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VOL.9 NO.3

AUG/SEPT 2019

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Marcoux Wins New England Amateur

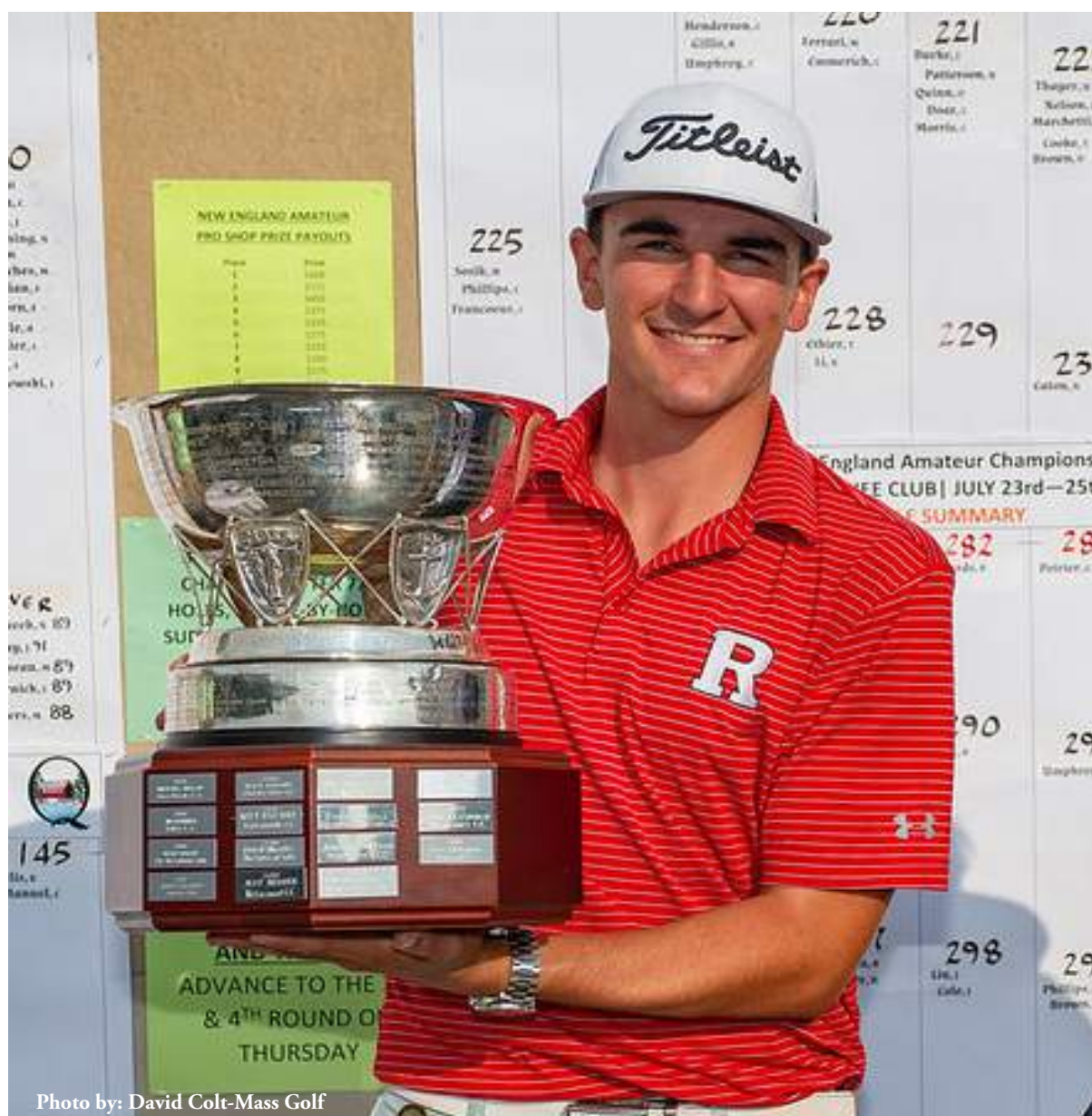


Photo by: David Colt-Mass Golf

18-Year-Old Xavier Marcoux held off Bobby Leopold to win the North East Amateur at The Quechee Club

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18-Year-Old Marcoux Wins New England Amateur

Massachusetts junior golfer Xavier Marcoux, of Concord, spent the week's 90th New England Golf Association's Amateur Championship at Vermont's The Quechee Club near the top of the leaderboard, having improved on his under-par round in each of the previous two days. In Thursday's 36-hole finale, the 18-year old, who will compete for Rutgers University beginning this September, carded matching 3-under 69 rounds in both the morning and afternoon to capture the 2019 Championship title.

Marcoux fired a three-day, four-round 9-under 279 to edge Rhode Island's Bobby Leopold, the 2017 NEGA Amateur champion, by one stroke and topped the rest of the 42 competitors who had advanced to Thursday's final rounds en route to being crowned champion.

"It's been a long time since my last win, so it definitely feels good to have my name on a trophy like

that with such history here in New England Golf," said Marcoux on capturing the Harry B. McCracken Trophy, named after the longtime NEGA Executive Secretary who was on site to award Marcoux the trophy.

After finishing the round, Marcoux had to wait for Leopold and two other groups to finish before his spot atop the leaderboard became finalized.

In Thursday morning's round, Marcoux opened up play on the 10th tee of Quechee Club's Highland Course by tallying birdies on three of his first five holes to move up from his T3 spot on the leaderboard where he had started the day up into the top spot. Despite two bogeys on the par-4 15th hole and par-3 17th holes prior to making the turn to his second nine in the morning, he was able to record another two birdies on the par-4 third hole and par-5 fourth hole to move back to 3-under for the round and 6-under through three rounds.

In the afternoon round, Marcoux,

a recent graduate of Florida's Bishops Gate Golf Academy, registered three birdies on his front nine and erased a back nine bogey with a fourth birdie on the par-4 15th to keep his spot atop the leaderboard. Leopold, who had fired a 4-under 68 in his morning round Thursday, courtesy of an eagle and three birdies, bogeyed three of his final four holes Thursday afternoon to finish at 1-under 71 for the afternoon and at 8-under 280 for the tournament.

On what went right Thursday, Marcoux said, "This afternoon was pretty steady. I didn't make a bogey until I got to the 12th hole and I kind of just told myself I could get one more." He added, "I felt like I minimized my mistakes really well. So when I was out of position, I was back in position right away."

Coming off a medalist finish two weeks ago at the U.S. Amateur Championship qualifier at Andover Country Club (Mass.), where he

had to play 36-holes to advance to his first USGA championship, Marcoux said the experience was key in his performance on the day. The previous two days of competition at the NEGA Amateur Championship were conducted at 18-holes.

"Thirty-six holes is definitely a very long day," explained Marcoux. "I learned a lot in my U.S. Amateur qualifier a couple weeks ago. You have to focus on one shot at a time, and you can't be thinking about the end goal. You have to definitely keep plotting your way around the golf course."

With his victory in the New England Amateur Championship Thursday, Marcoux becomes the first Massachusetts competitor to win the regional tournament since Gloucester's James Turner earned the feat at Hartford (Conn.) Golf Club in 2016. Since the tournament's inception in 1926, 36 players from Massachusetts have taken home the NEGA Amateur trophy.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to our second issue of Southern New England Golfer as a strictly online publication. I must admit that it was great not having a printing bill come into the office this month. Hopefully you are enjoying snegolfer.com in its new format. I still think that it is much easier to read on a computer screen rather than a small telephone. More and more of you are subscribing every day, so it seems that readers have found their way online to the publication.

This issue is called the Competition Issue for an obvious reason. There are so many tournaments that have taken place since our last issue on June 12. Wasn't that a great win by Chez Reavie at the Travelers in Cromwell, Ct.? It was his first win in 10 years. The staff at the Travelers' event, led by Andy Bessette and Nathan Grube, does an outstanding job. It was more difficult this year with the heat and wet weather, but the crowds were still outstanding.

This reporter covered the final round of the Northeast Amateur at Wannamoisett C.C. Those kids can play. Weather interfered with the last round as a thunderstorm came from out of the blue to delay play for over two hours with the leaders still on the ninth hole. Garrett May lost the lead that he had from the beginning of the tournament, but regained it by the end of the final round. The delay caused some of the players to miss flights to the next tournament, and one player was heading for Australia.

You must read the Junior pages on 12 and 13. What players who have been part of the U.S. Challenge Cup are accomplishing is amazing. Dave Adamonis, Jr. does a fine job in running this organization that might be the best junior golf program in the country. Keegan Bradley, who just finished second at the Travelers and then won the CVS Health Charity Classic the next day with Brooke Henderson and Billy Andrade, is one of the graduates of

the U.S. Challenge Cup. In fact the recommendation from Dave was instrumental in getting Bradley a scholarship at St. Johns University where he won ten tournaments during his four years in college.

I love the (British) Open. It is the most fun to watch of all the majors. You can set your DVR and watch the event when you wake up each of the four mornings. How could you not root for Shane Lowry? I've heard that he is still celebrating along with all the Irish lads and lassies.

Since pages used are not so important and you don't have to have blocks of eight for the printer, we decided to run a whole page of CVS Health Charity Classic volunteers. Larry Merlo, CEO of CVS Health talked about the importance of volunteers in making the tournament a success. "We can not have such a successful event without all the volunteers who make this event run," said Merlo at the closing ceremony. We decided to showcase (or at least put in headshots) of many of them. Hope you see someone that you know. If you do, say "Thanks."

We went up to Maine for our travel story this issue. If you've been to any of the golf shows in New England you have probably heard of the Maine Golf Trifecta. We played three excellent courses and stayed at the Maine Inn at Poland Spring Resort. The history of the place is worth the trip alone, but you will really like the golf at the three courses that are part of the Trifecta.

Our next issue will be on September 29. We will be sending out stories each week to all of our subscribers in the meantime. Keep your head down and swing easy and tell all your friends to subscribe to snegolfer.com. It will never cost anything, you won't ever be harassed with unwanted emails, and you might just see some golf news that is interesting. Regards,

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Publishing Information: *Southern New England Golfer* is published 5 times per year: May, June, August, October, and December.

Editorial: Mail all articles, releases, and other items to Editor, *Southern New England Golfer*, P.O. BOX 10038, Cranston, RI 02910. Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. All rights reserved.

Advertising: *Southern New England Golfer* is not responsible for advertising copy. Corrected advertising will be placed in future issues. For advertising information call 401-464-8445 or visit website www.snegolfer.com.

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O'Leary wins Rhode Island Amateur

Andrew O'Leary won't turn 20 until just before Christmas. He'll soon be starting his second year at Notre Dame University. He cannot yet buy a drink.

But he's the best amateur golfer in Rhode Island right now.

O'Leary, who lives in Norfolk, Mass., and plays out of Pawtucket Country Club, won the 114th R.I. Amateur Championship during Fourth of July week at Shelter Harbor Golf Club in Charlestown, R.I. And the 2018 graduate of Catholic Memorial High says he has only just begun.

"The ultimate goal is the PGA Tour," O'Leary said. "But for right now I'm more focused on college and the NCAA. An NCAA finals championship for our team, that's what I want now. It's a more feasible goal – for now."

In May, O'Leary, a two-time Massachusetts high school state champ, was able to play Shelter Harbor for the first time. He knew then that the course, with its long, wide fairways and multi-tiered greens, would offer him the opportunity for victory.

"It set up perfectly for me," he said. "I was able to hit it past a lot of players and keep it in the fairways. The course puts a premium on approach shots because of all the tiers on the greens. 'If you're on the wrong tier, it's tough to two-putt,'" he continued. "But I had a short iron in my hands most of the time and was able to get it close to the hole."

O'Leary's premonition came true. He captured the medal play portion of the five-day event by three strokes. Match play proved far more difficult.

In the semifinal round, O'Leary took on 32-year-old Kolby Simmons of Attleboro and Crestwood Country Club in Rehoboth, the reigning Attleboro Area Golf Association Open champion. Simmons jumped into an early lead, going three up after four holes.

O'Leary rallied but found himself down by three again after 11 holes. It took birdies on the final three holes for O'Leary to eke out a one-up victory. "He played VERY well," O'Leary said Simmons. "He gave me everything he had."

The 36-hole final featured O'Leary versus Bobby Leopold, winner of the 2009 and 2014 R.I. Amateur. "He's a real veteran, year in and year out one of the best in the state," O'Leary



Andrew O'Leary

said of his opponent. "He knew just what he needed to do to win. I was very fortunate to prevail."

The teenager and the veteran battled it over the entire day. Neither player ever led by more than two holes. O'Leary was able to wear down his foe, eventually winning the match 3 & 1.

"Your legs, your feet, your arms, everything is pretty much worn out," he said. "But it's your mind that really gets tired. You can't think about how exhausted your body is because it takes the focus off each shot you have to make. So, it's really a test of your mind."

When O'Leary finally held the championship trophy, the feeling of joy – and exhaustion – was overwhelming. That's not surprising considering he had played eight rounds of golf over five days. "It took me three or four days to recover mentally and be able to pick up a club again," he said.

Not playing is unusual for O'Leary, who practices for five to six hours a day, seven days a week, in order to compete at the Division 1 college level. "You add that up over the course of a week and it's like a full-time job," he said. "But if you don't put in the work, other kids will and before long they'll be lapping you."

Practice is especially challenging for young players from the cold Northeast. He spends long hours in indoor ranges instead of in warm sunshine and green grass. "You practice indoors until it gets to about 45 (degrees) and you can go outside," he said. "In some ways, it can make you a better player. You learn how

to focus and how to play when it's 45 degrees with a 20 mile-an-hour

wind. It's a different golf than the guys in warmer climates face."

This summer, O'Leary is playing regional amateur tournaments and getting ready for his sophomore year at Notre Dame, where he is a teammate of Davis Chatfield of Bishop Feehan High School in Attleboro. Last year, he was able to play as the number 3 player for the Fighting Irish, and he wants to build on that in the season ahead.

To do that, he has been utilizing the analytics employed by Notre Dame to hone his game. "Working on my wedge game, trying to put it close to the pin," O'Leary said. "That's what the guys do on the PGA Tour, and like I said, that's the ultimate goal."

Mike Kirby, former editor-in-chief of *The Sun Chronicle of Attleboro*, can be reached at mkirbygolf18@gmail.com.






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Fix your Clubface for Straighter Shots

How many of you out there have directional problems in your golf game? Slicing or hooking the ball is a common problem we see and you need to be able to make the proper adjustments to enjoy the game. Unfortunately, the many adjustments I hear people make, such as "I'm trying to keep my head down" are not really fixing the problem.

Ball curvature is defined by the following: The **PATH** in which you swing the golf club in your downswing (left, right or down the target line) combined with the position of the **CLUBFACE** at impact (open, closed or square) relative to the path will determine the curvature of the golf ball. The Gear Effect we discussed in the before (hitting on the toe makes it go left, and hitting on the heel makes it go right for right-handers) will also have a say in the flight of the ball, but let's assume for now in this article that we have center-face contact. Of the two factors

(Path & Face), the Clubface has the most influence, as it is responsible for 75% of the starting direction of the ball with an iron and 85% with a driver. So, improving the position of the clubface at impact will have a big effect on your ball flight.

How do we go about fixing things? Well, if you have a ball flight that curves to the right, then the clubface is open to your path. This will produce a slicing effect and is the most common ball flight problem that we see. There are a few basic things to look at to help get a more square clubface at impact: **1.** How is your grip (weak, neutral or strong position) – a more weak or neutral grip could lead to an open clubface at impact. **2.** Grip Pressure (tight or loose) – the tighter you grip the club, the less flexibility you have in your hands and wrists to allow them to rotate the clubface properly through the downswing. **3.** Do you rotate the clubface open excessively in the backswing – learn the concept

of a toe-up position as you take the club away.

The opposite would be true for a ball that curves to the left, the clubface being closed to your path. This will produce a hooking effect. **1.** Your grip may be too strong. **2.** Grip pressure may be too loose. **3.** The clubface may be too closed in the backswing.

As I stated earlier, these are just a few of the obvious things we look at, and there are other factors that may influence your clubface. Try a few of these tips mentioned above to see if you could find a straighter ball flight. You can also sign up for a TrackMan Analysis at our Golf Academy to get some great feedback on your swing & golf ball flight.

Todd Campbell is the owner of the Golf Academy at Mulligan's Island in Cranston. He writes an Instruction column in each issue of SNE Golfer. He can be reached at 508-951-4371 or at toddcampbell@pga.com

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Viktor Hovland

Age: 21
Birthplace: Oslo, Norway
Family: Single
College: Oklahoma St
Turned Pro: 2019



We have never featured a rising star who was 21 years old, and never one from Norway. Viktor Hovland just turned professional at this year's Travelers Championship in June after helping lead Oklahoma State to the NCAA Championship.

The week before becoming a pro he was the low amateur at the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. Hovland's score of 280 that left him tied for 12th at the Open, and broke the all-time record that had been held by Jack Nicklaus.

Maybe it was being a pro for the first time that affected Hovland as he tied for 54th and earned \$16,500 at the Travelers. The following week he rose to 13th and won \$137,000, the following week he was also 13th and won \$128,000. At the John Deere the next week he finished 16th and earned \$99,000.

He is running out of weeks to earn enough to get in the FedEx Cup, but he will certainly be in the running for many years to come.

Garrett May Wins Northeast Amateur

Once Garrett May reached the fifth tee, the five-shot lead he worked so hard to build was gone. Not because someone caught him, but because he had made more mistakes in those first four holes than he had in the previous 56 holes combined.

A double bogey at No. 3 (par 3, 136 yards) and a triple bogey on No. 4 (par 4, 432 yards), after hitting his tee shot out of bounds, reduced his lead to only a share instead of the commanding one he had held all week. "After I lost the five-shot lead, I was reeling," said May. Then I thought to myself that I was still tied for the lead and they hadn't given the trophy to anyone else yet. I just dug in and said 'we are going to be patient and we are going to do this.' My lead was gone and I needed to move forward."

Despite a final-round 74, May used his tremendous grit, willpower and determination to claim a wire-to-wire victory in the 58th Northeast Amateur Invitational at Wannamoisett Country Club (par 69, 6,760 yards).

He's the first golfer from Baylor University to win the Northeast Amateur. His 72-hole total of 269 (7 under) was good enough for a two-shot victory over 28-year-old Stewart Hagestad of Newport Beach, Calif. and 22-year-old Scott Stevens of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Disheveled and angry, May was looking for almost anything to help him get back on track. He was 5-over through eight and lost. But then a loud horn blew. Players were escorted off the course due to lightning in the areas surrounding Wannamoisett. Play was halted at 2:00 p.m. and delayed for two hours.

"When officials first sounded the horn I was really upset because I didn't want to come off the course because I was agitated," said May, 22, of Texarkana, Texas. "But when I got around some of the guys and chilled out a little bit, I realized it was exactly what I needed. It allowed me to reset."

That time proved invaluable for May who regained control of the lead after an unlikely birdie at No. 11 (par 4, 402 yards). He canned a 30-footer that put him back in front. "The turn of the round was when I made my putt on No. 11," said May. "It was a terrible lie on the fringe and was up against a clump of grass. I had to chop down on the putt and



Garrett May led the Northeast Amateur from start to finish

all I wanted to do was get the speed right. That turned the corner for me because Scott [Stevens] missed his birdie. All of a sudden I had a lead again and that gave me the confidence I needed to get away from thinking I was behind the 8-ball."

