak Tree Gang" playing out of Oak Tree National in Edmond. He still plays on the Champions Tour but is also getting into broadcasting and has a contract with CBS.

The Dallas native had a sensational amateur career. In addition to the NCAA and Western Open championships, he won the 1984 U.S. Amateur Championship at Oak Tree National. He won the Porter Cup twice, sweeping the Western Amateur, Porter Cup and Sunnehanna Amateur in 1985. The 1982 AJGA Player of the Year, he won the Texas State Amateur three times (1982, 84, and 85).

Verplank won nine times at OSU, capped by his final event, the 1986 NCAA Championship. He was a three-time first-team All American. Upon induction into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame in 2016, his former coach Mike Holder said he regarded Verplank as the best collegiate player ever with the possible exception of Phil Mickelson.



DANNY EDWARDS

When the Edwards family first moved from Wichita Falls to Edmond, Kickingbird had yet to open. Danny hit balls in a field, and often secretly, on the still growing-in course while no one was watching. Somehow he became proficient enough to win the state championship for Edmond and earn a scholarship to Oklahoma State.

A hard worker and driven to succeed, Danny became a two-time first-team All-American and two-time Big Eight Champion. He turned professional in 1973, earned his PGA Tour card in 1975 and went on to win five times (1977 Greater Greensboro Open, the 1980 Walt

Disney World National Team Championship (with brother David), the 1982 Greater Greensboro Open, the 1983 Miller High Life QCO, and the 1985 Pensacola Open.)

In addition to the victories at OSU, Danny's amateur career included a stint on the 1973 Walker Cup Team. He was low amateur the same summer at The Open Championship. He won the 1972 North and South Amateur and the 1972 Southeastern Amateur.

Although he played briefly on the Champions Tour, Danny was consumed with other opportunities. He was an original founder of Royal Grip, later successfully sold to investors. He became a highly proficient professional auto racer and was heavily involved with divot repair company (Green Fix Golf). He has recorded a series of videos teaching proper chipping methods.



DAVID EDWARDS

Although some mistake his laid-back personality for a lack of the same drive that fueled older brother Danny, that would be a mistake.

"David was one of the most driven players we've ever had at Oklahoma State," said former teammate Jones. "He wasn't the best player when he got here but he was when he left."

David, who did get to practice and play at the now-opened Kickingbird, went to OSU in 1974, where he averaged 77.6 shots per round as a freshman, lowering that to 71.8 as a senior when he won two events, finished second or third in five others and capped off his dominating year by winning the 1978 NCAA Individual Championship and leading the Cowboys to the team championship.

He didn't take long as a professional to break into the win column, claiming the 1980 Walt Disney World National Team Championship with brother Danny, then winning the 1984 Los Angeles Open, the 1992 Memorial Tournament and the 1993 MCI Heritage Golf Classic. He also won the 2006 3M Championship on the Champions Tour and was a two-time winner of the Oklahoma Open (1994 and 1996).

Never a long hitter, David was highly accurate and a great putter. He led the Champions Tour in Driving Accuracy (80 percent) in 2008 for the third consecutive year. In 2007, he had the longest streak of consecutive holes without a three-putt for the season (263 in a row).

Whether making an appearance at a youth tournament, a golf expo or a charity function, David has always been generous with his time to give back to the game in Oklahoma.



FLOYD FARLEY (1907-2005)

Floyd Farley was born in Kansas City and was a passionate and talented golfer for decades before turning his attention to course design, winning the South Central PGA Section Championship in 1937 and 1942.

He started golf as a caddy at age 12 and, as a player, was a part of one of the top high school teams in Kansas history in 1925. Also on that team at Rosedale High School in Kansas was Kansas Hall of Famer Jug McSpaden, who was runner-up in the 1937 PGA Championship and finished fourth at the 1947 Masters.

In 1931, Farley came to Oklahoma and became head pro at Twin Hills Golf & Country Club in Oklahoma City. At 25 years of age, in 1932, he designed his first course – Woodlawn Golf Club in Oklahoma City – and stayed on as head pro. After discovering his new love of golf architecture, he designed more than 100 courses, including new designs of some 40 courses in Oklahoma and renovations or additions to many others.

Farley escorted A.W Tillinghast on his visit to Oklahoma, a trip that resulted in designs for Tulsa Country Club and The Oaks. He also credited Perry Maxwell and William Bell as influences. After returning from a stint in World War II, in 1941, Farley designed and built now-defunct Meridian Golf Club in Oklahoma City. He owned that course until 1961.

In addition to Kickingbird, some of his notable Oklahoma designs include Quail Creek Golf & Country Club, Arrowhead State Park Course, LaFortune Park and the Woodbine Course at Mohawk Park in Tulsa, John Conrad in Midwest City, Adams GC in Bartlesville, Lew Wentz in Ponca City, Roman Nose State Park and dozens more.



ART PROCTOR

Teacher, professional, coach, course designer, competitor. You name it and Art Proctor has done it and done it well in his 82 years.

It was 50 years ago in 1971 that the Topeka, Kan. native was chosen to be the first head professional at the new Kickingbird Golf Course in Edmond. He took the job to heart. Soon Kickingbird was slammed from dawn to dusk, with over 66,000 rounds per year. Proctor had started a junior program that has led to dozens of state champions, collegiate and professional stars.

“In my opinion, Art Proctor set the stage for the greatest junior golf dynasty in the history of Oklahoma, said Mike McGraw, former Oklahoma State and current Baylor coach who was an assistant to Proctor while in col-

lege and became his junior golf director in 1982. “He gave so many young men jobs at Kickingbird and those jobs led to opportunity. That opportunity led to championships.”

He is credited for helping save the Oklahoma Open when he brought the tournament to Kickingbird in 1979 and helped persuade Oklahoma’s top pros to play in the event. The winners at Kickingbird were Danny Edwards (1979), Jaime Gonzalez (1980), Dr. Gil Morgan (1981), Doug Tewell (1982), Tom Jones (1983), Kenny Huff (1984) and Bob Tway (1985). The tournament then moved to Oak Tree CC with the backing of the Daily Oklahoman and it is still played there today.

“Art’s impact on the Oklahoma Open championship was transformative and long-lasting,” McGraw said. “He took a dying event and turned it into one of the best State Open’s in the country.”

Proctor left Kickingbird to build a 45-hole golf complex near Arcadia, but he ended up losing his shirt and his investors in the oil collapse of 1987. He then took a running the Oklahoma State Parks golf courses, and made many significant improvements, including designing nine holes at Lake Murray, nine holes at Quartz Mountain and nine holes at Cedar Creek in Broken Bow.

In 1999 he qualified for the Senior PGA Tour (now Champions Tour) and remained on tour through 2005. His playing record includes PGA South Central Section match play championships in 1974, 1976 and 1977 and Section Championships in 1983 and 1984. He has played in 20 major championships, including three PGA Championships, two U.S. Senior Open Championships, five British Senior Open Championships and 10 Senior PGA Championships. His best finish was a tie for 16th.

He has also played in 14 national club professional championships with a top finish of third place.

In 1984 at the age of 44, Proctor played a then Guinness Book of Records mark by playing 414 holes of golf in one day. He teed off at Kickingbird in Edmond at 5:46 a.m. and finished his 23rd round of golf at 8:51 p.m., averaging about two minutes per hole. The amazing thing, other than endurance, was that he shot 6-under-par for the day.