

SMILING GENE SARAZEN, MONARCH OF U. S. GOLF, SMASHED HIS SISTER'S BABY DOLLS ON KITCHEN TEE

Mother Sarazen Had to Work Fast to Prevent Severing of Diplomatic Relations Between Son and Margaret When Her Playthings Were Used as Rassies and Niblicks

CHAMPION SHOT FAIRWAYS WHEN BUT EIGHT YEARS OLD WITH STICKS HE WHITTLED

His Rise Was Rapid and He Never Allowed Reverses to Dim His Ambitions—Today Perfumed Missives From Belles of Country Shower Congratulations Upon Him

FROM doll babies to golf clubs! That in itself is no small step. But when the transition is made in one dazzling leap to the American open championship—that is a matter wherein a nation may well marvel. Hundreds of thousands of devotees of the ancient and honorable game in this country today acknowledge as their king a stripling of twenty-one who has forced his way from the obscurity of a humble immigrant's abode to the bright glare which beats upon the most enviable title in American goldfdom.

And in addition to this signal honor, he enjoys the distinction of being the first Latin to win his way to victory in this historic event, for both parents of the new king of American golf were born almost within the shadow of the Coliseum at Rome.

To his proud mother it seems only yesterday that Gene Sarazen was a laughing, chubby, olive-skinned little boy, playing with his sister on the kitchen floor and delighting in all the fancies and conceits which are the heritage of childhood.

And now the sporting world is agog over the same lad who helped his sister wash the doll dishes and mind the "children."

Gene was born February 27, 1901, at Harrison, N. Y. His mother and father came to America several years before Gene was born. His sister, Margarita, two years older, also was born in America.

As a little baby, Gene was no different from other babies. He slept, kicked and crowed, according to his mood or the time.

He was sent to the Harrison Grammar School and showed a genuine and active dislike for the confining walls of the schoolroom and a decided tendency never to open a book unless there was absolutely no other alternative.

Has Played Golf Since He Was Eight Years Old

From the time he was eight years old he began playing golf. With a sharp knife he would whittle away at the branch of a tree until it began to take the shape of a golf stick. And then with set jaws he would hit anything in sight which would travel like a ball.

And when he began his career as caddy he would cut down discarded clubs to fit his size, spend hours peering around for balls which had been lost, and then, with "real tools," he would get off by himself and play for hours. Despite the fact that he was just a boy, he would keep at it until his little arms were too tired to swing the sticks.

In the early spring, when in the schoolroom, the outdoors called to him through the windows and he wriggled about, impatient for the bell which would release him from his trouble, for such he considered school.

At the age of ten he caddied at the Apawamis Club at Rye, a place within easy reach of his home. And then he was in his element. Bending forward under the weight of the leather bags and heavy trunks, he seemed not to notice that they had any weight. With loving fingers he would stroke the clubs and if the owner would pause at a hole for a moment Gene would swing the clubs, snipping the grass as he came through with a fairly clean stroke.

Summer vacation came and the schoolhouse would temporarily lose its terror for him. With hands dug deep into his trouser pockets, the same hands, being as grubby as he chose to have them with no interference from a teacher, he'd stroll past that worthy edifice, whistling a bright tune and inwardly thanking his stars that he could walk right by with impunity and defiance.

The Old Swimming Hole Was Popular With Gene

And the joys those days held for him! Not so far away was a swimming hole, and what a spot it was! He and his sister would ramble over the countryside in search of cherries and blackberries. All sorts of mysterious places to be explored, trees whose branches bowed to the ground with the weight of ripe, coveted cherries.

Margarita would run a race with her smaller brother to the tree and then rained down on them. Warm, sticky and worn out from the ramble, they would come back to the swimming pool and with one splash plunge into the cool water.

Many days did not permit of cherry hunting and the sister and brother would stay home and play house. Gene family would come home to be fluttered by his small "wife." With masculine carelessness he would submit to a scolding of the trouble in the household,



The smile that won't come off



Sarazen's grip on driver



New champion and cup he won



A snappy mangle shot to the green.

gray fingers of dawn were just beginning to slip back the dark mantle of night, his little body hunched up, he slid silently along until he reached the club. And there with discarded clubs he went about the course until the sun, getting higher in the sky, warned him that for that day he could play no more.

The caddies at Apawamis were given a tournament, and Gene was among the first to signify his readiness to play. One member of the club bet him that he could not break 90. Confident of his ability, Gene boasted that he could, and was chagrined and mortified to find that he had done 105.

