

Tony Lema



He was born in Oakland, California. His meteoric golf career ended at age 32 in a crash of a private plane. From 1962-1966, when he died, he had won 10 tour events, was second 11 times, and third 4 times. He won the British Open in 1964 and was a member of the 1963 and 1965 Ryder Cup Team. His five victories in 1964 topped those of Jack Nicklaus (4), Arnold Palmer (4) and Gary Player (2). Enshrined in the Bay Area Sports Hall of Fame in 1990.

Tony Lema held the World Match Play record winning seven successive holes in 1965 during his match with the legendary Gary Player. Ernie Els topped it with eight successive holes in 2003.

The plane crash that caused his death, occurred after both engines failed due to fuel starvation. It came to rest in a shallow pond on the golf course. Lema was on a Buick promotional tour. His wife, Betty, was also killed.