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**Fall 2007**

**MICHIGAN GOLFER**

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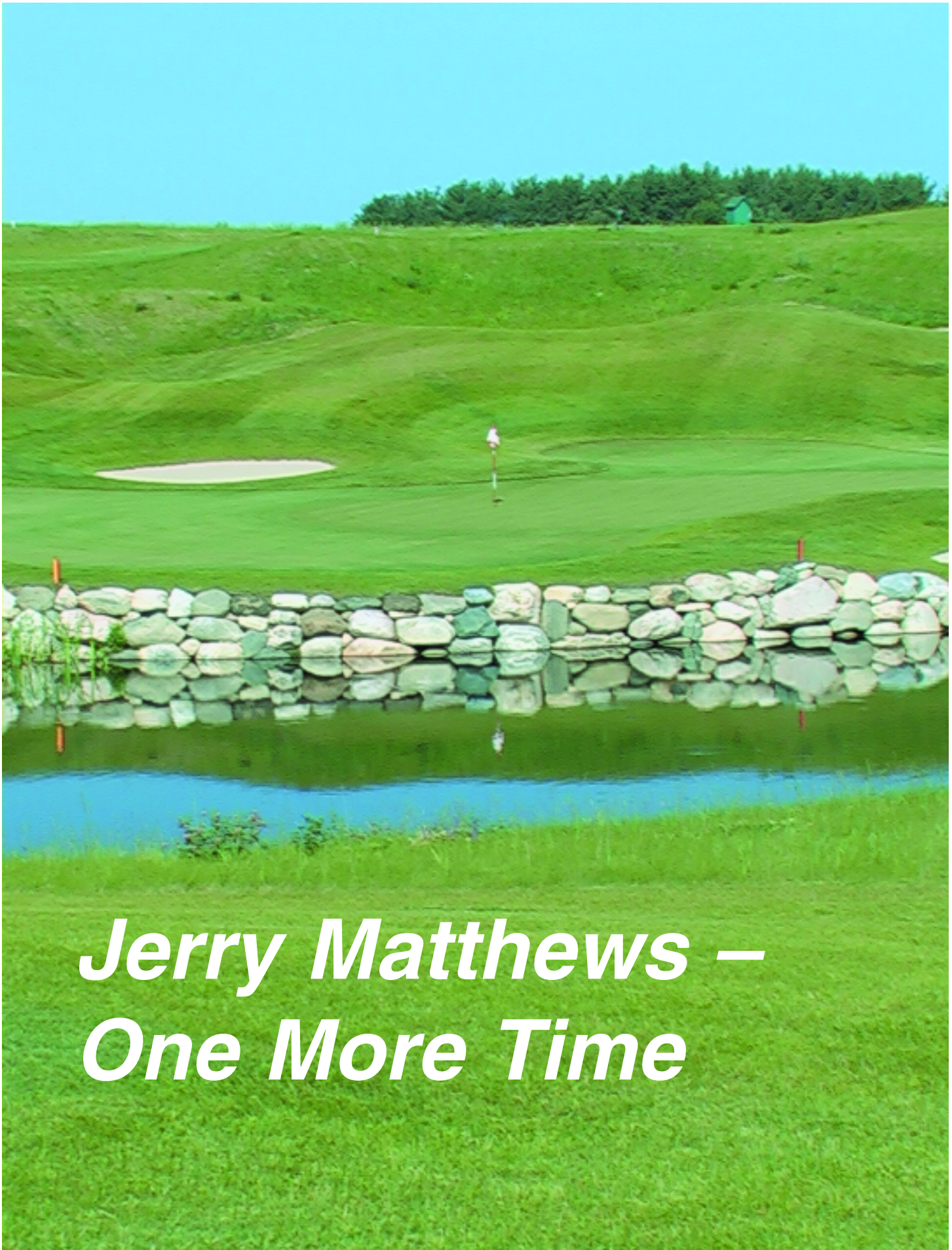
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*Cover: St. Ives, Hole No. 14. Photo by Art McCafferty*





***Jerry Matthews –  
One More Time***

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**M**ost of the time, many of us do not know when we have done the last of something we used to like to do all the time. We always think we will do it again.

