

Summer Tournament Schedule One Event Lighter

By Kelly Hill
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The loss of a title sponsor has cost Michigan one of its major annual tournaments. The Champions Tour will not visit the Grand Rapids area this summer as the long-running tournament, last known as the Farmers Charity Classic will no longer be played. The event had been billed as “West Michigan’s Premier Sporting Event.”

Golf fans around the state who wish to see some of the legends of the game will still have the opportunity, however, at the annual Ford Senior Players Championship at the TPC of Michigan, in Dearborn.

Michigan golf fans also may have to make a few logistical decisions this summer, particularly during the final week of July. The Buick Open, Western Amateur Championship and the Michigan Women’s Open all will be played during the same week.

Here is a quick look at the upcoming summer tournament schedule:

The Buick Open

Vijay Singh will attempt to defend his championship when the state’s only stop on the PGA Tour is played July 25-31 at Warwick Hills in Grand Blanc. Singh’s victory last year was his fourth of the season and came by just one stroke over John Daly and two over Tiger Woods.



Wild Bluff Golf Course hosted the 2004 Bay Mills Open Players Championship.
Photo by Art McCafferty

The Ford Senior Players Championship

Now the only Champions Tour stop in Michigan, the event played at Dearborn’s TPC of Michigan is scheduled for July 4-10 and will carry a purse of \$2.5 million. Mark James became a first-time champion on the Champions Tour when he won last year’s tournament by one stroke over Jose Maria Canizares and two over Bruce Fleisher. James finished at 13-under, despite a 1-over 73 in the final round.

The Bay Mills Open

The Canadian Tour stops in Michigan August 22-28 this year, as

the Bay Mills Open Players Championship will be played at Wild Bluff Golf Course in Brimley. Golf fans can enjoy a full week of quality action by attending the Michigan PGA Championship Monday through Wednesday of that week, prior to heading to Bay Mills.

The Western Amateur

Tiger Woods, Hal Sutton and Andy North are among the stars who won this title before turning professional. Played at Point O’ Woods Golf Club in Benton Harbor from July 25-31 this year, the tournament is known as the “Masters” of amateur golf. Ryan Moore beat Australian James

Nitties on the first extra hole to claim last year's crown. Moore also won last year's U.S. Publinxer, the U.S. Amateur Championship and won Arnold Palmer's Turning Point Invitational at the Country Club of Detroit.

The Michigan Open

The state open will be played for the 25th time on The Bear at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Acme. Slated for June 27-30, the Michigan Open was won last year by Knollwood Country Club pro Jeff Roth, who will be inducted in the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame on May 15. Roth shot a 4-under 68 in the final round to finish three strokes ahead of Eric Jorgensen of Grandville and Mike Austin of Burton. It was Roth's second Open title, as he also won in 1998.

The Michigan Women's Open

Scheduled for July 25-27 at Crystal Mountain in Thompsonville, the state's top women's tournament was won last year by Grandville native Stacy Snider, who played collegiately at Michigan State. Snider won a year ago on the first hole of a playoff with Amy Malinaric of Rancho Mirage, CA.

The Tournament of Champions

The most unusual event in the state each summer, this tournament features men, women, professionals, amateurs, seniors and juniors. Played on the Monument and Alpine courses at Boyne Mountain Resort, and scheduled for July 18-20 this year, the tournament was won last year by Eric Jorgensen, who last summer played regularly

on the NGA Hooters Tour. He finished four strokes ahead of five-time Michigan Open champion Scott Hebert and six strokes ahead of two-time LPGA Tour champion Elaine Crosby.

The Michigan PGA Championship

Slated for Aug. 22-24 at Shanty Creek in Bellaire, the state's PGA Championship was won last year by Joe Pollack, who almost blew the six-stroke lead he enjoyed entering the tournament's final eight holes. Pollack, who was a part-time instructor at Boulder Creek Golf Club in suburban Grand Rapids, won his first major Michigan championship by one stroke over Ron Beurmann of the Country Club of Jackson.

The Michigan Amateur Championship

The 94th state amateur championship is scheduled this year for June 21-25 at Muskegon Country Club. Last year, 19-year-old Jeff Cuzzort of Grosse Ile won the title at Grosse Ile Golf and Country Club, where he had served as a caddie for two seasons. Cuzzort defeated MSU sophomore Matt Harmon 3 and 2 in the championship match.



Ryan Moore won the 102nd Western Amateur, then took top honors at Arnold Palmer's Turning Point Invitational. – Photo by Clarence Sormin.

The Women's Michigan Amateur Championship

Now presented by the Golf Association of Michigan, the tournament is scheduled for July 13-15 at Radrick Farms. Sarah Martin and Jenna Walter, both of whom had finished second in previous women's state amateur championships, needed four extra holes before Martin won the 88th playing of the tournament last year. Martin was a senior at MSU last year. **MG**