

This won't be the first PGA in Metro area

By BOB GROSS

"wasn't one of the top players," according to Kerchinski. He was up against Chick Harbert on the final day of competition in a local pro at Meadowbrook and a crowd favorite.

Kerchinski said Ferrier won the tournament on the third hole of the final round. He said he was poorly by hitting his drive off line into some bushes near the equipment barn. From there, he hit an unbelievable hook that actually went out of bounds over Lahser Road, came back onto the course and bounced over a trap and into the green 18 feet from the pin.

Ferrier then sank his putt for a birdie-3.

AL Watrous, former head pro at Oakland Hills, was at Plum Hollow that day and helped locate Ferrier's drive on the third hole.

"He seemed to feel he could make the shot," said Watrous, "that he could pull it off."

"He probably played one of the greatest shots I've ever seen played," added Watrous.

Ferrier had no choice except to make a great shot, according to Watrous — Harbert had "hit one of his most prodigious drives where he had a wedge shot to the green."

Harbert made a good wedge shot, but Ferrier's second shot was better. Ferrier won the hole and went on to win the tournament.

The winner that year received \$3,500 out of a total purse of \$15,000. By contrast, this year's

winner will receive \$50,000.

LOCAL FAVORITE
Walter Burkemo won the PGA in 1953 at the Birmingham Country Club. Ray Maguire, head pro at Birmingham in 1953, said the tournament lasted five days — one day for a qualifier and four days of match play. A field of 144 qualified for the tournament.

Tom Daton, head pro at Franklin Hills Country Club, worked with Burkemo for nine years. He said Burkemo was a master at match play.

"Walter Hagen (Oakland Hills' first pro), up until that time, had been known as the greatest match play player in the country," said Daton.

"I'm positive they classify Burkemo as the second greatest match play player next to Hagen."

Warren Orlick, head pro at Tam O' Shanter Country Club in West Bloomfield, was in the service with Burkemo. He called him "one of the greatest match play players in this century."

"He had the ability to hit certain golf shots the other fellows had never heard of."

Watrous said Burkemo's best shot in the 1953 PGA came in his semifinal match against Claude Harmon, former golf pro at Lochnore Country Club in Grosse Pointe. Harmon had driven the creek on his second shot at the 18th hole. Burkemo did the same thing with an even better shot and made an eagle

to win the semifinal.

"Walter was a great match player and has a great match play record in national tournaments," said Watrous.

Burkemo was also the last club professional to win the PGA. Both Daton and Maguire called a club pro's chances of winning the PGA this year "about 100-1."

"There are so many more touring pros who are doing nothing but playing golf," said Daton. He said a club professional is lucky if he can play two rounds each week.

"They're (the touring pros) playing more competitive golf," said Maguire. He did say, however, that Oakland Hills pro Al Mengert "might have a chance at Oakland Hills."

Maguire said the Birmingham golf course has not seen too many changes since 1953, just minor alterations on the second and 15th holes.

"It's a short course," he said, "but the best score

ever played here is a 67, so it isn't that easy."

ORLICK THOUGHT
the major factor in the 1955 PGA at Meadowbrook was that "Doug Ford, who was an extremely fast player, played an extremely slow player in Cary Middlecoff."

"I thought Doug Ford had a little advantage because his fast play put a little pressure on Cary Middlecoff."

Watrous said, "Doug Ford, at that time, was right at the top of his game and he had a great record coming into the championship."

"Middlecoff could have helped himself out," said Orlick, "if he had been a little bit better prepared in his bunker play."

WATROUS HAD
the place of seeing a great shot in the 1972 PGA at Oakland Hills, to go along with his memory of Ferrier's shot in 1947, when Gary Player decid-

ed to go over the trees and the lake at the 16th.

"It was a gamble," said Watrous, "but the fact remains that he made it and made a birdie."

Player had put his tee shot to the right at the 16th, behind a screen of willows and across the

lake from the green. Hitting blind, he put a nine iron shot on the green, just inches away from the cup for a birdie putt.

Orlick, who was PGA chairman and president in 1972, called Player's nine iron, "a terrific shot."

He ran out into the

fairway because he knew he had hit a super shot.

"The fact that he knocked it up close enough for a birdie almost clinched the tournament."

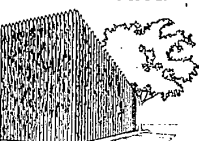
Player did need a bit of help from one of his caddies, Jim Jamison, who

finished the tournament tied for second with Tommy Aaron, bogied the last three holes and played himself out of the title.

Jim Ferrier in 1947, Walter Burkemo in 1953, Doug Ford in 1955 and Gary Player in 1972. Wonder who will be next?

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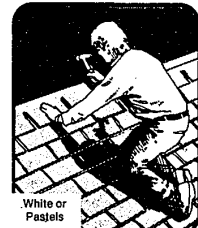
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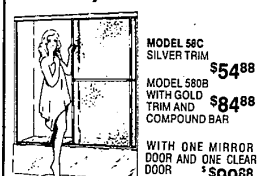
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