However, years and times move on and suddenly we realize that we can no longer run the marathon, throw a fastball past a waiting batter, hit a career golf shot or in the case of Jerry Matthews design another golf course. It is not that his considerable skills have diminished, it is just the economic reality of today's marketplace. In the past five years, more Matthews courses have gone off line than have come online. The 36 hole Wolverine, the nine hole Mitchell Creek, the Hawk at Partridge Creek and English Hills are gone.

Certainly Jerry Matthews has no complaints. Here is a person that ranks in the top 10 of America's most prolific golf architects. The list would include the likes of Tom Bendelow, Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Jerry Matthews. In Michigan, he has no peer, there is no one close to him.

However, at the age of 73, Matthews would like to design one more and hopes that it will happen. Currently, his curtain call is

A-Ga-Ming's Sundance Golf Course. Finished two years ago, Sundance is getting rave reviews from golf writers and more importantly, plenty of play from Michigan golfers. Prior to that he did Buck's Run, Hawk's Hollow, St. Ives, Elk Ridge and The Woods course on Mackinaw Island.

Matthews' success and also that of his father, W. Bruce Matthews, was due to the great service they provided their clients.

They established their successful business by being affordable, talented, hard working and honest.

While waiting for that phone to ring, Matthews continues his teaching for his and his father's beloved Michigan State University. Now the business is the occasional renovation project that comes along. This lull has given him some time to revisit some of his early work. Our company has been working on an online video



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Antrim Dells owner, Mike Morrical (left), Jerry Matthews (center) and family member Dick Finn (right).**

project featuring Matthews' courses. Thus far, we have done four of his courses, Timberstone GC in Iron Mountain, The Natural in Gaylord, The Majestic at Lake Walden and Buck's Run in Mt. Pleasant. Next year, we will complete four more of his courses: Cutter's Ridge at Manistee National Resort, Antrim Dells, A-Ga-Ming in Atwood and The Emerald at Maple Creek in St. John's.

When he is on property during these videos, everybody wants to see him. At Manistee, G.M Doug

Bell and Superintendent Joel Swanson were waiting to chat. At Antrim Dells, Mike Morrill and Dennis Finn waited until we got there just to tell him how much they enjoyed the course he had designed over 30 years ago. At A-Ga-Ming, owners Larry Lavelly and Mike Brown as well as superintendent Jim St. James waited to see him. We arrived very late at The Emerald and Kurt McDowell, new golf professional, was putting away the carts. He gave us one for a quick glimpse of the course and when we came back, I introduced Matthews to the pro and told him

this was the person who not designed the second nine holes on the course, but his father had done work on what is now the 17th hole in the late 1950's. McDowell indicated that he knew all about Matthews as he played his high school golf on Sugar Springs, a course Matthews designed and built in 1972.

Hopefully, Jerry Matthews will get another shot a golf course, but if he did, he would most likely want to do another after that one was done. It's in the family genes. **MG**



**Antrim Dells**

Photo by Art McCafferty





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## **the Jerry Matthews Collection**

<http://michigangolfer.tv/2006shows/jerrymatthews/>



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Sundance, Hole Number 1**

### **Now Showing**

Buck's Run with Jerry Matthews and Jim Zeh

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2006shows/bucksrun/>

The Majestic at Lake Walden with Jerry Matthews & Bill Fountain

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/majestic/>

The Natural at Gaylord with Jerry Matthews & Larry Bowden

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/natural/>

Timberstone with Jerry Matthews

<http://michigangolfer.tv/archives.html>

### **Coming Spring 2008**

A-Ga-Ming Sundance

Antrim Dells

Cutter's Ridge at Manistee National

The Emerald at Maple Creek

*For Information on our Golf Architects Series contact: Art McCafferty [artmccaf@glsp.com](mailto:artmccaf@glsp.com)*



# Boyne Is Now Coast to Coast Provider of Skiing and Golf

By Jack Berry



Photo courtesy of Boyne Real Estate



**B**oyne, the Big Daddy of Michigan resorts, is giving new meaning to the company name of Boyne USA with the acquisition of three New England resorts and an additional resort near its Crystal Mountain property in Seattle.

Boyne now stretches from coast-to-coast plus British Columbia and Steve Kircher, head of Eastern operations and the son of Boyne founder Everett Kircher, said “This is not the end.”

