

# Who Was Charlie Yates?

*(And Why Does He Have a Course Named After Him?)*

The magnificence of Bobby Jones during his prime cast a shadow over all other golfers in the world, much less any other talented amateur golfer in his hometown of Atlanta.

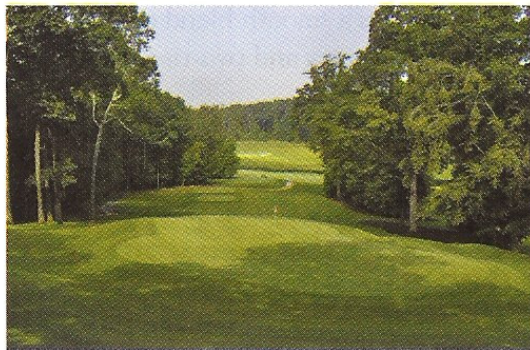
Charlie Yates may not have the same name recognition in golf circles as that of Jones, but, for those in the know, he is another of the city's most highly regarded treasures. Yates captured the British Amateur at Royal Troon in 1938. He was the Georgia Amateur champion twice and won the prestigious Western Open.

Like Jones, Yates was a product of Atlanta's East Lake Country Club. Eleven years the junior of Jones, Yates honed his game by closely watching the gifted game of the 1930 Grand Slam champion.

Yates' accomplishments are long. One of his lasting legacies is having the Charlie Yates Golf Course at East Lake named in his honor. The executive course, a Rees Jones-design, was built on the site of the old East Lake Country Club No. 2 course. It opened for play in 1999.

The Yates course was a key component in the rehabilitation of the once deteriorating East Lake neighborhood. The community's now demolished East Lake Meadows housing project had declined to the point that it was labeled a virtual war zone due to its high crime rates. The East Lake Foundation was established in 1995 to help transform the neighborhood and to create new opportunities for the families living there. Along with the course, the area now includes modern homes, a charter school and a YMCA.

Now, the Charlie Yates Golf Course is the home to The First Tee of East Lake, an organization that introduces the sport to children who might not



otherwise have the chance to play the game.

The 3,480-yard course, located in close view of Atlanta's skyline, is also a magnet for downtown workers looking to hit some balls on the range during lunch or to get in a quick round on their way home.

"We are almost in the city so we get a lot of activity from people that don't want to fight the traffic when they leave work," says Daryl Batey, the course's head golf professional.

The course is a par 58. It features 14 challenging par-3 holes and four par 4s.

The course is always in excellent condition. As evidence, *Golf Range Magazine* voted the Charlie Yates GC among the Top 10 Executive Golf Courses in America for three consecutive years.

The course is hilly on the front nine, but it flattens out on the backside. The greens are large but provide plenty of challenge with frequent undulations.

Batey says one of his favorite holes is No. 5, a par 3 that can play anywhere from 130 yards to 210 yards, depending on pin placements and tee boxes selected. Water runs down the entire left side of the hole.

"A lot of guys say, 'I don't want to play that short course because you can't hit driver,'" says Batey. "But a lot of low handicappers want to come back. They say, 'I can't believe the course did that to me.'"

Due to its status as a short course, Charlie Yates GC also offers a palatable pace of play that averages 2 ½ hours except at peak times. "All of those factors combined – the recognized quality of our Rees Jones-course, the prime location near downtown, great practice facilities and the pace of play – make it an easy sell for us," says Batey. ■