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Catching up with
Calvin Peete

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MICHIGAN GOLFER

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Cover: 1983 photo of Calvin Peete is by Mark Arpin.

Catching up with Calvin Peete

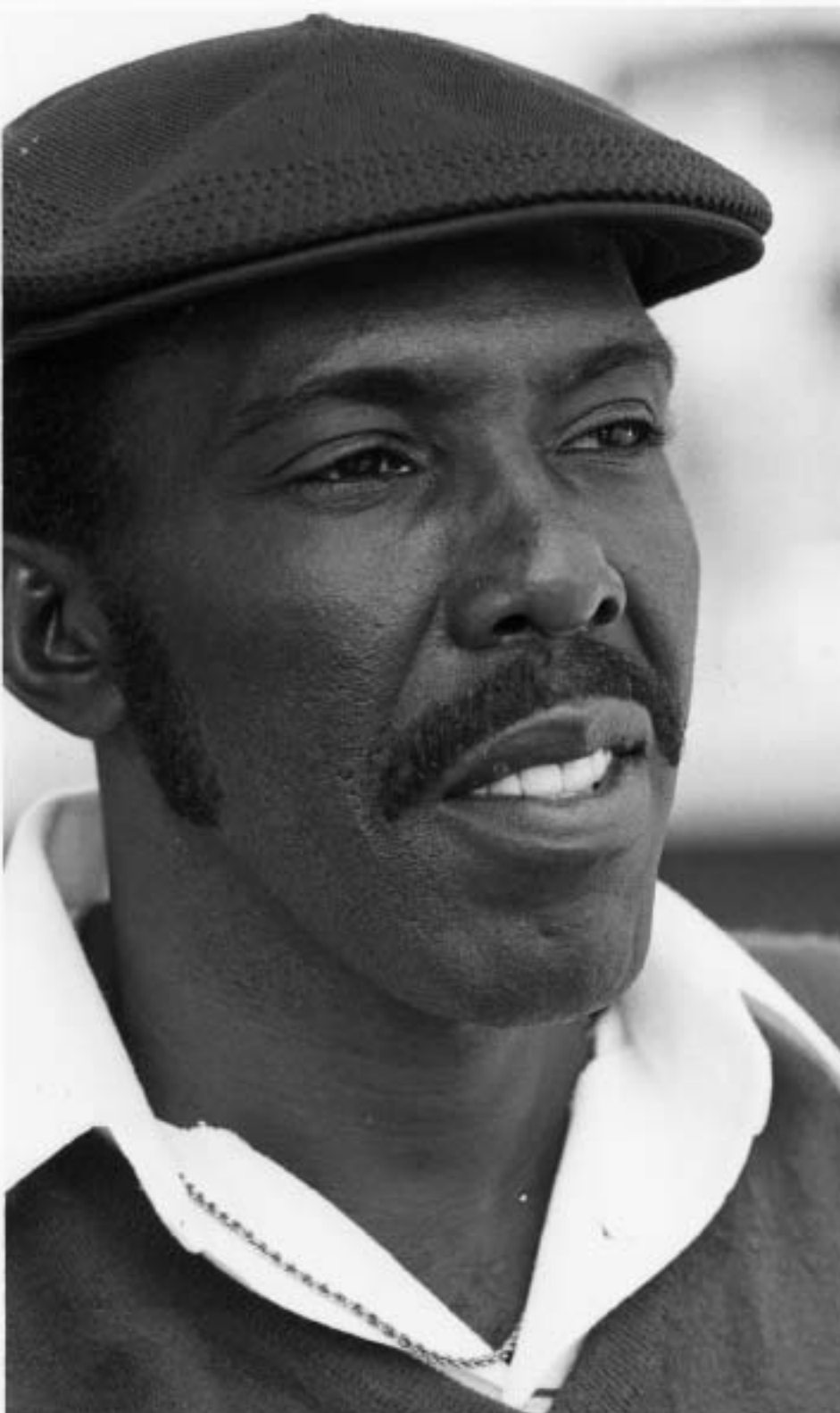


Photo by Paul Stano

by John Berkovich

Every day is Father's Day for Calvin Peete. The winner of 12 PGA Tour events is now a stay at home dad for his

daughters Aisha and Aleya and he wouldn't have it any other way. "I love being there for my kids now," says Peete. "When I was on the PGA Tour I was away from home so much that it was difficult to be there." Peete turns 63 in July of this year and although it has been twenty years since he was arguably America's best, yet definitely its most unappreciated golfer, he is much happier now. Peete and his second wife Pepper live quietly in the Jacksonville, Florida area. While Pepper manages the local First Tee facility, Calvin is the quintessential stay at home dad. His days consist of managing the household, keeping in touch with his children from his first marriage, and occasionally hitting balls at Sawgrass where he has a lifetime membership from winning the

story has been told before but given the mountains he has conquered and the attitude he has displayed, it bears repeating.

One of nine children born to a Detroit automobile factory worker, Peete's parents separated when he was 11. He, along with two younger sisters, was dropped off at his maternal grandmother's home in rural Missouri along the Mississippi. His mother headed to Chicago to search for employment but never returned to pick up her brood.

When he was 12, Peete fell out of a cherry tree and shattered his left elbow and although surgeons repaired the elbow, it remained fused so that Peete could never fully straighten his arm. His father

farmer. Years later, Peete said that he didn't mind getting sweaty on the golf course since it made him feel like he was doing honest work.

Desperate to move forward, Peete got his peddlers license and went on the road. "I bought from the wholesalers and would hit the migrant worker camps during sugarcane season," recalls Peete. "A lot of the workers were from Barbados and Jamaica. I sold jewelry, clothing, and stereos, basically whatever they wanted I got for them. They liked me because I was one of them and didn't over inflate my prices." Traversing the dusty farm roads from Florida to New York, Peete put diamond chips in each of his front teeth to make himself memorable while continu-

His fellow pros used to kid him about constantly being in the middle of the fairway with the nickname Mr. Accuracy.

1985 Players Championship. He is on disability and continues to receive a pension from his days on the PGA Tour. Peete also gives back to the community with the Calvin Peete Recreation Complex in St. Augustine, Florida. The center keeps kids off the streets after school and gives them an opportunity to hone their sports and life skills.

The inspirational Calvin Peete

eventually came for Calvin and his sisters along with three children from his second marriage and moved the kids to Pahokee, Florida on the southeast corner of Lake Okeechobee.

Dropping out of school in the eighth grade, Peete spent his days hustling pool and pulling various scams to help support the family in addition to the backbreaking work of pulling crops as a migrant

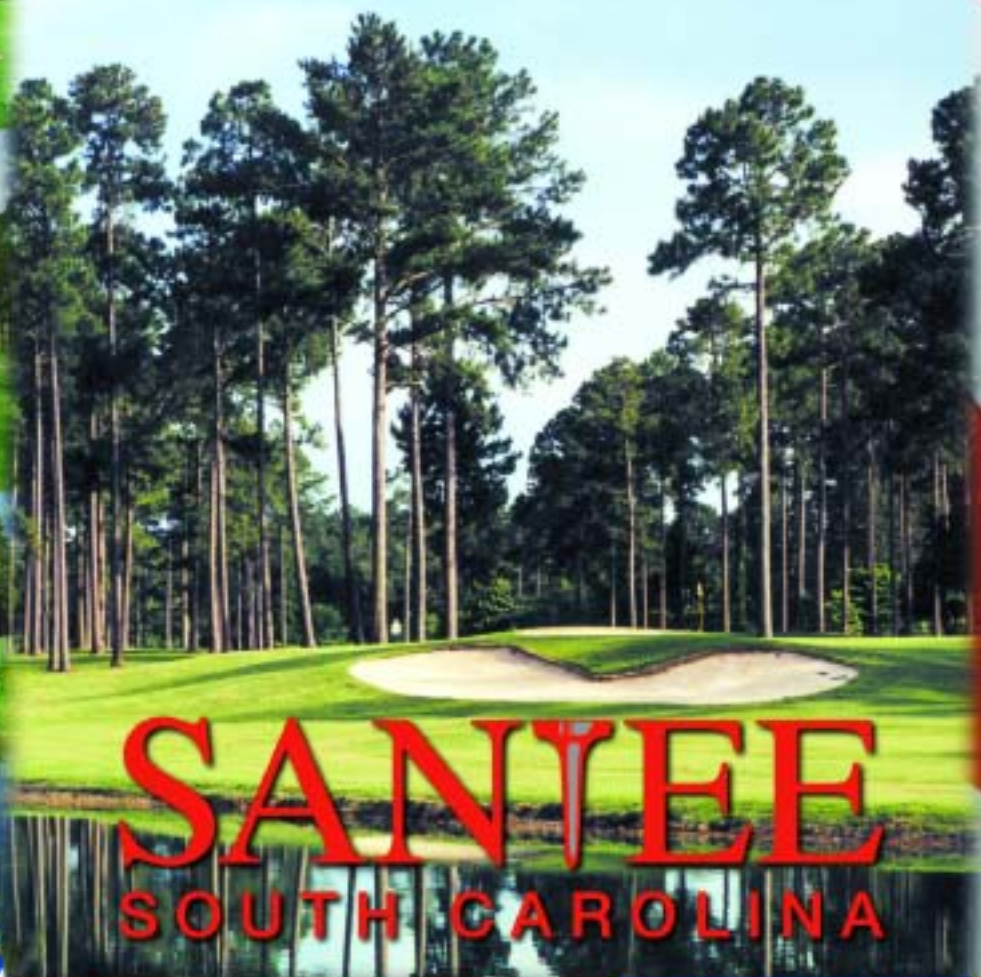
ing to hustle any game he could.

Some fellow gamesters encouraged Peete to join them for a round of golf and he was hooked. From that day forward his goal was the PGA Tour. He practiced and played any chance he could, often staying on the range until the lights went out near midnight.

