



Summer of Championship Golf Ahead

By Kelly Hill

If it's time to stow the clubs for a while in favor of watching the game as it is meant to be played, it must be summer in Michigan. The state is blessed with a PGA Tour event, two Champions Tour events, a four-legend, par-3 shootout which this year will feature the reigning Masters champion, one of the most active and best

organized PGA sections in the nation and a true promoter of amateur golf, the Golf Association of Michigan.

So take a short break from your game, find a little shade and watch some of the state's, nation's and world's best players compete around Michigan this summer. Here's a quick look at what you can expect.

Buick Open

Scheduled for July 29 through Aug. 1, the state's only PGA Tour event is hosted by Warwick Hills Golf and Country Club in Grand Blanc. The tournament's purse has been increased to \$4 million this year, with the winner to take home \$720,000. Jim Furyk is the defending champion as, at 21-under for

the tournament, he edged Tiger Woods by two strokes last summer.

Farmers Charity Classic

Played on half of the Ridge and half of the Valley courses at Egypt Valley Country Club in Ada, this 54-hole Champions Tour event is scheduled for June 4-6, Doug Tewell is the defending champion in this \$1.6 million tournament which, for the first time, will feature the dominating game of Hale Irwin.

Tewell, who lives in Edmond, Okla., and Eamonn Darcy of Ireland finished 54 holes tied at 15-under. They then went three playoff holes before Tewell eventually won with a 14-foot birdie putt.

Ford Senior Players Championship

This \$2.5 million Champions Tour event is played at the TPC of Michigan, in Dearborn. Craig

Stadler is the defending champion. This year's tournament, and its many related festivities, are scheduled for July 5-11.

Par-3 Shootout

Reigning Masters champion Phil Mickelson will be among the four legends of the game who are scheduled to play in the annual two-day Par-3 Shootout at Treetops in Gaylord. It is slated



*Arnold Palmer, Fred Couples, Lee Trevino and Phil Mickelson compete at the 2002 Par-3 Shootout.
Photo Courtesy of Treetops Resort.*

this year for June 28-29 which, unfortunately, conflicts with the first two rounds of the Michigan Open.

A year ago, two days after finishing tied for fourth in the U.S. Senior Open at Inverness Club in Toledo, Fuzzy Zoeller won the Par-3 Shootout. Zoeller won two holes worth \$100,000 apiece in the final round and finished with \$330,000. 2002 winner, Fred Couples finished with \$90,000, as did Lee Trevino, who was shut out in the final round. Mickelson, who was suffering from a sore neck last year, won \$30,000 in the tournament.

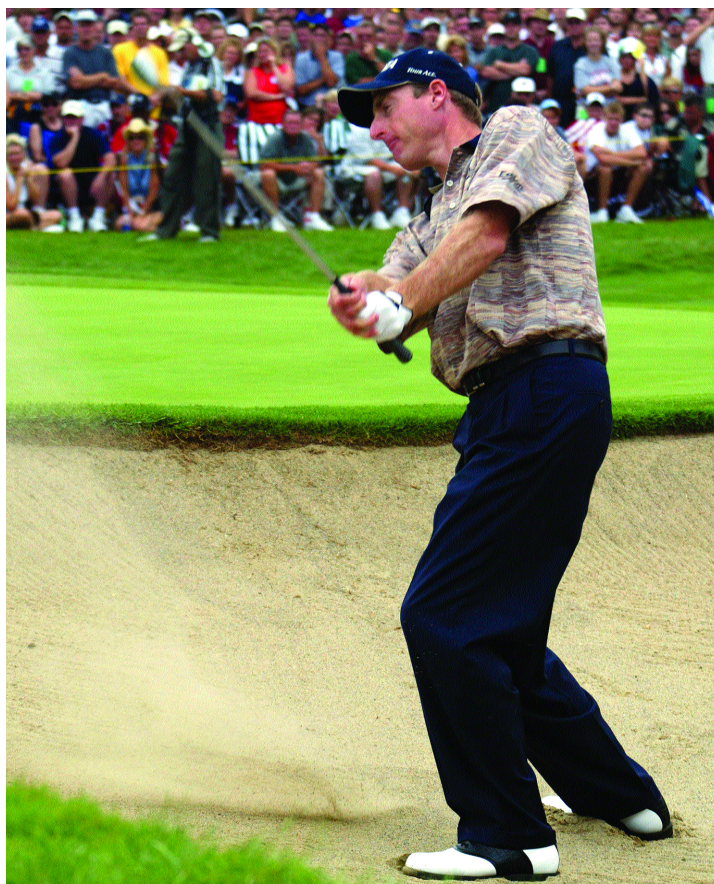
Michigan Open

The Michigan PGA's crown jewel, played late each June on The Bear at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, is scheduled this year for June 28 through July 1.

