Julius Boros Profile: Swing Easy, Hit Hard

By
Peter Smolens



With his relaxed, nonchalant-looking swing and manner, Julius Boros is remembered for not wasting any time. “He was slowest and fastest,” Golf Digest editor Jerry Tarde once wrote. “Slowest walking to the ball and fastest once he got to it.” Boros epitomizes the Nike catchphrase – he didn’t waste any time over the golf ball. Boros never took a practice swing. He looked at the situation, picked his club, and would “just do it.”

As a Hungarian-American professional golfer, Julius Boros was a big man at 6 feet who weighed in at more than 200 pounds. Born on March 3, 1920, in Fairfield, CT, the man known to fans on tour as “Moose” learned to take things easy after discovering during his military stint that he had a bad heart. The result was a relaxed, almost lazy-looking swing that writers dubbed, which became his catchphrase, “Swing easy, hit hard,” and the title of his golf instruction book – too easy to borrow as the title for my article.

A quiet person with an easy, flowing swing that generated plenty of power, Julius Boros won tournaments by using an exceptional short game to save shots around the green. As described in "How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time," the great golf teacher and author Tommy Armour suggested that Boros change his approach to the game. Instead of being cautious with his approach shots, Boros could be bold and let his approach shots fly at the pin. He knew he could still get up and down from around the green. A cautious putter early in his career, Boros often let his putts right online but short of the hole. Armour suggested that Boros could be confident knowing he could make the second putt if he missed. By giving Boros a tactical game plan, the results were dramatic.

Julius Boros put together a remarkable career for its consistency, longevity, and brilliance. The style worked well throughout his professional golf career. Boros won 18 PGA Tour events, including three major championships: the 1952 and 1963 U.S. Opens. At 48, Boros defeated the great Arnold Palmer, one of the oldest players to win a modern major championship, taking the 1968 PGA Championship in San Antonio by a stroke. Boros's win denied Palmer his best chance at a career grand slam. With PGA Tour career earnings of more than a million dollars, he led the money list in 1952 and 1955. He was PGA Player of the Year in 1952 and 1963 and a four (4) time member of the Ryder Cup team (1959, 1963, 1965, and 1967). His son, Guy, won the 1996 Greater Vancouver Open, making the Boroses one of only three father-son tandems to have won on the PGA Tour.

In the late 1970s, Boros raised the profile of professional senior golf competitions with a thrilling victory in the Legends of Golf tournament. Based on the results of that golf tournament, Boros used his relaxed, fan-friendly manner on a golf course, along with Arnold Palmer and others, to help start the Senior PGA Tour. He won one more major, the 1977 PGA Seniors' Championship. The PGA inducted Julius Boros into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1982.

Boros was a devoted family man with an impish sense of humor. When asked what he would do when he retired, Boros answered, “Retire to what? I’m already a golfer and a fisherman. I have nothing to retire to.” True to his word, Boros liked to fish when he was not on the golf course.

In 1994, while in failing health, Boros rode around the golf course almost daily to be near the sights and smells of the game he loved. Julius Boros’s life ended on the golf course. He suffered a fatal heart attack while sitting and relaxing in a golf cart under a willow tree near the 16th hole at the Coral Ridge Country Club in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, his favorite spot on the course.

“Maybe he wasn’t feeling that well and just went there to think about the life he had led,” said Nick Boros, one of Boros’s four sons. “I think it was a great blessing. He was there at his favorite spot.”

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