He regained a four-shot lead after a birdie on No. 14 (par 4, 374 yards). He hit a 9-iron from 160 yards to two feet to get to 9-under-par. After a nifty up-and-down on No. 16 (par 4, 447 yards) from the thick rough short and left of the green, May had a four-shot lead going to the par 5, 17th (519 yards).

After losing a five-shot lead, there was no way he was going to make it close again, right? Wrong. After hitting his tee shot into the left rough, the prudent play would be to lay up and eliminate disaster. But he stayed aggressive, maybe too much so, and hit his 4-iron out of bounds.

"I was thinking I needed to push that 4-iron up to the front of the green to make an easy par or birdie," said May. "I did the one thing you couldn't which was let the club turn over. It was so uncalled for and stupid. I was steaming afterward."

Luckily for May, the best score in the clubhouse was Hagestad at 5 under but his playing competitor Stevens had just birdied No. 17 to get to 6 under, one shot back.

"Once Garrett hit it out of bounds, I knew I could have a chance if I made birdie," said Stevens. "I had a chance to win at the end of the day when it might have looked like I might not have."

After finding the fairway on No. 18 with his drive, he hit a pitching wedge from 144 yards to 25 feet and two-putted for the win because of Stevens' bogey at the last.

Hagestad won the Joseph Sprague

Award for low Mid-Am for the third consecutive year.

Hagestad came to Wannamoisett fresh off playing in his third consecutive U.S. Open at Pebble Beach where he missed the cut.

"I love this tournament and everything about it," said Hagestad. "This is a very East Coast, old-school, golf course. While pars may

not win you the tournament, they are still a good score. For a shorter golf course, it has a lot of teeth."

Relieved and ecstatic, May reflected on the week that was and how this week was life changing in a number of ways.

"I am so humbled by winning this event," said May. "It makes me wonder if I belong with this great group of champions. I am extremely grateful and proud. I am so stoked about it. This is the biggest win of my career for sure."

May's high school golf coach at Texas High, Jay Brewer, passed away a couple of weeks ago due to a pulmonary embolism. This week turned out to be a great way for May to honor one of his idols in the game.

"He would have been really proud of how I played," said May. "He always did a great job of simplifying the game for me. If he were out here watching in-person today, he would have told me to chill, hit the ball and find the ball. He would have been proud of my attitude and how I kept my mind in it. I am proud to win for him."

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Fay and Papa Win R.I. Junior Am's

Brendan Fay said Monday after being the stroke-play medalist and No. 1 seed, he didn't think he had a shot to win the 98th Rhode Island Junior Amateur Championship. He talked himself right into it.

Fay, backed by consistent ball striking, claimed the Boys' division of the RIGA Junior Amateur after defeating No. 7 seed Harry Dessel of Rhode Island Country Club, 3&1, in the Final at Kirkbrae Country Club (par 71, 6,317 yards) Thursday.

Fay, of Metacomet Golf Club, defeated Henry Horgan of Newport, R.I., 3&2, in the morning semifinal match. "I am still surprised I won this," said Fay, 18, of Barrington, R.I. "My game wasn't solid coming into this week. I hit thousands of golf balls in the last few weeks. Once I started playing well, I knew I had a good shot to win."

After he and Dessel were deadlocked on the front nine, Fay took the advantage on No. 11 (par 4, 395 yards) after Dessel three-putted from the back of the green. "I didn't hit enough greens to keep up," said Dessel, 16, of Barrington, R.I. and an incoming sophomore at Moses Brown School. "The rest of my game was spot on and I did everything else well but I couldn't hit the ball on the green." a

Once he got the advantage, Fay's game plan started to come to fruition. "I kind of had a road map in my head of how I wanted the match to go," said Fay. "I figured if I was 1-up heading into No. 16 (par 4, 306 yards), I thought I would win the match because I have birdied that hole a lot this week. I knew Harry couldn't reach the green with his driver. So I felt comfortable."

He knew what he was talking about. Fay hit a drive on No. 16 25 yards short of the green and hit a tidy pitch from below the surface of the green to eight feet. He would convert to put Dessel dormie with two holes to play.

It was the first time all week a match of Fay's went to No. 17 (par 3, 191 yards) but he wasn't fazed. He had played the hole after each of his previous matches had concluded for practice. He hit a 5-iron to 15 feet and was conceded



Brendan Fay

a par after Dessel couldn't save his. "I have been in a big rebuilding stage for my golf swing," said Fay,

team for the third time. Dessel will also be on that team. Fay's victory continues a good



Gianna Papa

who will be running track at the College of Holy Cross in the fall. "I have been working on it all year. Coming in here without a perfect swing, I felt like I hit a lot of good shots. I was confident and you can't ask for anything more."

As a result of this victory, Fay will be a member of Rhode Island's New England Junior Invitational

amount of success for Metacomet members this season in RIGA events. Jamie Lukowicz won the John Burke Memorial (Gross), Eric Marchetti won the RIGA Four-Ball, Bruce Heterick and Dean Parziale won the Senior Four-Ball (Gross) and now Fay adds his name to that list of Metacomet winners this season.

"Metacomet has been crucial

to my development as a player," said Fay. "Everyone has been there for me and helped me improve. I can't thank them enough."

Fay's smile was endless when he received the RIGA Champion golf bag, a prize given out to only a select group of RIGA winners throughout the season. "It feels pretty cool to be the Rhode Island Junior Champion," said Fay. "I finally got the RIGA Champion golf bag. I have been looking at them for years. I can't wait to put my clubs in it."

Girls' Division

Gianna Papa had a tall task in front of her to win the RIGA Junior Girls' Amateur. She had to beat her sister Vinny.

No. 2 seed Gianna, led by a 2 under back nine, outlasted Vinny, 3&2, to claim the Junior Girls' Amateur at Kirkbrae (par 71, 5,326 yards). She defeated No. 6 seed Ava Santamaria of Alpine Country Club, 2-up, in the morning semifinal match.

Vinny and Gianna, from Foster, R.I. and Connecticut National Golf Club, embraced as only close family could after realizing they would be playing each other in the Final. "Once Vinny ran onto the green after I won my morning match, I was excited to know we were playing each other in the Final," said Gianna Papa, an incoming seventh-grader at Ponaganset Middle School. I knew it was going to be a tough and long match because we know each other's games.

Gianna put her foot on the gas on the back nine. She birdied No. 10 (par 4, 274 yards) after hitting an 8-iron from 120 yards to 20 feet. She closed the door with an unlikely birdie on No. 15 (par 3, 122 yards). A 7-iron left her about 40 feet short of the hole. When she made that putt, Vinny knew it wasn't her day. She didn't say a thing.

"I am proud of myself," said Vinny Papa, 10 and an incoming sixth-grader at Ponaganset. "My sister made more birdies than I did. I played well this week. She just got me in the end." "It means a lot to win this event," said Gianna Papa. "I have worked hard but it hasn't paid off a lot yet." Until now.

Open Championship Was Superb

Isn't the (British) Open the Best? This year's Open Championship at Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland was just so much fun to watch. Must See TV! The great thing is that you can set your DVR and wake up and watch it much faster than real time.

This reporter had the wonderful opportunity to play Royal Portrush in 2009. A group of writers from the U.S. were invited to Northern Ireland by the Tourist Board to cover the Walker Cup being held at Royal County Down. This was the event that the U.S. won on the last hole, and included Rory McIlroy, Danny Willett for the British team and Dustin Johnson, Webb Simpson and Ricky Fowler for the U.S. as well as many more future professional stars.

We got to play five courses in Northern Island, but Portrush was the most memorable. Aren't the views spectacular? They have made a few changes to the course since we were there, but minus all the stands, it looked the same.

What a great beginning to the event. Darren Clarke hit the first shot of the tournament at 6:30 a.m. local time. When we were playing there, our caddie pointed up the hill and said, "There is Darren Clarke's house. Graeme McDowell, winner of the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach in 2011 grew up in Portrush and was instrumental in bringing the Open to Northern Ireland for the first time in over 70 years. Shane Lowry lives 180 miles south in the Republic of Ireland.

The biggest draw in the field was Rory McIlroy who lives just south of Portrush in Holywood. This was the first Open in history where there were no tickets available at the gate. You had to have purchased your tickets in advance if you wanted to watch the tournament in person. The attendance for the event was announced as 237,750, the most ever except at St. Andrews.

Clarke's early start and fine early play had him on top of the leaderboard for the first two hours of the event. He eventually tired and did not make the cut, but his friends and fans surely took pictures of the leaderboard when his name was on top.

Rory McIlroy was the prohibitive favorite with the bookies. He had shot 61 at Portrush as a 16-year-old. All the pundits (including most in the U.S.A.) had McIlroy winning. Alas, it was not



Shane Lowry

to be! On the first tee, McIlroy, who is renowned as the best driver of the golf ball in all of golf, opted to hit an iron. He duck-hooked out of bounds to the left. The announcers did not say it was out of bounds immediately, but when he went to his caddie to get another ball, it was certain.

McIlroy's second tee ball (also with an iron?) also went left into the cabbage, but not out of bounds. His fourth shot was also in cabbage, and when he pitched up to the green and three-putted he had carded an 8. Being four-over after one hole is not something that anyone could imagine. As an aside, Joe Hall, a writer from Tennessee birdied that first hole when we played it in 2009. Rory's tenure in the event did not look like it would last more than the minimum two days. Bet he wished that he could have used Joe Hall's score.

The Irish lad fought back slightly the first round, but when he casually tried to putt in a ball from less than a foot, it led to another triple bogey and he settled for 79 that was eight over par. His excellent play the second day when he shot 65 (that was low for the day) left him one shot short of the cut, so all his fans could not watch him the last two days.

Shane Lowry became the crowd's favorite. He shot four-under 67 on both the first two days, and then the third day shot an amazing 63. He hit all but one green in regulation on this monster of a course. Paul Azinger, who does a fine job as a television analysis, said the greens were rolling at a 10 and the fairways at 8. Lowry seemed to use that long roll in the fairway to recover

from some of his errant tee balls.

As they finished the third round, only Tommy Fleetwood from England was within four shots of Lowry. The two played together in windy, rainy weather on the last day.

Lowry, who had lost a four-stroke

lead on the last day of the 2016 U.S. Open at Oakmont, bogeyed two of the first three holes, and certainly many of the locals were thinking about Oakmont. Lowry made a good putt for par at the fourth hole, and then never looked back as his lead grew to a large six strokes by the end of the day.

"I was worried all day," said a smiling Lowry after the round. "My good friend and caddie was able to keep me somewhat calm." Lowry won almost two million dollars for the win and now looks like a lock for next year's Ryder Cup.

Hooray for Lowry and congratulations to the folks who ran such a wonderful Open and showed off such a superb golf course. It took 68 years for the Open to return to Ireland, but you can be sure that they will be back much sooner the next time.

Bruce Vittner is a member of the Golf Writers of America and the Golf Travel Writers of America and can be reached at bruce@snegolfer.com.

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URI Golfers Having Great Summer

Here's a question for you: when I say the words "Rhody Rams," what pops into your head? Chances are, if you are a resident of the Ocean State like yours truly, you probably think of the University of Rhode Island's men's basketball program.

That's quite understandable given the fact that they are the most high-profile athletic program at the school which recently enjoyed success on the national stage by making it to college basketball's "Sweet 16" in 2018. But there are 15 other varsity programs at URI, many of which have enjoyed various degrees of success in their respective sports like the men's basketball team.

One such program is the URI men's golf team which, for many years, was led by Tom Drennan and, for the past eight seasons by Gregg Burke.

Over the years there have been many team and individual accomplishments from winning various tournaments, competing at the top of the Atlantic-10 and even in the NCAA's. What caught



Chris Francoeur

my eye this summer was the amount of success many of Burke's student-athletes were having in various state amateur tournaments.

Starting with recent graduate

Dawson Jones (Howell, NJ), he was URI's Athlete of the Year last year. A three-time All-New England, All-League and All-Northeast golfer, Jones also excelled in the classroom and was a two-time Golf All-American Scholar. This summer, he captured the New Jersey State Amateur for the second time in three years. "Dawson is one of the five best student-athletes to ever play for URI," Burke said. "He finished this season under par and had the lowest career scoring average over at least the past 15 years. He is the hottest player in the Met Golf Association right now. When you consider there are more than double the amount of people in the Met over the entire population of New England, what he is doing is truly impressive."

And Jones isn't the only Rhody golfer making noise this summer. Rising junior transfer Jordan Brajcich (Sonnomish, WA) just won the Washington State Golf Association Amateur Golf Qualifier and was ranked as high as 8th nationally in Division 3 last season. Second semester last season, a cyst was found in his shoulder which slowed his progress. "He was the starting quarterback and starting point guard on his high school teams and just a gifted athlete," said his new head coach Gregg Burke. "Once his shoulder situation is 100-percent and being able to concentrate of just golf and academics, he has the potential to be very, very good."

Sophomore Austin Fox (Delmar, NY)

made the cut at the N.Y. Open held at the famed and difficult Bethpage Black. He was the youngest person to do so. "Austin has a resume anyone would be proud of. He struggled last year as a freshman playing in all but one tournament. But he learned a great deal and will have a great year for us this year," added Burke.

Fellow sophomore Brandon Gillis (Nashua, NH) is a transfer from one of the nation's top collegiate golf programs – Wake Forest. He carded the low round for all golfers in both the New Hampshire and New England Amateurs at 66. "Brandon is a special talent. He has the ability and mindset to go very, very low. No one has a better understanding of the golf swing than Brandon," said his coach.

Junior Chris Francoeur (Amesbury, MA) could have played baseball in college but elected to play the sport of golf. "Chris may be the best athlete we've ever had in the golf program," Burke said. "Given his nearly year-round commitment to baseball in high school, he is just now coming into his own as a competitive golfer. He will definitely have opportunities to play professional golf." Francoeur made it to the Final 8 of match play in both the Mass and Rhode Island Amateurs. He finished 8th in the Providence Open at 7-under which tied him with Providence native and former PGA Tour pro Brad Adamonis.

And then there is incoming freshman Bryson Richards (Plainfield, VT). All this young man has done this summer is play 14 competitive rounds at a combined score of 12-over par. He also finished second in the Vermont Amateur and third in the New England Amateur. "Bryson is a tremendous athlete and two-sport high school star who can concentrate solely on golf," said Burke. "Given the short season in Vermont and his commitment to basketball the past four years, he is just scratching the surface of his talent."

Burke sums up this summer of success very succinctly with the following: "We demand a very competitive summer schedule of our guys. We want them to compete against as many good players as possible. Our Top group has certainly done that thus far."

I couldn't agree more. Scott Cordischi has a weekly sports talk radio show and writes a column in each issue of *snegolfer.com*.

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Darren and Rory were playing a match. Rory's ball was in the line of Darren's putt on the green and Darren asked him to mark his ball and move it one clubhead to the left. After Darren's putt was attempted, Rory replaced his ball on the marker and then moved it one clubhead to the left again and then putt. Is this a penalty?

Ruling: Yes, an improperly replaced ball incurs a loss of hole in match play and a two-stroke penalty in stroke play. Another common fault seen often is that a player does not put a mark where his ball currently is located and then moves the mark a clubhead. The ball must be marked where it lies first.

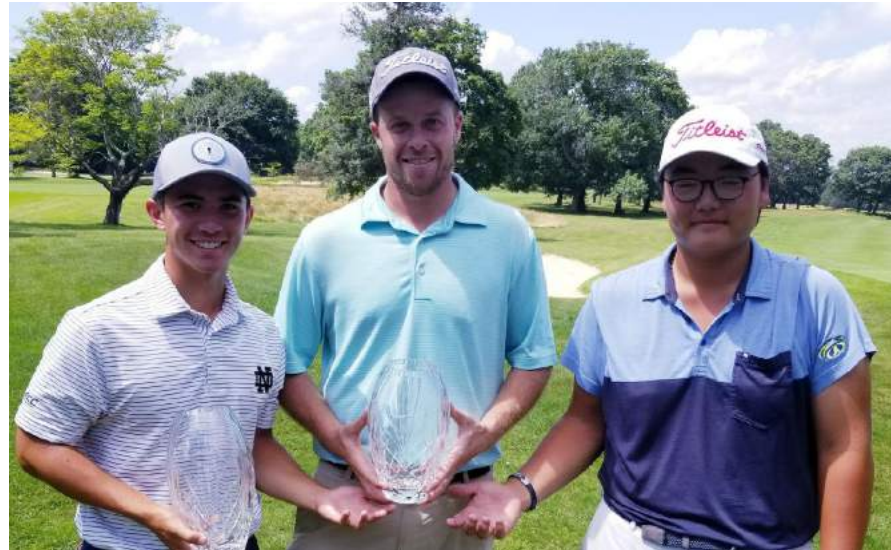
Ross Tops at Providence Open

Dunmore, Pennsylvania's Pat Ross overcame a star-studded, packed leaderboard to earn his first professional win at the Providence Open. The former University of Hartford and Temple University ace birdied the 13th, 14th and 15th holes on the back nine of his final round en route to a 1-stroke victory over amateurs Davis Chatfield and Mac Lee.

While the amateur duo finished 1-stroke behind Ross, Mark Baldwin was in the driver's seat with three holes to play. Baldwin, who had played the prior week in the PGA Tour's 3M Open, had birdied 8 of the first 15 holes over his final round to hold a 1-stroke lead over Ross standing on the 16th tee.

Playing almost 2 hours ahead of Ross and Baldwin, Jonathan Pannone was on a "59 watch" after he toured the back nine at the Donald Ross gem in 6-under par and birdied the first hole (his 10th) to get to 7-under par for the day. The new owner of Spargo Golf bogeyed the 3rd hole to hurt his chances, but closed with 5 consecutive birdies on holes 4 through 8. After a par at the 9th hole Pannone posted a single round tournament record and course record 11-under par 61. He coupled the 61 with an opening round 73 for a 10-under par total and leader in the house status.

Three other players made a run at Ross and Baldwin only to come up just short. Davis Chatfield fired a final nine of 5-under par 32 to close with an 8-under par 64 to post 11-under 2-day total. 16-year old Mac Lee playing in the penultimate group fired a bogey-free 66 to join Chatfield at 11-under. Peter French roared into contention with seven birdies through



Pat Ross with Davis Chatfield (l) and Mac Lee (r) who were low amateurs

16 holes, but a bogey at the 17th hole dashed his chances. He checked in at 10-under par with Pannone.

Despite the fireworks by the aforementioned players it came down to a head to head battle between Baldwin and Ross. Baldwin made a costly bogey at the 319-yard 16th forging a tie between he and Ross at 12-under par. An errant drive by Baldwin at the 17th led to a triple bogey opening the door for Ross to win his first pro event.

Ross made two routine pars at the 17th and 18th en route to a 7-under par 65 and a 12-under par total, 1-stroke clear of the amateur duo of Chatfield and Lee. Baldwin birdied the 18th to tie for 4th with Pannone and French.

"It is nice to get my first win as a professional. I didn't decide to enter the tournament until the last minute. I have

been working a lot at my home course this summer, not playing as much. I like coming here though (to Triggs). The course fits my game well. This

tournament always has a good field. If you want to win here you have to take it low" gleamed the 2019 champion.

Baldwin surprisingly took the tough loss in stride.

"I played superb golf for 51 holes. It is golf. I prefer to focus on my good play this week. Everyone hits a come bad shots during a tournament. My "one" was certainly untimely. I have been playing well the past few weeks. I hope to keep it rolling into Q-School. I want to get back on the Korn Ferry Tour."

