

# Massachusetts Golf's **20** Most Powerful Figures

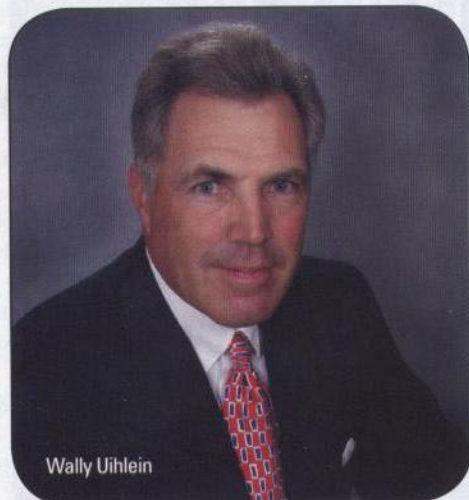
Golf is a vibrant industry in Massachusetts with a cherished history of people, places and events, and in its wake is an estimated \$2 billion trail of revenue.

Most sports fans know that golf history has been made in the Bay State, from native son Francis Ouimet's monumental upset victory in the 1913 U.S. Open--which precipitated the very first golf boom in America--to the equally historic come-from-behind victory by the U.S. in the 1999 Ryder Cup Matches at The Country Club in Brookline.

To the present day, who are the people with power on the Massachusetts golf scene? Where are they and how did they come into power and influence in a flourishing sport that has 57 million participants worldwide.

We asked these questions are more (with help from some experts in the field) and came up with a list of the 20 most influential and powerful figures in Massachusetts golf. In this comprehensive review, we discovered a sizzling array of talent, all at the top of their respective power game. The list includes three CEOs, five entrepreneurial women, one professional Tour player, one world-renowned architect, and eight highly successful and skilled individuals, all 100 percent involved in making a successful career in golf and hardly regretting a day.

Our selection for number one most powerful and influential person in the golf industry in the Bay State was a fairly easy decision. It's **Wally Uihlein** (pronounced U-line), chairman and CEO of Acushnet Company, located in Fairhaven. Uihlein's sphere of influence extends far beyond Bay State borders. Titleist, FootJoy and Cobra are the brands of choice by many of the world's best players, and Acushnet sales now



Wally Uihlein

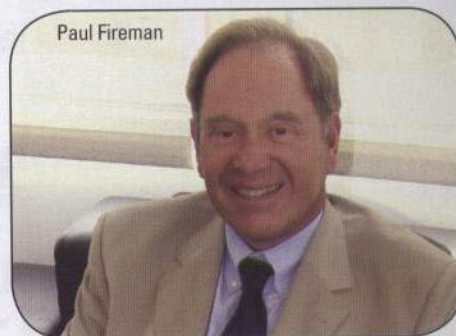
reach Canada, South America, Asia and Europe. Last year the company had \$1.2 billion in sales and it employs 4,500.

Uihlein, 55, earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Massachusetts in 1973, and started a career as a sales rep for Dunlop before joining Acushnet in 1976 as a sales rep in the Tideist Golf Division, ascended to national sales manager and was promoted to vice president in 1982. He was named CEO in 2000. His is a success story driven by a superb work ethic. Uihlein is the first head of an equipment company to receive the PGA of America's Distinguished Service Award, which was presented to him in August at the PGA Championship at Baltrusol.

Uihlein is a major financial contributor to multiple charities and is a devoted volunteer to junior golf programs locally and across the country. Although he shuns publicity, Uihlein is the undisputed golf industry kingpin in Massachusetts and worldwide.

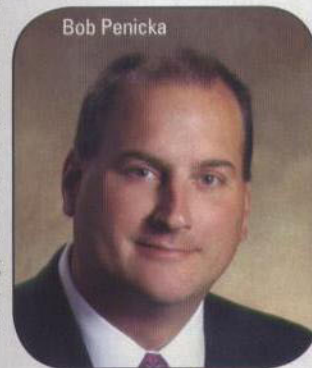
Uihlein's love of the game began in a golf shop in Haverhill at age 13, and a love of the game is what our Top 20 have in common.