When he was about twelve years old he failed to return home one evening. Too dark to be playing golf, his parents were worried. The morning brought no signs of the son and Mr. and Mrs. Sarazen were up bright and early inquiring for him about the neighborhood.

Left Home Three Days to Caddy for Woman

At the end of three days he came home. To the country club had come a wealthy woman who lived on Long Island. Attracted by the bright face of her caddy she told him to ask his mother for permission to go home with her for a few days to caddy for her at a game. Almost sure that he would not be given consent, Gene did not go home, but left without consulting his family.

And when at the end of three days he did return with a new suit, tales of a wonderland into which he had been given a peek, and displayed ten dollars he had won, the mother could not scold him to spoil his pleasure.

When he finished grammar school he was taken into his father's shop to learn to be a carpenter. But Gene had other plans than to be tied to a carpenter bench for the rest of his days. Mr. Sarazen, deciding that business in Bridgeport, Conn., would be more lucrative, moved his small family to new surroundings and the first thing Gene did was to visit the Brooklawn Country Club and offer his services as caddy.

Then he could devote his day to the links. But not for long, because the flu epidemic which swept the country, exacting toll from the four corners, brought its sinister presence into Bridgeport. So Gene laid aside his sticks most of the day to assist the Red Cross nurses in the hospital.

When his services were no longer required he joyfully took to his game again, and so intent was he, that Gene Sparling, a pro at the Brooklawn Club, became interested in the boy.

Gene Often Was Caddy for Sparling at Brooklawn

He permitted Gene to caddy many

most casual nature. He spoke of the delightful people he was meeting, of the country about him, of anything and everything but the fact that he was awakening interest in the sporting world.

But the newspapers supplied that which he omitted, and the little family in Bridgeport would with feverish interest read every word.

Became Assistant Pro at Fort Wayne, Ind.

Gene was not satisfied to stay in the South, but wanted to strike out for himself. While reading through a magazine one day he saw an advertisement for an assistant pro needed at the Fort Wayne, Ind., Country Club. Ramsey Hunter, brother of Willie Hunter, winner of last year's British amateur championship, was professional at Fort Wayne at the time.

Gene answered the advertisement and impatiently awaited the outcome. A wire summoned him to Fort Wayne and he packed his bag and started West.

His ever-present good humor and willingness to help others, his boyish grin and excellent game won for him many friends among the members of the club, and so they sent him to play in the national open championship at the Ieress Club, Toledo, in 1920.

The first day out he tied Jock Hutchison, and on returning to the clubhouse, told some people that some day he'd "beat that guy." In those few words there was an utter lack of flippancy, the remark was made in perfect seriousness backed by the belief he had in his own ability. The tournament did not end well for Gene and he ended in thirtieth place.

But naturally a friendly little fellow, he wanted companionship, and found it by a chance meeting with Emil Loeffler, who was at the time greenkeeper at the Oakmont Country Club of Pittsburgh. Emil, or "Dutch," as he is called, who is four years older than Gene, was waiting for the bus to take him to the course, when Gene came along, also going to the club.

A conversation was started, a friendship ensued and Gene and Loeffler were together for the remainder of the time. Loeffler not only liked Gene, but realized that he played a good game. Gene wanted to stay in or around Pittsburgh, where he could strengthen the friendship with "Dutch" and play with him.

Turned Down Position as Pro at Fort Wayne

So Loeffler promised to be on the lookout for anything which would interest Gene. In the meantime the boy returned to Fort Wayne. He was offered a position as pro there, but re-

take charge of the greens. He did so with such success as to get in close touch with the leading members, and when he was asked if he knew of someone to act as professional, he immediately suggested Gene, and was told to have the boy come on for an exhibition.

This was done, a foursome played and Gene showed forth to such excellent advantage that he was offered a contract. However, he would not sign it until he returned from playing in the Professional Golfers' Association championship which was held at the Inwood Country Club on Long Island.

There he defeated Harry Hampton, and also fulfilled the promise he made himself that some day he'd "beat that guy" for he defeated Hutchison.

Back to Highland he went and with his nose to the grindstone he spent his entire day at golf.

After Beating Hutchison He Lost to Cyril Walker

Shortly after Sarazen defeated Hutchison, he in turn was defeated by Cyril Walker by a score of 4 and 3. Then it was that the onlookers were sure that it was more chance than skill which gave him the victory over Hutchison.

Having burst into popularity he received offers from other clubs, but considering carefully the one at Highland, he decided it was the best and so he signed the contract. For three weeks his friend Loeffler, and also W. C. Fownes, Jr., once national champion, and Gene realized that by playing with those two he could learn much to his advantage.