Three attempts and seven years later, Calvin Peete had his tour

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card. "The first time through q-school I wasn't disappointed to miss out because it was all new for me," explains Peete. "I was ready the second time but didn't play well. I finally got it the third time and never went back." There was no Nationwide Tour to fall back on but there was Monday qualifying. The Top-60 and previous tournament winners were exempt for the year while the rest - including Peete - were known as the rabbits. They earned the moniker from hopping from city to city at their own expense in search of a spot in the field. Every Monday the rabbits would battle it out for the remaining spots in the tournament. Peete earned his way in three times in 1975 but didn't pick up his first check until the 1976 Phoenix Open - a tournament he would win nine

road, Calvin Peete's heart was at home. "Dad always had time for us," observed daughter Nicole Peete, an Atlanta third grade teacher. "He still does even though we're apart. Dad always loved to talk and some of my fondest memories are of sitting around the dinner table just being a family and talking. I don't ever remember dad yelling at me-he's always been so soft-spoken. I used to love watching him fiddling with the grips on his clubs when he was home and just listen to him talk about life."

Calvin Peete Junior, an Elkridge, Maryland realtor, echoes his kid sister. "Dad always had a great rapport with me. I still remember the time when I was 16 and just him and I went to New York. I wanted to get a car so we

solid play and earned over \$100,000 in 1980 and 1981 - a tidy sum in those days. "People knew what dad was earning because of what he did and everyone thought we were so rich," laughs Junior. "I really didn't grasp the impact of what dad was doing until years later."

Over the next four seasons Calvin Peete's golf game was in the stratosphere. He won 11 times - including the 1985 Players Championship - and the undying respect of his peers as possibly the best American golfer during that time and certainly the most accurate. His fellow pros used to kid him about constantly being in the middle of the fairway with the nickname Mr. Accuracy. He played on two Ryder Cup teams and cap-

“The press wasn't ready for a black man to dominate the PGA Tour and some of them expected me to self-destruct.”

years later. He averaged about \$20,000 those first few seasons, most of which went straight into tour expenses.

"I had a few top-tens in the early days and knew it was only a matter of time before I won so winning Milwaukee in 1979 wasn't a surprise," says Peete of his maiden victory.

Despite his many weeks on the

visited a dealership," says the gregarious 37-year-old. "Dad was teaching me how to drive standard and instead of getting all impatient like most people would as I struggled with the gears, he just calmly explained it to me and never raised his voice. At that moment I found it hard to imagine my dad hustling product on the road."

Although he wouldn't win again for three years, Peete continued his

tured the Vardon Trophy in 1984 for low scoring average. The only knock against him was his failure to win a major, yet he collected a handful of top-five finishes. "I was at the top of my game at The Players and I consider it my major," explained Peete of those golden years. "I always felt comfortable with my fellow pros and winning brings you the respect of others. When I first came out I developed a good rapport with Lee

Elder, Charley Sifford and Jack Nicklaus. Tom Kite, Lanny Wadkins and I became good friends. We all got along but let's face it, we wanted win."

Inexplicably, some golf instructors have credited Peete's legendary accuracy off the tee to his bent arm while at the same time ignoring golf's cardinal rule: keep your left arm straight. "Dad was one of the best ball strikers that ever lived and certainly the most accurate, yet some people refuse to give him the credit he deserves," chimes in Calvin's son Rick, an IT consultant and actor. "I think dad was very underrated as a player and I wonder if some of the reason is that he's African American. I don't think people were ready for him when he started winning tournaments." His father agrees. "It was different when Tiger Woods came along because everyone was waiting for him. They had been hearing about him since he was a child. The press wasn't ready for a black man to dominate the PGA Tour and some of them expected me to self-destruct."

Even with his success, dark clouds were looming on the horizon. "Even though I continued to play well and win after 1982, I started finding it tougher to focus," explains Peete of what would years later be diagnosed as Tourette Syndrome. "I was constantly changing my grip and what was left became right on the golf course. I literally had to think in reverse when hitting a shot. He picked up a pair of victories in 1983 but wouldn't win again until the tail end of 1984. "I think I tried too hard for a while there and the

Tourette's made it worse although I didn't know what was happening at the time. Naturally since I hadn't won in a while I was accused of taking drugs. You know, every time a black athlete has a slump it's always drugs," stated Peete sarcastically. "Those comments really hurt."

He won twice in 1985 and 1986 - his last victory at what is now the Zurich Classic of New Orleans - before it all started to unravel in 1987. His marriage to Christine collapsed, sending him into a depression. Feeling as if he failed, his game plummeted - exacerbating his neurological disorder.

After a brief stint in Phoenix, Calvin Peete remarried and moved back to Florida, playing the Champions Tour for eight years with moderate success while fighting the disease that eventually forced him to retire. "I thank God for Pepper and my family," says Peete. "She's been a real blessing as have my kids." He stays in constant touch with his grown children and is supportive of their varied careers.

"Dad and I are very close. I always remember sitting on the couch with him and watching cartoons. He used to take me for ice cream and we would just talk about things. He tried to teach me golf but all I ever wanted to do was drive the golf cart," reminisced daughter Calvinetta, a Washington D.C. law school graduate. "I remember at school once I turned in a paper and the law professor saw my name and asked if I was related to Calvin Peete. When I told him who I

was he wanted to know everything about dad rather than me."

Over the years Calvin Peete emphasized the importance of a good education and the kids have taken dad's advice. "I grew up in a church and consider myself a spiritual man," says Dad. "My wife and kids attend church every Sunday. I know about love and have passed that on to my children. I have seven children from my two marriages and I have always wanted what's best for them. When I was playing I used to think that with each dollar I earned I could send my kids to college."

"What's interesting about dad is that although he never got the type of education we did, he has a life education," explains son Calvin. "What he has accomplished and learned and passed on to us is ten times greater than anything that can be written about him. He was on medication for a while with Tourette's but he came off it and is doing great. His mind is extraordinary and his advice to us is always right on. He once said to me 'Just remember, you are your wife and children.' It really made me realize the importance of marriage and family."

Nicole Peete concurs with her siblings. "I talk with dad every week. He's a very smart man and I'm extremely proud of him. Dad grew up poor and how he has risen above all the obstacles in his life is amazing. It shows what you can achieve despite what life throws at you. Not only is he a wonderful father, he is the greatest and wisest man I have ever known. I love him so much." **MG**

Greg Davies Wins 95th Michigan Amateur



Photo by Kevin Frisch, Resort & Golf Marketing

The 95th Michigan Amateur Championship was played on the Heather at Boyne Highlands.

By Jack Berry

Five-foot-seven Greg Davies was the giant-killer of the 95th Michigan Amateur Championship, knocking

medalist and 2002 champion Corey Mahoney in the quarterfinals, then Michigan State golf team member Brandon Cigna, 5-4, in the semifi-

nal and dusting Spartan All-Big Ten 6-foot-5 Ryan Brehm by the same stunning 5-4 margin to earn the Staghorn Trophy.

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“This is the Granddaddy tournament, the one every amateur wants to win,” said Davies who has been playing the Amateur for nearly 20 years.

Davies was outdriven by nearly every rival but he won with nearly flawless fairways and greens play. Davies, a 38-year-old financial advisor from West Bloomfield, is the oldest champion in the usually collegian-dominated Amateur since Randy Lewis won in 1999 at the age of 42.

Davies played college golf, too — he graduated from Oklahoma in 1990 and was on the golf team with Todd Hamilton, winner of the 2004 British Open and Craig Perks, winner of the 2002 Players Championship.

“I knew my game didn’t match those guys so I figured I’d better get a job,” Davies said, laughing.

He’s compiled a good amateur record including the 2005 Golf Association of Michigan Mid-Amateur title which he also won at Boyne Highlands, two Syron Memorials, two Michigan Publinx Match Plays, and a Michigan Medal Play championship. It was at the Horton Smith/Michigan Medal Play earlier this year that a case of the yips led him to switch to a long putter. He tucks the end of the grip

into his left armpit and he’s been making nearly everything since.

Davies was 1-under-par in defeating Brehm who rarely used his balky driver in favor of a 2-iron. Consequently, Brehm’s tee shots landed in the same area as Davies’ driver. But Davies’ iron shots invariably finished below the hole and Brehm had scary downhill putts. With the Heather course’s greens firm and sun-baked, anything above the hole was fatal.

“I dug myself into a hole,” said Brehm, 20, who will be a junior at MSU in the fall. “The greens were faster than they were in the morning (semifinal when he defeated John Barry, 3-2) and they were in tough spots but they were fair. “I dug myself a hole early when Greg birdied the third hole and I was 5 down at the turn. I tried to make things happen, I scratched and clawed and it was pretty much that way all week.”

But Brehm said he felt good about going into the Michigan Open at the Bear and Davies will be there too. So will Mahoney, who finished his college career at Eastern Michigan and is turning pro at the Open on the Bear at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa.

This was the second time the Amateur’s been played at the Heather and the jewel of northern

Michigan golf, designed by Robert Trent Jones and celebrating its 40th anniversary, never looked better as it proved once again it is a championship course with its 10 doglegs, 60 deep bunkers with sparkling new PGA Tour sand. With no rain since Monday, the greens were lightning-quick for putts from above the hole. Davies’ putt on the par 3 sixth slid down off the green and nearly went into the bog. He had to chip back and bogied the hole as did Brehm who three-putted it.

There was another slippery slope for slow players during the championship. The GAM adopted the Pace of Play policy that’s been in effect in a number of other states. The pace is 15 minutes per hole and if the whole group is behind that time at the turn, each one is penalized a stroke. If the group finishes the 18th hole after the expected time there is a two stroke penalty if it is the second breach, a one stroke if the first.

“It takes away officials holding stop watches,” Director of Rules and Competition Ken Hartmann said. “There are atomic clocks at the fifth, ninth, 14th and 18th greens so players can see their time.”

