



Thank You, Mr. Jones

By Art McCafferty

This year, I visited Michigan's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and it was a phenomenal experience. Jones, one of the great golf architects of the world, left his imprint on four of our golf courses, Oakland Hills CC, The Heather at Boyne Highlands, Point O' Woods CC and Treetops.

Our first stop was at The Heather at Boyne Highlands. The Heather was a benchmark course in that it brought golfers in numbers to northern Michigan. It was, with the exception of the Jewel at the Grand Hotel, the first destination course in Michigan. It was also a course that regularly made Golf Digest's 100 Best Courses list in the 1970's and most of the 80's, even when it was split up for a time with the emerging Moor course.

Two years ago, the course was all gussied up for the Michigan Amateur, and it delivered big time. By the end of the week, writers, players and officials ran out of superlatives. It was great.

Photo courtesy of Robert Trent Jones Library



Robert Trent Jones

Point O' Woods, like The Heather, was a regular in Golf Digest's Top 100 course list. It only recently fell off the list.

While the Western Amateur's run at Point O' Woods is over, there is still the thought from club members that there are other tournaments out there that they can host.

We shall see.



Western Amateur

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNIJpX-CCXI>

The second leg of the trip has actually been an annual trek for the past six years. Point O' Woods CC has been the host of the The Western Amateur for four decades, this being the last time. Our company was in charge of creating the program and thus, we were in attendance at the last six tournaments.

Great amateurs and later great pros have wandered the pristine fairways along with throngs that sometimes reached over 10,000 in number. Nicklaus, Mickelson, Woods, Hutton and just about anyone who is anybody on the PGA Tour has golfed this course. To a man, they feel that this is one of the great golf courses in the U.S.

Millions of words have been written about Oakland Hills CC in the past and certainly hundreds of thousands this year during its hosting of the PGA Championship. Designed by renown architect Donald Ross, it was one of Detroit's great courses over its first three decades until Robert Trend Jones arrived for his famous U.S. Open make over. It was after his famous tweaking of the course, to set it up for the U.S. Open, that Ben Hogan called it the monster. With that remark, both Oakland Hills and Robert Trent Jones reputations grew.

During the U.S. Amateur, the Monster was humbled by the blasts



Boyne Golf

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

Photo previous page: The Opening Hole at the Heather. Photo opposite page: Pointe O' Woods Hole No. 8



Photo by Resort & Golf Marketing



Photo by Art McCafferty

Perhaps Oakland Hills hosting of the Ryder Cup will be its greatest and most lasting moment.

of winner Ricky Barnes. It was then that the call went out to the newly anointed course doctor, Rees Jones, the son of Robert Trent Jones. "When I interviewed for the job, I said, 'I've been waiting for this call my whole life,' The changes my father made at Oakland Hills, which was the first course strengthened after World War II, catapulted his career.

The Rees Jones re-model put back the teeth into the Monster. In fact, until the course underwent a

soaking rain, the scores were seldom in the red.



**Oakland Hills hosts
35th Ryder Cup**

<http://michigangolfer.tv/2008shows/oaklandhills/>

Photo opposite page: Robert Trent Jones says the par-5 first hole at Treetops is one of the top opening holes of a golf course in America.

Treetops, the last course designed in Michigan by Robert Trent Jones, brought the Golf Mecca tag line to Gaylord and made it a golf destination. Treetops, like The Bear and other 80's courses, was built to be a demanding course with a rating in the upper 130 range. The course, the deep pockets of Harry Melling and a young energetic golf pro, Rick Smith, soon put the course and resort on the map. Four other courses followed, three by Rick Smith and one by Tom Fazio, to flesh out the Northeastern part of Michigan as the golf mecca.

Treetops has sired a number of tournaments, the Pepsi Fall Charity Invitational, now in its 21st year, started the same year the course came on board. Treetops has been softened over the past two decades, but it can still cause some havoc, if you go to the back tees.



**Treetops
Robert Trent Jones
Masterpiece**

<http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/treetops/>

Michigan has been blessed with the work of some of our nation's finest golf architects, such as Arthur Hills, Bruce and Jerry Matthews, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Rees Jones, Tom Weiskopf and Jim Engh. However, none can match up to the legacy of Robert Trent Jones **MG**



Photo courtesy of Treetops