The Kirchers are the largest family owners and operators of ski resorts in North America with 10 locations, Michigan, Montana, Maine, New Hampshire, Utah, Washington and British Columbia. The recent expansion is the result of a partnership with CNL Income Properties, a real estate investment trust (REIT) headquartered in Orlando.

“It’s a continuation of what we’ve been doing for 60 years,” Kircher said. “Dad started the geographical footprint 60 years ago with the (sightseeing) lift at Gatlinburg (Tenn.). Our goal is becoming the best four season resort company in the world by 2015.

“The relationship with CNL opened new doors for us. It’s the first time skiing had REIT capital to back it. It came about through our relationship with Marriott at the Inn at Bay Harbor. In the early 1990s, Marriott had 400 properties and now it’s grown to 2,800 and gone from ownership and managing to just managing.”

Kircher said his father, who died in 2002, “would think this is unbe-

lievable. He said there was no way you could make money or get money in the ski business and you had to be long term patient.

Kircher said with the addition of Sugarloaf/USA and Sunday River in Maine and Loon Mountain in New Hampshire, he expects skier visits at Boyne properties to jump to 3.6 million this winter from 1.9 last winter.

“We’ve come up with \$125 million of acquisitions in the last month. The partnership has allowed us to buy things we never would have been able to do on our own,” Kircher said. “We’re evolving the way Marriott and Starwood have. REIT owns and we manage.”

While Boyne remains Big Daddy in Michigan with Boyne Mountain, Boyne Highlands, the Inn at Bay Harbor, eight golf courses and Avalanche Bay indoor water park, Kircher said “I can’t talk REIT into investing in the state of Michigan right now. I said that when I testified in Lansing (in support of an increased tourism budget).”



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Steve Kircher with his father Everett Kircher.**



Photo courtesy of Sugarloaf/USA

**Sugarloaf**

Kircher said the \$30 million appropriation, which funded the “Pure Michigan” television, radio and billboard campaign in the Midwest, was a good start – “We’re seeing more license plates from outside of Michigan” – but it’s going to take years of pounding hard. The more people who come in and get around the state will realize what a great state this is to live and work in. We had a customer in from Texas and he was surprised at what Michigan is,” Kircher said. **MG**



# McGuire's Resort: “We'll Take Care of You!”

**By Kelly Hill**  
*Managing Editor*

CADILLAC - A landmark stands on the west side of US-131, between Grand Rapids and Cadillac. It has stood there, visible to northbound drivers, for more than a generation.

The landmark is an old barn, little different than thousands of other Michigan barns. This barn,

though, stands just to the west of the primary artery between the state's second-largest city and countless destinations “Up North.”

What distinguishes this old barn, and what has made it a landmark, is the advertisement painted on its south side. The barn-turned-billboard hails one of those “Up

North” destinations. It lets travelers know they are approaching Cadillac, which is the home of McGuire's Resort.

Opened in 1949 as a drive-in restaurant, McGuire's Resort now includes 27 holes of golf, 123 hotel rooms, dining and banquet facilities for 175 guests, convention and

Photo above: McGuire's Resort, Hole No. 5



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meeting facilities for a similar number and seven kilometers of groomed cross-country skiing trails, three of which are lighted.

“McGuire’s is a family resort,” said head golf professional Phil Himes, who recently joined the McGuire’s staff after serving as the head pro at Eldorado Golf Course in Cadillac. “People come back here because they are treated like family. We have groups that have been coming here every year for 30 years.”

Himes, who was born and raised in Southern California, moved to San Francisco in 1988 work for Marriott at the Chardonnay Golf Club in Napa. In 1997, he transferred to Marriott’s Lincolnshire Resort in Chicago, where he served as the head golf

pro until August of 2001. He moved to Michigan in 2002 and three years later accepted a position at Eldorado.

“There is more snow here, but it is not as cold as it was in Chicago,” Himes said. Himes and his wife, Becky, welcome the snow in Cadillac as they own the White Thunder Kennel, out of which Becky Himes races some of their 42 sled dogs.

“Some golf pros go south for the winter, but not me,” Phil Himes said. “I go further north. We race in the U.P and Minnesota and all over.”

McGuire’s Resort in Cadillac features the Evergreen Golf Club: the 18-hole Spruce course and the 9-hole Norway. According to

Himes, approximately 9,000 rounds are played each year on the Northway while 13,500 rounds are played on the Spruce.

