

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

Grantland Rice

“Golf is twenty per cent mechanics and technique. The other eighty percent is philosophy, humor, tragedy, romance, melodrama, companionship, camaraderie, cussedness and conversation.” The author of this gem deserves to be highlighted in our review of golf books. One of the most oft quoted lines of sports wisdom of all times, which I have used many times with my own children, was also written by Rice, “It’s not whether you win or lose, it’s how you play the game.”

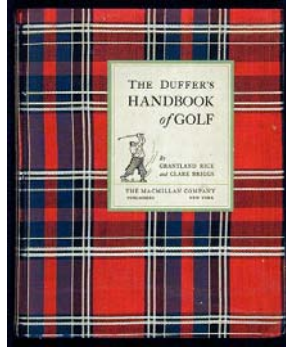
A scratch golfer and friend of Bobby Jones, Grantland Rice started covering the great man from when he was just fourteen years old. An avid golfer, he played any day he could and brought his golf clubs with him when he traveled. In addition to Bobby Jones, Rice was also friends with Babe Didrikson.



When I grow up, I want to be Grantland Rice. He was a member of Augusta National, Maidstone Links in East Hampton, Englewood in New Jersey and the Lakeside Golf Club of Hollywood. Rice and his wife would check into the Beverly Wilshire for the winter season when in L.A. His contract with the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1925 paid him \$52,000, the same amount Babe Ruth made playing for the Yankees that year!

His playing companions at Lakeside Golf Club included Bing Crosby, Oliver Hardy and Thomas Montague. Montague is an intriguing golf story written about by Leigh Montville in *The Mysterious Montague*. Rice trumpeted him as one of the best players he had ever seen. Rice was a double major in Greek and Latin from Vanderbilt, where he played varsity baseball. Although he was exempt due to his age, he enlisted and served in the Army in the First World War.

Rice’s most famous work related to golf is *The Duffer’s Handbook of Golf*, published in 1926 by Macmillan (D & J R7750), which he co-authored with the illustrator Claire Briggs.



One of the most unusual covers of any golf book is the limited edition of 500 of *The Duffer's Handbook* (D & J R7720), which was made of a plaid fabric that is subject to chipping, fraying and moth eating. Those in excellent condition are thus prized.

Rice wrote *The Bobby Jones Story: from the writings of O.B. Keeler*, published in 1953 in the U.S. and the U.K. One of the lesser known works edited by Rice is *Fore-With a Glance Aft*, published in 1929 by Conde Nast (D & J R7480) which features Bobby Jones on its cover.



Rice is generally credited as the first sportswriter of the modern era to create stars from sports heroes. Among the stars he is credited with highlighting are quite a collection of talent. In addition to Bobby Jones it includes Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Knute Rockne, Jack Dempsey and Bill Tilden.

Charles Fountain's biography of Rice, *Sportswriter: The Life and Times of Grantland Rice* says that Rice made more money than any sports figures in the 1920s with the exception of the boxer Jack Dempsey.

Rice was also well known for his work in college football, selecting All-America teams beginning in 1925. In addition to serving as the editor of *American Golfer Magazine* Rice also wrote *Baseball Ballads*, a book of poetry dedicated to baseball. Rice's autobiography, *The Tumult and the Shouting* was published in 1954. We don't have enough space to give full due to Rice's whole career. It was impressive, spanning 53 years, producing 67 million words, including 22,000 columns and 14 books, but hopefully we've sparked your interest in this unique character in the history of golf.