

Saturday, February 2, 1974

Alvis Hylton

(1910-1974)

For those who knew Alvis Hylton, anything we say here will be inadequate. Those who didn't know him likely won't believe us.

Few men have ever endured such a lifetime of pain, trial and tribulation as the slender gentleman who presided over Boonsboro Country Club's golf facilities the last 20 years of his life. Yet all you would know if it came from the crippling marks upon his body; it never showed in his spirit.

He was a golf professional in the finest sense of the term — a "pro" all the way. Golf was his life. He worked at it, studied it, talked it, dreamed it, loved it with a passion that never wavered. He not only knew about all there is to know of the game — he was one of its finest players. Had he not been crippled twice in his young manhood in train accidents he undoubtedly would have become one of the game's brightest names. Even without the use of his right hand he was one of the finest golfers in Virginia until the latter years when a lifetime of pain took its toll.

It wasn't his skill as a golfer or his ability as a golf teacher or his knowledge of groundskeeping and golf course supervision we remember most vividly. It was the spirit of the man which physical calamities seemed only to toughen. They broke Alvis Hylton's sinewy body but he emerged from each setback, each

operation determined not to be beaten. A man can only be beaten by himself; if he won't be, he can't be. The worst that can happen is that he will lose, but that's not being beaten.

As prolonged and terrible as was the pain that afflicted him, even greater was the joy he got from golf and his lovely family and the comfort and sanctuary they gave him. No father ever set a finer example for his son than Alvis for Gary Hylton who has had more than his share of illness and suffering which thwarted a golfing ability as promising as that of his father.

To each his own view of what this life will come to. But, since nothing ever passes from existence but only changes form, that most important part of a man, the essence of him we call the spirit or soul surely must continue. For those who think so, it will be only natural to look for Alvis along the undulating fairways of Boonsboro's wooded course, perhaps observing the way golfers approach No. Six or play No. Eleven. And if we listen closely enough, there may come a suggestion in the mind on club selection, or strategy, or the line of a putt. If one does come, better listen: you'll never get a better tip.

The game of golf is played according to its rules, and so must the game we call life if one is to measure up to the challenge. Alvis Hylton was a champion in both.