The resort offers a two-night package with unlimited golf. According to Himes, golfers often check in and play 18 on Thursday. They will then play 36 on Friday and play another 18 before checking out on Saturday.

While the expressway portion of US-131 used to end just south of McGuire’s, it now ends north of Cadillac. Himes said, though, that McGuire’s Resort has not been affected by the expressway extension.

“This is a hidden little gem,” he said. **MG**



Photo courtesy of McGuire's Resort

**McGuire’s Resort, Hole No. 13**





## Michaywe Pines

# Gaylord Grows ‘Bigger’ – Now, it is *America’s* Summer Golf Mecca

By Susan Bairley

I remember Gaylord, Michigan, when it was Gaylord, Michigan. When I was a kid, it meant ‘the hills of Gaylord’ and Call of the Wild Museum, which my Dad would never stop at, despite our backseat pleas, as we ventured to our usual summer Douglas Lake destination. Gaylord golf was there, and beautiful. It just wasn’t on my family’s radar when swimming, sailing and bass fishing awaited.

Then 20 years ago, Gaylord took on a new persona – as a Golf Mecca destination and division of the Gaylord Area Convention and Tourism Bureau. ‘Dem dere hills’ became “challenging golf holes with spectacular vistas and dramatic elevations” and a showcase for some of the world’s premier golf architects and designers. The result was an awesome setting for some of the best golf – if not THE best golf –

in the Midwest.

But that was 20 years ago, and this year, Gaylord's Midwest golf horizon has gotten considerably broader. Still beautiful, still challenging, now with 21 golf courses working together, the Gaylord Golf Mecca is branding itself as America's Summer Golf Mecca. And why not?

Recently, my husband Paul and I participated in Gaylord's annual FAM (familiarization) trip for media. We spent four days golfing nearly 80 holes, interspersed with three six-

hour sleeping nights, three abundant dinners and cocktail hours, three scrumptious breakfasts and two delicious lunches – and we barely scratched the surface of this worthy American golf destination.

We started our adventure at Treetops Resort, home to the Robert Trent Jones Sr. Masterpiece, Tom Fazio Premier and Rick Smith Tradition, Signature and Threetops courses. While arranging for at-home childcare caused us to miss the FAM prequel round at the Masterpiece, we enjoyed a great round on the

truly amazing nine-hole Threetops course. Every hole is unique, beautiful and dramatic – and none are as easy as they look. Paul and I were beside ourselves to have birdied and parred, respectively, the No. 3 Devil's Drop! If you haven't played this course yet, you need to put it on your "must-see" list and do it. It's that simple, America.

Day Two also took us to the classic Gaylord Country Club. Established in 1924, it moved to its current location, just west of Gaylord, in 1975. A rainy morning



Photo by Art McCafferty

### Treetops Ladies Golf School



slowed our start and we didn't quite complete 18 before we had to move on, but our time at Gaylord CC was wonderful. A traditional course in all ways, it was pretty, the greens were fast and the hole placements tough. Lunch at the clubhouse was well worth the stop. The grille serves generous portions and fresh fare, with Northern touches like Whitefish sandwiches – yum! Our Gaylord trip host, Kevin Frisch, had just won the Club Championship there the day before, so the performance bar was set pretty high for us visitors.

Day Three was a Michaywe Day. The Pines Course, which opened in 1973, offers spacious tree-lined fairways and the natural beauty of a mature course. It's friendly for higher handicap golfers, yet measures more than 7,000 yards from the championship tees to make it a challenging long course for the low handicapper.

**M**ichaywe's Mountain Lake is a Jerry Matthews design that recently was

remodeled by owner, Michael Tellshow, to make it more friendly. And to be quite honest, I can't imagine what less friendly would have felt like as the Mountain Lake plays with a fair amount of difficulty still. Not an easy one for mid-level golfers, it offers the low handicap player a test of accuracy, carry and steady putting.

Nonetheless, Mountain Lake has nine holes up the ski slopes, with fabulous Otsego County views, and nine holes around Lake Michaywe and along the Au Sable River. Now,



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Treetops Tom Fazio Premiere, Hole No. 9**



really, you can't get much more Northern Michigan than that!