**2.) Paul Fireman:** Born and bred in Brockton, the long-time Thorny Lea Golf Club member invested \$65,000 in 1979 in a British running shoe company called Reebok. In 1984, Fireman bought out Reebok, took it public and today it is a \$3.5 billion corporation. With a lifelong passion for golf, he has maintained a single-digit handicap for 30 years and also controls another successful multi-million dollar operation--Willowbend Development LLC. Fireman's generosity goes seven-figures deep when golf charities like Willowbend Children's Charity, the Ouimet Scholarship Fund and the William F. Connell Golf House & Museum are involved. He's the man behind the building of the high-profile Liberty National Golf Club in New Jersey, across from Manhattan.



Paul Fireman

**3.) Bob Penicka:** The 43-year old is president and CEO of Chicopee-based Top-Flite Golf Company, which employs 700. The company has been in the golf industry since 1895, first appearing under the Spaulding Sporting Goods label. Top-Flite is the world's largest golf ball manufacturer and became a wholly owned subsidiary of Callaway Golf in 2003, making it the largest golf company in the world. Its two popular name brands are Top-Flite and Ben Hogan. Penicka graduated from Ohio State with a degree in chemical engineering and maintains a 12 handicap.



Bob Penicka

**4.) Jay Monahan:** Just 35, the Belmont native's triangle of influence begins with International Management Group (IMG), and flows to Tiger Woods and the PGA Tour. He is tournament director for the Deutsche Bank Championship at the TPC of Boston course in Norton, and the event appears destined to be a Labor Day talent show for local golf aficionados for many years to come. Monahan's Rolodex includes names like Vijay Singh, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Retief Goosen. Co-founded Golf Fights Cancer with Brain Oates.

**5.) Bob Donovan** is the executive director of the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund, the golf charity of Massachusetts. Founded in 1949 by friends of Francis Ouimet and the Massachusetts Golf Association, the fund has awarded over \$14.2 million in need-based scholarships to over 4,100 students. The quiet and unassuming Donovan's annual fund-raising skills approach \$1 million by selling bag tags, running two tournaments and hosting an annual banquet with about 1,500 guests.

**6.) Nathan Robbins** is the executive director of the New England chapter of the PGA, which consists of 670 PGA golf professionals and 230 PGA apprentices at over 340 golf facilities in Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island and New Hampshire. Less than one year into the position, Robbins' oversees 150 professional, amateur and junior tournaments annually.

**7.) Tom Landry** is the executive director of the 102-year old Massachusetts Golf Association, which consists of 400 member clubs totaling some 101,000 members. The MGA runs 10 tournaments, nine which require a handicap of 4.0 or less to participate and all members pay an annual fee of \$20 for a computerized handicap. He is also involved with the Alliance of Massachusetts Golf Organizations. The MGA is a 501 (c) (3) multi-million-dollar operation, which each year nets a \$70,000 profit by running the state amateur championship.

**8.) Tracy West:** This ambitious 39-year old golf entrepreneur has parlayed an MBA in finance (Michigan State '88) into a successful business as president of Hayson Sports Group, with a high-profile role as one of only three female tournament directors of the Champions Tour. The Bank of America Championship, held every summer for the past 25 years at Nashawtuc Country Club, is the oldest 54-hole Champions Tour event. It takes power and influence to successfully run a major pro golf tournament luring top names and featuring a \$1.6 million purse.



Tracy West

**9.) Jim McCabe** is a 20-year veteran of the Boston Globe sports department whose wisdom, insight and reporting on golf has set a lofty threshold for followers of the sport. McCabe has covered 27 PGA Tour majors and commands a boatload of respect and knowledge from his colleagues and the international golf community. McCabe's annual habit includes earning a national golf-writing award from his peers in the GWAA. He maintains a bowling average of 86, which matches many of his golf scores.