Six players were penalized over the first two days of qualifying stroke play and the word spread fast to keep pace. *MG*

95th Michigan Amateur on the Web:

<http://michigangolfer.com/2006shows/boynegolf/>

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Photo courtesy of Circling Raven

Circling Raven

Jud Heathcote and Idaho Golf

by Jason Deegan

Jud Heathcote sits in the clubhouse of Circling Raven Golf Club in Worley, Idaho.

He's got a wad of money on one side of the table and a load of scorecards on the other. He's

laughing and joking with a handful of guys after a day on the links, miles away from where he came into fame.

Heathcote looks nothing like the maniac who roamed the sideline

for decades at Michigan State University, winning a national championship with Magic Johnson in 1979.

As the Spartans coach, Heathcote would rant and rave and



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with his signature move, bang his head with the fist repeatedly after a boneheaded play. But in this setting at Circling Raven, roughly 30 miles away from his retirement home in Spokane, Wash., Heathcote is enjoying a moment of serenity now.

“It’s a beautiful course, one of the best I’ve played,” Heathcote says.

Circling Raven seems to have that soothing affect on just about everybody. He is among the lengthy list of stars who has visited this unlikely golf outpost in the northern panhandle of Idaho and come away raving. Movie stars like Samuel L. Jackson and Dennis Franz (former NYPD Blue star) and Hall of Famers, such as point guard John Stockton and baseball’s Joe Morgan, and even pro golfers have gone out of their way to play Circling Raven, an 7,189-yard amenity of the Coeur d’Alene Casino Resort & Hotel.

PGA Tour star Rich Beem holds the record on the three-year-old course with a 65. The most recent celebrity sighting was the LPGA’s Wendy Ward.

“Circling Raven is a lush, beautiful golf course that challenges you from start to finish,” says Ward, a 3-time member of the U.S. Solheim Cup Team. “The greens are similar to U.S. Open setups in that it is helpful to position your ball in the correct quadrant of the green. And the setting of Circling Raven, out in the grassy, rolling hills, is so relaxing and beautiful.”

Circling Raven teams with the Coeur d’Alene resort course, and its famous floating island green, in nearby Coeur d’Alene to provide one of the nation’s most unique golf destinations. The two are part of the northern loop of the nine-course Idaho Golf Trail, the state’s version of Alabama’s successful RTJ Golf Trail.

Idaho’s panhandle offers up wonderful rolling terrain for golf and scenic lake-front settings, much like northern Michigan. Don’t confuse the Coeur d’Alene Resort and the Coeur d’Alene Casino Resort & Hotel despite their similar names.

The Coeur d’Alene Casino Resort & Hotel (www.cdacasino.com or 800-523-2464) and Circling Raven in Worley are owned and operated by the Coeur d’Alene Indian Tribe on a reservation covering 345,000 acres, spanning the western edge of the northern Rocky Mountains.

The casino, once just a tiny bingo operation, has brought life back to the tribe that just 15 years ago suffered from 80 percent poverty, according to Bob Bostwick, director of public relations for the resort.

“There were 75 jobs in 1991 (within the tribe),” he says. “There are now 1,300, including 800 at the resort. Within (the near future), we’ll have an RV park, 225 hotel rooms and another course. If you’d seen the area 12 years ago, the changes have been immense.”

While the 202-room hotel and casino are nice, the course is a

blockbuster. It offers up almost as much risk-and-reward as the casino.

Florida-based architect Gene Bates, who once teamed with Fred Couples, let the open, sweeping prairie land dictate his routing. Of the 620 acres available, only 100 are maintained, giving the layout a natural feel.

Wetlands play into 13 holes. There’s no sense in listing the signature holes. At least 10 of them are worthy of such praise, but the par-5 12th and the downhill par-4 15th, carved from the pines, are memorable. The course is named after Circling Raven, a spiritually powerful leader from the tribe who used the raven to guide him on journeys, warn of danger and show the way to fish and game.

Your round might turn into a spiritual, soul-stirring journey as well. Golf Magazine, in its Sept. 2006 issue, wrote the course “would have a significant impact on our 2008 Top 100 Courses You Can Play rankings.”

The 25-acre practice facility and the clubhouse grub live up to Circling Raven’s high standards.

About 25 minutes away, the lone course at the Coeur d’Alene Resort (www.cdaresort.com) has been nationally renown since opening in 1991.

The Scott Miller creation provides one of the greatest experiences, or gimmick some might say, in golf. The tee shot and ensuing boat ride to the floating island green on the par 3 14th hole should be on every golfer’s to-do list, much like playing

Pebble Beach Golf Links and visiting Ireland and Scotland.

The 15,000-square-foot green complex, decorated with three pines, splashes of red flowers and two bunkers, is made of 105 foam-filled concrete blocks. Acting as a pontoon attached to computer-operated cables, the whole thing can be moved on a daily basis, ranging from 100 yards to 175.

But the island green isn't the only attraction. The course is meticulously conditioned with more than 59,000 flowers planted throughout. The carts are custom-built with heated seats. The rakes

for the bunkers are hidden in the ground next to each hazard, intelligently out of play.

A recent redesign, completed in 2005, stretched the layout from a sporty 6,300 yards to a manly 6,735 yards. Besides being a beauty, it's now a beast, too.

While it doesn't have a casino, the Coeur d'Alene Resort, one of just 12 to receive a Gold Medal rating from Golf Magazine in its latest rankings of the country's top resorts, does have an award-winning spa and five restaurants on-site. Two hand-crafted Honduran Mahogany water taxis, another

luxurious amenity, shuffle players on the lake to and from the course.

Are you sold on a visit yet? Contrary to what you might believe, there is world-class golf, and more, in Idaho. As Heathcote might say, Circling Raven and the Coeur d'Alene resort course are a slam dunk. They're as good a 1-2 punch for golfers as Johnson and Greg Kelsner were for Spartan fans back in that magical season of '79.

For more information on these two and other courses of the Idaho Golf Trail, visit www.inidaho.com/idahogolftrail or call 800-844-3246. MG



Floating Green

Scott Hebert Wins His 6th Michigan Open

by Jack Berry

If the Michigan Open remains at Grand Traverse Resort, Scott Hebert may double Al Watrous's record of six Open victories.

Hebert, recently named head professional of Grand Traverse, tied the late Oakland Hills Country Club professional's record Thursday and did it in high style on a Chamber of Commerce and Tourism blue sky, total sun day.

With the Navy's Blue Angels roaring overhead, practicing for their weekend National Cherry Festival show, Hebert thundered around the Jack Nicklaus-designed Bear in 68-70-67-70—275, 12 under par, and won the \$92,000 championship by four shots over Brian Stuard of Jackson, a 2005 graduate of Oakland University who turned professional last fall and currently is playing on the Hooters Tour.

Randy Hutchison, 19, a sophomore at Michigan State and Traverse City resident who is a bag boy at the resort, bogied the 17th hole and fell into a third place tie with first round leader Scott Hayes of Ypsilanti's Miles of Golf.

Watrous, long known as "Michigan's Most Titled Golfer," won his six Opens on five different courses over a spread of 23 years, from 1926 to 1949. All six of Hebert's have come at Grand Traverse and they've come in a span of 10 years.

Hebert, a native of Escanaba, likes the north country. Formerly an assistant professional at Grand



Photo by Art McCafferty

Scott Hebert

Traverse, he first played the Bear in 1995 and finished 11th, his poorest finish. Since then he's been second twice, losing a playoff to Jeff Roth in 1998, third once and fourth the last two years while he was working at Sunnybrook Golf Club in Grand Rapids.

Hebert also has played various professional tours but now is settled Up North.

"My last day at Sunnybrook was one week ago so I've been on the job here one week," Hebert said, smiling. "It's sweet coming back. It hasn't sunk in yet (six titles) but that's a pretty major feat and I'm proud of it. I guess I'm still young enough that I may win another one – if it stays here it'd be pretty good for me."

The 5-foot, 9-1/2-inch, 170-pound Hebert isn't a particularly long hitter, unlike the many colleagues who play in the Open, but he's an accurate driver and a strong iron player, admirable qualities on any course but particularly on the Bear, once the most-feared course in Michigan golf and, back when the Open was first played on it 25 years ago, it was a nightmare for most. The "worst ball," the highest score on each hole, had nines of 81 and 80 in that first year when Randy Erskine won.

Hebert was tied with Erskine for most Open victories until this one and Erskine, 55, professional at Great Oaks Country Club in Rochester, said "I wouldn't be at all surprised to see him run past Watrous without any problem.

"I was trying to get six and got close at one point but I wouldn't say I let any get away. The best news for Scott is, he's a head pro now. I don't see any stopping him. He may win double figures," Erskine said.

While being head pro usually is a restriction on the pro's playing time, Grand Traverse wants Hebert to play and fly the resort flag. He still has a long way to match the Watrous overall record, though. Watrous won the Michigan PGA title nine times, first when he was 23 and last when he was 55. Hebert hasn't won one. But then, it hasn't been played on the Bear. **MG**

Michigan Open on the Web:

<http://michigangolfer.com/2006shows/michiganopen/>



Photo courtesy of Chateau Chantal

Wine and Golf - Sip and Chip

by Art McCafferty

A loaf of bread a bottle of wine and golf? Okay, thou is pretty hard to replace, but there is a movement to couple the wonderful pursuits of golf and wine in Sip and Chip events throughout the U.S.

and Canada. In fact, at John Daly's new course in Niagara, you might see him grip it, rip it, chip it and then sip it. Thundering Waters is near Rockway Glen Golf Course & Estate Winery, one of the few wineries that have a golf course attached

There have been some attempts at a Sip it and Chip it program in Traverse City. When John Jessup was at High Pointe, he tried to start such a program with some of the local wineries on the Leelanau and Old Mission Peninsulas and at the time, the Park Place Hotel.