Tournament Tap-Ins – Tampa, Florida resident Ryan Gendron won "The Qualifier" with an 11-under par 4-round total. The tournament which couples two rounds at Agawam Hunt with the two rounds at the Providence Open was established in 2011 as a way to help players pay for the cost of Q-School. Gendron finished 6-strokes ahead of NCAA Division 2 champion Michael VanDerLaan

Results on page 30.

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Nation Domination in July

It has become an annual summer tradition that Challenge Cup Nation (past and present) is en fuego in the month of July. Each year the Nation's presence becomes more prevalent, as evidenced in the New England Amateur at the Quechee Club in Vermont. Ninety-seven players in the 144 player field of the New England Open hailed from the Nation. Nineteen of the top 21 cut their teeth with the Challenge Cup....and the winner was a former Challenge Cupper. Rutgers bound Xavier Marcoux fired rounds of 71-70-69-69 to post a 9-under par 279 en route to the title. His performance was 1-stroke clear of 2017 champion Bobby Leopold and 3-strokes clear of URI bound Bryson Richards.

Leopold Gets By With A Little Help From A Friend

In a rare instance New England Amateur runner-up Bobby Leopold was carrying his own bag the first two days at the New England Amateur. His long-time caddy and father-in-law, Scott Cooke was holding down the fort at the family's business while Leopold was trying to chase down his second New England Am title. On day three of the tournament competitors play 36 holes to finish the 72-hole event. With Cooke at home, none other than RIGA czar Bob Ward stepped in to don the caddy bib with a twist. Ward's primary reason for attending the New England Am was to lend a hand in running the tournament. In between posting scores Ward looped for roughly 27 holes over the final two rounds. Talk about multi-tasking.

Gilman, Garvin, Landry, Ramos Jr. Tops at World Series

Year after year the Challenge Cup's World Series of Junior Golf at Triggs Memorial GC continues to live up to its billing as the top junior golf competition in New England. Annually the field for the World Series is the largest and strongest of all New England junior golf events. This year's champions continue an impressive roll call of winners at this prestigious event.

Middletown, RI resident Mason Gilman fired rounds of 70-72 for a 2-under par 142 total en route to the Boys 16-19 Division title. Gilman entered the back nine of the final round tied for the lead with Jack Tobin at 4-under par. The Assumption College commit held off Tobin and a host of other challengers to earn the biggest victory of his career. Over the final



World Series of Jr. Golf Champs Mason Gilman, Angela Garvin, Stephen Ramos Jr., and Alex Landry

nine holes at the Donald Ross gem, sixteen players were within 4-strokes of the lead. Gilman finished 1-stroke clear of Jason Temel and 2-strokes ahead of Nico Ciolino and Trevor Lopez.

While Gilman, Temel and company were staging a thrilling battle in the

at the 15th and 16th and held on for a 1-stroke victory over his teammate to be. Much like the battle in the older division nine players finished within 6-strokes of the lead.

The exciting finishes continued in the Girls Division as Angela Garvin



Challenge Cup Champs Cole Ekert, Max Jackson, Angela Garvin

main event St. John's Prep teammates Alex Landry and Aidan LeBlanc were going toe to toe in the Boys 14-15 Division. Landry made clutch birdies

continued her perfect season in Challenge Cup competition. The Maryland bound star defeated Elon bound Emily Nash on the first hole

of a sudden death play-off for her 4th win in as many starts on the Challenge Cup circuit this season. The duo ended regulation tied with 6-over par 150 totals.

In the Boys 13 & Under Division, Stephen Ramos Jr. continued the fantastic finishes by edging CJ Winchenbaugh by 1-stroke. Ramos carded rounds of 74-75 for a 149 total. Much like Gilman this was Ramos' biggest win of his career.

The 29th annual World Series of Junior Golf attracted a field of 158 junior golfers from 8 states and two countries. Two traditions, which are a staple of the World Series of Junior Golf continued at this year's championship as players were treated to a Del's Lemonade stand during the 1st round and Palagi's Ice Cream truck was on campus for the 2nd round.

Nation Claims Four State Amateur Championships

Six state amateur championships were contested over the past month and Challenge Cup Nation produced four champions and four runner-ups. In Vermont, former Challenge Cup Player of the Year Drake Hull recorded his 3rd consecutive Vermont Amateur title. In Massachusetts 28 out of 32 players who qualified for match play cut their teeth with the Nation. All 16 players in the Round of 16 were Challenge Cuppers....and of course it was an all Challenge Cup final with Steven DiLisio topping Jimmy Hervol for the title.

Connecticut Amateur Championship
Rick Dowling def. Chandler Morris 1 up

Maine Amateur Championship
Cole Anderson 65-69-67-201 (-9),
Reese McFarlane 71-69-69-209 (-1)

Massachusetts Amateur Championship

Steven DiLisio def. Jimmy Hervol 3 & 2

New Hampshire Amateur Championship

John Devito def. Jake Hollander 7 & 6

Rhode Island Amateur Championship
Andrew O'Leary def. Bobby Leopold

Vermont Amateur Championship
Drake Hull 66-73-70-66-275 (-3),
Bryson Richards 70-71-68-72-281 (+1), Jacob Zaranek 71-72-68-70-281 (+1)

State Junior Champions Crowned
Thorbjornsen Falls Short at U.S. Junior

A little over a month after making the cut at the U.S. Open, Stanford commit Michael Thorbjornsen entered the USGA Junior Amateur as the defending

champion. The 2017 Challenge Cup Player of the Year fired a 3-under par 36-hole total en route to earning the #5-seed in the medal play portion of the tournament.

The champ looked to be in fine form after missing the medal by 1-stroke, "The Future" then routed Thailand's Phichaksn Maichon 5 & 4 in the opening round.

In the Round of 32 Thorbjornsen's dream of becoming the first back to back champion since his childhood idol Tiger Woods came to an end. Thorbjornsen, who was 2 down with seven to play tied his match with Palmer Jackson with a par at the 233-yard 12th and a birdie at the 460-yard par-4 15th. A costly bogey at the 490-yard par 4 17th dropped the defending champ to a 1-down deficit. The defending champ answered at the 18th knocking his approach to almost gimme range, but Jackson answered by chipping in from 40-feet for birdie to secure a 1-up victory.

Thorbjornsen was joined by fellow Challenge Cuppers Ethan Han, James Imai and Jack Wall in the match play field of 64.

Imai, who was en fuego earlier this season (winning three Challenge Cup events in three starts) lost his opening round match to Garrett Martin 4 & 3.

Han and Wall won their first round matches, but were eliminated in the Round of 32 like Thorbjornsen.

Alums Edge Juniors at Foon Cup

The Challenge Cup alums continued their dominance of the juniors by posting a 5 ½ to 4 1/2 victory at 7th annual Foon Cup at Ledgemont CC. The team of Ryan Gay and James Pleat clinched the victory by stopping Vikram Konanki and Colin McCaigue 2 & 1. This annual competition is coordinated in recognition of Steve Feinstein's countless contributions to junior golf.

DiLisio Leads Large Contingent U.S. Amateur Bound

Steven DiLisio continued his torrid summer punching a ticket to the US Amateur later this summer. Fresh off a win at the Massachusetts Amateur Championship, the Duke University senior to be fired rounds of 66-67 en route to a 7-under par 133 total 1-stroke clear of Jacob Zaranek. DiLisio and Zaranek will join another 10 players from Challenge Cup Nation at the 119th USGA Amateur Championship at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club August 12-18. The group is headlined



Steve Feinstein with Golden Domers, Davis Chatfield, and Mark Baldwin

by 2017 USGA Junior Amateur champion Michael Thorbjornsen.

Player Qualifying Course Score

Brent Ito Port Jefferson CC (NY)
66-71-137 (-7)
Ethan Ng Port Jefferson CC (NY)
70-67-137 (-7)
Xavier Marcoux Andover CC (MA)
69-68-137 (-7)
Brett Krekorian Andover CC (MA)
71-68-139 (-5)
Nick Maccario Andover CC (MA)
68-72-140 (-4)
N. Harrington Fairview Farms (CT)
68-68-136 (-8)
Z. Ong Whipoorwill Club (NY)
68-65-133 (-9)
Davis Chatfield Metacomet CC (RI)
66-67-133 (-7)
Chris Emmerich Metacomet CC (RI)
68-67-135 (-5)
S. DiLisio Longmeadow CC (MA)
66-67-133 (-7)
J. Zaranek Longmeadow CC (MA)
69-65-134 (-6)
Michael Thorbjornsen
2018 USGA Junior Amateur Champion

Cup Runeth Over

In the month of August the Challenge Cup acknowledges two of its most notable employees. The 16th annual Gately Cup, a tournament which

honors the tireless contributions of the late, great Barry Gately, will be contested at Connecticut National GC.

The day after the Gately Cup players will trade shots at the 2nd annual Steve Desantis Memorial 2-Ball also at CT National. Desantis, who spent the last 17 seasons a tournament director, passed away unexpectedly last June. Proceeds from this event will help perpetuate a scholarship which has been established in Steve's memory.

The summer schedule comes to a magnificent end on Labor Day weekend, as 16 of New England's top junior golfers will compete in the 13th annual John D. Mineck Junior Cup at the highly acclaimed Boston Golf Club. The competition is run in conjunction with the PGA Tour's Nothern Trust Championship. Team Mineck, captained by yours truly, seeks back to back victories.

Date

Tournament Site

8/5-8/7
Stan Trojanowski Northern Junior
New Haven CC
8/6-8/7
Wampanoag Classic
Wampanoag CC
8/11-8/13
New England Junior Amateur
Mill River CC
8/15-8/16

Gately Cup
Connecticut National GC
8/17
Steve DeSantis Memorial 2-Ball
Connecticut National GC
8/19 – 8/22
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Crumpin Fox Club
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Spinal Technology Match Play
Qualifier
Rehoboth CC
8/30-8/31
John D. Mineck Junior Cup
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Golfers Warehouse—36 Years of Success

It was 1983 when a new golf business opened up in Hartford. This reporter did not know about that store, but when Golfers Warehouse opened just off of Pontiac Ave., just below the exit for Route 37 in Cranston in 1987, I thought I had found Nirvana.

Imagine a warehouse-sized building with nothing but golf equipment and a little tennis stuff? Having been a golfer since age 12 and having owned only three sets of clubs in the 30 years that I had been playing (two of those were hand-me-downs from my left-handed uncle), I was in pure joy as I traversed the store.

Golfers Warehouse now has five stores (Hartford, Cranston, and Auburn, Danvers and Braintree in Massachusetts. Michael Britt, a



Mike Britt and Mike Kenney in the Cranston Golfers Warehouse

one thought for his staff is “attention to detail and finding out what the customer is looking for. “We want to make sure that our customers leave the store happy and with the right products and equipment for them,” added Kenney.

Brian Derham is the assistant manager at the Cranston location. He is also a long-time employee and he adds to the leadership team that makes the store so successful.

In 2009 Golfers Warehouse joined with Worldwide Golf Shops in California to make a huge group of golf shops. Under the Worldwide Golf Shops besides Golfers Warehouse is Edwin Watts, Roger Dunn Shops, Van's Golf and Las Vegas Golf. “This huge grouping of stores allows us to buy in huge quantities to lower prices that we can pass on to our customers,” said Britt who is responsible for stores in New England, Kentucky and Tennessee including Nashville.

One of the trademarks of all these stores is the 90-day Guarantee. Shoppers have up to 90 days to get a full refund if they are not satisfied with their purchases. The company has a huge online sales department as well as the many brick and mortar stores. You can get more information by going to worldwidegolfshops.com.

Full disclosure—this reporter started a small business in 1983 called ParMor Golf Coupon Book in Rhode Island and southeastern Mass. What made it successful was the \$5 off coupon that Golfers Warehouse offered as a coupon along with discounts at many of the local public golf courses. That business was the forerunner of Ocean State Golf that became Southern New England Golfer in 2010 and you are reading right now.

native of Pawtucket and a graduate of Tolman High who attended CCRI and Providence College, was the first manager at the Golfers Warehouse in Cranston from 1997 to 2001. He became the regional manager working out of the Hartford store for the five Golfers Warehouse stores in 2001.

When asked what were some of the reasons for the success of the Golfers Warehouse stores, Britt talked about the quality and knowledge of the employees in all the stores. “We keep a huge dollar inventory in each of our stores, so customers have a great selection to choose from. We have club-fitting machines and launch monitors in all of the stores and most all our staff are experienced and certified club-fitters.”

Britt feels the friendly staff and help from experienced professionals is the reason that the stores are so successful. “Our stores have the largest inventory in southern New England,” he added while helping a woman who was trying to purchase a pair of golf shoes for her golfing husband before heading out to visit another of the Golfers Warehouse stores.

Mike Kenney is the manager of the Cranston store. He has worked for Golfers Warehouse for 25 years. A graduate of Pilgrim High School and CCRI, Kenney feels the number

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Reavie Wins Travelers Championship—First Win in 10 years

Mike York has caddied for his friend Chez Reavie for six years, so he has excellent insight into what makes him tick. “He’s a little bulldog,” York said. “He’s an MMA fighter trapped in a golfer’s world. He hates to lose more than he likes to win.”

Reavie demonstrated those exact traits on several fronts on his way to winning his second PGA Tour victory in the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands. Reavie fell six strokes behind upstart Zach Sucher midway through the third round, but as Sucher imploded with a bogey-double bogey-double bogey start to the back nine thanks in part to some tough luck and Reavie made three consecutive birdies, the tournament storyline suddenly changed.

The shocking eight-stroke swing in three holes became a 12-shot turnaround by the end of the day, giving Reavie a six-stroke lead over Sucher and Vermont native Keegan Bradley entering the final round. It was the largest 54-hole advantage since the tournament began in 1952 as the Insurance City Open at Wethersfield Country Club.

But as the \$7.2 million event headed down the back stretch on Sunday, it appeared as if it might be déjà vu all over again. Reavie didn’t have any implosions, but Bradley applied plenty of pressure. While Reavie was making one birdie and one bogey in the first 15 holes, Bradley was rattling off six birdies to easily offset one bogey. When Bradley holed a 71/2-foot birdie putt at No. 15 to get within a shot of the lead, he pumped his fist and looked toward a boisterous partisan crowd where dozens of family and friends were rooting, some too vociferously, causing him to ask for some civility.

Reavie said the back nine was a challenge, for sure, but he focused on one shot at a time.

“I still played aggressive, even though I had the six-shot lead,” he said. “I didn’t shy away from flags and hit the same shots I did all week. Unfortunately, I didn’t make any putts until the end.”

On the par-3 16th hole, Bradley



Chez Reavie

hit his tee shot over the green but made a brilliant chip to 2 feet to save par as Reavie missed his fifth very makeable birdie putt on the day. But the suspense suddenly ended at the water-lined 17th hole, which Reavie called the most visibly difficult on the course. He hit a perfect drive, knocked his approach to 14 feet and made the putt for his second birdie while Bradley drove into a fairway bunker, skulled his 9-iron second shot over the green and then three-putted from 18 feet for a double-bogey 6.

A routine par at the 18th gave Reavie a 2-under-par 69 for a 72-hole total of 17-under 263 and a four-stroke victory over Bradley and Sucher, whose 5-under 30 on the back nine was 10 strokes better than Saturday.

“This means everything,” said Reavie, who had only three bogeys in the tournament. “I knew Keegan was going to come out firing and ready to go. I’ve played a lot golf with him, and he’s a fantastic player. I just was fortunate enough to stay patient and make that big putt on 17 to give myself a little cushion on 18.”

Reavie, 37, said a tie for third in the U.S. Open the previous week went a long way to his first victory in 250 starts and 3,983 days since he won his only other PGA Tour title in the 2008 RBC Canadian

Open in his rookie season.

“Being in the second-to-last group the last day of the U.S. Open definitely gave me a lot of confidence coming into this week, and particularly today,” said Reavie, who had never finished better than a tie for 11th (2012) in eight previous tournament appearances. “I played really well on Sunday at the U.S. Open, and I tried to treat this week the same as I did then.”

Bradley, whose four PGA Tour victories include the 2011 PGA Championship in his first major event, was a pedestrian 1-under 34 on the front nine in the final round, but he began his charge with birdie putts of 11 and 14 feet on the 10th and 11th holes. A 9-foot birdie putt at No. 13 got him within three, and he got to only one down with a 7-footer for birdie at the 15th.

But all good things came to an end at the fateful 17th hole, where many winning tournament hopes have been dashed through the years. Bradley was trying to put together the second biggest comeback-from-behind victory to the seven-stroke rally by Rhode Island native Brad Faxon in 2005. Three-time champion Bubba Watson rallied from six back in 2010 and 2015.

“I was just having so much fun,” Bradley said. “The crowds, man, that was so great. It felt like a Ryder

Cup for me because they were so loud. You just dream of that as a kid. It was just incredible. I was having the time of my life.” And the 17th hole?

“I hit a good drive and it just bounced into the bunker,” Bradley said. “It was such a tough (second) shot (over water), but I hit a brutal shot and got it thin. I ran my first putt four feet by, which was tough. I wish I could have that back, but I’m proud of the way I played. I knew Chez was just going to be on the fairway, on the green. He was playing great, so I knew he was going to be really tough to beat, and he was.”

“But the week was a dream come true. I got to play in front of the fans of New England and put on a show. I’ve never felt that type of support ever. Maybe in a Ryder Cup. I imagined this as a kid coming to the Greater Hartford Open, now the Travelers Championship, when I was 10 years old. I was out there living it. The fans were on my side, and it was so fun. I’m speechless. To come to this tournament every year of putting myself in this position and having this chance on the back side lived up to the hype. It was awesome.”

A lot of folks felt plenty good for Sucher, the last player in the tournament via a Korn Ford Tour sponsors’ exemption from Travelers. Sucher put his disastrous meltdown Saturday mostly out of his mind except for a four-putt for double-bogey 6 at No. 9 that gave him a 1-over 37 on that side. But he made five birdies on the back side for 67 and his best finish on the PGA Tour. It was worth \$633,600, doubling his career earnings and moving himself within striking distance of getting a PGA Tour card off a major medical exemption.

“Honestly, the four-putt was great,” Sucher said. “It got me going. I was rattled enough maybe to get over it. I didn’t feel like I was putting too well before then. I felt like I had some good putts that didn’t go in but also had some pushes on holes early. I putted awesome after No. 9.”

Sucher, sidelined for two years with a variety of injuries after the 2017

Travelers Championship, capped the most memorable week of his golfing life when he holed an 18-foot chip from the rough on the 18th hole, eliciting a roar from the crowd that filled the amphitheater setting.

"Oh, man, that was pretty cool," beamed Sucher, who couldn't touch a club for 13 months following knee surgery. "The first chip was awful, but that's way better than a regular up-and-down. The back nine was exciting. I hung in there, which is great."

So, too, was a third-place finish in a PGA Tour event for a struggling Korn Ford Tour member.

"I'm not sure what all this does points-wise for next year," Sucher said. "But I know that two months ago we had credit card debt, so I know we don't have that anymore." Talk about changing someone's life, especially with his family looking on.

"I wasn't sure how I would handle it this weekend," said Sucher, making only his fourth PGA Tour start. "I haven't been in a situation

like that out here. Done it on the Korn Ferry Tour a few times, but this is a little different. Crowd-wise everything is about 10 times bigger out here, so to be honest, it was so much fun.

"It was a lot of highs and lows, but I honestly can't wrap my head around it. First time I've been in this situation. Obviously, I would have liked to be winning, but it gives me a huge boost of confidence knowing that I can hang in there. It was amazing. It was life changing." Vaughan Taylor finished in amazing fashion, birdying the last five holes to shoot a back-nine 29, one off the record, for 65 and fourth place at 268.