Jim McCabe

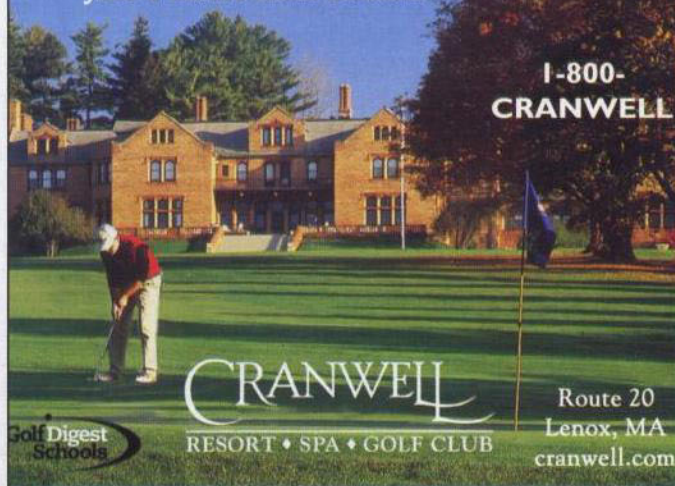
**10.) Brian Silva:** Although Amherst's Geoffrey Cornish is the most prolific of New England golf course designers, the 92-year old he is retired. Silva, Cornish's partner since 1983, is a recognized authority on course restoration and renovation. Now 52, the UMass alumnus was named Golf World magazine Architect of the Year in 1999. Silva has worked on 100 projects worldwide with his most impressive solo efforts at home being Waverly Oaks, Captain's, Shaker Hills, Black Rock, Red Tail and Acushnet River Valley.

**11.) Jane Blalock** spent 17 years on the LPGA Tour and notched 29 victories before retiring from competitive golf in 1985 and successfully delving into the private sector. For the past 20 years, Blalock has been in business as a stockbroker, founder of the Jane Blalock Golf Academy and an organizer of golf retreats for women. She lives at the Ridge Club on Cape Cod and is president of the Women's Senior Golf Tour, which held a phenomenally successful tournament (BJ's Charity Championship) at Granite Links GC at Quarry Hills (Quincy) in early August.

**12) Richard F. Connolly** is the senior vice president at UBS

## From the Back Nine, to Cloud Nine, Cranwell Has It All.

Championship 18-hole golf course, Golf Digest School, 113 guest rooms, new 35,000 sq-ft Spa, 3 award-winning restaurants and more — with the *only* GPS in the Berkshires! Just 2 hours from Boston.



1-800-  
CRANWELL

Route 20  
Lenox, MA  
cranwell.com

## Judge It For Yourself!

**Y**ou've read the accolades. You've listened to the rave reviews. Now it's time to see it for yourself. Plan a trip to The Ranch in 2005.

THE RANCH GOLF CLUB



SOUTHWICK, MASSACHUSETTS

(413) 569-9333 • (866) 790-9333 • www.theranchgolfclub.com

Financial Services Inc. and one of the most prolific fundraisers in the commonwealth. The Holy Cross alumnus is also Arnold Palmer's personal financial advisor. For 30 years, the former caddy has raised millions for the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund, and in 2000 the Richard F. Connolly Distinguished Service Award was established in his honor. His philanthropic support to golf and other charities in the Bay State has helped thousands. He is a member of Concord Country Club, The Kittansett Club and the Weston Golf Club.

**13.) Leigh Bader** has been active in the golf business for more than 30 years, as co-owner with Joe Ricci of Joe & Leigh's Discount Pro Shop and Pine Oaks GC (Easton). Golf World Business has recognized Bader's company for 12 years as one of America's top 100 golf shops. He also owns 3balls.com, a highly profitable leading online retailer, and was recently selected to serve as director on Golf 20/20, an organization composed of key players in the golf industry. Bader was honored with PGA Merchandiser of the Year (Public) in 1995 and 2001 and employs about 100. He also serves on the PGA Tour's Technology Advisory Committee.

