



MABEL PALKO

The Saskatchewan Amateur Women's Championships were match play events when Mabel Palko was runner-up in 1933, 1935 and 1938 before she won in 1939. In 1935 Mabel and Jean Menard made up the first Saskatchewan women's team sent to a Canadian championship, held in Vancouver that year. After the WWII hiatus in competitions she won in 1947 and 1950, and was runner-up in 1948. Mabel was a member of the provincial team in all three of those years, travelling to Toronto, St. John and Winnipeg.

Mabel was born into a large family in 1901 in Michigan and arrived in Saskatoon with her widowed mother and siblings in 1911. She took up golf after her marriage to Pete Palko in 1923. They studied

Bobby Jones' instruction book, and Mabel attended ladies' clinics held by William Kinnear at the Saskatoon Golf and Country Club. She practised hard and developed a beautiful swing and timing. Even pushing her heavy floor polisher back and forth became a drill for developing a strong left-arm pull-through in her swing! Over the years she won many long-drive competitions.

Mabel Palko was the Saskatoon city champion three times in the thirties, three times in the forties, and in 1953. At the Saskatoon Golf and Country Club she was women's club champion five times. In 1967 their women's section renamed their two-ball foursome trophy after her to honour her sportsmanship, promotion of club activities, modesty in victory and graciousness in defeat. She continued to be a member until she passed away in 1987.

Mabel's competitive career came to an end at age 50 when she was struck with rheumatoid arthritis, crippling her hands and joints. After 1951 she continued to play casually by modifying the grip on her clubs and playing through pain and fatigue, and amazingly took part in the Canadian Championships when they were held in Saskatoon in 1958 and 1967.

Mabel Palko represents a group of intrepid women golfers who competed in Saskatchewan through difficult conditions during the Depression and War Years, and were on the earliest amateur women's teams representing the province at national competitions. Mabel is being inducted posthumously into the Saskatchewan Golf Hall of Fame.