Paul Casey had his fourth top-5 finish in five Travelers Championship appearances thanks to stellar work down the stretch. He drove the 289-yard, par-4 15th and needed only a 6-foot, 9-inch putt to register an eagle 2. He capped another terrific Travelers showing with an 8-foot putt for his third birdie of the day at the 18th hole that more than offset his lone bogey

at No. 11 to shoot 65 for 269 and a tie for fifth with PGA Tour rookie Joaquin Niemann (66) and Kevin Tway (67).

Abraham Ancer made the biggest move, carding seven birdies in a 63, the low round of the final round, to vault into a tie for eighth at 270 with Brian Harman (66), Jason Day (69), Bryson DeChambeau (68) and Roberto Diaz (69).

Watson, trying to tie Hall of Famer Billy Casper for most tournament wins, shot 279 for a tie for 54th, his worst showing since he missed the cut in his second appearance in 2008. Brooks Koepka, admittedly fatigued after he won a second consecutive PGA Championship in May and finished second to Gary Woodland in the U.S. Open, never really challenged while shooting 280 for a tie for 57th.

But that was better than former champions Phil Mickelson and Jordan Spieth, two of the stars in the best field since Travelers became title sponsor in 2007. Mickelson, the only back-to-back winner (2001-02) in tournament history,

had an opening 67 but limped to a 76 and missed the 138 cut by five strokes. Spieth, whose 61-foot bunker shot on the first playoff hole beat Daniel Berger in 2017, wasn't much better, shooting 73-69. Fairfield native J.J. Henry, the only Connecticut to capture the title in 2006, shot 70-72 to miss his 11th cut in 16 starts this season. Richy Werenski, the only New Englander to make the cut besides Bradley, shot 281 to tie for 60th.

Another highlight of the week was a new \$20 million clubhouse that is 40,000 square feet, which four times the size of the original facility. It drew rave reviews from players and fans as the latest major upgrade by the tournament. A \$5 million state-of-the-art practice facility was built in 2014 that included a First Tee of Connecticut Learning Center and adjacent four-hole mini-course geared toward the more than 70,000 youngsters involved with the program. Two years ago, there were \$3 million worth of course changes focused on the fairways and bunkers.

Travelers Sets Another Charity Record

It's not yet official, but the Travelers Championship last month set a new tournament record for money raised for charity despite heavy rain that caused some logistical problems and several marquee players failing to make the cut.

"We did indeed surpass \$2 million this year," tournament director Nathan Grube proudly said. "We are still finalizing the exact amount, but we will be more than last year regarding our generated number for charity."

The 2018 Travelers Championship raised a record \$2 million thanks to Bubba Wilson donating \$200,000 of his \$1,260,000 winnings to the tournament.

"I think \$2 million looks a lot better than \$1.8 million," a smiling Watson told tournament officials after the trophy ceremony honoring his third victory, one shy of Hall of Famer Billy Casper's tournament-record four titles. Watson's special donation led to the dedication of a special area in his honor at the Hole In The Wall Gang Camp in Ashford, the tournament's chief beneficiary.

Grube had an idea there might be another record amount generated because advance ticket and corporate sales were ahead of their 2018 pace. And the tournament was ahead of three areas that are measured — merchandise, concessions and the gate. The latter was helped by early commitments from highly ranked players such as Watson, Brooks Koepka, Justin Thomas, Francesco Molinari, Patrick Reed, Paul Casey, Bryson DeChambeau, Jason Day, Tony Finau, Tommy Fleetwood, Patrick Cantlay and 2012 champion Marc Leishman. Toss in the late additions of Louis Oosthuizen and former champions Phil Mickelson and Jordan Spieth, and the tournament ended up with the best field since Travelers became title sponsor in 2007.

The poor weather from Tuesday to Friday, combined with Mickelson, playing in Cromwell for the first time in 16 years, and Spieth both missing the cut didn't help Connecticut's biggest sporting event. And Watson and weary No. 1-ranked Koepka, who repeated as PGA Championship winner five weeks earlier, had early

starting times Saturday and Sunday, finishing their rounds before the leaders started.

Still, the tournament drew an estimated 250,000 fans, though Grube continued to not announce attendance figures. But he did say "with the charity number being up year over year, I think it would be safe to say that we had similar support to last year from our fans and sponsors attending the event."

And everyone witnessed another thrilling finish. This year, Chez Reavie rallied from six strokes behind Zack Sucher midway through the third round to forge a tournament-record, six-stroke lead after 54 holes thanks to a back-nine, 7-under-par 28 as the last player in the field via a Korn Ferry Tour exemption shot 40. But with two holes left in the final round, Reavie's lead was down to one shot over Keegan Bradley before the Vermont native made double-bogey 6 at No. 17 and Reavie sank a 14-foot birdie putt to clinch his second PGA Tour victory, the first since 2008 in his rookie season.

Reavie, who had tied for third in the U.S. Open the previous week, could

stroll down the 18th hole knowing he had won the \$1,296,000 first prize five years removed from major left-wrist surgery that cost him the 2014 season. The win gave Reavie a PGA Tour exemption through 2022 and earned him a spot in the 2020 Masters, PGA Championship and Players Championship.

"When I was in a long-arm cast after my wrist surgery, I went and met with the doctor, and he said the surgery went great," Reavie said. "But there was a 50/50 shot whether it was going to work, and there was no guarantee that I wasn't going to go make one full swing when he allowed me to and it wasn't going to happen again. So those were probably the darkest days. Just the unknown and sitting at home not being able to do anything and your mind wandering, 'Okay, if it didn't work, if I can't play golf, what am I going to do?'"

The Travelers staff has already begun to look toward the 2020 tournament June 25-28, again after the U.S. Open, which will be played at the Winged Foot Golf Club West Course in Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Byrd Cruises to Senior Open Win

One of golf's all-time "traveling man" has a simple motto about his favorite game. "Wherever there's a course, I'll play," Robin Byrd said. "I've been playing a long time, and it's a lot of fun when the ball is going where you want it go."

Byrd had plenty of fun in the Connecticut Senior Open, shooting a pair of 6-under-par 65 for an eight-stroke victory over Charlie Blanchard and Jeff Dantas at Shennecosett Golf Course.

Byrd, who has played on five continents and earned playing privileges on six tours, capped his spectacular showing with a 7-iron shot from 190 yards to 8 feet for eagle 3 on the final hole. Each of his 65s tied the competitive course record, and his 12-under 130 total shattered the tournament record of 136 set by Mal Galletta in 1999 and matched by Jerry Courville in 2014.

"I hit it pretty solid and hit my irons really good," said Byrd, who will turn 59 on Aug. 2. "And I reached a lot of the par-5s (in two shots) and putted well." Well, that just about covers every phase of the game.

Byrd, of Satellite Beach, Fla., finished 36 holes with two eagles, both on No. 18, 11 birdies and three bogeys to improve on his third place in his only other tournament start in 2017. That's mighty impressive, but Byrd also has 18 holes-in-one while playing on the Web.com Tour and in 15 PGA Tour Champions events that he qualified for in the United States, along with tournament appearances in Europe, Asia and Australia. He also has won 12 times on the Sun Belt Senior Tour in Florida and made the cut in one of the three U.S. Senior Open Championships for which he qualified.

"I've had Tour card on every Tour except the PGA Tour," Byrd said. Byrd, who won \$3,500, started the day with a two-stroke lead over former PGA Tour and PGA Tour Champions player Ken Green, who wasn't sure if he was going to be able to finish on the back nine because of severe migraines caused



Robin Byrd

by constant pain in his right leg, which had to be amputated below the knee after a horrific recreational vehicle accident 10 years ago that killed his brother, girlfriend and dog. Green, who has finished second three times, did manage to hobble in, shooting 2-under 33 on the back that included a 4-iron to 3 feet at the par-3 16th for 74-141 and fourth place.

"I just can't focus when my migraines are so bad," said Green, who has had 24 surgeries and 17 other procedures and been fitted with several prostheses since his accident. "I was zoning out at times, like on the seventh hole where I four-putted (for double-bogey 7). It really was bad all day, and I didn't think I was going to make it (to the end). But it is what it is, so I'm not going to complain because I love golf and I love playing this course."

Green also knew he had no chance to win. "Robin played great," said Green, who is living in New Fairfield during the summer. "I couldn't have caught him if I was playing my best."

Byrd all but settled the issue with birdies on the first, seventh and eighth holes in a front-nine 33, which gave him a seven-stroke lead over Dantas. Byrd also birdied the 12th and 16th holes before the stellar finish and a quick exit for the T.F. Greene International Airport in Providence, R.I., and a trip to the

Arizona Open.

Dantas, from Seekonk, Mass., wouldn't even have been in the tournament if his daughter, Ally, hadn't lost in the New England Softball Championships semifinals in New Hampshire on Sunday. Dantas, the Cape Cod Pro-Am Player of the Year seven consecutive times before turning pro, arrived at Shennecosett at 7:30 a.m. on Monday and got into the tournament as an alternate. "I think (Ally) is going to want some of my money," said a smiling Dantas, who pocketed \$2,250.

Playing in the final group with Byrd and Green, Dantas knew he was two shots out of second place with two holes to go and thought he might have lost his shot at a piece of the runner-up spot when he lipped out a 12-foot birdie putt at No. 17. "I really thought I'd made that one, so I knew I needed an eagle on 18 to tie for second," Dantas said.

Dantas did just that in spectacular fashion, hitting a 5-iron shot from 204 yards to 8 inches for a tap-in eagle. He also nearly made his 14th career hole-in-one at the 175-yard ninth hole and 125-yard 12th hole, where his tee shots each stopped 6 inches from the cup. "I didn't make any long birdie putts, but I had nine birdie inside three feet," Dantas said.

It was only Dantas' fifth round of the year as he has been busy for the past five years working with a resistance band that he frequently uses at a training facility in Warren, R.I. "I design trainer aids, and the resistance band has resurrected my game as far as being longer, better and straighter," Dantas said. "I'm still working on trying to figure out distances, but it's amazing what a difference the band has made for me."

Blanchard, 53, the men's golf coach at Bryant College, was also a late entry, signing up the day before the tournament and ending with his third Top-5 finish in as many starts thanks largely to six birdies in the first eight holes in a front-nine 30 that led to 66. He won every major amateur tournament in Rhode

Island and was Rhode Island Player of the Year several times before turning pro at 50.

"I really like the course because it sets up well for my ball flight, and the par-5s are reachable," said Blanchard, of Warwick, R.I., who tied for 11th last year. "And I drive the ball well. I played very solid, hit it good and made a couple of putts that I wasn't expecting to make."

Blanchard's birdie binge began with a sand-wedge shot to 10 feet at the second hole, and he followed with birdie putts of 4, 4, 8 and 40 feet at Nos. 3-6. He made a 15-foot birdie putt at No. 9 to turn in 30 but bogeyed the 10th, 11th and 14th holes. The man whose home club is famed Wannamoisett CC in Rumford, R.I., closed strong with a 5-iron shot to 12 feet for birdie 2 at No. 15 and a two-putt birdie at the par-5 18th.

Former PGA Tour and Nike Tour player Bobby Gage of Torrington shot a second 71 to tie for fifth with Kirk Hanefeld of South Hamilton, Mass., who closed with 70. A three-way tie for seventh at 143 included Jim Becker of Bloomfield (71), Charles Bolling of Glen Cove, N.Y. (72) and the low amateur, David Baker of Branford (72), who received \$300 in merchandise credit.

CALIGIORE CAPTURES WOMEN'S OPEN

Aimee Caligiore couldn't have had much more of a deflating start to her final round in the fourth Hartford Women's Open at windswept Keney Park Golf Course in Hartford.

Caligiore began the day tied with Elizabeth Choi after each shot a 1-over 71 in the opening round at nearby Goodwin Golf Course the previous day. But five holes into the final round, Caligiore found herself four back after she bogeyed No. 1 and made a double-bogey 6 at No. 5 while Choi was sinking 7-foot birdie putts at the third and fourth holes after a bogey at No. 2.

"I think the nerves got the best of me on the fifth hole, but I just told myself to stick to my game plan and look at my targets," Caligiore said.

"I told myself to forget about the double bogey because I was hitting the ball really well. I wasn't going to force anything because you have to just try to control what you can control."

Caligiore, 28, immediately heeded those thoughts, sinking birdie putts of 12 and 3 feet at the seventh and eighth holes to take a lead that she would never relinquish. The birdie at No. 7 was the first of two two-stroke swings in favor of Caligiore, who rallied from 4 down to 3 up over seven holes on the way to a closing even-par 70, a 36-hole total of 1-over 141 and a one-stroke victory over Choi.

The key moment in Caligiore's first win as a professional was the par-4 12th hole, where the long-hitting Choi knocked a 50-yard wedge shot over the green into a bunker and missed a 10-foot, par-saving putt. Meanwhile, Caligiore hit a wedge to 18 feet and made the putt for birdie and then doubled her lead to two when Choi bogeyed the par 3-13th hole.

Choi made it interesting when she nearly holed her approach at the par-4 17th, settling for a birdie that got her within a shot. Choi and Caligiore each hit the green on the 175-yard, par-3 18th hole, and Choi narrowly missed her birdie putt from 40 feet, tapping in from six inches. Caligiore rolled her downhill 35-foot birdie try 2 feet past the cup and made the comebacker to earn the \$1,500 first prize.

"I was so shaking," a smiling Caligiore said of her final stroke. "I just took two practice strokes to get the feel and managed to knock it in."

Caligiore's first pro win was extra special for the Division III All-American at St. Lawrence University because it came with her father, Sandy, doubling as her caddie. Sandy said being alongside his daughter for her first pro title was even more special than calling the United States' monumental men's hockey victory over the Soviet Union and subsequent win over Finland that gave the Americans the gold medal in the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid.

"I was working for WNBZ radio and on the opposite of the rink from (ABC announcer) Al Michaels," Sandy recalled. "As the final seconds

(of the Soviet Union game) counted down, I said, 'This is a miracle. I can't believe it. It's a miracle.' I obviously didn't have any idea what Al was saying, but it's pretty amazing how we said almost the exact same thing."

Angela Garvin, of Feeding Hills, Mass., shot 144 to win low amateur honors by a stroke over Krystal Knight of Groveland, Mass. A final notable note was 10-year-old Vincenza "Vinny" Papa of Foster, R.I., who shot 78 for 159 and tie for 24th.

GIOVANNETTONE WINS CONN. WOMEN'S OPEN

Loretta Giovannettone tried to employ a simple game plan in the Connecticut Women's Open.

"I tried to keep any swing thoughts out of my mind," Giovannettone said. "As a teaching pro, it's easy to think about tinkering with your swing while you are out there. I tried to stick with the same exact routine every time."

That successful strategy enabled Giovannettone to shoot a pair of 2-under 70s to finish one ahead of Brooke Baker and three better than 2011 winner Jordan Lintz, Kellie Edelbut and amateur Jennifer Keim.

"I'm a little bit on Cloud Nine right now," Giovannettone, 27, a teaching pro at Woodway CC in Darien, said after competing in her third Connecticut Open. "I was not expecting to win this event. It's a really good feeling."

The win came a month after Giovannettone won the Metropolitan (N.Y.) PGA Women's Championship at Burning Tree CC in Greenwich.

"The members were pumped up a couple weeks ago when I won the Women's Met PGA Championship, which was a shocker," Giovannettone said. "To see me go back-to-back, the members will be really thrilled."

Giovannettone trailed Baker by two strokes through 13 holes, but back-to-back birdies gave her the lead for good. She nearly holed out her second shot on the par-4 14th hole, then birdied the par-3 15th. On the 315-yard, uphill 16th with a severely slanted green, Giovannettone, Baker and Lintz each made bogey, leaving Giovannettone with a two-shot lead with two holes to go.

Baker, the 2017 Hartford Women's Open champion who plays on the Symetra Tour and the Ladies Australian Tour, also bogeyed No. 15 and three-putted the 16th hole, as did Lintz. At No. 17, Giovannettone made another bogey but retained her two-stroke lead when Baker three-putted again. Then on the 18th, Giovannettone made a solid par 4 that she ended up needing to clinch the win.

Keim, 21, of South Yarmouth, Mass., who will be a junior at Florida Atlantic and had her mother Debbie, a teaching professional, on her bag, closed with a 67, the low round of the tournament, to take low amateur honors at 143. Ami Gianchandani of Yale was second low amateur at even par, and Sydney Yermish, 13, was third at 146. The 10-year-old Vincenza "Vinny" Papa shot 153 to tie for 20th. Her sister, Gianna, 13, shot 166 to tie for 46th.

SCHRECK FINALLY PREVAILS

The third time in a Connecticut Women's Golf Championship final proved quite the charm for Mim Schreck. In 2014, Schreck lost in the Founders Cup final to Hannah Steel. A year ago, Schreck lost in the championship flight final to Autumn Serruta.

It appeared Schreck would make it an unwanted trifecta at Hartford Golf Club, but two-time champion Lynda Foster missed a 4-foot par putt on the 18th hole that would have given her a third 1-up victory for the week. Foster pulled the potential winning putt left, and Schreck ended years of frustration when she made a routine par on the first playoff hole, the par-4 first, to beat her longtime friend.

As Schreck walked off the final green, she had a wide smile and emphatically proclaimed, "This is exhausting. I've never played this much golf in such a short time in my life."

Schreck, 69, from Oronoque Village CC in Stratford, alluded to playing in a special event in Farmington on Monday and then qualifying for the CWGA Championship on Tuesday. After two matches on Wednesday, she and Foster were part of the state team that competed in the Connecticut-Rhode Island matches at Wannamoisett CC in Rumford,

R.I., on Thursday before returning for the semifinals and final on Friday at Hartford GC, which is more than an hour from her home in Stratford.

"I can't even believe I won," Schreck said, shaking her head. "I'm thrilled beyond belief because I beat some really good players. It's truly amazing, but it was a grind. I thought I was extremely strong this morning (in shooting 4-over for 16 holes in beating Mercedes Large), and I was just good enough in the afternoon. Lynda and I weren't always at our best, but we both came up big when we had to, which is why the match went to the 19th hole. I'm over the moon thrilled."

Schreck, seeded No. 11, reached the final with a 3-and-1 victory over Large (Wampanoag CC-West Hartford), who for the second consecutive year rode in a cart and served as her caddie in the final. Schreck, a part-owner in "a shoe and other things" store in Ocean City, N.J., gave Large credit for being a major help on the playoff hole.

"She said, 'Do you remember I had this same (30-foot) putt on the first hole in the morning, and it isn't as fast as you'd think,'" Schreck said.

Schreck did remember, and she left the lengthy putt 2 feet from the cup. But she never had to putt again, as Foster three-putted for a double-bogey 6.

But it was what transpired one hole earlier that stuck in Foster's craw.

Foster took a 1-up lead on the 15th hole with a deft chip from the rough behind the green that stopped 5 feet from the cup. After Schreck three-putted from 60 feet, missing an 8-foot comebacker, Foster made her putt for a winning bogey.

Foster narrowly missed an 18-foot birdie putt on the 17th hole that would have won the match and then hit her drive into a divot at No. 18. But she struck a brilliant 5-wood shot that found the right side of the green 60 feet from the cup. The long-hitting Schreck outdrove Foster by 30 yards and put her approach 30 feet from the hole. After rolling her first putt through a valley to within 3 feet, Foster had another shot at victory but never touched the hole with her second stroke.

"You think I'm going to think about that putt for a while?" Foster

said rhetorically. "I gave away the (CWGA's) 100th anniversary championship. And I knew her length gave her an advantage on the first (playoff) hole. ... I wish I had been a little more steady. I hit a lot of good shots, but I hit a lot of bad shots, too. It's just disappointing because I had it and missed that tiny putt."