There was a time, when Paul Nine of Grand Traverse Resort fame, was trying to buy some land on Old Mission Peninsula to create a new golf



Photo: courtesy of Chateau Chantal



Photo: courtesy of Chateau Chantal

Bob Begin, President and CEO, Chateau Chantal

course there, but was thwarted in his plans. A golf course there could have blended in nicely with the Bowers Harbor Vineyards, Brys Estate Vineyard & Winery, Chateau Chantal, Chateau Grand Traverse and Peninsula Cellars.

The Leelanau Peninsula, however, is a different matter. They have the fine Mistwood, Kings Challenge and The Leelanau Club at Bahle Farms.

The wineries are plentiful on that side of Grand Traverse Bay. The Leelanau Peninsula wineries include Bel Lago

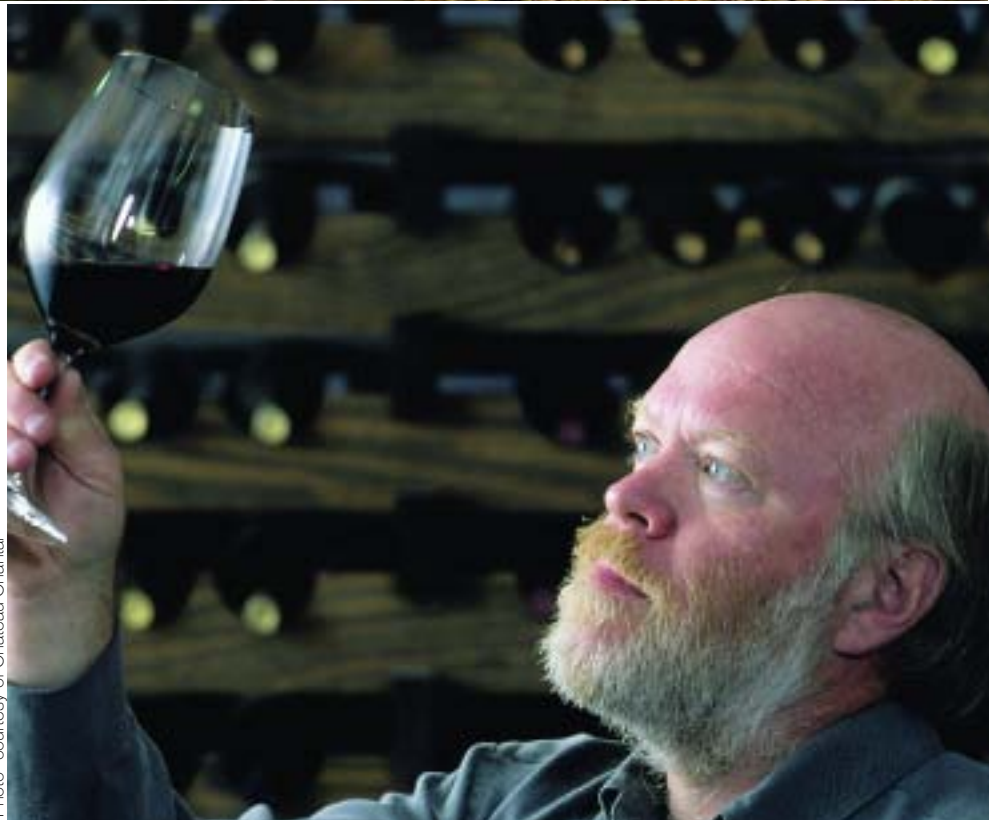
Photo courtesy of Chateau Chantal



Vineyard and Winery, Black Star Farms, Chateau Fontaine, Chateau de Leelanau Vineyard and Winery, Cherry Republic Winery, Ciccone Vineyard and Winery, Gill's Pier Vineyard & Winery, Good Harbor Vineyards, L. Mawby, Leelanau Wine Cellars, Longview Vineyard & Winery, Shady Lane Cellars and Willow Vineyard.

The opportunity seems to be there thinks Bob Begin, CEO of Chateau Chantal. With a smattering of Bed and Breakfasts in the wineries themselves it seems like a natural tie in. I'll certainly drink to that. **MG**

Photo courtesy of Chateau Chantal



Mark Johnson, Vice President and Winemaker, Chateau Chantal

Michael Harris Wins His 4th Tournament of Champions



Photo by Andy Sneedon / Petoskey News Review

Mike Harris Wins Tournament of Champions on the Monument Course, Boyne Mountain Resort, July 26

Courtesy of Michigan PGA

BOYNE FALLS, MI (7/26/06) – Michael Harris, a 28-year-old touring professional from Troy, shot 67 on the Monument Course in the Goyne Tournament of Champions final round to successfully defend the crown he’s now won four times. Harris commanded the \$12,000 first-place check, but his other T of C titles had already yielded the traditional green blazer and Country Club of Boyne membership.

“Maybe they should just donate Bay Harbor to me,” Harris joked. “Seriously, I enjoy coming back and my goal is to put my name on the trophy as many times as I can. I love the competition.”

Harris wrote his name in the record books by shooting an Alpine course record 62 in the second round. He began the final round a stroke behind fellow mini-

tour player Eric Jorgensen. His three-round total of 15-under-par was enough to overcome and then best runner-up Jorgensen by four strokes. “I was happy I maintained poise and didn’t try to force anything. I just tried to stay steady and I knew that if I just kept going forward I’d be alright. It was kind of a plodding round,” said Harris, “but it’s my first win this year, and it’s always good to get back into

Final:

Overall leaders:	Mike Harris	72-62-67 - 201	-15
Low amateur:	Ian Harris	72-69-72 - 213	-3
Low Female:	Stacy Slobodnik-Stoll	72-70-73 - 215	-2
Low Senior:	Ian Harris	72-69-72 - 213	-3

the winner's circle. Hopefully it's a sign of good things to come."

Harris previously won the Tournament of Champions in 2000, '03, and '05.

The University of Michigan alum and Troy native who now lives in Shorewood, WI also won last year's Michigan Open and the Canadian Tour's Players Championship at Bay Mills Resort in Brimley.

round 72 on Boyne Mountain's 6,785-yard Monument Course.

"It's tough. I haven't been in contention for a long time and I knew I'd be nervous. Why wouldn't I be nervous?" Jorgensen asked. "Once I lost confidence in my tee shots I couldn't recover. I was keeping myself calm and making pars to keep myself in the game, but I was making mistakes, and I knew it."

Jorgensen, a Michigan State

likely not looking forward to Boyne's Monument course. After the opening two rounds were contested on Boyne's Alpine course, the final round of the Tournament of Champions was held on The Monument.

"I'm comfortable on the Alpine but there are some shots on Monument that I just don't feel comfortable playing," Jorgensen admitted, even sighting that he was afraid of heights, so elevated tee shots, like

"I enjoy coming back and my goal is to put my name on the trophy as many times as I can."

Harris is currently 26th on the Canadian Tour's Order of Merit and 138th on the Nationwide Tour money list. He is hoping to receive a sponsor's exemption to next week's PGA Tour event, the Buick Open at Warwick Hills Country Club in Grand Blanc. If not, he'll play the same Canadian Tour event in Montreal to which Jorgensen is headed.

Jorgensen, who won the Tournament of Champions in 2004, lost the lead by shooting a final

University graduate now living in Oconee, FL, has been playing on the Canadian Tour, this year, where he ranks 71st, and has won only \$4,225 over seven events. The 26-year-old collected \$5,300 as TofC runner-up.

"This tournament usually gives me a boost, but being runner-up is not as good as being the winner," said Jorgensen. I thought about this tournament three months ago and knew I wanted to come here and get my confidence up." He was

the 565-yard first hole and the 517-yard fifth, made him nervous.

Reigning Michigan Open champion Scott Hebert, at 5-under-par, finished in third place, his seventh top-five finish in the Tournament of Champions. Michigan State University golf coach Stacy Slobodnik-Stoll was the lowest female competitor finishing at 1-under-par. Ian Harris, of Walled Lake, was both low-amateur and low-senior, with a three-round total of 3-under-par.

119 champions of all varieties began the Tournament of Champions competing against each other for a purse of \$65,000 from staggered tees. The two-

round cut came at 153, and Harris emerged the winner from a remaining field of 71 professionals, amateurs, women, men, juniors and seniors. While the field

is diverse, the entrants had one thing in common: they'd all captured an important, sanctioned state title at some stage in their playing career. **MG**

Final Scores

1st	Michael Harris	Shorewood	72	62	67	201	-15	\$12,000
2nd	Eric Jorgensen	Grandville	68	65	72	205	-11	\$5,300
3rd	Scott Hebert	Grand Traverse Resort	71	71	69	211	-5	\$4,000
4th	George Bowman	Oakhurst Golf Country	73	69	70	212	-4	\$1,975
	Brian Cairns	Highland Golf Center	72	71	69	212	-4	\$1,975
6th	Ian Harris-A	Walled Lake	72	69	72	213	-3	\$750
	Gary Smithson	Thousand Oaks Golf Club	71	73	69	213	-3	\$1,400
8th	Randy Erskine	Great Oaks Country Club	70	72	72	214	-2	\$1,175
	Charles Pasco	Grosse Ile Golf CC	71	70	73	214	-2	\$1,175
10th	John DalCorobbo	Forest Akers GCMSU	71	68	76	215	-1	\$1,025
	Dave Kendall	Kendall Academy of Golf	68	72	75	215	-1	\$1,025
	Stacy Slobodnik-A	Haslett	72	70	73	215	-1	\$500
13th	Lee Houtteman	Bay Meadows Golf Cou	71	70	75	216	Even	\$893.75
	Lynn Janson	Egypt Valley Country C	71	75	70	216	Even	\$893.75
	Thom Piscopink	Wayne	70	70	76	216	Even	\$893.75
	Adam Walicki	Jackson	71	71	74	216	Even	\$893.75
17th	Bob Ackerman	Bob Ackerman Golf	75	69	73	217	+1	\$740
	Kenneth Allard	Detroit Golf Club	73	75	69	217	+1	\$740
	Ron Beurmann	Country Club of Jackson	74	71	72	217	+1	\$740
	Ryan Brehm-A	Mt. Pleasant	70	75	72	217	+1	\$490
	Robert Makoski	Van Dyke Sports Center	73	74	70	217	+1	\$740
	Andy Matthews	Ada	73	70	74	217	+1	\$740
	Kevin Muir	The Wyndgate	76	74	67	217	+1	740
	Barry Redmond	Lenawee Country Club	73	72	72	217	+1	\$740
	John Traub	TNT Enterprises	75	72	70	217	+1	\$740
26th	Mark Black	Fortress	75	71	72	218	+2	\$670
	Elaine Crosby	Jackson	69	72	77	218	+2	\$670
	Peter Green-A	Franklin	72	73	73	218	+2	\$480
	Tom Harding	Kendall Academy of Golf	73	75	70	218	+2	\$670
30th	Ron English	Charlotte Country Club	69	75	75	219	+3	\$650
	Jerry Gunthorpe-A	Ovid	72	75	72	219	+3	\$465
	Bill McDonald-A	Troy	72	74	73	219	+3	\$465

