

Barbara Puett, Golf, 1960-62



ou won't find the name of Barbara Puett in any of the UT golf record books. But more than 10 years before The University even had an official golf team, she was considered one of the leading amateurs in the country.

Without an official team in the early 1960s, Puett and a handful of other women golfers represented UT at the few college events that were held in those days.

"There just weren't many tournaments for college women golfers back then," said Puett, today one of the most sought-after teaching professionals in Central Texas. "Mostly we just played the amateur events we could get to. But I do recall that the University paid our way to the NCAA Championships."

Women's golf became an official sport within the athletic department for the 1974-75 season when Pat Weiss became coach. Since then, the program has produced some of the best teams and individuals in the country. Today's Longhorn teams play about 15 tournaments a year. An Austin resident and fan of all UT sports,

Puett has watched the program grow through the years.

"I'm not at all jealous of what the program has become, even though we didn't have it that way," Puett said. "The opportunities for women in all sports is so much better today and I think it's fantastic."

"Until recently, women never had the opportunity to experience the pure joy of competing just for the sake of competing," Puett added. "Besides the fun, there is so much you learn from competitions. That's one of the great things you get through sports and it's great to see the way it has grown for women."

After graduation from UT, Puett was a school teacher and served as golf coach at Lamar Middle School where one of her players was a youngster named Tom Kite. She eventually got into teaching golf full time. Her schedule is booked solid with private and group lessons, and it is estimated that she has taught the game to some 500-to-1000 people every year for the last 12 years through the

University's Informal Classes.

A longtime friend and disciple of the legendary Harvey Penick, Puett is one of many golf teachers who still rely on his wisdom.

"Every now and then I will stray away, but I always go back to Harvey's way of teaching," Puett said. "Harvey's magic was in emphasizing what a person did well instead of correcting what they might be doing wrong. It was always so positive."

As a player, Puett won the Austin Women's Championship five times and in 1963 she captured the Texas State Women's Amateur title. In 1989 the Austin American-Statesman named her Golf Teacher of the Year.

When she's not teaching or playing golf, Puett is often writing about it. She was co-author of the popular book, *Golf Etiquette*, and is a regular contributor to *Golf For Women* magazine.

Barbara's husband, Roane, was a Longhorn letterman in the early 1950s who has been one of the top amateurs in Texas for several years. ★



"Until recently, women never had the opportunity to experience the pure joy of competing just for the sake of competing. Besides the fun, there is so much you learn from competitions. That's one of the great things you get through sports and it's great to see the way it has grown for women."

—former UT golfer
Barbara Puett