But it was a minor miracle that Foster was even in the tournament much less advancing to the final with a 4-and-3 victory over Liz Distenano of Ellington Ridge CC in the semifinals. On Oct. 9, Foster had a two-level spine decompract and fusion on her back that sidelined her for months. Then she shot a 20-over 91 in qualifying and barely reached match play as the 16th and final seed before rallying from 2-down with three holes to play to beat medalist Jill Tryon 1-up in the first round and then defeated former champion Donna Harris on the 20th hole in the second round.

Those wins were largely due to a tip from her husband, Craig, a retired orthopedic surgeon, on the practice range on Wednesday morning. Suddenly, Foster knew she might have a shot at a third CWGA title to go with six that she won at Plainfield (N.J.) CC where she learned to play the game, six at Silver Spring CC in Ridgefield and 16 at her current course, Madison CC, where she and Craig live next to the 13th green.

"I took two swings, and Craig noticed I wasn't extending enough," said Foster, 66, who has competed in four U.S. Senior Women's Amateur Championships. "When I started extending, everything changed."

But it wasn't quite enough for Foster to garner another memorable CWGA crown. When she won her first title in 2005, she didn't realize she had cancer and had surgery three months later on Sept. 25. She notched her second victory in 2010 and was runner-up to Madison clubmate MacKenzie Hawkes in 2015.

"Losing is disappointing, but I'm delighted to get to the final after I played so poorly in qualifying," Foster said.

Diane Rothwell (Ellington Ridge CC) won the Founders Cup title after nearly not playing at all.

She was talked into competing by CWGA majors tournament chairman Lynn Lefler a week before the tournament.

"Lynn called and asked if I wanted to play since they were a player short and would have to give someone a first-round bye if I didn't play," Rothwell said. "I'm really happy. I'd never made a final because I usually got knocked out in the early rounds."

DOWLING CAPTURES MEN'S AMATEUR

Rick Dowling held on to defeat Chandler Morris 1 up to win his second title in the Connecticut State Golf Association Amateur Championship at Fox Hopyard GC in East Haddam.

Dowling, the 2017 champion, built a 5-up lead late on the front side, winning four consecutive holes at one point, but found himself even after Morris found his rhythm and won the ninth, 11th, 13th, 15th and 17th hole, the latter with a 4-foot putt. On the final hole, both laid up on a sometimes-reachable par-5. Dowling managed to get his approach from 145 yards to the back tier where the hole was set. Chandler's approach from 120 yards hit the slope in front of that tier and spun back, leaving him with a 50-foot putt. He putted it to 4 feet but missed the second putt.

"Honestly, I wasn't really thinking about the status of the match," Dowling said about the evaporating lead. "I was trying to play it hole by hole, but I made a few poor swings on the back and couple of silly bogeys. Credit Chandler for coming back. What I'm proud of is that I played pretty even keel throughout the round and stayed with my approach to each shot."

Morris's theme had been "patience" all week, arguing that Fox Hopyard, with its mostly tree-lined fairways and perplexing, tiered greens, demanded it above all. "The course played tougher than it has all week," he said of the 6,912-yard, par 71 layout. "The wind picked up, the greens got more difficult with the traffic. Gauging the speed became tougher as the putting surfaces slowed with the rain. I got myself in kind of a hole on the front, but I hit a lot of good shots on the back. I came back. I hung in there. I'm



Richard Dowling

happy with that."

The final was shortened to 18 holes after a four-hour-plus rain delay three days earlier forced stroke play qualifying to replace match play. Then, after the end of play the third day, semi-finalist Seth Egnasko, who was to play Dowling, withdrew due to a work-related emergency, leaving Dowling with a pass to the afternoon finals.

The victory was sweeter for Dowling because his father, Richard, was on the bag and his mother, Nancy, surprised him to give him a congratulatory hug. The elder Dowling was moved to tears talking about his son's win at Tashua Knolls GC in Trumbull in 2017 since that is where the father, once a 3-handicap, had played thousands of rounds.

"I'm very proud," the elder Dowling said. "But also congratulations to Chandler, who played so well and came back like that."

... Mark Vasington of the host Wampanoag CC in West Hartford defeated Bruce Krackowsky of Blue Fox Run GC in Avon 7 and 6 to win the CSGA Senior Match Play Championship. Vasington had only 13 putts in the 12-hole match in his fourth lopsided victory, the last over the 2006 champion that included five birdies and an eagle in front of several dozen fellow members who followed the match. "Whenever I was tempted to get ahead of myself, I said, 'I'm doing this for them, I'm doing it for the club,'" Vasington, 61, said in his Donald Ross/Wampanoag hat. "That kind of deflected the pressure away from me. I just kept thinking, one swing, one swing. I don't think it will sink in for a while. But I'm really happy for Wampanoag." Vasington previously won the CSGA 2014 Senior Amateur.

... Ben James stuck to his conservative strategy off the tee

and rolled to a 6-and-5 victory over Gunnar Granito in the final of the CSGA Junior Championship at Watertown Golf Club. "I'm proud of the way I managed my game," said the 16-year-old champion from Milford and Great River GC who won the AJGA Killington Junior the previous week at 13-under. "I had a game plan all week, and I never varied from it. No matter what my opponent did." James had



Ben James

played the Junior since he was 11 and never made the final. Granito, 18, the New Canaan High School graduate from Woodway CC in Darien, made the 2019 Junior his coming-out party. He had won the FCIAC individual championship in June and hopes golf can someday rival his first love, hockey. He'll play at the Berkshire School in the fall, and with one college golf offer can expect several more now. The victory gave James a spot in the Connecticut Open, and he's exempt from qualifying for the 2020 Russell C. Palmer Cup and Connecticut Amateur. He also earned a spot on the CSGA's New England Junior Team, where Granito will be one of his teammates.

Bruce Berlet is the retired golf writer for the Hartford Courant and writes a Connecticut Notebook column in each issue of snegolfer.com. Visit the website often to see more of his columns.

The Field



What's Up With Those Headcovers?

BY JIM HAMMOND

It was a bright sunny Monday at the Rhode Island Country Club in Barrington R.I. Players were warming up; getting ready to compete in the CVS Charity Golf Classic. I was watching two young pros that exceeded their golfing peers at a very early age-- Keegan Bradley, who was named as the PGA Tour rookie of the year in 2011, and Morgan Pressel, who qualified for the U.S. Open at the tender age of 12.

Morgan was very relaxed as she was grooving her swing. I noticed her holding an unusual head cover that she had removed from her driver. "Neat headcover there Morgan" I said. "Thanks." "Do you have a dog?" I asked. "Yeah" she replied. "A Goldendoodle. He looks like this headcover." "What's his name?" I asked. "Zoey. I take him with

me on the road." "The road can get lonely. But I always have my best

friend. He is back at the hotel in Providence waiting for me."



I noticed that Keegan Bradley, who had just finished in a tie for second place at The Travelers the day before, had a dog cover also. "You have a dog Keegan?" "Yes it is a Goldendoodle, also." His headcover had a shaggy face and a big smile. "Do you take him on the road?" "Absolutely. Bennie loves the road. It's good to share the road with your best pal."

Craig Stadler had a walrus headcover and Greg Norman had the shark, but Keegan and Morgan only need to reach for their driver and they know that their shaggy dogs are waiting for them back at the hotel. Even if you have a bad day on the course, man, and woman's best friend is waiting for the next adventure waiting for them on their professional golf tours.

CVS HEALTH CHARITY CLASSIC

Bradley Wins Fifth Straight CVS Health Charity Classic

Keegan Bradley was part of the winning team for the fifth straight year at the CVS Health Charity Classic held at beautiful Rhode Island Country Club in Barrington, R.I. on a picture perfect, three-bridge

day in June. This was the third straight win for the trio of Bradley, Brooke Henderson and co-host Billy Andrade. He had also won the event with friend, schoolmate (Hopkinton, MA High School) in 2015 and 2016.

The team had a fast start, but the team of Kisner, Thompson and Clarke made a big run on the back nine shooting 28 that was two better than any of the other five teams. The winners needed to make two pars on the 18th hole

for the win, and when all three hit the green, it was all over but the shouting. Both Bradley and Andrade rolled their first putts to within a foot of the hole to seal the victory.

Final Results / Scores

Keegan Bradley, Brooke Henderson, Billy Andrade
25-31-56 -15

Kevin Kisner, Lexi Thompson, Darren Clarke
29-28-57 -14

Keith Mitchell, Morgan Pressel, C. Montgomerie
29-31-60 -11

Billy Horschel, Paula Creamer, Mark O'Meara
29-31-60 -11

Max Homa, So Yeon Ryu, Brad Faxon
30-30-60 -11

Sam Saunders, Lydia Ko, Rocco Mediate
32-36-68 -3



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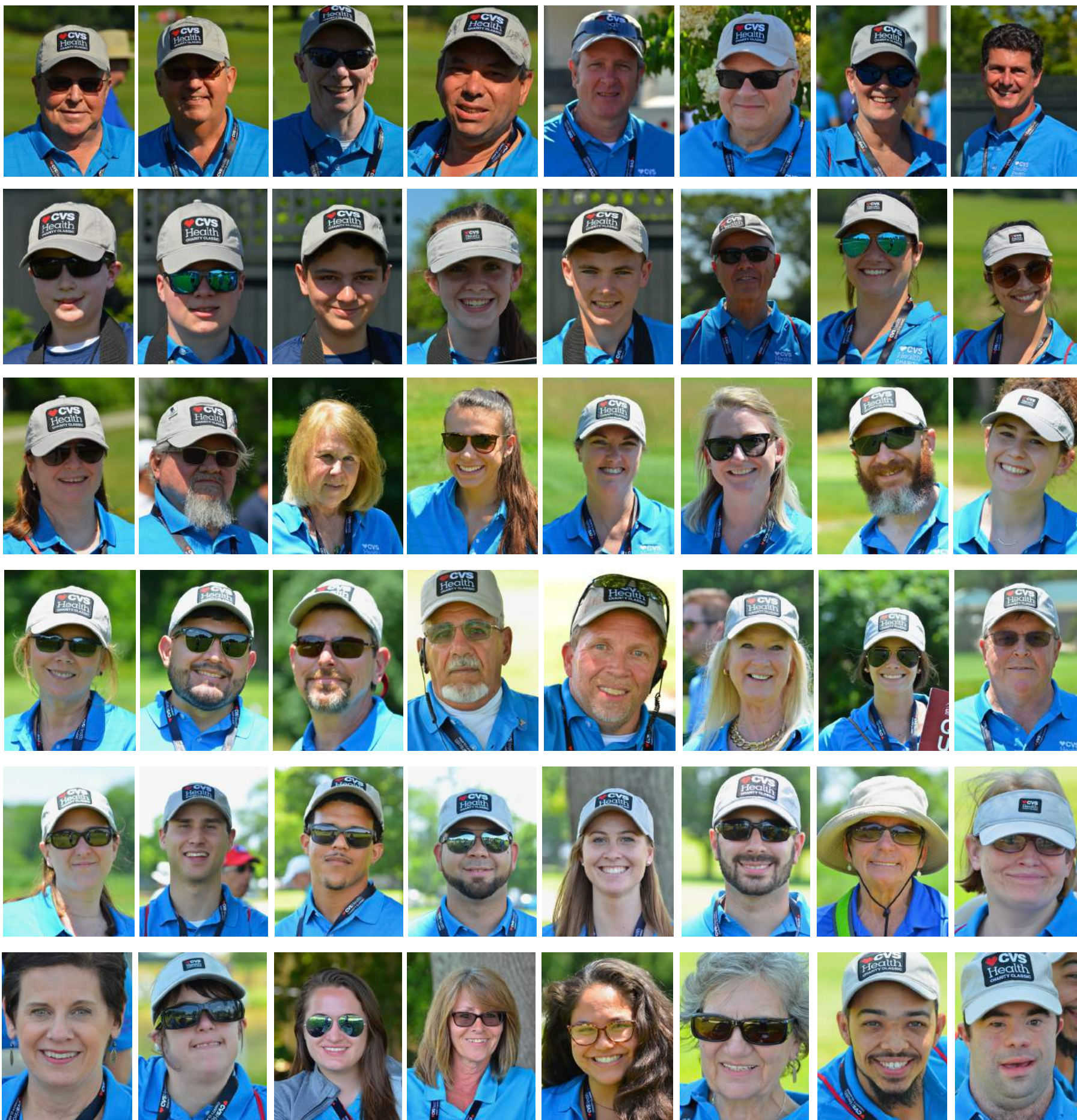
Congratulations to our 2019 CVS Health Charity Classic Champions Keegan Bradley, Brooke Henderson and tournament Co-Host Billy Andrade along with our PGA TOUR, LPGA and PGA TOUR Champions professionals.

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For more information visit CVSHealthCharityClassic.com.

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Golf Saved His Life

"Golf saved my life," Andrew Bachelder says often. It's a life that came close to ending, twice.

On Oct. 26, 2009, two American military helicopters, a UH-1N Huey and an AH-1W Cobra, collided in mid-air over the southern Helmand province of Afghanistan. Four Marines were killed. Bachelder was one of two survivors.

Bachelder broke his back, pelvis, right leg and shoulder along with five ribs. He had a collapsed lung. And traumatic brain injury. But that wasn't the worst thing. The worst thing was the survivor's guilt.

Why did he survive and get to go back home to his wife and children while those four men – all great Marines – perished in the crash?

One of the deaths haunted him in particular. The pilot of the Cobra, Marine Capt. Kyle R. Van De Giesen of North Attleboro, was the only other father involved in the collision. He was beloved in his hometown, not just for being the quarterback of a football team that won the high school Super Bowl, but because he had exhibited an amazing level of poise, leadership and smarts in his 29 years.

His story touched all of New England. His days in dangerous territories were supposed to be over after two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. In just a matter of hours, he was scheduled to leave his foreign post to return home to his pregnant wife, Megan, and their daughter, Avery. His son, Colin, would be born 15 days after the crash.

Bachelder's connection to Van De Giesen brought him to the Mansfield Holiday Inn over the Memorial Day weekend for a fundraiser for the foundation honoring the deceased Marine captain. Bachelder, a tough-as-cheap-steak retired Marine, stood before a microphone and told his story.

"On Sept. 11, 2012," he said, "I tried to end my life." The guilt so tortured him, he said in a recent interview, that on the 11th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on our nation, Bachelder swallowed as much pain medication as he could in a failed suicide attempt.

"I saw it as the only way to end the pain," he said. He doesn't own a



Andrew Bachelder

gun. If he had, he said, he wouldn't be here today.

Bachelder continues to recover, both physically and emotionally. He has undergone half a dozen surgeries including a hip replacement, and his back still bothers him daily. But the emotional healing required him to reconnect with something he had enjoyed in his childhood but had given up.

Bachelder grew up next to a golf course in Fort Worth, Texas, playing regularly from the time he was 10 until he joined the Marines in 2002 when he was in his early 20s. He had always loved golf but the demands of his family and military life simply didn't allow him to play.

During physical therapy, he searched for something more than exercise, something that involved his mind as well as his body. His physical therapist finally relented by letting him play golf.

For the first time in years, he rediscovered the joy of striking a ball – and all that goes into it. Golf, he explained, is only 10 percent physical. The other 90 percent, he said, "is in the four inches between your ears. If we can focus on a little golf ball and breathe deeply and hit that one-plus shot that you envision in your mind, then you can probably overcome the other challenges that come before you in life," he said.

Bachelder tries to teach that lesson to other veterans facing similar

challenges to his. "I want people to hear my story," he said, "because it could help another individual facing the same things that I did."

He has become so proficient at golf that he has twice won the President George W. Bush Warrior Open for wounded veterans held each year in Texas. Last year, he graduated from the Golf Academy of America Dallas and he carries a plus-1 handicap.

Golf was also part of the reason that brought him to the Mansfield Holiday Inn that recent night. The fundraiser featured an auction of some big-ticket prizes. One of them included three foursomes of golf at exclusive TPC Boston in Norton, donated by some friends of the Van De Giesen family. Among those playing would be Andrew Bachelder, veteran, survivor and golf instructor.

It's the third time Bachelder has agreed to be part of the package. In those three years, the auction has raised nearly \$20,000 for the Capt. Kyle R. Van De Giesen Memorial Fund. "I think of all the wonderful

things they've been able to do and it's just an honor for me to be a part of it," he said. "I'll hop on a plane any time they need me."

Bachelder communicates occasionally with Van De Giesen's family. Those talks, and his ability to contribute in honor of his fellow Marine, have gone a long way to salve the wounds he suffered, physically and emotionally, on Oct. 26, 2009.

"Being accepted is one of the biggest things for me," he said. "This family has just welcomed me and my wife and children. I can't tell you how much that means to me."

Mike Kirby can be reached at mkirbygolf18@gmail.com.

**Keep an eye out for the
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Brattleboro Country Club, a Hidden Gem on the Gateway to Vermont

Why, I asked, should golfers want to come and play Brattleboro Country Club? My question was put to Brattleboro CC's Director of Golf, Michael Zaranek and he quickly responded: "We're here right at the gateway to Vermont, and we're such a little hidden gem. We have an amazing golf course, with a little modern, a little old school and a little bit of everything. Our course will test your game in every way, shape or form. If you hit good shots, you'll get rewarded and if you miss shots, it's not too bad, not really unforgiving."

Zaranek added, "Plus, we have all the bells and whistles, a good practice facility, a good teaching facility, and we actually have 19 holes of golf. The practice hole is the original hole, so if you're tied with



4th Green at Brattleboro C.C.

someone after 18 holes, you can go there and figure things out."

A round at Brattleboro CC, as I recently found out, makes for a wonderful day. Perhaps you want some time away from the hustle and bustle of your city surroundings. You'll find a peaceful setting here in the Green Mountain state and a terrific, well-maintained golf course.

Zaranek, whose son, Jacob a rising junior and golfer at Fairfield University in Connecticut, recently qualified for both the Mass. and U.S. Amateur Championships, began his career at BCC from 1997 to 2000. After 15 years as head pro at Crumpin-Fox Club in Bernardston and then three years at Crestview, he returned to BCC this season.

Brattleboro CC boasts an interesting history. In 1899, local residents formed the Wantastiquet Golf Club and established a six-hole course near the present site. In December 1913, Tom McNamara, a professional golfer from Boston and three-time U.S. Open runner-up, toured the site and plotted a lay-out for a nine-hole course.

The property then was owned by the Brattleboro Retreat. In February, 1914, 14 local businessmen incorporated the Brattleboro Country Club and changed the name from Wantastiquet GC. Construction began in April of that year and the grand opening was held

on July 1, 1914. Over 1,000 people visited the clubhouse and enjoyed a celebratory Japanese lawn party.

By 1930, a re-design was in place by noted architect and designer Wayne Stiles. Many years later, 70 to be exact, an expansion and partial rerouting by Vermont native Steve Durkee was completed in 2000, the course transitioning from a private, members-owned course to a public play facility.

Eight classic Stiles' holes remain (9-12, 15-18), with 10 contemporary Durkee holes women in (1-8, 13-14), with ample elevation, charming variety and pleasing views at every turn. The course restaurant Bella Notte is open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m, offering a full lunch and dinner menu with options including past dishes, seafood and steak as well as appetizer, burgers, sandwiches, specialty salads and desserts.

Melanie Boese is the owner. She and her late husband, Jack, bought BCC in 2014 to keep it from going to auction. She remains the sole owner.