One night and the morning of Day Four was not enough to spend at Otsego Club. Newly acquired by Osprey, the club is unique unto itself. And Osprey's Mike Biber and crew are just starting to transform this tradition-steeped, classic resort club into the legend Keith Gornick intended it to be. Multimillion dollar facility and room renovations are capturing the log-cabin ski and golf resort trappings with a contemporary blend of style and comfort. And long-time landmarks like the cozy Logmark Bar and geometric Pontresina Restaurant are being carefully preserved.

**T**he Tribute was especially enchanting on the morning we played. Shrouded in morning fog, Otsego's flagship course, designed by Rick Robbins and Gary Koch, provided an almost Disney-like golf experience; I almost wanted to pinch myself just to make sure it was real. Carved through 1,100 acres of hardwood forest, a long cart ride takes you along a winding woods path to the first tee and fairway, which beckon you to join the land of golf – deeper and deeper into the rolling landscape. With more than six miles of cart paths, and championship yardage that exceeds 7,000 yards, The Tribute is a tribute to Michigan golf at its best. As a matter of fact, from the third tee, the 20-mile view of the Sturgeon River Valley is a tribute to Michigan itself.

Photo by Paul Bairley



**Paul Beachneau**

Photo courtesy of Paul Bairley



**Susan and Paul Bairley**



Photo by Resort and Golf Marketing



**Gaylord Country Club**

Photo by Resort and Golf Marketing



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Photo by Art McCafferty

**Treetops Robert Trent Jones Masterpiece, Hole No. 18**



One of the best things about Gaylord's Golf Mecca is that its 21 courses can come up with nearly an unlimited array of golf packages and sometimes even free golf. This year, on the weekend of Oct. 19-21, for example, visitors who book an overnight stay at participating hotels will be able to play a free round of golf on one of the participating Gaylord Golf Mecca courses.

For more information on America's Summer (fall and spring!) Golf Mecca, visit [www.gaylordgolfmecca.com](http://www.gaylordgolfmecca.com). **MG**

Photo by the Umflex Group



Otsego Club, The Tribute, Hole No. 4

Photo by the Umflex Group



Otsego Club, The Tribute, Hole No. 10



# Jhared Hack wins 105th Western Amateur



Photo by Dave Richards / Resort and Golf Marketing

**Pictured here is the Point O' Woods par 4, 420-yard 16th to which Hack dropped a wedge shot eight feet from the hole and drained the putt for birdie and the ultimate 1 up advantage.**

Benton Harbor, Mich. (Monday, August 6, 2007) – Seventeen-year-old Jhared Hack, 2006 Western Junior champion, claimed the 2007 Western Amateur championship Monday at Point O' Woods G. & C.C., edging Alex Prugh 1 up in a match where neither player ever held more than a 1 up lead.

Hack, of Sanford, Fla., follows in the footsteps of 2007 NCAA champion Jamie Lovemark to become only the second player to win the Western Junior and Western Amateur in back-to-back years since the Western Golf Association started the national junior championship in 1914. Lovemark, who withdrew from

this year's Western Amateur after one round due to injury, won the Western Junior in 2004 and Western Amateur in 2005.

"This whole week's been a blur," said Hack, who had to wait until Monday to win the rain-delayed championship final. "I didn't have the best expectations com-

ing in this week. For me to win is awesome. It's the best feeling I've had so far in golf."

Hack, a freshman-to-be at the University of Central Florida, is also the second youngest player, after Lovemark, to win the Western Amateur. Lovemark also was 17 but didn't turn 18 until five months later; Hack will celebrate his 18th birthday Sunday.

Asked about the recent success of 17-year-olds in a championship traditionally dominated by seasoned collegiate players, Hack said more junior players are stepping up to amateur golf competition earlier.

"You have to start playing in these tournaments younger to learn to compete," said Hack, who gave up more than age to his match play opponents. In beating two-time, first-team All-American Dustin Johnson in the semifinals and Prugh in the final, Hack overcame a distinct distance disadvantage.

"I played with Dustin last week at the U.S. Amateur qualifier in Battle Creek, and he was averaging 50 yards longer than me off the tee," said Hack.



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Jared Hack (left) shot 4 birdies while Alex Prugh's 3 birdies weren't enough to win the Western Amateur's final round of match play.**

Hack's philosophy: "Just play your own game, and don't let people who drive it 50 yards by you bother you.

