

Bradshaw, Harry

by Jim Shanahan

Bradshaw, Harry (1913–90), professional golfer, was born 9 October 1913 in Killincarrig, Co. Wicklow, eldest among four sons and two daughters of Edward 'Ned' Bradshaw, golf caddie and later golf professional at Delgany Golf Club, and Elizabeth Bradshaw (née Walsh) of Killincarrig. He was educated locally. He was a golf prodigy as a child: at the age of ten he had a hole-in-one on an eighty-yard (73 m) par three at Delgany. After leaving school he joined his father at Delgany Golf Club, progressing from caddie to assistant professional.

In 1941 he was appointed golf professional at Kilcrouney, and in 1950 he began his long association with Portmarnock Golf Club when he was appointed golf professional there. By this time he had already made his mark, having won the Irish Open in 1947 and 1949. He went on to win the Dunlop Masters on two occasions (1953, 1955), and in 1958 he became the first Irishman to win the PGA Championship. He had also won the Dunbar Open in Scotland in 1953 and the Gleneagles Pro-Am with Joe Carr (qv) (1922–2004) in 1955. The highlight of his career was probably in 1958, when, in partnership with Christy O'Connor Sr, he won the Canada Cup (the original name of the World Cup) in Mexico City, eventually losing a play-off for the individual title after having a bogey five at the last hole. He also appeared in three Ryder Cup teams. At Wentworth in 1953, he won his foursomes match partnering Fred Daly (qv) and his singles match against F. Haas. In 1955, at the Thunderbird Golf and Country Club in California, he partnered British captain Dai Rees in the top foursomes match against American golf legend Sam Snead and Cary Middlecoff, losing rather unluckily by three and two, and losing his singles match by the same score to Jack Burke Jr. Two years later he was a member of the side that defeated the American team 7–4 at Lindrick in Yorkshire, only the third victory by the Britain and Ireland side in the twelve matches played up to that time, and the last American defeat until Europe's victory in 1985. In 1958 he received the Golf Writers' Award.

Domestically, he won both the Willie Nolan Trophy and the Moran Cup on twelve occasions and the Irish Professional Championship ten times, a record later equalled by Christy O'Connor Snr, as well as being a three-time winner of the Irish Dunlop Trophy. However, it is for the famous 'bottle' incident at the 1949 British Open at Sandwich that he will be best remembered. His ball landed in a broken bottle on the fifth hole of his second round at the Open and he elected to play the ball where it lay, judging (correctly, as it turned out, under the laws of the time) that he was not entitled to a free drop as the bottle was not a bona fide hazard. He subsequently took a six on that hole, and ended up tying with the South African Bobby Locke for the title, losing a thirty-six-hole play-off by twelve strokes. As a result of his experience with the broken bottle, the rules of golf were changed to cater for the

possibility of such an incident recurring. Until then, it was the closest any golfer from Ireland had come to winning the British Open. He subsequently revenged himself on Locke by beating him to the Irish Open title the following month. He remained the golf professional at Portmarnock until 1983, when he retired, but such was his popularity that he remained on the payroll at Portmarnock as an informal ambassador for the club.

As a golfer he had an unorthodox grip, with three fingers of his right hand overlapping his left, but he had a very consistent short game, though he seldom practised that particular element of his play. A feature of his game was what was called the 'hit and hark' approach, where he never lifted his head until the ball had landed. Nicknamed 'the Brad', he was extremely popular with amateur and professional alike, was a great raconteur and tremendous company, and was noted for his lack of rancour towards, or criticism of, other players. He died 22 December 1990 at the age of 77, just a month after Fred Daly, who was the only Irishman to win the British Open title until 2007.

He married (1944) Elizabeth Foley from Carlow; they had four children. His three brothers, Eddie, Hughie, and Jimmy, were all professional golfers.

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*Ir. Times, Ir. Independent*, 24 Dec. 1990; *Fyffes*; McRedmond; Menton, *Golf in Ireland* (1993); [www.rydercup.com](http://www.rydercup.com) (accessed 23 Apr. 2003); information from Breda Mullally (daughter), 4 July 2006