33rd	Steven Cuzzort-A	Grosse Ile	70	78	72	220	+4	\$445
	Bill Zylstra-A	Westland	71	72	77	220	+4	\$445
35th	Shawn Koch	Lawrenceville	74	72	75	221	+5	\$635
	Timothy Matthews	Scotts	74	72	75	221	+5	\$635
	Mike Ray-A	Dearborn	70	80	71	221	+5	\$430
38th	Steven Brady	Oakland Hills Country	74	75	73	222	+6	\$610
	Larry Mancour	Life Member	71	75	76	222	+6	\$610
	Jamie Wiest	DeWitt Golf Center	72	77	73	222	+6	\$610
41st	Agim Bardha	Red Run Country Club	72	76	75	223	+7	\$575
	Jeff Champine-A	Rochester Hills	77	71	75	223	+7	\$420
	David VanLoozen	Edgewood Country Club	73	74	76	223	+7	\$575
	Mark Zelazny	Dearborn Country Club	70	77	76	223	+7	\$575
45th	Andrew Bethune	The Sawmill GC	74	76	74	224	+8	\$557.50
	Korey Mahoney	East Lansing	73	77	74	224	+8	\$557.50
	Kirk Scheerhorn	Wuskowhan Players Club	78	74	72	224	+8	\$557.50
	Christian Vozza	Grand Traverse Resort	71	78	75	224	+8	\$557.50
49th	Bill Baldwin	King Par Golf Corporat	74	69	82	225	+9	\$540
	Jeffrey Cuzzort	Grosse Ile	76	74	75	225	+9	\$540
	John Seltzer	The Polo Fields Golf Club	75	72	78	225	+9	\$540
52nd	Tom Fortuna	Shenandoah Golf Count	80	71	75	226	+10	\$517.50
	Jeff Gniewek	Prestwick Village Golf	75	75	76	226	+10	\$517.50
	Joe Hill-A	Shelby Township	75	75	76	226	+10	\$410
	John Nolan	Van Dyke Sports Center	74	76	76	226	+10	\$517.50
	Michael Pearson	Crystal Mountain Resort	75	75	76	226	+10	\$517.50
	Robert Pillard	Duck Lake Country Clu	73	76	77	226	+10	\$517.50
	David Zielinski	DeWitt Golf Center	75	76	75	226	+10	\$517.50
59th	Paul Haase	Kendall Academy of Go	77	70	80	227	+11	\$495
	Theodore Kondratko	Life Member	78	75	74	227	+11	\$495
	Fred Muller	Crystal Downs Country	74	78	75	227	+11	\$495
62nd	Brian O'Neill	Boyne Mountain Resort	77	75	76	228	+12	\$485
63rd	Aaron Bush	Flushing Valley GCC	78	73	78	229	+13	\$462.50
	Josh Fryer	Franklin Hills Country	77	76	76	229	+13	\$462.50
65th	Mike Raymond-A	Jackson	75	75	80	230	+14	\$395
	Jack VanEss-A	Gand Rapids	80	72	78	230	+14	\$395
67th	John Gregus	Copper Ridge Golf Club	77	74	80	231	+15	\$415
	Gary Robinson	Foundation Learning Ce	74	76	81	231	+15	\$415
69th	Claud Johnston-A	Westland	75	77	80	232	+16	\$370
	Luigi Spadafora-A	Milford	75	75	82	232	+16	\$370
	Tommy Valentine	Lochmoor Club	82	71	N			

The Final Ford Senior Players Championship

By John Wukovits

This year's edition of the Ford Senior Players Championship—the final in a Michigan run that started in 1990—opened on Thursday, July 13, 2006 with a burst of birdies and low scores before limping to the bogey-marked finale on Sunday, July 16. It may not have been the most memorable tournament in the long stretch in Dearborn, Michigan, but it offered glimpses why the Champions Tour provides galleries with amazing artistry from veteran players.

Tournament play started on Thursday with a popular veteran and an unheralded performer tied for the lead. Fuzzy Zoeller, always a fan favorite with his quick banter and stellar play, registered a seven-under par 65 behind eight birdies over the demanding TPC of Michigan course, a Jack Nicklaus designed layout in Dearborn.

“One thing you want to do on the Champions Tour is get out of the box,” explained Zoeller after completing his first round. “That’s one thing this year I haven’t been doing. I’ve always put myself kind of in a hole the first round. These guys out here like to shoot and shoot fast. Everybody has got a six-shooter and they’re all very quick on the trigger. It’s kind of nice to get out of the box and play under par.”

Journeyman Ron Streck, who warmed up for the tournament by putting siding on his garage the previous weekend after missing the cut at the Senior Open, matched Zoeller with his best golf of the year, a round that saw him record five straight birdies on the back nine.

“I like the golf course,” Streck said following his round. “I’m sorry we’re not going to play here anymore. This is only my second year to play here, but I like the golf course. I think there are just enough difficult shots to make the golf course go one way or the other as far as the scores.”

A stable of twenty-three talented golfers lurked within four shots of the lead, including Bruce Lietzke at 67, Jay Haas and Tom Kite at 68, and Dana Quigley, Tom Watson, and tour newcomer Fred Funk at 69.

Sweltering conditions that saw temperatures soar into the 90s took its toll on the field during the second round. Twenty-nine players stood within four shots of the lead, which moved only to eight-under par, one stroke better than posted on Thursday. Eight players ended the day tied for the lead, including Tom Watson and Gil Morgan.

“It’s like that every year here,”

said Tom Watson. “It just seems everyone’s between five and eight-under par after two rounds.” He added that he felt excited with the condition of his game. “That’s the best I’ve struck the ball since earlier in the year,” stated Watson, “so that’s a good sign. I just can’t wait to get out there again tomorrow to play.”

Joe Ozaki notched the most spectacular round of the tournament. After paring the first hole, he ran off a string of eight straight birdies—tying a tour record—to post an incredible eight-under 28 on the front nine. After paring the tenth hole, Ozaki birdied the eleventh, then stumbled a bit on the way in with a one-over 37. His 65, however, vaulted him into a tie for first place.

They were followed one shot back by Fuzzy Zoeller, who came in with an even-par round, two shots back by Loren Roberts, Jay Haas, and Tom Kite, and three shots by Fred Funk. Rain forced the suspension of round two with twenty players, including Ozaki, still on the course. Those twenty finished their rounds Saturday morning, before play commenced on the third round.

Spectators hoping for someone to break out of the pack during the third round were not disappointed.

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Loren Roberts needed only twenty-five putts in his eight-under par, bogey-free round of 64 to grab a two-shot lead over Lonnie Nielsen and a three-shot lead over Brad Bryant and tour workhorse Dana Quigley.

Loren Roberts attributed the work he has recently put in on his game for his great results. "I've been working at my game pretty hard for the last four months. I made a couple of adjustments, one in the golf swing and one in the putting stroke. Yesterday, about the last three or four holes, I hit some better shots and made some better putts."

venous fluids, but they could do little for the other golfers who watched their rounds crumble in a flurry of second-nine bogeys.

Third-round leader Loren Roberts increased his lead to five shots before losing an errant drive on the hazard at 11, which cost him a double bogey. A bogey at the 12th hole and a second double bogey, this time at the treacherous 14th hole, dropped him from the lead.

Jim Thorpe, who had lurked within a few shots of the lead all week, now saw a win within his grasp, but a bogey on 18 put him three shots behind Bobby Wadkins, a longtime player who had never

13-foot putt to avoid falling into a tie with Jim Thorpe. He made the clutch putt to complete a four-under 68 and take the tournament. "All I was thinking was what Lanny was saying out there," said Wadkins of his older brother, Lanny, busy in the CBS television booth.

Wadkins earned \$375,000 for his victory, plus a spot in next May's PGA Tour Players Championship.

Some fan favorites attended the final Michigan version of the Senior Players Championship. Three legends—Gary Player, Chi Chi Rodriguez, and Lee Trevino—

"I'm sad to see golf leave the Detroit area. It's a great sports city."

Gil Morgan remained in the hunt with a one-under 71, placing him five shots off the pace, but Tom Watson all but shot himself out of the tournament with a 78. However, as play headed into Sunday's final round, 14 golfers were within six shots of the lead. A shootout in the grand tradition of tournaments past loomed.

The epic duel failed to materialize as one after another, leaders stumbled in the blistering heat that saw Gil Morgan walk the fairways with a wet towel draped around his head and Jim Colbert leave the course on the 13th hole.

Paramedics stabilized the 65-year-old by administering intra-

won on the regular PGA Tour. Consecutive birdies from the 11th to the 15th holes vaulted Wadkins over his struggling competitors and placed him in a comfortable spot to win for the first time.