"I think it puts more pressure on them. It doesn't bother me at all," said Hack, who averages about 270 off the tee. "If I hit a good shot from 30-40 yards back, it puts pressure on the other guy."

Hack's wedge play and putting skill counter his lack of distance. In Monday's final, Hack closed out the match with three quality approach shots and one timely putt.

On the par 4, 420-yard 16th, Hack dropped a wedge shot eight feet from the hole and drained the putt for birdie and the ultimate 1 up advantage. On the par 3, 208-yard 17th he hit a 5-iron to within eight feet but narrowly missed the putt

that would have closed out the match. On the par 4, 421-yard 18th, he hit a pitching wedge to six feet that sealed the match, as Prugh missed a 12-foot birdie putt that could have forced extra holes.

"My putt at 16 was huge," said Hack. "It was just a great match ... an awesome match. We both played good, and it went

back and forth. This was the best match I had all week. We only won holes with birdies."

For Prugh, a 2007 All-PAC 10 selection from the University of Washington, three birdies weren't enough.

"I only hit maybe two or three bad shots," said Prugh, 22, of Spokane, Washington, who birdied the first hole to hold a brief 1 up lead. "I didn't make any bogeys. You have to make birdies to win holes, and I just didn't make enough. I was trying to post a score - 67 is not a bad round out here.

"He just happened to be one better than me today," said Prugh. "I didn't make a couple of birdie putts coming in that I needed, and he made birdie on 16." **MG**



# Our Ireland Thirteensome



Photo by Mike Beckman

By Art McCafferty

The opportunity to party with the Irish when they were in town for the Ryder Cup festivities at Oakland Hills<sup>1</sup> was a great experience and provided the stimulus for me to get my golfing buddies interested in the idea of spending one of our golfing holidays abroad. The foursome of forever friends included Mike Beckman, Peter Allen and Mike Duff. We had played some very nice courses in the past twenty

years in Arizona, Florida, Wisconsin and, of course, Michigan. We had talked about a Scotland trip for years, but the Ryder Cup drew our attention to Ireland instead.

Jack Berry, PGA Lifetime Journalism Award winner, was the person who really sealed the deal. Our company convinced Berry to share his knowledge of playing over 70 courses during his decades long love affair with the “Old

Sod”, by doing a series of videos on Irish golf.<sup>2</sup> The enthusiasm of Berry’s commentary in the videos was a bit overwhelming. A pint or two of Guinness after our taping sessions did not hurt much either. Berry did tell us, that to try and plan a golf trip in Ireland without a driver was not wise. He mentioned the difficulty of driving in Ireland on the left side of the road, the poor signage of Ireland roads and the narrowness of them. That was sage advice from Berry and some

Photo above: The Cliffs of Mohr

we gladly we followed. Obviously, a driver and coach adds considerable expense to a trip, but again, it turned out to be money well spent.

Our foursome increased to an eightsome with the addition of our lovely brides; Linda, Pam, Sharon and Jennie. To that we added two couples who are friends of the Duffs, to expand our group to a twelvesome. Finally, we swelled to a thirteensome with the addition of our driver and guide, Cyril Quigley.

Quigley, really made the trip a total delight. He picked us at the airport on our arrival and deposited us back there a week later. His knowledge of Irish history, Ireland golf courses and interesting places to visit, contributed immensely to our enjoyment. Oh yes, he also regaled us with some great Irish songs during our week together. Perhaps more importantly, he allowed us to focus on our vacation and not the hassles that can occur when traveling. Our group was always fresh and our collective energy was spent in enjoying the experience.

The golf was as superb as it was expensive. However, 18 holes on Waterville Golf Course, was well worth the money. If we had had more time, we would have golfed Lahinch. Basically, to understand links golf, you need to acquire the

experience. It leaves a lasting impact on your thoughts about the game.

The Irish people are friendly and wonderful hosts. Their country is on a roll right now with almost full employment. Their golf status within the world community as also risen. They also have more golf product than Scotland and new courses are continuing to come on line to compete with those that have become legendary.

