

Man gets to know his grandfather in a whole new way

Michael Brooks Jr. always knew his grandfather played golf.

He just never knew his grandfather may have had a hand in the way we look at the game's history.

Growing up, Brooks had been told by his mother that his grandfather, Perry Adair, had played golf with the legendary Bobby Jones, but he knew little else. That was until he got a phone call last summer saying Adair would be posthumously inducted to the Georgia Golf Hall of Fame. It was



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then that Brooks, a 42-year-old sports and lifestyle resident, was asked to present his grandfather for induction.

The invitation opened a door to his family's past and started preparing him for an experience of a lifetime.

"Originally, I thought I was just going to go to the Hall, shake a few hands and that would be it," Brooks said. "But, as the day got closer, it grew into much more. I got the itinerary in October. Then, around Thanksgiving, they told me I would be doing TV and radio spots for ESPN in August."

Then, Brooks got the big news. "I got a call from Robyn Jarrett

of the Hall of Fame," he said. "And she said, 'Oh, by the way, we are going to need you to give about a 4- or 5-minute acceptance speech.'"

"In front of how many people?" Brooks asked.

"Usually, around 500 people," Jarrett told him.

This posed a problem. Not only was Brooks not accustomed to speaking in a public forum, but he did not know about his grandfather's playing history, or why he was being inducted into the Hall, despite being an avid golfer himself with a 13 handicap.

"I grew up in a football household," he said. "My dad was J.L. Brooks Jr. He was an all-confer-

ence guard for Georgia Tech in the '50s. He is better known as 'Shorty' Brooks, so we talked about Georgia Tech football. He never talked about my grandfather's golf."

After starting his research, Brooks learned his great-grandfather, George W. Adair, could arguably be considered the godfather of golf in Atlanta. Through his realty company Adair Realty and Trust, George Adair helped with the construction of great area golf courses like Capital City Club, Druid Hills and East Lake (where he was also the first club president). It was at the latter



Perry Adair and Bobby Jones

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where Perry Adair first came in contact with Jones, and it was there where the boys learned the game of golf.

Golf enthusiasts, when asked who the greatest players in the history of the game are, there are three names are likely to be commonplace: Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus and Bobby Jones. It's no secret Woods idolized Nicklaus and has spent his career chasing the Golden Bear's career records.

The one whose idol was Jones was Nicklaus, who eventually took the moniker of the greatest player of all time from the legendary amateur. But that begged the question, who was it that Jones wanted to emulate?

Perry Adair

As teenagers, Adair and Jones traveled together to the big amateur events throughout the Southeast and it was at the 1916 Georgia Amateur where the game of golf changed forever. Jones, 14, defeated Adair, 16, 2-up at the Capital City Club.

Jones was quoted in the East Lake Book of Champi-

ons as saying this about that match:

"Up to this moment, despite the fact that I had won two out of three matches in which Perry and I had met, I still considered that he was the better golfer. I looked up to him and thought that I had managed to win from him a couple of times by accident. It was this match that I finally gained confidence in myself and my game.

"This was the match which gained for me my first opportunity to play in a national championship and also gave me the assurance I needed to enjoy taking advantage of it. But what it did most, for me, was Perry's remark as he put my ball in my hand on the last green, he muttered, 'Bob, you are just the best.'"

Brooks realized his grandfather was not just another golfer.

"When I found this quote," he said, "this was the thing that really made me sit back and say, 'Wow.'"

During World War I, Adair and Jones would become two members of the Dixie Whiz Kids, teaming with Atlantans Alexa Stirling and Elaine Rosenthal, who all toured the country playing exhibitions and raising more than \$150,000 for the American

can Red Cross

Following the war, Adair went on to capture the Georgia Amateur in 1922. He also traded the Southern Amateur championship with Jones over a four-year span with Jones winning in 1920 and '22, and Adair claiming the title in 1921 and '23.

Not long after that, Adair quietly ended his playing career.

As Jones went on to win the Grand Slam in 1930, Adair joined the family real estate business.

"I really don't know why he put the clubs down," Brooks said. "Maybe it was because of the Depression and he figured he needed to get a real job."

Armed with his newfound information, Brooks set off last week for the induction ceremonies in Augusta, only to get one more surprise. With his grandfather having the last name Adair, Brooks would get to present first.

"I didn't have anything to drink before the ceremony," he said. "But afterward, I was glad I got to go first. I got to sit there and listen to everyone else and that's when I had my wine.

"What moved me the most (about the ceremony) was the Atlanta Pipe Band, and it was

in. The walked in and the formed two rows for us to walk through. There I was, walking in with my big smile.

"After the ceremony everyone came up to me and thanked me for the presentation and said I did a great job. I really haven't come down from the weekend's high yet."

With the unique learning experience behind him, Brooks plans on educating the rest of his family what he has learned about his grandfather and great-grandfather. He also plans to keep up his research to try and find some answers to a few other questions, like why didn't his grandfather try to play on the national stage like Jones did? And, why did he quit competing at such a young age?

Brooks is also negotiating with the Hall of Fame to bring the jacket his grandfather would have received at the ceremony to East Lake, where the club has already said it would proudly display it in its trophy case.

If successful, it would bring his grandfather's accomplishments, along with Brooks' newfound understanding of his family's stature with the City of Atlanta and the game of golf, full circle.

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