Despite the three-stroke margin with one hole remaining, Wadkins almost squandered his good fortune. He hooked his drive into the hazard skirting the fairway's left side, then plunked his third short into a bunker guarding the green. A poor blast out of the bunker left him in heavy rough over the green, and had not a mediocre chip hit the pin at full speed, Wadkins might have landed back in the original sand bunker. With his lead evaporating, Wadkins had to drain the

flew in as a way of saying thanks to the southeastern Michigan golf fans who long made the tournament a special one.

The final edition produced mixed reaction from the players. Most hated to leave such an appealing locale, but understood that economics propels every industry, including their own.

"I'm sad to see golf leave the Detroit area," said defending champion Peter Jacobsen to the Heritage Newspaper Press & Guide. "It's a great sports city." On the other hand, Lee Trevino laid the reasons to money. "Once you start losing the gallery, it's time to go someplace else." **MG**

Kris Tamulis Wins Michigan Women's Open



Photo courtesy of Crystal Mountain Resort

Kris Tamulis Wins Michian Women's Open

Courtesy of Crystal Mountain Resort

CRYSTAL MOUNTAIN RESORT, MI (7/20/06) — LPGA professional Kris Tamulis shot a final round 70 to win the \$40,000 Michigan Women's Open presented by Century 21 Wednesday. Tamulis, 25, who summers in Onekama, finished two strokes ahead of LeAnna Wicks, a 26-year-old professional from Brighton, MI, who closed

with a 71. Tamulus completed the tournament, staged on Crystal Mountain Resort's Mountain Ridge Course, with rounds of 72-75-70—217 (1-over-par). She began Wednesday's final round two strokes off of the lead.

"I wasn't ever out of it. As the day wore on, I think maybe it was

getting to some of the other girls. The pressure builds. I just kept doing what I do. I kept hitting the greens - letting other people make mistakes," said Tamulis. "Everyone else was starting to hit it in not so fantastic places. I was just going to keep going on because I cannot control what they're doing, but I had legitimate

birdie chances throughout most of the back nine.”

Tamulis, who collected \$5,500 for the victory, has won \$54,640 playing on the LPGA Tour this season. She arrived back in northern Michigan at 1 a.m. Sunday night after competing in the LPGA’s Jamie Farr Classic in Toledo over the weekend.

“I guess the pressure of people knowing I play on the LPGA means people expected me to play well here, so it’s nice to play here and win, said Tamulis, who made three birdies and two bogeys. “I’m proud of the way I kept going at the end and giving myself chances to increase my lead.”

The 25 year-old practices regularly at Crystal Mountain since she summers with her parents at Andy’s Point in Onekama.

“She was here for two weeks at the end of June and came out to play from time to time,” said Crystal Mountain’s director of golf Brad Dean.

“At LPGA tournaments they announce my name and where I am from and I’ve always said Michigan. My parents and sisters still live here and I am proud to be from Michigan,” said Tamulis, who attended Florida State University and maintains a residence in Naples. “I still say ‘pop’ instead of ‘soda.’”

Tamulis will compete next August 3 in the British Women’s Open at Royal Lytham and St. Anne’s in Lancashire, England.

“I’m going to cool it for the next couple of days and not worry about it too much. I hit good shots today which make me feel better. I have some things to work on before I go to England, but I’m not going to worry about it for the next couple of days,” she said.

Wicks, who collected \$4,000 as runner-up, finished T-6 in the Michigan Women’s Open in 2003 – her best previous finish. She withdrew from last year’s competition during the third round due to a pulled back muscle.

“This year is obviously much better. I did a lot of training to strengthen my back,” said Wicks, a University of Michigan graduate who has been competing on the LPGA’s developmental Futures Tour. She began the final round three shots off of the lead, made four birdie and three bogeys in the final round.

“I’ve been playing well. Everyone was going to do what they were going to do so I just focused on my own game.”

It was a bogey on the 172-yard, par-3 17th hole that sunk Wicks.

“I hit my tee shot pin-high left about 40-feet from the hole and three-putted it. My first putt rolled about 12 feet past the hole. The greens were faster than they have been. The wind dried them out. Putting was the key here this week.”

She then rebounded with a birdie on the 485-yard, par-5 home hole.

Wicks planned to take a few weeks off before heading east to compete in more Future’s Tour events. “The money I won here helps a lot. I’ll use it to pay most of the \$5,000 entry fee for LPGA qualifying school in September,” said Wicks, who has attempted to qualify in the past.

Wicks and Tamulis were the only players in the field to better par in the final round.

Carolyn Barnett-Howe, a 44 year-old head professional Appleton, Wisconsin, and that’s state’s reigning Women’s Open champion, finished the tournament at 7-over-par in third place. Australian Suzie Fisher, who attended Tulsa University, would have been tied for third place, but was disqualified for signing an incorrect scorecard.

Sara Brown, of Tucson, AZ, finished the event as low-amateur with a three-round total of 9-over-par. Brown, who was runner-up in 2005 as well, plays college golf at Michigan State University.

Aimee Neff, an amateur from Carmel, Indiana, aced the 146-yard, par-3 12th hole with a 5-iron shot. She finished the championship at 13-over-par.

Professional and amateur golfers from 11 different states are competed in the \$40,000 Michigan Women’s Open presented by Century 21 on Crystal Mountain Resort’s Mountain Ridge course. First prize was \$5,500. Play concluded Wednesday after three rounds. **MG**

Hebert Headlines Summer Schedule

By Kelly Hill
Managing Editor

Scott Hebert opened the summer by being named the head professional at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa. He ended the summer as co-owner of one of the state's greatest golf records and won the Michigan PGA Championship in his first try.

BUICK OPEN

History was made at Warwick Hills in Grand Blanc this summer when Tiger Woods became the youngest player ever to win 50 PGA Tour events. Woods won his 50th PGA Tour title at the Buick Open, shooting four straight 6-under 66s, Jim Furyk.

Woods reached a season-low 24 under and made a career-high 28 birdies in the tournament to hold off Furyk - who closed with a 64 - for his fourth win of the year and a check of \$864,000. Woods became the seventh member of the PGA Tour's 50-win club after improving to 21-for-21 when leading by more than one stroke after three rounds. The 30-year-old Woods beat Jack Nicklaus' record pace to the milestone, which Nicklaus reached in 1973 at the age of 33.

MICHIGAN OPEN

Scott Hebert had been the head pro at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa for less than a week when he won a historic sixth Michigan Open championship on The Bear. Hebert, 37, shot a 2-under 70 in the final round and finished the 72-hole event 12-under. He won by four strokes over Jackson pro Brian Stuard, who shot a 5-under 67 in the final round. Amateur Randy Hutchison, 19, a sophomore at MSU who works as a bag boy for Hebert, and Scott Hayes, 28, who teaches at Miles of Golf in Ypsilanti, finished tied for third, five strokes back.

Hebert is now tied with Al Watrous for the most Michigan Open wins. Watrous won six between 1926 and 1949.

MICHIGAN PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

Hebert won the Michigan PGA Championship with a 15-foot birdie putt on the third hole of a playoff with Oakhurst Golf & Country Club pro George Bowman.

Hebert, 36, who won his sixth Michigan Open earlier this summer, shot a 4-under 68 in the final

round at Eagle Eye Golf Club in East Lansing to finish the 54-hole event at 3-under. Bowman, 42, who did not record a birdie in the final round, drained a 45-foot par putt on the 54th hole to force the playoff.

Hebert was making his first appearance in the Michigan PGA Championship as he joined the section just eight months before the championship.

MICHIGAN WOMEN'S AMATEUR

Lindsay Davis, a Whitmore Lake resident and junior on the University of Michigan golf team, avenged a loss her younger sister, Katelin, suffered when she defeated Michigan State senior Mandi McConnell in the championship match of the Michigan Women's Amateur Championship at Barton Hills Country Club in Ann Arbor. While McConnell defeated Katelin Davis in the tournament's opening round of match play, Lindsay Davis, 20, defeated McConnell 4 and 2 in the championship match. "She beat my sister, so there was a chip on my shoulder," Davis said.

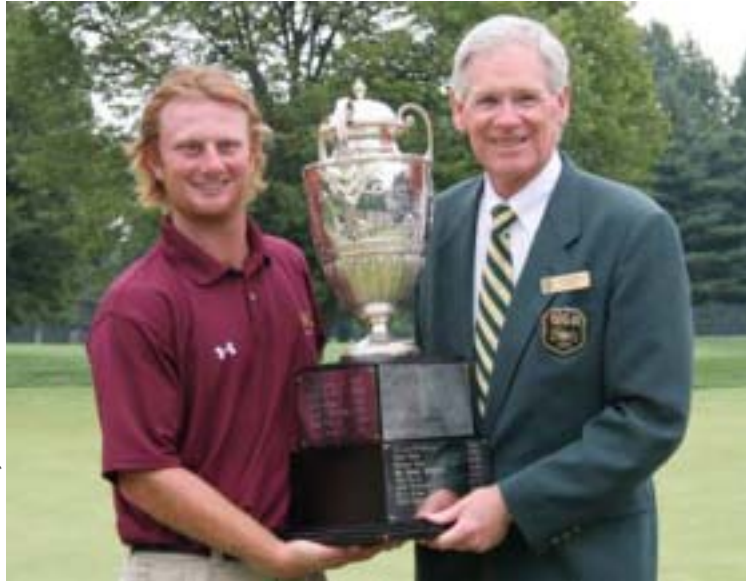
McConnell was the defending champion, while Davis was playing on her home course. MG

LaCassie Wins 2006 Western Amateur

Courtesy of Western Golf Association

BENTON HARBOR, MI (8/6/06) – Bronson LaCassie held on to defeat Spain's Pablo Martin on Sunday to claim the 2006 Western Amateur title and become the first Australian in the tournament's 104-year history to have his name engraved on the George R. Thorne Championship Trophy.