The spirit of our trip was captured in a video<sup>3</sup> – our “what we did on our summer vacation” memoir. If interested in planning such a trip, you can’t do better than Sullivan Golf and Travel. They are a client of ours, but they did a great job with the trip and were interested in our experience for improvement in the future. They are participants of the Michigan Golf Show and you can discuss your trip with them there. *MG*



Photo courtesy of Sullivan Golf and Travel

**Waterville, Hole No. 11**






Photo courtesy of Sullivan Golf & Travel

**Our group traveled in this coach. Cyril Quigley, our driver made the trip a total delight.**



Photo courtesy of Sullivan Golf and Travel

**Adare Manor and its grounds were sumptuous accommodations on the last day of our Ireland vacation.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>1 Irish &amp; the 2004 Ryder Cup, Oakland Hills</b><br><a href="http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/irish/">http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/irish/</a>  |
|  | <b>2 Golfing in Ireland with Jack Berry</b><br><a href="http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/golfireland/">http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/golfireland/</a> |
|  | <b>3 Ireland Adventure-Golf and Touring</b><br><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi0VIEHoOcg">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi0VIEHoOcg</a>           |



# SLICE OF LIFE



By Terry Moore

Well the result—Tiger winning again—was no surprise but all in all the FedEx Cup was a qualified success. The Tour wanted to generate some fan and media interest in a “playoff model” that followed the final major of the year—the PGA Championship—and on this score it worked. It always riled the Tour that none of the five majors (I include the Ryder Cup in the usual mix) were “owned” by the Tour or its players and that all gain more media attention and revenues than its own Tour events. Try as it might, the Players and Tour Championship are prestigious events but neither is deemed a “major” by the general golf public and media. So the FedEx Cup was a worthy experiment that definitely worked to retain the Tour’s lucrative television contract intact. And this time around, the public was indeed interested in the Tour after the PGA Championship.

There were some bumps in the road, however. For starters, there were some awkward and unseemly criticisms of the FedEx Cup including some selfish sniping at the

deferred compensation set-up. I mean, how bad was it for some of these pampered millionaires, with their courtesy cars and weekly creature comforts, to be complaining about a plan that any tax attorney or CPA would say richly rewards them with someone else’s money? On top of it, was the unfounded criticism that players were not informed of some of these provisions. Baloney, said Player Policy Board rep Stewart Cink. Tour players were kept in the loop all along, insisted Cink, with regular communiqués and meetings, most of which was hardly attended by the all too busy superstars. Hand it to Cink for sticking up for the Tour and giving a deserved retort to the whiners.

Then there was the matter of certain Tour stars—namely Woods, Mickelson and Els—skipping one of the three playoff events leading up to the Tour Championship at East Lake. First, Tiger skips the opening Barclays saying he needed to take a break after playing two weeks in a row. Tim Finchem says he’s “disappointed” but really can’t do anything else when the Tour always claims it merely services “independent contractors.” Then almost as a slap at the Tour and Finchem, Mickelson decides to skip the BMW event at Cog Hill and announces his decision and dismay with Finchem on national TV following his exciting victory (against Tiger, no less) outside Boston. He voiced some unspecified issues against Finchem and the Tour. Ok, so what were they? Well, here’s my take on it. I think the Tour’s brain trust in fact suggested to Tiger he could take a pass at the Barclay’s because it real-

ized if Tiger won there, he would have essentially clinched the Cup and made it irrelevant in generating playoff excitement. Before then, Finchem and the Tour must have strongly encouraged Tiger, Phil and Co. to play all three of the inaugural playoff events plus the finale for the sake of the tourney sponsors as well as the mega-sponsor FedEx. (Recall last year when Tiger and Phil both skipped East Lake.) So when Phil sees Tiger taking or getting a week off, he wants to know why the unspoken rules were changed and decides to ask for something in return that Finchem can’t or won’t deliver. So hence, Phil decides to take his ball and head home.

Finally, there was the shameful condition of East Lake GC. The bent grass greens were no match for the hot, humid summer weather of Atlanta and the greens were toast. Usually, this event is held in November when cooler temps prevail. As the East Lake super observed, no one asked him about what would happen to the greens if the event were moved up two months and in the summer heat. I mean, Augusta National closes for the season every May and doesn’t re-open until November for exactly this reason. Oh well, it really didn’t matter when it comes to the best player in the world competing. Tiger can sink putts on heavy shag carpeting.

And that’s why the inaugural playoff set-up and FedEx Cup turned out so well. We all stayed glued to the tube these past few weeks to see Tiger Woods continue his amazing dominance and command of the game. **MG**