

Newsletter



Spring 2026

President's Message

The game of golf is truly challenging. I often wish I had been introduced to this wonderful sport as a youngster, rather than trying to pick it up in my 40s—armed only with Golf Digest instruction articles on the “turn” and the “swing plane.” Early on, I learned that while the technical aspects of the game are important, there are so many other rewards: beautifully designed golf courses, both old and new; stately clubhouses rich with history; and, for me, one of the most meaningful parts of the journey—the friendships and new people I’ve met along the way. These are qualities few other sports can claim.

One of the most rewarding parts of my golf journey has been not only playing great courses, but meeting memorable individuals who demonstrated both exceptional skill and outstanding character. A particularly notable experience came when I was asked to assist with land permitting for what is now known as TPC Boston. Based on my company's prior experience with a new golf course in Virginia, I strongly recommended Arnold Palmer Design for this PGA project in Massachusetts. After interviews and evaluations, it became clear that Arnold Palmer and his team were the right choice.

Mr. Palmer and his design general, Ed Seay, set out to create a course that professionals could challenge themselves on, while still being enjoyable for members. Reaching consensus with the PGA architects was no easy task, but Palmer ultimately succeeded. When the project began, Mr. Palmer sent my entire staff autographed calendars—welcoming us, in essence, into “Arnie’s Army.” His personal touch was evident from the very start.

He later invited me and several staff members to attend his Bay Hill Classic and join his team for pre-tournament celebrations, which included thoughtful gestures such as recognizing seniority with gold Rolex watches. Mr. Palmer always treated his employees and colleagues like family. Relationships are a cornerstone of golf, and the Rhode Island State Senior Golf Association provides a unique opportunity to strengthen existing friendships while creating new ones. One of the things I have most enjoyed about our organization is meeting new members and hearing the wonderful stories and lore that come with this great game.

As I complete my term as President, I am encouraged by the strong position of our organization and its continued ability to offer golfers a meaningful way to carry forward their legacy—both in spirit and skill. Leadership now passes to Tony Ventetuolo as our new President, along with new members of our Executive team who will guide us in the years ahead. I extend my sincere gratitude to all our officers, and especially to Steve Rooks, our Secretary, for their support over the past two years.

I look forward to seeing you this spring.

Jonathan Feinstein

Interstate Results

2025 CSSGA

On September 19th, Team RISSGA hosted the Connecticut State Seniors Golf Association (“CSSGA”) at Wanumetonomy Golf & Country Club for our annual Interstate match. Wanumetonomy is a classic links-style course located directly on the eastern shore of Narragansett Bay in Middletown, RI. As hosts, we delivered perfect weather and the club provided a superbly conditioned golf course along with superior hospitality. It was a day of friendly competition coupled with wonderful buffets for lunch and dinner, hors d’oeuvres, cocktails and tons of camaraderie with our friends from Connecticut.

On the course we weren’t quite so friendly. Team RISSGA exhibited a dominant display of best-ball net golf. As aging amateurs, no individual golfer played great, but each RISSGA team ding-donged its way around the course to lead our team to a resounding victory 14½-3½. Our thanks to Lynn Saylor for assisting in securing this venue.



2025 Tri-State

On August 7, 2025, Rhode Island Country Club in Barrington, RI was the site for the annual Interstate Tri-State match between the Rhode Island (“RISSGA”), Connecticut (“CSSGA”) and Bay State (MA) (“BSSGA”) State Seniors Golf Associations. This annual event’s venue rotates among the three state associations.

The first Tri-State match was held in 2009 at Wannamoisett Country Club. RISSGA was victorious at the inaugural event and has won 11 of the 16 Tri-States. The event was not contested in 2020 due to COVID. Overall, BSSGA has won three (3) and CSSGA only two (2). Similar to the Interstate matches, each state sends six teams of 2 players to the Tri-State. However, this match is scored as a net medal best-ball of two for 18 holes. Each state’s lowest five net medal scores are combined for a total team score. If there is a tie, the sixth score determines the overall winner. In 2025, it was the first time there was a tie. RISSGA’s sixth score was three strokes lower than CSSGA’s so RISSGA was declared the winner. A win that kept RISSGA’s win streak alive at seven years in a row.



Member Tribute - Captain Bob Clifford



RISSGA Secretary Steve Rooks presents a framed wall plaque to Bob Clifford recognizing his dedication and service to RISSGA.

Since 2017, Bob Clifford has been RISSGA's Interstate Team Captain. At the end of the 2024 golfing season, Bob retired as Team Captain and passed the torch to his protégé Bob Carlson. Mr. Clifford guided his teams to many, many Interstate victories over the years. His most noteworthy achievement was six consecutive Tri-State championships through 2024. Accordingly, Bob decided to take a victory lap in 2025 as Interstate Tri-State Captain emeritus. Of course, to the surprise of no one, Bob Clifford led his RISSGA Tri-State team to its seventh straight victory in 2025!!!!!!

On behalf of every member of RISSGA, past and present, thank you Bob for everything you have done for us as Team Captain extraordinaire. You have dedicated so much time and effort to ensure that all aspects of our interstate matches have been executed and contested seamlessly; like magic. The only thing that exceeded your planning, organizational and leadership skills has been your engaging, captivating and enchanting personality that you weaved into every match. You will always be a winner!



WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT BOB CLIFFORD

"As an officer of the Bay State Seniors Golf Association for the last six years, I have had the pleasure of working with Bob Clifford in planning and implementing golf events for our groups and the Connecticut Seniors. His knowledge and experience and his willingness to share them made him a mentor for me. The enthusiasm and encouragement which he fostered led to the great camaraderie among our organizations. Although he has stepped down as Interstate captain, I look forward to seeing him at our state events and enjoying his company!"

**Dick Whitney, President,
Bay State Seniors Golf Association**

"I first met Bob competing in a Tri-state match.....won by Rhode Island, and also got to play in his retirement Tri-state match.....won by Rhode Island on his home course! He taught me the ropes as a new captain, and a great personal friendship developed. It will be tough to match his win/loss record, as CSSGA was only able to come out on top once, but he was as gracious in defeat as he was in victory.

I will miss the old school gentleman, keeper of all Interstate traditions, and trust that he will continue to come out and set the tone for us all!"

**Bruce Ruehl
CSSGA Interstate Captain**



Legacy Corner

Ed Mauro



While the newly-erected monument to honor Ed Mauro was covered with snow this winter, it won't be long before Button Hole is crowded with players of all ages and abilities. His vision to develop a 26-acre parcel on the Providence-Johnston line into a hub for young golfers to learn the game and hone their skills will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Aug. 4.

Ed was honored after the annual Button Hole Invitational on June 2, 2025 at Point Judith Country Club when it was announced the new short-game practice area will be named the "Ed Mauro Learning Center at Button Hole." It will feature a large practice green, practice bunker and chipping areas set to open this spring.

"It's been beyond a special experience for me," he said. "These things, they may start with one person, but after that it takes a staff, it takes people who are dedicated. Button Hole has been a big part of my life."

Button Hole's success has exceeded his dream and expectations. In fact, it was on display during the 106th Junior Amateur Championship last summer at Pawtucket Country Club. While thousands of kids have enjoyed learning and playing the game at Button Hole, for the first time it was an all-Button Hole championship in the boys' U-14 division between Kailer Louangxay and Ishaan Catone. The match was a back-and-forth battle, and it came down to 18th hole before Louangxay pulled out the victory over his good friend.

Tom Ryan, the former CEO of CVS, first met with Ed in the summer of 1997 to discuss his plans for Button Hole. It didn't take long for the two to join forces, along with several others, including Brad Boss, Brad Faxon and Billy Andrade. During the Button Hole Invitational last summer, Ryan recalled those early conversations with "Dr. Golf."

"This vision you had, no one could pull this off but you," Ryan said. "We all know nothing of any meaning happens alone; you need a team to do it and every team needs a leader. Eddie's passion, his honesty, his determination got it done. Button Hole wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for Eddie Mauro. I hope you are as proud of what you've accomplished in Button Hole as we are of you."

Club Ambassador Program Update

The Association initiated a new CAP program in 2025, with the goal of providing members with more value by offering opportunities to play at most desirable courses in the area; identifying Club Ambassadors at our most desirable clubs to help sponsor and retain membership in our Association; and aid in scheduling regular RISSGA Tournaments at their clubs during the season.

We were successful in naming 16 Club Ambassadors and after a slow start were able to begin to implement this unique and beneficial program. Thanks to all those Ambassadors who helped kick off this program and look forward to reaching high gear in 2026!

While the hosting program didn't start until last July, nearly 20 of our members were able to play these great courses: Point Judith CC; Misquamicut CC; Shelter Harbor CC; Warwick CC; and Myopia Hunt Club in MA. Three of our members played in a regularly scheduled Club Tournament at Myopia!

In discussions with Mike Ingenito, our Golf Genius Manager, we have decided to conference call existing CAP's in April with our new CAP Coordinator, Dann Provolo, and shoot to increase opportunities by starting the hosting program in June; simplify the registration process, and try to couple opportunities at clubs on the same day to get more of our members together at these clubs.

In the meantime, we are asking all CAP's to review those members at their club who are/have been RISSGA members and try to verify their status for 2026. In addition, we will be asking you to help identify desirable individuals for future members.

We look forward to a great 2026 with significant growth in membership; enhanced playing opportunities; and growing comradery among our members!

Tony Ventetuolo

2026 RISSGA Event Schedule

May 18th

Spring Tournament @ Kirkbrae CC
(including Annual Meeting dinner)

June 30th

CSSGA Interstate Match @ Silver Spring CC

July 9th

Tri-State Match @ Pleasant Valley CC

September 14th

BSSGA Interstate Match @ Wannamoisett CC

September 21st

Fall Tournament @ Pt. Judith CC

October 6th

Fall Classic (Split Field Event with CSSGA) @ Shorehaven Golf Club

June - August

15-20 Member Hosting Events @ various outstanding RI & MA courses

RISSGA LEADERSHIP

Tony Ventetuolo
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Dann Provolo
1st Vice President

Casby Harrison
Secretary

Joe Timmins
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