Photo courtesy of Western Golf Association



2006 Western Amateur champion Bronson LaCassie holds the George R. Thorne trophy with Western Golf Association President Rich Peterson after his 2 and 1 match play win over Pablo Martin Sunday, August 6.

LaCassie, 23, of Brisbane, Australia, joins a list of golf greats who have won the prestigious national title, including Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Jack Nicklaus. But the names of his fellow countrymen absent from the trophy give LaCassie confidence he can live his dream of success as a professional golfer.

Australians Geoff Ogilvy, Adam Scott, Aaron Baddeley and Mathew Goggin, who all have prospered as professionals, are among the Australians who reached the Sweet 16 at the Western Amateur at Point O'Woods G. & C.C. in Benton Harbor, yet were unable to claim the championship.

"It definitely makes you believe you can go on and do what they've

done. It is really special," said LaCassie, the Western Amateur's first international champion since Michael Kirk, of Johannesburg, South Africa, won in 2000, and only the third foreign champion in history. Jim Nelford, of Canada, won in 1977.

"Definitely winning a trophy Tiger's won feels special and is something I'll never forget. Individually, it's the biggest thing that's happened to me in my career."

LaCassie, 23, a junior at the University of Minnesota, took command of the match on the back nine after he and Martin, 20, of

Malaga, Spain, made the turn all-square. LaCassie won the par 4, 10th with a 12-foot birdie putt, then carded back-to-back birdies on the par 5, 13th and par 4, 14th to take a 3-up lead. Martin answered by winning the par 5, 15th, with a conceded eagle putt, and the par 4, 16th, also with a conceded birdie putt, after LaCassie missed the greens on both of his approaches.

Undaunted, LaCassie answered on the 208-yard, par 3, 17th, hitting a 5-iron to eight feet below the cup and curling the putt in for a birdie and the 2 and 1 victory.

"I felt on 15 I got a little unlucky with a flier over the green, and on the 16th I had an awkward yardage," said LaCassie.

Not much else went wrong for LaCassie. "I really felt confident out there," he said. "I never got nervous. I pretty much knew where all my shots were going to go."

LaCassie, who was beaten by Martin by four strokes when they were paired in the third round of this year's NCAA championship, knew he would have to play his

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Don VanDerveen

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best. "He's a great player. He's won a lot of college events and is very experienced," LaCassie said. "I knew he was going to be tough to beat."

Martin, a first-team All-American and a member of Oklahoma State's 2006 NCAA Championship team, credited LaCassie's clutch putting as the difference in the match. "I had my chances," Martin said. "You can always hit it closer and make more putts. I had birdie chances. He just played better than me."

Forced to withdraw from his first Western Amateur a year ago due to muscle soreness in his arms after being introduced to water-skiing a couple of days before the competition, Martin made the most of his second chance. "It was a great week, a fun week," he said. "It's awesome to be at a tournament like this. It's as good as it gets."

With three of the final four hailing from outside the United States, the internationals were heavy favorites to prevail. "Golf's getting more and more popular everywhere in the world," said LaCassie, who chose to attend college in the United States so he could compete in the summer amateur circuit. "The ones you see here (at the Western Amateur) are the best amateurs in the world. They want to come and play here."

Although LaCassie intends to

turn professional after he finishes school next year— he has just one year of eligibility remaining— he indicated the timing depends on what happens. "If I'm still an amateur, I'll definitely be back next year," he said.

Morning Semifinals

In the morning semifinals, Martin defeated the lone semifinalist from the United States, Scott Pieri, 38, of Fort Wayne, Ind., 5 and 3, and LaCassie edged Dawie Van Der Walt, 23, of Cape Town, South Africa, 3 and 1.

Martin moved in front of Pieri early with a birdie on the par 5, 525-yard second, then methodically built the lead to 5 up through 12

"I always felt that nothing would top my PGA TOUR events, but this was the best week I've ever had in golf."

en route to the win. Martin finally closed the door with an eagle on the par 5, 15th after hitting a 197-yard 6-iron eight feet from the hole and making the putt.

"It was a good match," Martin said. "He's a great guy."

"I felt great today," said Pieri, a former PGA professional who regained his amateur status in March. "I was just a little bit off. I didn't play my best, and I got beat."

Despite the loss, Pieri embraced the experience. This was the expe-

rience of a lifetime to me, said Pieri, who played as a professional in three PGA TOUR tournaments in 1997. "I always felt that nothing would top my PGA TOUR events, but this was the best week I've ever had in golf."

On Saturday, Pieri defeated two of Martin's teammates on the OSU Cowboys national title team, 2006 NCAA champion Jonathan Moore and Tyler Leon. On Sunday, Martin got revenge. "I certainly was the underdog, playing three college All-Americans at age 38," Pieri offered.

In the second semifinal, Van Der Walt took a 2-up lead after LaCassie bogeyed the short, par 4 eighth. But LaCassie won the par 3, 11th, then pulled all-square with an eagle on the 550-yard, par 5, 13th. He birdied the par 4, 14th to take his first lead in the match.

Van Der Walt, a senior at Lamar University, gave LaCassie a nod for playing the better round in their match. "Bronson was playing good," he said. "I knew it was going to be a tough match. He made a good putt on nine not to go 3 down, and made that eagle on 13."

Although he plans to turn pro in 2007, Van Der Walt left the door open for a return appearance at the Western Amateur. "I have one more year in school, then I'll turn pro next summer. Maybe I'll come back next year," he said. **MG**



Threetops Hole No. 7

The Gaylord Golf Mecca Struts Its Stuff

by Sam Fullerton

Blessed with four days of terrific late-summer weather, the Gaylord Golf Mecca put its best face forward for a recent gathering of the members of the golf media. Writers and videographers from several states were treated to the trials and tribulations that challenging golf courses can provide.

The Gaylord area has adopted a collaborative marketing effort rather than a having the array of courses engage in an expensive battle for market share. As a result, the Golf Mecca has witnessed a sustained growth in the number of rounds played. This growth has been achieved while the industry is flat at best and characterized by a number

of golf courses being closed or converted into residential complexes. The area surrounding Gaylord is home to some 21 courses, many of which were designed by top architects such as Smith, Jones, Fazio, Matthews, Robbins, and Koch. The media representatives witnessed first hand six of these courses, playing 90 holes of golf over the four day peri-

od. The courses were Threetops, Treetops Signature, Otsego's Tribute, Marsh Ridge, Black Bear, and Michaywé Pines.

Threetops

Recognized as the top par-three course in America by *GolfWeek Magazine*, players are likely to be overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of the course. Dramatic elevation changes add to both the visual perspective and the uncertainty as to which club to hit. With drops of up to 170 feet, players would be wise to carefully consider club selection. To illustrate this phenomenon, consider the names given to just four of the nine holes: "Devil's Drop," "Deception," "Valley Low," and "Hang Time". Most golfers will find this challenge adds to the enjoyment of playing this course. To ease the potential frustration that accompanies every round of golf ever played, the course is made more playable by the presence of four sets of tees. From the back tees, yardages range from 135 to 219 yards; from the front tees, these numbers drop to a range of 82 to 137 yards.

Many fans of the PGA will recognize the course as the home of the ING Par 3 Shootout that has been broadcast on ESPN for the past few years. It is where Lee Trevino made his famous million dollar hole-in-one and promptly donated half of the money to St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Threetops is playable by golfers of all levels of skill, and it represents the perfect place to begin a golf vacation at the Gaylord Golf Mecca.

Treetops Signature

The September issue of *Travel + Leisure Golf Magazine* recently anointed Treetops as the second best golf resort as well as the second best resort for a "buddy trip" in the Midwest. The resort provides a perfect get-away with large rooms featuring numerous amenities such as a whirlpool tub in your room and a full-service spa for those who wish to be truly pampered. Despite these accommodations, it would be hard to forget that the primary allure of Treetops is golf.

Rick Smith's Signature course is part of the Treetops North complex that includes a triumvirate of championship courses in addition to the popular Threetops course. Each course is highly rated by *Golf Magazine* with the Signature course receiving 4.5 stars. The topography means that the courses have a number of similarities, but the designs of the three architects (Robert Trent Jones, Sr., Tom Fazio, and Rick Smith) provide ample diversity such that each offers a unique golfing experience.

From the back tees, Signature's 6,653 yards play to a mere par 70. But these numbers belie the USGA rating of 72.8 and the slope rating of 140. These numbers should tell you that the Signature course is anything but a simple resort course designed to facilitate a speedy round of golf. At the same time, the five sets of tees allow the player to match the challenge of the course with his or her own level of skill. The scenery is absolutely breathtaking with many elevated tees providing vistas for admiring

the surroundings that feature hardwood trees, evergreens, and an abundance of native vegetation. Add the vast bunkering system that encompasses 136 sand bunkers to the equation; then you can understand why many players heave a sigh of relief upon reaching the green. But the golfer's work is not finished because the greens can be very challenging. Approach shots may even need to be aimed somewhere other than at the pin in order to allow the slope to funnel the ball toward the hole. One piece of advice given to our party prior to teeing off was to keep the ball below the hole; putting downhill can turn any green into a challenge to avoid the dreaded three-putt. In fact, one review of the course offers an assessment that the Signature course "tests your putting skills perhaps more than any other element of your game." With the depth of several greens exceeding 120 feet, it is evident that many golfers will agree with that assessment.

The course is difficult, but beautiful. As each of our groups came off the eighteenth green, the comments were universally positive. Even though each golfer reportedly left a ball or two behind, it was apparent that everyone enjoyed the challenge and the aesthetic qualities of the Signature course. Be certain to add it to your list of courses to play.

Tribute at Otsego Club

The Otsego Club provides an array of lodging alternatives to meet the needs of virtually any group. Beyond lodging, there is an intimate bar area and an excellent



Marsh Ridge

restaurant. Still, it is the visual character of the golf course that gets your attention.