**14.) Anne Marie Tobin:** In women's amateur golf she is a certified legend, both

on and off the course. Tobin is a seven-time winner of the state championship of the Women's Golf Association of Massachusetts (WGAM), which serves over 2,000 members at more than 180 member clubs. The 1983 graduate of Suffolk Law School is chief legal counsel for the New England PGA. Tobin is past president of the WGAM (1995) and Ouimet Fund (2004). The women's player of the year award is named in her honor.

**15) Susan Curtin** is another young female power broker who also happens to maintain a 3 handicap and has won four club championship titles at Thorny Lea while raising two kids. Curtin, with eight years of experience in the business, is executive director of the New England chapter of the National Golf Course Owner's Association (NGCOA), which is made up of over 330 golf course owners, operators and corporate members. The Holy Cross alum's duties include assisting NGCOA members with profitable operations, management, development and promotion of golf at public and private courses.

**16) Walter Lankau** is the owner of Stow Acres Golf Club, part owner of Sterling Country Club and is president of Nashawtuc Charities, the local charitable organization that evolved from the Champions Tour's

PV hosts many local and regional tournaments and is a frequent site for MGA events. The Mingolla family will fondly and forever be a force in New England golf folklore.

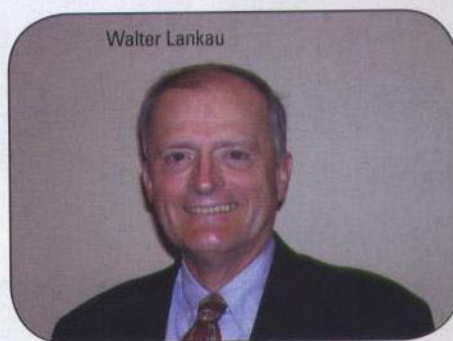
**18.) James Driscoll:** The 27-year old Brookline and Charles River Country Club product is a rookie on the PGA Tour. His stellar amateur career transformed him into perhaps the best player ever from the Bay State. Although he's missed the cut in more than half of his PGA Tour starts, Driscoll's prime-time performance on national television at the Zurich Classic in New Orleans on May 1 showed charisma, composure and class. He lost in a playoff but cashed a check for \$594,000 and is close to breaking into the top 150 players in the world. His earnings through August approach \$900,000.

**19.) Tom Cavicchi:** His resume shows 30-plus years as a PGA pro while carving out a reputation as New England's finest instructor. He's employed as director of golf at Harmon Golf & Fitness Club in Rockland, where he combines state-of-the-art equipment with high-tech swing analysis. He's expensive at \$150 per session, and expect to be placed on a waiting list to get some advice from Cavicchi.

**20.) Jane Frost** brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the lesson tee along with several prestigious awards and golf industry recognition. Frost broke through by earning 1994 LPGA Teacher of the Year honors, and she is annually ranked by Golf Digest and Golf magazine as one of the top 50 teachers in America. She works at Holly Ridge Golf Club in Sandwich. Priced at \$250 hour for one lesson, Frost makes occasional appearances on the Golf Channel's "Academy Live Show."



James Driscoll



Walter Lankau

annual summer visit to the Bay State. That charity shelled out a whopping \$350,000 last year to local organizations and the 25-year total disbursement is \$4 million. Lankau is a former president of the Golf Course Owners Association of America and a major donor to the Ouimet Fund, the MGA and almost every golf-related men's, women's and kid's programs.

**17.) Ted Mingolla:** The owner of Pleasant Valley Country Club, the site of 32 consecutive PGA Tour events until 1998 when really, really, really big bucks started to dictate the Tour's future. The run started with the 1965 World Carling Open and ended with the 1997 CVS Charity Classic.



Jane Frost

*Tom Gorman, a member of the Golf Writer's Association of America, is a Boston-based freelance golf writer.*