A par 71, Brattleboro CC measures 6,533 from the tips (71.1, 126 slope), 6,073 from the regular tees (69.1/122), 5051 from the forward tees (64.2/112 for men; 69.8/114 for women). With a cart, it's \$65 for a weekday round and \$75 on the weekend.

In his short but fact-filled book about Brattleboro CC over the years, "The Club History" Brattleboro member Robert R. Anderson covers the history from opening day in 1914 into the 21st century and concludes with a positive note, writing: "Like many country clubs of its vintage, clubs created in the countryside to provide town-dwellers a variety of outdoor pursuits, the Brattleboro Country Club soon became a club devoted solely to the game of golf. Its charm continues to lie in its unpretentiousness, its unassuming friendliness, its venerable clubhouse and pro shop, and its challenging golf course." For more information visit: brattleborocountryclub.com



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Templewood Golf Club's 20th Anniversary

They walked together through the dense forest in Templeton in the spring of 1997—the well-known golf architect Geoffrey Cornish, age 83, and the owner of the land, Bill Matuszewicz, who was 60 and had never played a round of golf in his life.

“We walked for hours, and I could hardly keep up with him,” recalled Matuszewicz. “And when we were done, he said to me, ‘This is beautiful land for a golf course. We can do the architect work, and if you build it, the people will come.’”

Cornish, who planned more golf courses in New England than any other architect in history, was right. All these years later, in the summer of 2019, golfers still come to Templewood Golf Course on Brooks Road which is approaching a 20th anniversary—the first nine holes opened in 1999. Four years later, the second nine was added.

Matuszewicz’s journey to becoming a golf course builder and owner, along with his wife, Annette, is a lesson in adapting to changing times, intelligent decision making and sheer hard work.

The son of William and Jennie Matuszewicz, Bill at seven years old, began working on the family dairy farm in the 1940s. Cows would graze on the same property that spawls today with inviting fairways and greens.

“After many years, we quit farming, figuring there was no money in it. So we started building houses. And I also had a logging and pallet operation,” said Matuszewicz who constructed 50 houses on his 210-acres before deciding that a golf course would fit perfectly into his land plans.

“At the time our inspiration was that Gardner Municipal, Ellinwood in Athol, and many other courses in the area had waiting lists for members,” Matuszewicz said. “The original plan was to build 100 houses, but the housing market went to pot in the 1980s.”

So, by the mid-1990s, he turned to golf, first meeting with Cornish and then working with Cornish’s assistant Howard Mauer. For two years, Matuszewicz toiled on the course by himself, clearing trees, measuring land from tee to green and creating the groundwork for the eventual golf holes.

And Templewood has been good for golfers, forging on even with the golf boom now over, and with some area courses closing. “We’re holding our



Bill Matuszewicz

own,” said Matuszewicz. “We’re not losing money and we’re making a living which is better than a lot of places.”

With pride, he added, “I had a gentlemen here recently, a consultant in the golf industry. I like to pick people’s brains, and he said our greens were some of the best he’s seen in the Massachusetts and New England area.”

And it doesn’t just happen. “I’m up at 4 a.m. most mornings. Dairy farming was the same thing,” said Matuszewicz, who praised the work of his son, Wayne along with Bob Haley and Dick Kodys who do most of the mowing. A friendly crew of loyal workers in the clubhouse greet patrons every day. “We don’t see ourselves as rivals of nearby courses,” said Matuszewicz, “especially Gardner which has been around for a long time and has a wonderful reputation.”

Templewood, with six par 3 holes, is a par 70. The par 3 holes on the front side range from 140 to 155 yards, while the par 3’s on the back run from 177 to 204 yards. Golfers finish on the challenging 18th, an uphill monster that stretches 583 yards.

Weekday rates at Templewood are \$15 for nine holes (walking) and \$27 (with cart). For 18 holes it’s \$20 walking and \$38 with cart. Weekend rates and holidays are slightly higher, but only before 1 p.m. For more information and for season membership rates visit: templewoodgolfcourse.com.

Green Hill Opens Driving Range

The newest golf news in Worcester is the official opening of the first practice range at Green Hill Municipal Golf Course.

After the original planning stages, which began in 2008, the project was finally completed this spring and the driving range opened in May.

“The new range in the first few months has been great for us and our golfers,” said Green Hill head pro Matt Moison. “We’re meeting all our expectations for use and it will continue to get more use throughout the summer. A driving range is something we always wanted here, and now we have it.”

Because Green Hill existed without a driving range since its inception 90 years ago, two new holes had to be built on the back nine to accommodate the new project which occupies much of the former 17th hole. After re-routing on the back nine, there is now a new, par-5 12th hole and a new, par 4 17th hole.

“The range will definitely extend our golf season,” said Moison, who is in his 23rd year at Green Hill. “We have full-flight golf balls and an available fob for any frequent range user. For \$100, that golfer will receive a 20 percent discount on any size bucket of balls.” According to veteran Worcester Telegram golf writer Bill Doyle, the new Green Hill driving range is the only range open to the public in the city.

On the synthetic turf tee box that measures 150 feet from side to side and 20 feet from front to back, golfers can fire golf shots into the distance, an uphill area spanning 300 yards and ending with a screened area for golfers’ protection.

Range balls are available for \$4 for a bucket of 25, \$10 for 90 and \$15 for 125.

Jay Gearan writes a Central Mass. Notebook column in each issue of snegolfer.com

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Amid Brick and Mortar Chaos, Innovative Golf Retailer Thrives

Custom Club Fitter Continues National Expansion As Demand Grows

Willowbrook, IL -- In a world where staples like Toys "R" Us are disappearing, the outlook for new brick and mortar businesses is bleak. More retailers are moving to an e-commerce model, and even more are downsizing. The golf industry would seemingly fall in line with these company casualties, but one brand is succeeding amongst the chaos - Club Champion, a custom club fitting company.

The dynamic Club Champion vision has catapulted the brand to be ranked as the #1 specialty fitter according to Golf Datatech, the golf

industry's market share monitor. The company's thorough processes and attention to detail set them apart from the competition.

"Our business model works because the service works - we can show measurable improvements," said Nick Sherburne, Club Champion's founder. "That translates to happy golfers and a higher demand for what we do."

The company has opened 31 stores in the last year for a total of 62 locations. In 2018, Club Champion posted same-store sales growth of 59%; each store conducts an average

of 500-1500 fittings annually, with many stores surpassing that. Their fitting studios service most of the major golf markets in the country.

Club Champion's brand agnostic approach allows them to focus on the golfer - not the manufacturer - so they're able to provide a unique experience that delivers real results. A *Golf Digest* study found that eight out of nine Club Champion custom-fit golfers saved as many as six strokes per round and added more than 20 yards off the tee.

Equipment manufacturers have high praise for the brand;

TaylorMade CEO David Abeles said, "Club Champion truly is one of the most innovative club fitters in the business. They provide a consumer experience that is undeniably helpful for all golfers to play better." Callaway CEO Chip Brewer confirmed, "Club Champion is a fantastic consumer experience. One of the great, new age golf retailers who understand that fitting is the future."

For more information, visit clubchampiongolf.com.

Looking Back Aug. 2012

Lucky Seven years ago in the Aug./Sep issue of Southern New England Golfer we had Chris Swift on the cover as he had just captured the New England Amateur at Falmouth Country Club in Maine. Swift, of New Canaan, Conn. was the only player to break par over the 72 holes on the demanding layout. He was entering his second year at Marquette, University and had never won a junior tournament. Finishing second was Garren Poirier of Vermont and third was Jake Nutter of New Hampshire.

The other picture on the cover was of a young Richy Werenski who had just won the prestigious Porter Cup in Niagara Falls. He made 16 birdies, one eagle and one bogey over the four rounds. Werenski is now playing on Tour and was one of the early leaders at this year's Travelers Championship.

Charlie Blanchard, who was often on our cover, won his second R.I. Amateur at Wanumetonomy in July of 2012. He defeated Jamison Randall of Cumberland in the finals.

Our rising star was Ted Potter, Jr. who was having a strong year. He has survived on Tour, but has never become a star. We must have picked him because he was left-handed.

This issue features the winner of the Northeast Amateur. In 2012 the winner was Justin Shinn who beat Jordan Russell on the third hole of



Richy Werenski

a playoff.

We had a picture of Seth Waugh, who grew up in Ayer, Mass. He was the CEO of the Americas of Deutsche Bank in 2012 and was instrumental in growing the tournament in Norton, Mass. He is now executive director of the PGA of America after retiring from the bank.

Marc Leishman won the Travelers Championship in 2012 and continues to play well. He beat Charlie Hoffman by one stroke and became the fifth first-time

winner in the last seven Travelers Championships.

Morgan Pressel and Jay Haas teamed to win the CVS Charity Classic in 2012. They were a two shots ahead of Suzann Pettersen and Fred Funk. Both Annika Sorenstam and Lorena Ochoa, LPGA Hall-of-Famers played in the event.

Other names highlighted in the 2012 issue were Ali Prazak who won the OSWGA State Amateur and Nicole Scola who won the RIWGA State Championship by beating Amanda Sabitoni 3 and 2 in the finals. Ricky Stimets won the Worcester County Amateur. Mike Calef captured the Mass. Amateur title after winning the MGA's Mid-Am the previous year.

Bob Beach, won the first Patriot Golf Award from the NEPGA. Beach, the head professional at Braintree Municipal was rewarded for his tireless work with veterans and their families within the VA hospital network.

We ran a golf commentary column about TEE IT FORWARD. You don't hear much about this great concept nowadays, but this reporter thinks it is one of the best concepts in golf—especially as we get older and can't reach the greens we had always been able to in the past.

Brad Faxon was highlighted at Button Hole Short Course and Learning Center. Each year he has a Junior Golf Day for boys and girls

ages 6-16 and in 2012 over 100 youngsters were there to learn the game of golf and have fun.

As is the case in this issue, in 2012 we highlighted golfing in Maine. There were stories of The Ledges, Links at Outlook and Nonesuch River.

There was a sad note in the issue in 2012 as we wrote about the passing of Lou Lombardi who had been the superintendent at Cranston Country Club for many years where he worked with his cousin Michael who is the owner. Lou had been a science teacher in West Warwick before switching to become a course superintendent.

Bruce Vittner is the publisher/editor of snegolfer.com and writes a Looking Back column in each issue of the publication.

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Naumec Creates Great Memories

It was the “bucket list of bucket lists” for Matt Naumec of Wilbraham, when the whirlwind start to his professional golf career landed him on the biggest of stages – at the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach – in June. “Playing in the U.S. Open, at Pebble Beach ... that week I’ll remember for the rest of my life,” Naumec, 22, said. “I got to share something I had dreamed about for 22 years, and I got to share it with my entire family. That made it so much more special.”

Naumec was born eight days after Tiger Woods made his professional debut, and there he was hitting balls on the range – one spot away from him – as he prepared for his fourth professional start. “I played with Rickie Fowler, Tommy Fleetwood, Ian Poulter, Jon Rahm ...,” Naumec said. “Growing up it was always a dream to be out there playing with guys like that, and now I can put it in perspective.”

“I played great on the first day, I was 3 over. I hit the ball great and I can’t hang my head. I had a couple of good putts ... I was really, really close to putting together a very good round.” His second round and his U.S. Open ended with an 18-foot putt for birdie at the 18th hole.

“I used a (local) caddie for the week, but on the last hole I had my dad (Mike) take the bag,” Naumec said. “I was in the last group, the last person on the course for the day. I ended up making birdie there, so my dad has told me that he’s 1 for 1.” For the record, rounds of 74 and 79 did not advance him to the weekend on which Gary Woodland was crowned champion.

Doug Hutcheson, Naumec’s golf coach at Wilbraham & Monson Academy for three years, said it succinctly that “it’s the bucket list of bucket lists ... of where you want to play and it’s at the U.S. Open.” Naumec won the New England Prep School Golf Championship in 2013 and played at Division I Boston College, where he finished his stellar playing career as captain and with All-Northeast region honors for the third straight year.

He graduated with an economics degree in May, turned professional and qualified to play on the Mackenzie Tour/PGA Canada



Matt Naumec living his dream at Pebble Beach

Tour. To reach the U.S. Open, he advanced through two stages of qualifying, including a 36-hole sectional qualifier in Walla Walla, Washington.

ZARANEK QUALIFIES FOR U.S. AMATEUR

Jacob Zaranek of South Deerfield resident made five straight birdies to spark an outstanding day at Longmeadow Country Club July 8, a stretch that helped him qualify for the U.S. Amateur Championship. “I think I had done that in a tournament one other time, but this timing was pretty good,” Zaranek said of five consecutive birdies. “But to have that help get me there ...”

“There” is Pinehurst (N.C.) Country Club and Resort, where Zaranek will make his debut at the national championship Aug. 12-18. The five birdies and two others helped Zaranek close with a 5-under-par 65 to earn the second of two qualifying bids. His 6-under 134 was second only to Steve DiLisio of Swampscott, who fired a 133.

Zaranek, who plays out of CC of Greenfield and Brattleboro (Vt.) CC, opened the afternoon round off the 10th tee and after the turn birdied the first through fifth holes. This spring, Zaranek competed at the U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship with Kyle Puzzo of Ludlow at Bandon Dunes (Ore.).

ACES WILD



Matt Naumec's family and friends pose for a picture

Longmeadow natives **Jack Dombeck** and his son **Jack Dombeck Jr.** each made a hole-in-one on the same hole, using the same club ... two days apart. Dombeck Sr. aced the 18th hole at Twin Hills Country Club in Longmeadow on June 20. Two days later, his son did the same. The ace with a 5-iron was the seventh for Dombeck Sr., while Dombeck Jr. made his first.

Another father-son ace tandem grabbed headlines a few weeks later. East Longmeadow residents **Bob Phelan** and his son **Jack Phelan** each made an ace within four days. Bob aced the 17th hole at Orchards Golf Club in South Hadley on July 4, before Jack did the same at the second hole at Springfield Country Club in West Springfield on July 7.

WESTERN NOTES

Connor Piecuch of East Longmeadow, a rising sophomore at Mercyhurst University, was a witness to three aces in 10 days and

he has witnessed nine in his lifetime. Piecuch played with **Cody Booska**, when the CC of Greenfield member aced the fourth hole during a U.S. Amateur qualifier at Longmeadow CC July 8. That came a day after he was with East Longmeadow’s **Jack Phelan**, who made a “1” at the second hole at Springfield CC. A week earlier, he witnessed East Longmeadow’s **Eddie Morin** make a hole-in-one at the 14th hole at CC of Wilbraham. Piecuch, 19, made the only ace of his career this March, at Mangrove Bay CC in St. Petersburg, Fla. ... **Angela Garvin** on Feeding Hills won the Girls Open division at the U.S. Challenge Cup’s World Series of Golf July 3-4. Garvin won at the first extra hole at Triggs Memorial in East Providence, R.I., after opening the 36-hole tournament with a 72. Garvin was two strokes back entering the last hole, where she made par to force a playoff.

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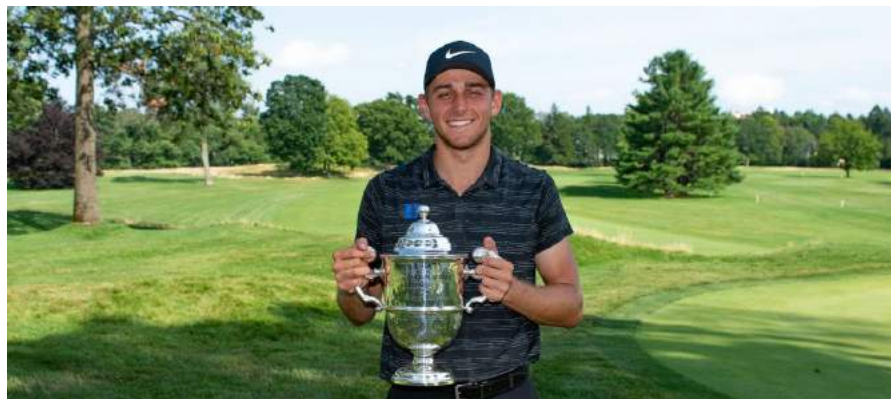
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Swampscott's Dilisio Defeats Hopkinton's Hervol, 3&2, in Final Match of 2019 Amateur Championship

All week, Swampscott's Steven DiLisio had said his focus was on beating the golf course, rather than his opponent, even when the format of the 111th playing of the Massachusetts Amateur Championship went from the 36-hole stroke play portion to the match play portion of play. Fast forward four matches from Wednesday's starting Round of 32 match to Friday's 36-hole championship match at The Country Club and DiLisio did that once again, focusing more on his individual performance than that of his opponents to ultimately defeat Hopkinton's Jimmy Hervol, 3&2, in the 36-hole finale of the week-long championship. With his victory, DiLisio becomes the 77th competitor to win the Bay State's most prestigious amateur golf event.

With that mindset, DiLisio, a rising senior on Duke University's Men's Golf Team, tallied eight birdies in his 34 played holes, led by as much as 5-up and held on despite a valiant comeback effort by the recent UConn graduate Hervol down the stretch that saw him win two of his final four holes. After Hervol sunk a 14-foot on the 34th hole, the par-3 16th hole at The Country Club, DiLisio countered with a difficult five-foot birdie putt to officially book his spot in the Mass Golf history.



Steven Dilisio

"It's awesome. It's exciting. I've been playing in [the Massachusetts Amateur Championship] since I was 12 or 13 years old with my brother and this is my first win," said DiLisio following the Championship match, which began at 8:00 a.m. with his opening tee shot and finished just minutes shy of 4:00 p.m., with a 40-minute break after 18 holes. "It's a long week. You're hoping it's a long week. I'm just super excited."

When the final match commenced Friday morning, DiLisio wasted no time, quickly taking a 1 up advantage after the first hole when he sunk a 15-foot birdie putt that Hervol couldn't match.

Hervol won the third hole to bring the match back to all square,

but the 21-year old DiLisio, who is five months younger than Hervol, regained momentum by winning the next three holes in the match, on Holes 6, 10 and 12, respectively, to move to 3-up. The 3-up lead remained intact until the 18th hole, when Hervol's key 12-foot birdie putt dug into DiLisio's lead ahead of nearly a 40-minute long break at the midway point of the Championship match.

Despite the two-hole score differential, both competitors were grinded through the excessive heat, carding a 5-under par 65 with conceded putts, while Hervol's scorecard showed 4-under 66 after conceded putts as the match surpassed 18 holes.

"It was hard. Part of me wanted to keep going [after 18] and part of me

wanted to call it for the day because it was so hot," said DiLisio. "Like I talked about it yesterday, I just tried to come out and play as good as I can and I had to against Jimmy."

In the second half of the Championship match, after DiLisio had increased his lead to a day-best 5-up by the 30th hole, key putting from Hervol extended the match for additional holes. Needing to at least halve the hole, Hervol tapped in a par-putt on Hole 31 and won 32 with a conceded eagle putt to bring the match within two, but after they both carded pars on the par-4 33rd hole, DiLisio finished off Hervol with his five foot birdie putt on the par-3 34th hole.

After a few days of rest, DiLisio and Hervol will both compete in the Porter Cup, one of the country's most prestigious amateur events, next week at Niagara Falls Country Club in Lewiston, New York. Following that, they'll both compete in the Ouimet Memorial Tournament conducted by Mass Golf. DiLisio will also compete at the 2019 U.S. Amateur Championship in mid-August before returning for his senior season at Duke while Hervol says he plans to turn professional this fall after advancing to the Regional Round of the NCAA Tournament in his final year at UConn this past May.

