

Growing Up at St. Clair

Born on March 14, 1929, in Belleville, Goalby grew up during the Great Depression in a working-class family. St. Clair Country Club was just a short walk from his childhood home, and it quickly became his second home. As a young caddie, Goalby absorbed the rhythms of golf. He studied swings, learned strategy, and sharpened his own skills on the club's fairways. More importantly, St. Clair gave him a sense of belonging and purpose. "That place made me who I am," Goalby often said of the club. The game came naturally to him, but it was his work ethic—honed from humble beginnings—that carried him forward. By the time he enrolled at the University of Illinois, where he was a standout athlete in both golf and football, it was clear he had the talent and the drive to make golf his life.

Making His Way on the PGA Tour

Goalby turned professional in 1952, embarking on a journey that demanded persistence. In those early years, prize money was modest, and the road was long. But Goalby's determination never wavered. He steadily improved, earning his first PGA Tour victory in 1958.

Over the next decade, he built a career marked by **11 PGA Tour victories**. Known for his crisp ball-striking and steady demeanor, he earned the respect of fellow players and carved out a reputation as a competitor who never backed down. Among his victories were notable triumphs at the Los Angeles Open, the Greater Greensboro Open, and the Canadian Open—wins that underscored his ability to succeed against the best in the world.

The 1968 Masters: A Career-Defining Moment

No story of Bob Goalby is complete without the **1968 Masters Tournament**. On the final day at Augusta, Goalby delivered a spectacular round of **66**, making birdies when he needed them most and putting himself in position for victory.

That year's Masters would go down in history not only for Goalby's brilliance but also for the controversy surrounding runner-up Roberto De Vicenzo, who signed an incorrect scorecard. The error gave Goalby the title by a single stroke. Yet those who watched that Sunday knew the truth: Goalby had played like a champion. He did not back into the victory; he earned it. With quiet dignity, he accepted the green jacket, handling the awkward circumstances with grace. In the decades that followed, he remained proud of that win—not because of how it ended, but because of how he played. His victory was, in every sense, legitimate, and it secured his place forever in golf's storied history.

Life Beyond the Fairways

When his competitive playing days wound down, Goalby seamlessly transitioned to new roles in the game. He became a television analyst for NBC Sports, bringing sharp insights and plainspoken commentary to audiences during the 1970s and 1980s. His voice became familiar to millions, bridging the game to fans with authenticity and clarity.

Goalby also played a crucial role in shaping the **Champions Tour (now PGA Tour Champions)**, helping create a competitive platform for senior golfers. His work in its formation gave older professionals new life in the sport and left a legacy that endures today.

A Lifelong Bond with St. Clair

Through it all, Goalby never forgot where it began. St. Clair Country Club was not simply a golf course to him; it was family. He returned often, walking the same fairways where he once caddied, sharing stories, mentoring young players, and giving back to the community that raised him.

To Belleville and to St. Clair members, he was more than a Masters champion—he was a hometown hero. He took pride in his roots and never allowed fame to distance him from them. His story was proof that greatness can grow in small places.

Family, Character, and Community

Off the course, Goalby was a devoted family man. His values of humility, perseverance, and generosity shone in the way he carried himself. He was approachable and kind, never seeking the spotlight but always willing to share it with others. To those who knew him, his legacy is not just the trophies he won but the example he set: that success is measured as much by how you treat others as by the titles you earn.

Legacy of a Champion

Bob Goalby passed away on January 20, 2022, at the age of 92. His life spanned eras of golf and touched countless lives. He will forever be remembered for that Sunday in Augusta, for his 11 PGA Tour victories, and for his voice in the broadcast booth.

But perhaps more than anything, he will be remembered as the boy from Belleville who grew up at St. Clair Country Club, chased a dream, and lived it fully. His story endures not only in the record books but also in the hearts of those who cherish the game.

As long as golfers walk the fairways of St. Clair and speak of the Masters, the name **Bob Goalby** will live on—a champion, a gentleman, and a son of Belleville who made his mark on the world.