The Tribute incorporates some 1,100 acres of the Sturgeon River Valley. As you drive your cart from the clubhouse to the first tee, you continue to pass ski lifts and you begin to wonder where the first tee has been hidden. Finally, you arrive at the first tee. At first blush, you get the impression that the course is wide open. That impression will quickly change as you reach the third tee. The tree-line fairways are generally wide enough to be somewhat forgiving of a pushed or pulled shot, but the

strategic placement of bunkers will put a premium on accurate shot-making. The large, often undulating, greens provide ample targets for approach shots, but they also mean that your putting acumen is likely to be challenged – significantly challenged. The USGA rating of 74.1 with a slope rating of 134 for the championship tees should convince most players to swallow their ego and play the course from one of the three shorter sets of tees.

With its location on the high bluffs, the course offers many panoramic views of the area. What you seldom see is another hole or a

golfer from another hole searching for a lost ball. The vastness of the landscape from which the course was carved provided that degree of isolation. It is you against the course and your playing companions. The diversity of the course is perhaps best illustrated by number 16. The relatively short par 5 is flanked by trees on the left as the player hits from an elevated tee that requires the carrying of a large ravine in order to reach an ample landing area. As you consider your second shot, you are faced with a narrow landing area and a second ball-swallowing ravine. Your third shot to the green means that you have successfully navigat-

ed the course's number two handicap hole. You may also be fortunate enough to see some of the area's wildlife. On our closing holes, we were treated to a view of a doe and rare triplet fawns.

The bottom line for the Tribute is that it provides a beautiful venue that can be played by golfers of different abilities. It is diverse and features an ample array of hazards that need to be avoided. It is a good test of golf that is worthy of inclusion on your itinerary of courses in Northern Michigan.

Marsh Ridge

Of all the courses discussed in this article, Marsh Ridge was perhaps the most intimidating. The fairways are sufficiently lined with trees so as to make the golfer consider the consequences of a wayward shot. Even though the course is not particularly long – playing only 6,231 yards from the back tees – it is punctuated with water and marsh lands that must be avoided. You will suffer the consequences of a poor shot. The par 71 layout is made more playable with the presence of five relatively short par-3 holes.

To help with your shot-making, the course offers GPS in the carts. The system can answer your questions about how far you need to hit the ball to avoid the various hazards.

As with many courses that comprise the Gaylord Golf Mecca, Marsh Ridge is replete with holes that feature elevated tees that afford the golfer with breathtaking views of the course and the unspoiled environment within

which it is incorporated. But don't get lost in the view; selection of the right club is more difficult and more important. In some cases, the player simply cannot afford to underclub. A number of holes, including some of the par 3s, require the player to carry the tee shot over a significant distance in order to reach a safe landing area. The 169-yard eighth hole is all carry as is the 168-yard thirteenth hole. The back nine begins with the course's signature hole, a 172-yard, par 3 that requires a tee shot from one of the five tiers of the tee area over marshland to an elevated green. Safely reaching many of the holes simply initiates a new set of problems. Some of the greens are steeply sloped as well as multi-tiered. For instance, the narrow green on number 14 has three distinct tiers that make two putts a difficult objective, especially when the approach shot has come to rest above the hole.

Marsh Ridge presents a challenge for any golfer, but its physical characteristics will provide a pleasurable experience. Of note is the fact that *Golf Digest* gave the course a four-star rating.

Black Bear

Black Bear bills itself as the only 19-hole golf course in the state of Michigan. While golfers have come to expect a practice range and a putting green at every resort course of any note, players at Black Bear have the luxury of playing a practice hole prior to heading for the first tee. The moderate length par-three hole will help get the golfer into the proper frame of mind.

The course is fairly short measuring only 6,504 yards from the back tees and 4,404 yards from the most forward set. It is also very open, so golfers can survive their stray shots. Having led you to think the course is easy, it is time to point out that it has large, undulating greens with rolling fairways, elevation changes and roughs that often incorporate the heather that you would associate with the traditional links course. It is located in the Vanderbilt area where players may see elk, deer, or perhaps even the course's namesake, a black bear. Greens can be fairly difficult with tiering and slopes that dictate the need to hit the correct approach shot. The terrain is varied; it features considerable sand and a modest amount of water. But unlike many courses in northern Michigan, golfers do not need to stuff their bags with extra balls to replace those that they lose.

Black Bear has not escaped the eye of the media. It has been named a "People's Choice" winner, and it has been designated as a 4-Star course by *Golf Digest*. Its modest greens fees make it a great value, one well worth visiting on any golf vacation.

Michaywé Pines

The Michaywé Pines Course is one of the original tracks that comprise the Gaylord Golf Mecca. A substantial renovation has addressed improvements in the bunkers, the establishment of four tee areas for each hole, an enhanced irrigation system, and enlargement of the pond on the 9th hole. The tee options provide alternatives ranging from 5,259 to 7,034 yards. As the name implies,



Michaywé Pines

the course is carved out of a stand of tall evergreen trees, but the front 9 is characterized by the deciduous trees that line the fairways. Despite this reality, the course is comparative open and features flat, wide landing areas. Greenside bunkers tend to be just that – beside the greens. This has opened up the approach areas leading to the greens. And despite the aforementioned enlargement of the pond on number 9, the course is relatively devoid of water. Playability is also enhanced by the relatively flat greens. Michaywé is a residential community, so houses are also part of the landscape faced by the golfer.

Course operators take pride in

touting the course as “female-friendly.” The reality is that the course is playable by golfers of all levels of ability regardless of gender or age. It was a great way for us to end four days of golf.

Overview

The Gaylord Golf Mecca has done a great job of marketing the area. But good marketing cannot overcome a poor product. The area’s success has been achieved because it offers an outstanding product. There are courses and lodging options to fit differing budgets and playing ability. What the courses

have in common is a desire to satisfy their customers. The ability to do so has helped the area sustain its growth in an industry that has struggled from overbuilding combined with the economic downturn in Michigan. Whether you want flat or rolling courses, wooded or open courses, long or short courses, the Gaylord Golf Mecca has what you are looking for. And they have it at prices that will not make you break out in a cold sweat. That response is most likely due to the adrenaline rush you experience as you tee it up on the first tee of any of the terrific courses that comprise the Gaylord Golf Mecca. **MG**

SLICE OF LIFE



By Terry Moore

Reader warning: This is my annual review about my own golf equipment. Do not operate heavy machinery or be driving a motor vehicle while digesting it.

The best thing I did in terms of golf equipment this year involved my entire set of clubs. No, not buying a new set or tossing the old ones in a pond. Instead, I went through clubfitting and launch monitor sessions. These sessions convinced me to re-evaluate my clubs and to make some changes. One recommendation was to re-shaft my irons with new lightweight steel ones, thereby increasing swing speed and enhancing my ball trajectory and carry. As such, I reshafted my irons with a new set of sub-100 gram weighted steel shafts from Nippon Shaft. I'm still a believer in using steel shafts in irons where stability and consistency are desired. I always remember a cautionary line from a Senior...er...Champions Tour player at the Ford Seniors Players one year, "Graphite shafted-irons often have a mind of their own." (Tour players want assurance that when they pick out a club it only goes a set distance with little or no variance save turf

and wind conditions.) Anyway, these lightweight steel Nippon shafts have been a plus for me. I only wish I had made the switch sooner.

Another equipment switch I made this year was to jump on the hybrid bandwagon. I opted for the AdamsGolf's Idea Hybrid A2 3-iron. These hybrids are easier to hit than the traditional long irons and they lend a higher trajectory. I replaced my five metalwood with this hybrid and it's been a good move. But like all equipment changes, a good solid swing, tempo, and mechanics still must be applied to them. Those elements will always be a work in progress.

Cashing in some pro shop gift certificates, the "Moore equipment makeover" continued with the purchase of some new wedges this past spring. I tried various models and brands but ended up with the Titleist Vokey Design Spin Milled wedges. The faces on my old wedges had been so worn down (from abuse not overuse!) that I hardly ever spun or even checked up a ball with them. But with these new wedges, if you hit it properly the ball will "check" on command. Case in point: I was playing with our club pro (a master at the short game) one day and had a short chip shot to a pin with little green to work with. Using my 56 degree Vokey Spin Milled wedge, I nipped this shot so that it hit once, bounced twice and then stopped on a dime ensuring me a short birdie putt. (With my old wedges there would've been no way for me to have stopped my ball near the flag.) When the pro came over to examine my new wedge it was a MasterCard moment: priceless.

Rarely do I make putter changes.

Maybe once during a comet cycle. As a veteran of the game's trials, I know it's seldom—in the phrase used by Dave Hill--- the arrow that's at fault but usually the Indian. But at PGA Merchandise Show in Orlando last January, I tried the Heavy Putter, the aptly named, hernia-risking, two pound putter that came on the market in 2005. Immediately, I loved its feel and how its heavy mass and weight forced me to swing the clubhead in a pendulum fashion. Anyway, I knew I had to give it a go and decided this summer to put one in my bag. In theory, it's hard to argue with the Heavy Putter's science. I recall the advice of former National PGA of the Year Charlie Sorrell when talking about putters and putting. Sorrell recommended heavier putters for those struggling with their stroke or with their confidence. The heavy clubhead forces one to use the bigger arm and shoulder muscles when swinging the blade, letting the clubface naturally accelerate through the ball. It will take another season to see if I fully adapt to and become comfortable with the Heavy Putter. I also know I have to be careful when removing and returning it to my bag. One false move and the Heavy Putter can put a heavy hurt on one's fingers.

Speaking of fingers, I will now snap mine and you shall awake. You won't remember what you've just read.

A member of the Golf Writers Association of America, Moore lives in Grand Rapids with his beautiful and most patient spouse and the aforementioned golf clubs. He may be reached at tmoore@usxc.net. MG



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