Club Champion Offers Equipment Trade-In Program

Golfers can earn money in return for old equipment through 2nd Swing

Willowbrook, IL -- It's time to clean out the garage, empty the crawl space and collect the clubs taking up space in your office - your old golf equipment could be worth some cash. In partnership with 2nd Swing, Club Champion offers a trade-in program that pays golfers for unwanted equipment.

Since its inception in April 2017, more than a thousand

Club Champion customers have taken advantage of the trade-in service. According to Erik Lemieux, Key Account Manager for the program, payouts have averaged approximately \$300 per transaction. Many customers have received more than \$1,000 with at least one taking home more than \$2,000. The only caveat is that the trade-in must be made in conjunction with a new purchase at Club Champion.

The process is simple - in three steps, you can complete your trade-in online. First, get a custom

fitting at Club Champion and purchase clubs. Next, check the value of the clubs you're trading in at clubchampiongolf.com/tradein and complete the checkout process. Individual clubs and full sets are eligible for trade-in. Finally, just ship your clubs using the FedEx labels provided and get paid via check or PayPal within seven business days.

"There is no limit to the number of clubs a customer can trade in, and in some cases, the total trade-in amount may exceed their purchase price," Lemieux added. "All major

and boutique brands qualify." All the major brands are accepted as well as niche manufacturers like Epon, Honma and PXG. You can even trade in rangefinders or GPS devices from companies like Bushnell or Voice Caddie.

If you're considering a fitting at the nation's #1 premium club fitter, builder and retailer, check out the trade-in program to help finance those new clubs you've been dreaming about. Turning clubs into cash has never been so easy!

Buckle down and get to know Golf's New Rules

I wonder how many of you had found yourself as I have on the golf course, in a sticky spot like a gopher hole or nestled in the roots of a large tree, only to wonder what do I do now? If you are playing with friends just to be out there for a day of fun and frolic, you may give your ball a little foot wedge to a better place. No harm, no foul. Everyone is all smiles.

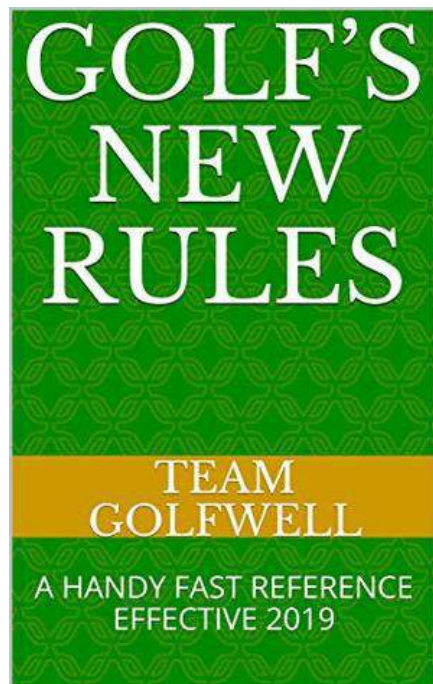
However if you are playing for your life (like in a tournament) or even a glass or wine or a quarter, the foot wedge is out. Rules are in. And ladies, who knows the rules better than us? Or maybe not.

Just as you ponder your options, you know there is a rule out there that settles the matter. Still, how many times have I played the game and come up short with an answer only to call the pro shop and ask for divine guidance. You'd think after all these years I'd know my way through the 1,200 decisions in the Rule Book of the USGA & R&A Association. But I've never quite made it. Neither have most of the ladies I play with day after day, year after year. Some don't have a clue. How do you play out of a snarly hazard? What about that unplayable lie thing? How long can you look for your ball? Certainly not until the sun sets but what's the rule? In the past these indecisions have slowed the pace of play and have slowed down the entire course.

Finally the powers of golf realized that this difficult game took too long to play. So to make things clearer, speed things up, and in general make everything more player-friendly, the Rules have been completely re-written and nonsensical rules have been eliminated. It has taken seven years to do the job, but now it's done, the booklet is printed and we are off and running.

Golf's New Rules has 24 Rules vs. 34 Rules in the old book. The Decision Book went from more than 1,200 Decisions to 400 plus Decisions with 400 eliminated and 400 incorporated into the Rules and Definitions.

On our first day of our Ladies Night Out, we were given a list of a few of the major changes. Here are a few.



You have three minutes *only* to look for that lost ball, not half a day! If you want to go ball hawking, do it after your round on your own time.

Instead of returning to the spot of your previous shot in the event of a lost ball or a ball out of bounds, you can take a drop in the nearest spot of the fairway (within two club-lengths of the edge of the fairway), no nearer the hole than where the ball crossed the OB line, with a two-stroke penalty. Or you can still follow the old rule and hit again from the spot where you hit from before with a penalty of stroke and distance.

1. If a ball is moved during the search, there is no penalty.
2. If your ball is embedded, you get free relief.
3. A drop is now measured from your knee not your shoulder.
4. If a ball unintentionally hits a player or equipment there is no penalty.
5. A double hit now counts as one stroke.
6. Any part of the course the

committee defines as a penalty area may be marked as such including water, so a player can take his relief with a one shot penalty and move on. This eliminates the need to play a provisional ball.

7. If your ball moves accidentally on the putting green, you can replace it with no penalty.

8. A player may play a ball as it lies in a penalty area (formerly know as a water hazard) under the same rules that apply to a ball in the general area (fairway). You can ground your club, remove loose impediments and remove any moveable obstruction that interferes with your lie or your swing.

9. Positioning a club for alignment is not permitted. (Save that for the practice range).

10. Caddies can't help you with alignment either. (Getting the picture here? Don't spend so much time on the green!)

11. Putting with the flagstick in the hole is permitted. (We have found this to be a big time saver. Get over your old habits and try it.)

12. A ball wedged against the flagstick and side of the hole is now deemed as holed.

13. Player must make a stroke in no more than 40 seconds after he or she is able to play, without any interference of distractions.

14. A player may play ready golf even in Match Play if players agree to play out of turn.

15. Ball marks, spike marks and scrapes can now be repaired. Also animal tracks and hoof indentations can be repaired. Each player should have the same playing field.

16. A player may now remove loose impediments and moveable obstructions in a bunker and in so doing, may touch the sand, all

without penalty. If all else fails, dropping a ball out of a bunker counts 2 penalty strokes.

By following these changes, all golfers should be able to finish any round in less than four hours. Of course there are other factors to consider when working to speed up play, but these are for another column. Just be sure you get your copy of Golf's New Rules and take time to read it.

I realize this is not exactly a beach book—in fact it could double as an excellent sleep aid—but if you do play in any kind of tournaments including your sweeps days, it is important you know the rules so you are all playing on a level playing field. It's simply the fairest way to play.

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Par 72-72-144

1 Patrick Ross Dunmore, PA -12	67 65 - 132	\$3,500
T2 Mac Lee (a) Andover, MA -11	67 66 - 133	
T2 Davis Chatfield (a) Attleboro, MA -11	69 64 133	
T4 Mark Baldwin Laconia, NH -10	66 68 134	\$1,700
T4 Peter French Franklin, MA -10	68 66 134	\$1,700
T4 Jonathan Pannone Warwick, RI -10	73 61 134	\$1,700
7 Max Ferrari (a) Framingham, MA -8	70 66 136	
T8 Brad Adamonis Coral Springs, FL -7	67 70 137	\$1,300
T8 Chris Francoeur (a) Amesbury, MA -7	69 68 137	
T8 Chris Ayers (a) Wethersfield, CT -7	69 68 137	
11 Ryan Gendron Tampa, FL -6	69 69 138	\$1,100
T12 Shawn Warren Windham, ME -5	67 72 139	\$850
T12 C. Greenleaf Windham, NH -5	69 70 139	\$850
T12 Mark Purrington Dartmouth, MA -5	69 70 139	\$850
T12 Fletcher Babcock Danielson, CT -5	70 69 139	\$850
T16 Andrew Gai Westport, CT -4	68 72 140	\$150
T16 Matt Cowgill Weston, MA -4	69 71 140	\$150
T16 Chris Houston Gilford, NH -4	70 70 140	\$150
T16 Sam Grindle Deer Isle, ME -4	71 69 140	\$150
T16 Barry Babbitt Winter Garden, FL -4	72 68 140	\$150

New England Amateur Partial Results Quechee Club

July 22-25, 2019

1. Xavier Marcoux, Nashawtuc CC	71-70-69-69 279
2. Bobby Leopold, Wannamoisett CC	69-72-68-71 280
3. Bryson Richards, CC of Barre	70-69-75-68 282
4. Garren Poirier, Rutland CC	72-72-69-70 283
5. N. Cummings, Marlborough CC	69-75-72-68 284
5. Jacob Zaranek, CC of Greenfield	72-71-70-71 284
5. C. Dubiel, Old Sanddwich GC	67-73-71-73 284
8. B. Gillis, Souhegan Woods GC	73-72-74-66 285
8. Pat Pelletier, Hanover CC	73-71-72-69 285
10. R. Dowling, Golf Perf. Ctr. (CT)	73-73-69-71 286
10. Caleb Manuel, Brunswick GC	71-74-69-72 286
12. Jeff Giguere, Wannamoisett CC	68-73-72-74 286
13. Jared Nelson, Rutland CC	73-75-74-66 288
13. Ryan Pelletier, Pawtucket CC	73-70-72-73 288
15. Austin Cilley, Winnepaug CC	72-70-70-78 290

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Nine Mass. Golfers will be playing in U.S. Amateur at Pinehurst

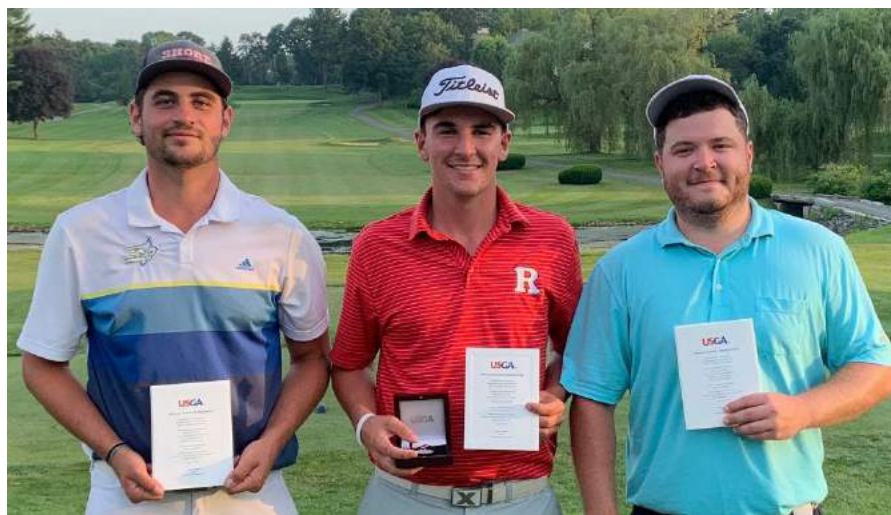
Three more Massachusetts golfers punched their ticket to the 119th U.S. Amateur Championship on Wednesday at Andover Country Club, increasing the number of Bay State golfers in next month's Championship Proper field to nine. Medalist **Xavier Marcoux**, of Concord, who fired a day-best 7-under 137 in the 36-hole qualifier, joins Andover's **Brett Krekorian** and Haverhill's **Nick Maccario** to complete Wednesday's Bay State sweep. With their placement atop the leaderboard, all three competitors qualified for their first USGA Championship.

The trio will join Massachusetts residents **Steven DiLisio**, **Jacob Zaraneck**, **Davis Chatfield** and **Christian Emmerich**, all of whom qualified on Monday at respective qualifiers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, while both **Matt Parziale** and **Michael Thorbjornsen** earned entrance into the Championship Proper via exemptions from previous USGA performance.

Marcoux took the top spot on the leaderboard with rounds of 69-68-137 while Krekorian fired a 5-under 139 after rounds of 71 and 68 respectively. Maccario, the reigning Massachusetts Four-Ball champion, shot a 68 in his morning round Wednesday and after carding an even-par 72 in his afternoon round, defeated California's **Spencer Soosman** in a one-hole playoff to capture the final qualifying spot.

The 18-year old Marcoux, a recent graduate of Florida's Montverde Academy, had missed qualifying for the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship and the U.S. Open sectional stage by one stroke apiece to date this year, and wasn't going to let that happen a third time, as he tallied nine birdies over his two rounds to finish at 7-under 137, a two-stroke margin over the next closest competitor.

"Qualifying for the Amateur is just amazing," said Marcoux, who has signed his national letter of intent to compete on the Rutgers University Men's Golf team this fall. "Me going into college next year and being able



Brett Krekorian, Xavier Marcoux and Nick Maccario

to play the [Amateur], where all the top college players will be, will be a good test to see how I stack up against the rest of the college fields."

In the morning round, Marcoux carded a 3-under 69, combining two birdies on his front nine with three additional birdies on his back nine to finish one stroke behind the leaders at the midway point.

"I got some really good breaks on my first 18 and I felt that I was able to take advantage of them, minimizing the mistakes and that's basically what kept me in it," said Marcoux upon receiving his USGA medal.

He added, "On the second 18, I knew I probably had to shoot at least 3-under again and I stayed patient, took my holes where I had good putts and converted a couple early, then figured the rest out.

In his second 18, he birdied the first hole starting from Andover's 10th, made three more birdies on his way in and shot nothing greater than par to build on his first round performance.

Similar to Marcoux, both **Brett Krekorian**, a recent graduate of South Carolina's Limestone College, and **Nick Maccario**, who plays out of Bradford Country Club, also qualified for their first USGA Championship with their performances Wednesday.

"It's pretty cool. I feel like in three of the last four years, I have been in

shoot a seven or eight under in the second half to hang on, but it worked out in my favor," said Krekorian, who was playing in his hometown. "I made a couple of nice up and downs late and was able to hold on."

Maccario, who was tied atop the leaderboard following his 4-under 68 morning round, had two bogeys and a double on his final nine of the afternoon to fall down into a tie for third with Soosman, a rising senior at the University of Texas who medaled in the same event two years ago at Andover. On Andover's 10th hole, which was used as the first playoff hole, Maccario used an eight iron from the rough to four or five feet, then knocked in the left to right putt to secure the final qualifying spot.

"It was awesome. I love Andover," said the 27-year following his

the mix [at U.S. Amateur qualifying] and today, I thought I would have to

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Bay Pointe Club Shining

We recently traveled to Buzzards Bay to play a golf course that I hadn't played since the early 1980's. Then it was called Wareham Golf Club, but today it is known as the Bay Pointe Country Club.

Everyone knows that Buzzards Bay is part of Cape Cod as is Plymouth. It has the same topography, rolling hills and rugged trees. The only reason it is not considered part of the Cape is that they built a canal and two bridges (really three if you count the railroad bridge just down the street) to cross over to the "Cape."

The good thing is that we didn't have to cross the bridge and fight the traffic, and the even better thing is that we found an excellent golf course to play at a very reasonable price. It also had an excellent restaurant where I had the best Rueben in a long time.

Back to the course. Holes one, two and three make you think that you are on the Cape. Hole one, a par 5 that is the 5th handicap hole, takes you straight up the hill and then a 90 degree turn to the left to a hole that runs away from you as you head slightly downhill. Play a smart second shot into the opening and it is not too hard.

The hardest hole is the long par 4, second hole. The tee shot is partly blind, and then you travel uphill again to a sloping green. We were wondering if we had bit off more than we could chew with these first two holes.

You can see the green (first time in three holes) from the elevated tee. Your tee shot goes down into the flats, but then your second shot goes uphill to very back to front sloping green. Hole 4 is a downhill par 3, but then the course really levels off for a few holes.

Our favorite hole was the seventh, a very short island green par 3. It looks like you could just toss your ball onto the green, but some of those short shots are the most difficult, especially with all that aqua around it.

The trek from the 9th to the 10th tee is quite a journey. It takes you past the new pavilion that is used for weddings and large parties. The terrain on the back is down, then up, then flat, then up, then down. Geoffrey Cornish, the dean of New England course designers, did an



One of the new homes across from the 6th fairway

excellent job with this course. The 15th, a par 5 dogleg left to a downhill green might be the most strategic

uphill shot to the green is tricky and the green itself is slippery.

The course only plays to 6,201



The view of The Pavilion from the 10th green

hole on the course. Hole 18 is a fine finishing hole. You can see the green in the distance, but you can't see where your tee ball lands. The

yards from the back tees, but it plays much longer. The white tees at 5,720 are just right for the average golfer who doesn't hit the ball 250

yards. The conditioning is always good and the people are very nice.

While we were playing there was a great deal of construction of houses taking place next to the fifth and sixth holes. The Windward Pines is a grouping of 84 luxury houses, both single family and duplexes. There are five different designs and each has a master suite on the first floor and a garage.

With a fine course adjacent to the property and all the amenities that go with living near a golf course, the beaches in Onset and nearby Cape Cod, this is a very desirable place to live and sales have been going very well.

The head professional at Bay Pointe Country Club is Scott Trethewey, the former All-American golfer at Bryant University who played for the late Archie Boulet. He is a wealth of knowledge about the course and also the properties adjacent to the course.

For more information or to make a tee time you can call 508-759-8802 or go to the website at www.baypointclub.com.

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Poland Spring Resort has Great History

Could Poland Spring Resort be the first golf resort in the United States? Many people think that it was. Maine historian Jason C. Libby has written a book entitled *A Course Built By Legends* that gives credence to that statement.

Most of us on the east coast know of Poland Spring water. In fact it is the number one seller of bottled water in the United States. The original spring, that sits about a five-iron away from the resort and only a pitching wedge from the second green, opened in 1844.

The Ricker family had purchased the property in 1794 and it was a farm. Hiram Ricker, grandson of the original owner, started drinking from the spring in 1844 and it cured his stomach ailments. Word soon spread about the curative value of this spring water and in 1859 the Rickers started selling this water throughout New England.

The water was originally sold in barrels, but in 1876 they started selling it in bottles. The profits were huge and Hiram Ricker decided to build the Poland Spring House. This giant wooden structure had 350 guest rooms, a pool room, a music hall, bowling alleys, dining facilities and even an elevator.

In 1894 the family purchased the Maine State Building that had been built in Chicago for the World's Fair. They disassembled it, transported the parts by rail back to Poland, Me. and reassembled it on their property. Today that building houses a library and is the home of the Maine State Golf Association.

Shortly after that, in 1895, the Ricker family commissioned Arthur Fenn, who most consider the first golf architect born in America, to build a nine-hole course in front of the Poland Spring House. He became the first golf pro on the property, and his nine-holes were all they had until Donald Ross, the famous golf architect from Scotland who had moved to the Boston area early in the twentieth century to ply his trade in America, was hired to rework the course and add an additional nine holes.

The Poland Spring House hosted many celebrities. The young Bobby Jones from Atlanta came to play as



The Maine State Building

part of a Red Cross benefit to raise funds for veterans returning from World War I in 1918. In 1921 President Warren Harding visited and played golf. Calvin Coolidge stayed many times. Samuel Ryder (he of the Ryder Cup) took lessons at the course before he donated the prize that started the event that is so popular today.

Poland Spring Resort had a Caddy Camp from 1921 until 1965. There were no golf carts then, and caddies were used by most everyone who played the game. Most of the caddies would come from the Boston area for the summer.

Fenn's daughter, Bessie, became his assistant, and when he died in 1924, Bessie was asked to become the head professional at Poland Spring. She also replaced her father as head professional of the Poinciana Club in Florida, the predecessor of the Palm Beach Golf Club, beating out 400 males who applied for the position.