Bob Ackerman of West Bloomfield won last year's Open, when he edged Bryan Snyder of Detroit Golf Club on the first hole of a playoff. The victory was Ackerman's second in the Michigan Open and made him the first player ever to win the Michigan Open and Michigan Senior Open in the same season. He won last year's Michigan Senior Open at Bedford Valley Golf Club in Battle Creek. Ackerman, who owns Bob Ackerman Golf Academy, won the 1975 Michigan Open as an amateur.

Michigan PGA Championship

Shanty Creek in Bellaire is the site of this late-summer champi-



*Jim Furyk won the 2003 Buick Open.
Photo by Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios.*



Bob Ackerman won the Michigan Open in 2003 after having won the same tournament as an amateur in 1975. Photo by Art McCafferty.

onship. It is slated this year for Aug. 23-25. One of the best players in the history of Michigan golf, J.R. Roth, is the defending champion.

Roth won his fourth Michigan PGA Championship last year, finishing the 54-hole event at 10-under, five strokes ahead of Robert Pillard and John Traub. Roth, who is the head pro at Knollwood Country Club in West Bloomfield, fired a 1-under 71 on the Cedar River course at Shanty Creek to claim the 10th Michigan major championship of his career.

Tournament of Champions

You have to have won something to even qualify for this Michigan PGA tournament scheduled this year for July 19-21 on the Alpine and Monument courses at Boyne Mountain.

Recent MSU graduate Stacy Snider, a Grandville native, surprised the field by becoming the first woman ever to win the event, which features pros, amateurs, men, women and juniors.

Playing in only her second tournament as a professional, Snider, who now lives in East Lansing, won the Michigan PGA's Tournament of Champions when she posted a 1-under 71 in the final round. Snider, a former Big Ten champion while at MSU and the 2000 women's state amateur champion, finished one stroke ahead of five-time Michigan Open Champion Scott



Chris Botsford is the 2003 Western Amateur Champion.

Photo by Clarence Solmin/

Hebert and former Michigan PGA and Open champion Jack Seltzer. She finished 9-under in the 54-hole event and collected the \$17,250 winner's share of the \$100,000 purse.

Michigan Women's Open

Snider finished fifth in last year's Michigan Women's Open, which was won by Breanne Hall of Kentwood in a playoff with Allison Fouch of Grand Rapids. Former LPGA star Elaine Crosby had won the event the two previ-

ous years. This year's tournament is scheduled for July 26-28 at Crystal Mountain.

Michigan Amateur Championship

A pair of West Michigan players squared off in last year's finale of the biggest amateur tournament in the state. Presented by the Golf Association of Michigan, the state's amateur championship will celebrate its 93rd playing this summer. It is slated for June 22-26 at Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club.

One of the most grueling events in golf, this tournament features two rounds of stroke play, after which the field is cut to the low 64. Two matches per day are then played, for three days, until the champion is crowned.

Colby Beckstrom of North Muskegon beat A.J. Balulis of Baldwin 5 and 3 in last year's championship match.

Bay Mills Open

The Bay Mills Open is one of the jewels of the Canadian Tour. Wild Bluff Golf Course at Bay Mills Casino and Resort hosts The Canadian Tour's Players Championship August 23-29 in Brimley, Michigan. High School sensation Michelle Wie almost made the cut in 2003. Defending champion Rodney Butcher took home a \$37,600 check.

Western Amateur Championship

Point O' Woods Golf and Country Club in Benton, Harbor, Michigan hosts the 102nd Western Amateur Championship July 28-August 1, 2004. Defending champion Chris Botsford is in the com-

pany of previous winners Phil Mickelson, Tiger Woods, Tom Weiskopf and Justin Leonard.

Considered the "Masters" of amateur golf, the Western Amateur combines tradition with the competition of the nations' top amateurs. **MG**



Stacy Snider is the first woman to win the Tournament of Champions.
Photo by Kevin Frisch.