

# A BRIEF HISTORY

Since its founding in 1902 by a group of Toronto gentlemen, Lambton Golf Club has evolved through a remarkable journey. Led by Mr. A.W. Austin, President of the Dominion Bank and a group of his friends from the Spadina Golf Club, 150 acres of land was purchased in what was then known as Lambton Mills, situated along the banks of the Humber River where it is joined by Black Creek.

The original clubhouse was constructed over the winter of 1902-03 and was ready for the club's official opening on June 13, 1903.

To design the golf course Austin retained Willie Dunn Jr., member of the eminent Scottish golfing family. Dunn prepared designs but departed well before the course opened. Lambton's first Golf Captain, the great George S. Lyon, oversaw the completion of the championship 18-hole course with suggestions from American golf course architect Tom Bendelow. Some of Dunn's design was modified in the process. The nine-hole Valley Course, completed in 1904, may well have been the first course designed in North America for women.

Lyon, who was born in 1859, remained Lambton's Captain for 23 years. He was an eight-time Canadian Amateur Champion (1898, 1900, 1903, 1905-06-07, 1912 and 1914), won the golf Gold Medal at the 1904 Olympics at Glen Echo Golf Club in St. Louis at the age of 46 and finished runner-up at the 1910 Canadian Open, held at Lambton. Lyon was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1955, the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame in 1971 and Ontario's Golf Hall of Fame in 2000. In 2015, Toronto's Sports Hall of Honour named him among its Sports Legends.



**George S. Lyon  
with the Olympic Trophy.**

The legendary English golfers Ted Ray and Harry Vardon played an exhibition match at Lambton following their famous playoff showdown at the U S Open against Francis Ouimet in 1913. Golf Hall of Famer Sam Snead won his third Canadian Open title at Lambton in 1941.

Over the last century, a number of noted golf course architects contributed some of their genius to the old course design including Donald Ross, Stanley Thompson, Robbie Robinson and Graham Cooke.

Disaster visited the Humber Valley in 1954 in the form of Hurricane Hazel and Lambton was at its very centre. Scores of lives were lost as flash flooding raised water levels 25 feet throughout the adjacent river valley. The Canadian Armed Forces located their relief operations HQ in Lambton's clubhouse. Parts of the courses were devastated but soon restored. Further revisions in design were required subsequently due to the realignment of Black Creek. Containment of the Creek within a diversion channel as a flood control measure eliminated the snake-like coils which had characterized its passage through the courses and shaped so many of the original golf holes but has served to protect the courses ever since.

In 1964, the original clubhouse was replaced by the Club's second, a more modern design located again on the brow of the hill. This clubhouse in turn was replaced by the current building just in time for the Club's Centennial in 2002. A comprehensive redesign and renovation of both golf courses by noted golf course designer Rees Jones was completed by 2010, which elevated Lambton to a new level of excellence. It is also noteworthy that tennis has been played at Lambton almost continuously since the Club's beginning. Tennis too found renewal as the courts were relocated from the fringes of the property to a position adjacent to the new clubhouse with new surfaces and added facilities. Under a winter "bubble" tennis is happily played year round.

Over the years, Lambton has hosted numerous provincial and national championships including the Canadian Ladies' Amateur Championship, the Canadian PGA Championship, the very first Canadian Seniors Golf Association Championship, the Canadian Women's Senior Golf Association Championship, the Ontario Amateur and others. Alena Sharp won the 2004 Canadian PGA Women's Championship at Lambton and the Club also hosted the Four Nations Team Championship as Canada defeated squads from Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

**Lambton has hosted four Canadian Opens:**

- 1907 won by Percy Barrett
- 1910 won by Daniel Kenny
- 1925 won by Leo Diegel
- 1941 won by Sam Snead

**Lambton has hosted five Canadian Amateurs:**

- 1907 won by George S. Lyon
- 1910 won by Fritz Martin
- 1919 won by W. McLuckie
- 1932 won by Gordon B. Taylor
- 2015 won by Billy Kennerly (co-hosted)



**Women playing golf in 1904.**



**A.W. Austin**



**1902**



**Now**