Last winter he played and won a tournament at New Orleans, which was up to that time quite the biggest event in his career. The players were high in the game and he defeated such men as Jim Barnes, Hutchison and every other golfer of note, with the exception of Walter Hagen.

And when Gene went to Pittsburgh, where he put in his days of constant practice, satisfied in his mind that he could enter against the biggest.

And then he went to Skokie to try the course. For three weeks he played around, making careful calculations and finding out what shots he would have to practice. Satisfied in his mind that he was to be the winner, he would not take a chance on the course, and that is why he allowed himself so much time. He even figured out in his mind about how some of the other men playing would come out.

And then the week of the tournament, the final totaling of the scores which showed that he had won the famous old cup from Jim Barnes who won it last year and brought it West with him ten days ago.

Sister Rejoices as Gene Is Crowned Open Champ

Telegraph wires began to burn with the news and the sister Margarita, who with so much pride has followed the success of her brother and now living in Rye, was told that Gene had reached the pinnacle.

"I just couldn't believe it at first," she said with a happy laugh. "But there was no doubting the head lines. I rushed out and telephoned my mother and father at Mount Vernon, and my dad thought I was kidding him. I finally made him believe me and he could hardly talk. He had been in bed when I phoned, but got dressed and walked about three squares away to the station to get the papers and read all about it for himself."

While in New York he stayed at the Biltmore. Calls of congratulations



Gene is shown here at the completion of his swing.

times when he was practicing. Sparling kept an eye on him, directing his shots, correcting his mistakes and also gave him a new set of sticks. When Gene was fifteen Sparling gave him his still more time, took him under his professional wing, and taught him some tricks of the trade. He also gave him a job in the club house as his assistant and there Gene learned to clean and repair clubs.

When Gene was seventeen Sparling talked with him and Gene realized that he showed extraordinary ability, and that he, Sparling, believed that in time Gene would be one of the best golfers in the country. This acted as an incentive and was still more of an impetus, because close association with Sparling had taught Gene to admire the man and respect his opinion.

Walter Hagen, winner of the British open championship, visited the club, and Gene watched the great man play. And then it was tried for a definite style, and spent many hours attempting to copy Hagen.

Over a certain extra would devote many days, determined to conquer it. The South, with its blue sky and waving palms, called to him and he left Bridgeport and went to Miami. It was not until then that the worth of his name was truly noted. Prefessional and sport writers with a keen vision saw in the boy of eighteen great promises and some even made predictions that the day would come when he would be heard of in more than a casual way.

Reticent, not given to talking about himself, his letters home were of the

fused it, because it would mean taking away the position of the man for whom he had been working.

So Hunter was let go to make it all right for Gene's way of thinking. But that wasn't to his manner of thinking at all, so he gave his resignation, and once more turned to golf magazines to see if he would be able to read something for him.

The country club at Titusville, Fla., was in the market for a professional, and Gene signed up there. But the course was only nine holes and Gene became restless; he wanted to get out and play against the big men in his field, where he would have competition.

Loeffler, by working hard, had gotten into a position as pro at the Beaver Valley Country Club, Beaver Falls, Pa., prompted by jealousy, other professional spin stories about Gene, being him uneducated, unsmooth and not qualified to hold the position. Later Gene proved the injudiciousness of the remark, but sufficient to say that he worked for the time. So Gene was at Titusville.

And then the Highland Country Club at Westview, outside of Pittsburgh, added the last nine holes to its eighteen hole course and Loeffler was asked to

poured in upon him, girls wrote poems about him which they sent on colored sheets of perfumed paper, reporters flocked about him. Everywhere he was in demand.

Golf, yes—he would answer any questions he might be asked, but he did not care to talk about himself. With no desire to be impudic, his eye would raze toward the caddy, because in a short time he was leaving for Mt. Vernon, where he was to spend the evening with his family.

Today he plays a tournament at Philmont Country Club with Joe Kirkwood, the Australian star; Walter Hagen and Charley Hoffman, the Philadelphia professional. Jock Hutchison had been asked to play, but is in poor health. When Sarazen was asked to take his place he immediately accepted.

Many tournaments throughout the country have been arranged for him, and fall when he will go to England to play the course there that he may qualify for the British open championship.

But the most remarkable thing of all has been that he's the same unaffected, unostentatious boy who played golf with his sister and confidentially said: "Mother, when I grow up to be a big man, you'll hear of me as a big golfer."



Sarazen and his sister Margarita as they looked in the days when golf in the kitchen was a popular pastime with them