

Hangin' Out with Pete Dye at the Ryder Cup

By Art McCafferty

I had the opportunity to hang out with arguably the greatest living architect of our time, Pete Dye, during the Ryder Cup. It actually proved to be more thrilling than watching the meltdown of the U.S. team on the final day of play. Dye is getting up there in years and is fighting a battle with cancer and thus sightings and opportunities to converse with him will become all too rare.

This was Dye's fifth Ryder Cup, having watched the past four on U.S. soil and the last match at The Belfry. We watched most of the pairings from the point in the 10th fairway, where most of the drives were landing. His knowledge of the players and their games was extraordinary. He also praised the course and Oakland Hills greens. They were the first greens to have

a substructure and he watched Robert Trent Jones build them for the 1951 Open. He felt they would hold up to the test at hand, and they did.

His other tie to Michigan was the design of the University of Michigan's Radrick Farms. He went up against Dick Wilson and Robert Trent Jones for the job, but Harlan Hatcher gave him the responsibility. He said he stole most of his ideas from Jones for Radrick Farms and chuckled when Jones later told him he had done some nice work as an architect and that he particularly liked the work he did at Radrick Farms. He said he was asked to look at upgrading Radrick Farms, when the Buick Open was available a couple of years ago, but he didn't think it would work because of opposition from faculty and others. He was also in town to lobby Larry Peck,

marketing director for Buick, to see if they would be interested in bringing the Buick Open to Indiana on an every-other-year basis. He also mentioned that there was not much happening on the proposed Boyne course.

In discussing life with another famous Dye, Alice, he said that her book, *Alice Dye: From Birdies to Bunkers*, had vastly out-sold his book, *Bury Me in a Pot Bunker*. The books collectively represent over 100 years in the golf business. They also serve to chronicle their lives since they met in college, just after Pete returned from active duty.

They were outstanding amateur golfers when growing up, she having won the Indiana Women's Amateur seven times, he winning

*Photo opposite: Pete Dye (left)
and Art McCafferty*

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the Indiana Amateur once and finishing second twice. He said that Alice was asked to play in the Indiana Amateur this year as a guest celebrity and did surprisingly well. "I left her at the course that morning and when I returned to pick her up, I was prepared to console her. Instead, when she got in the car, she said she had beaten the defending champion by shooting a 74." Pete also confessed to setting the course record, a 74, at the opening of his new TPC course in New Orleans. He beat a couple of tour players, although he was play-

We did an Internet TV show with Mike David, the Executive Director of the Indiana PGA and Indiana Golf Association, a couple of years ago, showing off the HOF. You can see this show at <http://michigangolfer.tv/2003shows/show10/index.html>.

Dye doesn't really know exactly how many courses he has designed, but feels that it is north of 80. His sons, P.B Dye and Perry Dye are both architects. I have worked with both of them on courses, but they are really just friendly competitors. He indicated

chandize on Saturday, and Mr. Kohler, said, 'Not here they won't.' They ordered heavily and had a fire sale right after the event and sold out everything. Kohler has a new piece of property in Ireland and we are looking at building something there. He is a powerful man, who individually owns the largest plumbing company in the world. I am probably the only person that stands up to him. We have had some interesting conversations about what he wants on the golf course; he still does not know that much about golf course design."

During the Ryder Cup, Dye

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ing from the white tees.

On his ties with higher education: Dye designed the newest Purdue course at the Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex and has helped raise millions for the school. He also hires students right out of college to work with him in the construction of his courses. He has the client pay the students directly and he supplies the direction. He sketches out his designs and is not that enamored with the world of computers.

He also worked to raise funds for the establishment of the Indiana Golf Hall of Fame. In addition, he built a par-3 course there for instructional purposes.

that P.B has a mind of his own and that he does not get involved very much with his projects. "He does not want me around," Dye said. He thought that Perry had done a nice job with a course in Japan.

He felt that the pros would score 8-10 under on his Whistling Straits course in Wisconsin. It is a resort course and the greens were designed for fast play. "The ground was flat when we started and Mr. Kohler wanted an Irish looking course, so we began to dig. They had over 300,000 people go through there during the tournament. The PGA sold more merchandise at that tournament than they ever did. I remembered that one PGA official said that they would most likely start to run out of mer-

continued to keep in contact with work that he and Chris Lutzke were doing at the New River course in Virginia. "We are not renovating it, but we are totally making a new course out of it. It has frontage on the New River and it is at a point on the river where there are rapids. It is a very exciting piece of property.

As wave after wave of PGA officials passed by our spot, many of them recognized him and then stopped to say 'Hello' to Dye. As the last two-some passed us on the 10th fairway, we parted ways. As I watched him head toward the clubhouse I knew that one of my most memorable moments at the Ryder Cup was hanging out with Pete Dye. *MG*