

REES, DAVID JAMES (DAI) (1913-1983), golfer and author

Name: David James Rees
Date of birth: 1913
Date of death: 1983
Gender: Male
Occupation: golfer and author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Sports and Leisure Pursuits
Author: D. Ben Rees

Dai Rees was born 31 March, 1913 in the village of Font-y-gary near Barry, Glamorganshire, the son of David Evans Rees (died 1959) and his wife Louisa Alice (née Trow). As his parents were involved in the world of golf - his father was the professional at Leys Golf Club in the Vale of Glamorgan and his mother a steward in the same club - he was brought up to play the game from childhood. He began to play at the age of five.

He was educated at the primary school at St Athan in Gileston and then Jenner Park School in Barry, but as his father was appointed to the Aberdare Golf Club, the family moved in 1925, and Dai Rees attended the school at Aber-nant, the village where Aberdare golf course was situated. He began his career as a professional golfer in Aberdare in 1929 aged 15 as a deputy to his father. Soon he was making a name for himself and won the PGA Assistants Championship in 1935 and 1936.

He moved to South Hertfordshire Golf Club, Totteridge after the death of Harry Vardon in 1937 and he was associated with them as professional for 37 years. (It is interesting to note that his daughter Gill Williams was the Captain of the South Hertfordshire Golf Club in 2008, an honour that her father would have been proud of). Dai Rees married Eunice Thomas in 1939, and during the Second World War he served with the RAF, with responsibility for Physical Training. For a period he served in the Middle East.

As a golfer he soon became a hero to the spectators. He is associated mainly with the British and Irish team in the Ryder Cup Competition against the USA. He took part in 10 of these competitions, beginning in 1937, and was Captain of the British team on five occasions - in 1955, 1957, 1959, 1961 and 1967. He did not play in 1967. He reached the zenith of his career when the British and Irish team won the Ryder Cup, under his captaincy, on the Lindrich Golf course in Yorkshire in 1957. This was the only time that Britain and Ireland defeated the USA between 1933 and 1985. As a consequence he was voted as the BBC Sports Personality of the Year. He was made CBE in 1958 for his contribution to golf.

He won 39 major titles in his career, including the Professional Golfers Association in South Africa, the Open in Switzerland, Belgium and Ireland, two British Masters and four News of the World Match Plays. He was disappointed, that he did not win the British Open. He came second to Ben Hogan in 1953, to Peter Thomson in 1954 and to Arnold Palmer in 1961. Rees served as the Captain to the Professional Golf Association team from 1967 until 1976.

Dai Rees loved writing on golf to national newspapers, and five books came from his pen, namely *Golf my Way* (1951), *Dai Rees on Golf* (1959), *The Key to Golf* (1961), *Golf Today* (1962), and *Thirty Years of Championship Golf* (1967).

He always expressed his pride in his Welsh background and emphasised the need for personal discipline. Rees never smoked and was an advocate of temperance with regard to alcohol. He kept himself physically in good shape and believed that all players should adopt such a regime. One of his greatest delights was supporting Arsenal Football Club. On his way home in 1981, after watching Arsenal play that afternoon, he was seriously involved in a motor car accident. His life was saved but he never fully recovered. He died aged 70 at the Barnet General Hospital on 15 November 1983. Following cremation, his ashes were buried at St Andrew's church, Totteridge.

Author

D. Ben Rees

Sources

Personal research

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004

'Cwpan Ryder', *Seren Cymru*, 1 October 2010, p 3

Peter Alldiss, *Who's Who in Golf* (1983)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dai Rees](#)

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