Bessie only served as head professional at Poland Spring for one year, but she later became the assistant librarian at the Maine State Building on property. Glenna Collett of Rhode Island, the women's national champion in 1927 played an exhibition match with Bessie and

two other women in 1927.

Poland Spring was reorganized in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The property was bought and sold many times, and the golf course went into disrepair. In 1962 Saul Feldman, who had previously owned the Magnolia Manor in Gloucester, Mass., purchased the property and planned a new hotel, the Maine Inn. He also started running golf tournaments to attract more and new guests. In 1965 Feldman hosted the Vacationland Open to bring media and new acclaim to Poland Spring. The winner was a young Bert Yancey who went on to have an excellent pro career on Tour.

In 1972 Mel Robbins came to Poland Spring to discuss development options with Mr. Feldman. He originally wanted to sub-divide the property, but saw the potential of the hotel, golf course and other building. "She was like a beautiful woman who had aged badly," said Robbins.

Robbins decided to lease the hotel from Feldman. A decision was made to make Poland Spring a budget-minded guest haven. On July 3, 1975 the Poland Spring House was destroyed by fire. There was no insurance! What would become of the golf course that had been around

for almost 90 years?

Robbins, half kiddingly said that it should become an animal park or a zoo. It was his wife Cyndi, who he had started working at the resort in 1971 as a waitress and married the boss, who saved the golf course from disappearing into the past.

In November of 1975 the Robbins leased the whole property from Feldman and announced plans to revive the country club. They announced plans to increase the membership by offering access to the pool and other amenities on the property. The ad they ran in a local paper said: Full Family Membership \$169. *It included unlimited golf, use of the tennis courts, free use of the giant pool, locker room privileges, saunas, showers and reduced cart fees.* Not bad for a Donald Ross original.

In 1982, after ten years of leasing, the Robbins' purchased the resort. They continued to make improvements. Mel Robbins got Alzheimer's disease in the late 90's and Cyndi cared for him until his death in 2007. She has amazingly continued to run Poland Spring Resort and has expanded it and made it even better. Golf Digest has rated Poland Spring as "One of the Best Places to Play" and "One of the Best Golf Resorts in New England." *Bruce Vittner is a member of the Golf Writers Assn. of America and the Golf Travel Writers of America.*

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Maine Trifecta a Winner

Poland Spring, Spring Meadows and Fox Ridge Combine for Excellent Golf Package

We recently had the opportunity to visit Maine for a golf trip. We had often heard of the Maine Golf Trifecta promoted by three of the excellent public courses a short drive northwest of Portland, and when we were invited by Poland Spring owner Cyndi Robbins to visit and play all three courses it was a easy decision.

Imagine three fine golf courses getting together to offer a golf package! In this day and age when everything is so parochial, it was refreshing to see three different ownership groups working together to provide such an excellent golfing experience.

Our first round was at Spring Meadows Golf Club in Gray, just a short distance from the Maine Turnpike, less than a half hour from Portland and under three hours from Providence. Spring Meadows was designed by Brad Booth and opened in 1999 on former farmland owned by the Pollard family. In fact the pro shop and large dining and bar area was the site of the former barn.

Dave Pollard is the general manager and he talked about the course, its history and the reasons for being part of the Trifecta. "We have a wonderful course that has quite a few risk/reward holes. Booth did a fine job with the layout, and it is a fun course to play. The Trifecta brings us new golfers who might not have made the trek to just play one course." He was correct in all three of his comments.

The clubhouse sits on top of a hill and the first hole plays down the hill and around a pond. It looks intimidating (the #3 handicap hole), but there is plenty of room to go around the pond. The third hole is the number one handicap for good reason. It measures 585 yards from the back and has three marsh areas to carry during your travels to the green. "Big hitters can carry the first two, but it is wiser to hit over one per shot," said Ben Morey, PGA professional who played with us and said it was he who thought of the name "Trifecta" when the three courses were choosing a name to use for their package. "Winning a



The 4th Hole at Poland Spring

trifecta is great at the race track, and this golf package is a winner," he said with a smile.

Spring Meadows is aptly named. The holes are well designed, especially the par 3 fourth over a marsh area and the par 3 sixth over a chasm with a great backdrop right and behind the green that slings balls towards the hole.

Number 11 was one of the most challenging holes, a dogleg left that is guarded by a small pond front left. "That is where the cows mostly hung out," said Brad Pollard, Dave's brother, who runs the fine Cole Farms restaurant across the street from the course.

We drove 20 minutes and checked in at the Poland Spring Resort

after golf and met with Robbins who talked about the hotel, restaurant and activities scheduled for our stay. *See the accompanying story on page 35.*

The next morning we traveled to Fox Ridge Golf Club about 15 minutes away. We met with Dan Hourihan whose company manages the course. "We have hosted the Maine Open and *Golf Digest* rates us a Top 10 course in the state," he said with a smile.

Fox Ridge is the most difficult of the three courses. It plays over 6,800 from the back and the blue tees are just under 6,300 yards. We played the white tees from 5,800 yards and it was a test. Number 2 has a downhill drive followed by a shot over a marsh area. The par 5 fourth is the number one handicap. It requires an uphill drive with trees on both sides of the fairway. Handle that and then your next shot is over that same marsh area that came into play on number 2. Carry that, and then you have a shot to a large and undulating green.

The par 3 fifth is the signature hole, a downhill par 3 with water front, left and over the green. It plays 169 from the white tees and usually into the wind. Might be time for an old ball.

The course travels uphill and downhill often. You need to be on your game to score well. It is very pretty, but challenging. You will really enjoy the long par 5 11th and the straight downhill par 3 13th.

Our last round was at Poland Spring. We had played there about 15 years ago for a story, and the course was even better than we remembered it. How great it is to just walk out the front door of your hotel room and on to the first green.

This Donald Ross designed course (see page 35 for other designer theories) is typical of courses built

over one hundred years ago. Hole one plays away from the clubhouse, two comes back, three goes away and the signature par 4 holes goes further away and down a steep hill.

Hole four offers the most spectacular views on the course with a lake off in the distance. The sixth hole is a pretty par 3 over a pond. Many of the greens are elevated and saucer-shaped in the Ross tradition.

It is such fun to think about the people who have walked these same fairways and putt on these greens over the last more than 100 years. Presidents, world-class amateurs, top professionals, millionaires and so many more have walked on this same property.

Back to the Maine Trifecta. We have seen Cyndi Robbins, Dave Pollard and others at the Boston, Providence and Connecticut golf shows over the years. We really had a chance to sit down with them on our visit to get all the information. The brochure that they hand out at the Shows says, "3 Great Courses-1 Incredible Price for \$319*. The asterisk says that you can upgrade accommodations (stay in the Maine Inn) for an additional \$30—it is worth it!

The package includes two nights lodging at Poland Spring, four all-you-can eat buffet meals, 18 holes with cart at each of the three courses and driving range balls. There are not many packages this inexpensive anywhere in the country.

We saw many couples and also golf groups—both men and women. "This is such a great deal, we come every summer" said a couple from Connecticut who toured the Maine State Building Museum with our group of writers.

The back of the brochure says "Want to go some place where you can relax and not spend an arm and a leg? The Maine Trifecta is the perfect solution!" They are not fibbing.

You can get more information by visiting the website at www.mainetrifecta.com or by calling 207-998-4351.

SNE GOLFER LOCATOR MAP

RHODE ISLAND COURSES

1. BEAVER RIVER G.C. (18) P

343 Kingstown Rd. Richmond, RI, 401-539-2100
www.beaverrivergolf.com, PS,CR,CH,SB,O

2. BUTTON HOLE SHORT COURSE (9) P, X

1 Button Hole Dr. Providence, RI, 401-421-1664
www.buttonhole.org, CL,CH,DR,PS, Lessons

3. COUNTRY VIEW G.C. (18) P

49 Club Lane Burrillville, RI, 401-568-7157
www.countryviewgolf.net, CR,CL,PS,CH,O

4. COVENTRY PINES G.C. (9) P

1065 Harkney Hill Rd. Coventry, RI
401-397-9482
www.coventrypin.es.com CR,CH,CL,SB,DR

5. CRYSTAL LAKE G.C. (18) SP

100 Bronco's Hwy. Mapleville RI 401-567-4500
www.crystallakegolfclub.com CR,CL,PS,CH,O

6. CRANSTON C.C. (18) P

69 Burlingame Rd. Cranston, RI, 401-826-1683
www.cranstoncc.com, CR,CL,PS,CH,O

7. EXETER C.C. (18) SP

320 Victory Hwy. (Rt.102) Exeter, RI
401-295-8212 www.exetercc.com
CR,CL,PS,CH,O

8. FAIRLAWN GOLF COURSE (9) P, X

3 Sherman Ave. Lincoln, RI 401-334-3937
www.fairlawngolfcourse.com CR,CL,CH,SB,O

9. FENNER HILL G.C. (18) P

33 Wheeler Ln. Hope Valley, RI 401-539-8000
www.fennerhill.com, CR,DL,PS,CH,O

10. FOSTER COUNTRY CLUB (18) P

67 Johnson Rd. Foster, RI, 401-397-7750
www.fostercountryclub.com, CR,CL,PS,CH,O

11. HARBOR LIGHTS MARINA & C.C. (9) P

150 Gray St. Warwick, RI, 401-737-6353
www.HarborLightsRI.com, CR,CL,PS,DR,CH,O
Restaurant, Leagues

12. JAMESTOWN G.C. (9) P

245 Conanicus Ave. Jamestown, RI, 401-423-9930
www.jamestowngolf.com CR,CL,CH,SB

13. KINGS CROSSING G.C. (9) P

655 Old Baptist Rd. N. Kingstown, RI,
401-294-2872, www.kingscrossinggolfclub.com
CR,PS,CH,O

14. LAUREL LANE C.C. (18) P

Laurel Lane, off Rt.138, W. Kingston, RI
401-783-3844, www.laurellanecountryclub.com
CR,CL,PS,CH,O

15. MEADOWBROOK G.C. (18) P

163 Kingstown Rd. (Rt.138) Richmond, RI
401-539-8491 www.meadowbrookgolfri.com
CR,CL,CH,PS,O

16. MELODY HILL C.C. (18) P

55 Melody Hill Ln. Harmony, RI, 401-949-9851
CR,PS,CH, O

17. MIDVILLE COUNTRY CLUB (9) P

100 Lombardi Ln. W. Warwick, RI, 401-828-9215
www.midvillegolfclub.com, CR,CL,PS,CH

18. NEWPORT NATIONAL G.C. (18) SP

324 Mitchells Ln. Middletown, RI, 401-848-9690
www.newportnational.com, CR,CL,PS,SB,O

19. NORTH KINGSTOWN G.C. (18) P

615 Callahan Rd. No. Kingstown, RI,

401-294-0684, www.nkgc.com,
DR,PS,CR,CL,CH,O Fat Belly's

20. PINECREST GOLF CLUB (9) P

25 Pinehurst Dr. Richmond, RI, 401-364-8600
www.pinecrestri.com CR,CL,CH,SB,O, Leagues

21. RICHMOND C.C. (18) SP

Sandy Pond Rd. Richmond, RI 401-364-9200
www.richmondcountryclub.net CR,CL,PS,CH,O

22. ROSE HILL GOLF CLUB (9) P, X

222 Rose Hill Rd. So. Kingstown, RI, 401-788-
1088, www.rosehillri.com CR,CL,CH,SB, Leagues

23. TRIGGS MEMORIAL G.C. (18) P

Chalkstone Ave. Providence, RI
401-521-8460, www.triggs.us, CR,CL,PS,CH,O

24. WINDMILL HILL G.C. (9) X

35 Schoolhouse Rd. (off Rt 136) Warren, RI
401-245-1463, www.windmillgolfri.com

CR,CL,CH,O, Restaurant

25. WINNAPAug C.C. (18) P

184 Shore Rd. (Rt. 1A) Westerly, RI 401-
596-1237 www.winnapaugcountryclub.com
CR,CL,CH,DR,SB,O

26. WOOD RIVER GOLF (18) P

78 Woodville-Alton Rd. Hope Valley, RI, 401-364-
0700, www.woodriversgolf.com, CR,CH,SB,O

RHODE ISLAND DRIVING RANGES

A. BUTTON HOLE LEARNING CENTER

1 Button Hole Dr. Providence, RI 401-421-1664
www.buttonhole.org, target greens, 2 putting
greens, lessons

B. IRON WOODS GOLF PRACTICE CENTER

1081 Iron Hill Mine Rd. (off Rt.146) N. Smithfield,
RI, 401-766-1151, www.iwgolf.com, putting greens,
grass tees, covered area, bunker, lessons, repairs

C. MULLIGAN'S ISLAND GOLF & ENTERTAINMENT (9) X

1000 New London Ave. (Rt 2) Cranston, RI
401-464-8855, www.mulligansisland.com
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mini-golf, par 3 course, 18-hole pitch and putt,
PGA Golf Academy, **Spargo Golf** on premises, club
fitting and repairs

MASSACHUSETTS COURSES

27. BACK NINE CLUB (18) X

17 Heritage Hill Dr. Lakeville, MA 508-947-9991
www.thebacknineclub.com
CL,CR,CH,Rest.,Lessons

28. BLACKSTONE NATIONAL G.C. (18) SP

227 Putnam Hill Rd. Sutton, MA, 508-865-2111
www.bngc.net, CR,CL,CH,PS,O,DR

29. BLISSFUL MEADOWS G.C. (18) SP

801 Chocalog Rd. Uxbridge, MA, 508-278-6110
www.blissfulmeadows.com, CR,CL,CH,DR,PS,O

30. BUNGAY BROOK G.C. (9) P

30 Locust St. Bellingham, MA, 508-883-1600
www.bungaybrook.com, CR,CL,DR,PS,CH,O

31. CAPTAINS COURSE (36) P

1000 Freemans Way, Brewster, MA, 508-896-1716
www.captainsgolfcourse.com CR,CL,CH,PS,O

32. CHEMAWA GOLF COURSE (18) P

350 Cushman Rd. N. Attleboro, MA, 508-399-
7330, http://chemawagolf.com CR,CH,O,CL

33. DUDLEY HILL G.C. (9) P

80 Airport Rd. Dudley, MA
508-943-4538, www.dudleyhillgolf.net
CR,CH,Rest,O

34. EASTON C.C. (18) SP

265 Purchase St. Easton, MA
508-238-2500, www.eastoncountryclub.com
CR,CL,PS,CH,DR,O

35. FOXBOROUGH C.C. (18) SP

33 Walnut St. Foxborough, MA 508-543-4661X3,
www.foxboroughcc.com, CR,CL,PS,CH,DR,O

36. HAZELTON GC (18) P

329 Summer St. Rehoboth, MA 508-557-1856
www.hazeltongolfclub.com CR,PS,CH,O

37. HILLSIDE CC (9) SP

82 Hillside Ave. Rehoboth, MA 508-252-9761
www.hillsidecountryclub.com Sauna, Pool,

Courts,CR,CL,CH,Tiki Bar,O, Lessons

38. JOHN E. PARKER MUNI. G.C. (9) P

17 Fisher St. Taunton, MA, 508-822-1797
CR,DR,CH,SB, Skins Thurs. at 3:45

39. JUNIPER HILL G.C. (36) P

202 Brigham St. Northboro, MA, 508-393-2444
www.juniperhillgc.com, CR,CL,PS,CH,SB,O

40. MAPLEGATE COUNTRY CLUB (18) SP

160 Maple St. Bellingham, MA, 508-966-4040
www.maplegate.com, CR,CL,PS,CH

41. THR LINKS AT MASS GOLF (18) P, X

300 W. Maine Rd. (Rt 123) Norton, MA
508-222-0555, www.linksatmassgolf.org
CL,PS,CH,SB,O

42. NORTON COUNTRY CLUB (18) SP

188 Oak St. Norton, MA, 508-285-2400
www.nortoncountryclub.com, CR,CL,CH,SB,O

43. OLDE SCOTLAND LINKS (18) P

695 Pine St. Bridgewater, MA, 508-279-3344
www.oldsotlandlinks.com, CR,CL,SB,DR,O

44. PINE OAKS G.C. (9) P

68 Prospect St., S. Easton, MA, 508-238-2320
www.pineoaks.com, CR,CL,CH,O
Retail Store

45. REHOBOTH C.C. (18) P

155 Perryville Rd Rehoboth, MA, 508-252-6259
www.rehobothcountryclub.com, CR,CH,PS,O

46. SHAKER HILLS G.C. (18) P

146 Shaker Rd. Harvard, MA, 978-772-3330
www.shakerhills.com
CR,CL,CH,PS,O

47. SHINING ROCK G.C. (18) SP

91 Clubhouse Way, Northbridge, MA, 508-234-
0400, www.shiningrock.com, CR,CL,CH,PS,O

48. WENTWORTH HILLS G.C. (18) SP 27

Bow St. Plainville, MA, 508-316-0240
www.wentworthhillsgc.com, CR,CL,CH,PS,O

MASSACHUSETTS DRIVING RANGES

D. ATLANTIC DRIVING RANGE/ SHADOWBROOK (9) X

754 Newport Ave. So. Attleboro, MA, 508-761-
5484, www.atlanticgolfcenter.com, heated tees,
retail shop, mini golf, chip and putt

E. STIX GOLF & BASEBALL FUN CENTER

582 Kelley Blvd., No. Attleboro, MA

508-695-0091, www.stixfuncenter.com, TrueStrike
golf mats, grass tees, minigolf, batting cages, putting
green, bunker, lessons

CONNECTICUT COURSES

49. AIRWAYS G.C. (18) P

1070 S. Grand St., W. Suffield, CT
860-668-4973, www.airwaysgolf.com
CR,CL,CH,SB,O

50. ELMRIDGE GOLF CLUB (27) P

229 Elmridge Rd. Pawcatuck, CT, 860-599-2248
www.elmridgegolf.com, CR,CL,DR,PS,CH,O

51. FOX HOPYARD (18) SP

1 Hopyard Rd. East Haddam, CT
860-434-6644, www.golfthefox.com
CR,CL,CH,PS,DR,O

52. LAKE OF ISLES C.C. (18) P

Foxwoods Casino, Mashantucket, CT, 860-312-
3636, www.lakeofisles.com CR,CL,PS,SB,Rest.,O,
Golf School

53. MOHEGAN SUN GOLF CLUB (18) P

7 Dows Ln. Baltic, CT 860-862-9230
www.mohegansungolfclub.com CR,CL,PS,CH
golf packages, Lessons

54. QUARRY RIDGE GOLF CLUB (18) SP

9A Rose Hill Rd. Portland, CT 860-342-6113
www.quarryridge.com CR,CL,CH,PS,O riding
only

55. RACEWAY GOLF COURSE (18) SP

205 E. Thompson Rd. Thompson, CT
860-923-9591, www.racewaygolf.com
CR,CL,CH,PS,DR,O

56. RIVER RIDGE GOLF CLUB (18) P

259 Preston Rd. Griswold, CT
860-376-3268, www.riverridgegolf.com
CR,CL,PS,CH,O

57. SHENNECOSSETT G.C. (18) P

93 Plant St. Groton, CT, 860-448-1867
www.shennygolf.com CR,CL,CH,PS,Rest.,O

58. SKUNGAMAUG RIVER G.C. (18) SP

104 Folly Ln., Coventry, CT, 860-742-9348
www.skungamauggolf.com, CR,CL,CH,PS,O

59. WINDHAM CLUB. (18) SP

184 Club Rd. N.Windham, CT 860-456-1971
www.windhamclub.com, CR,CL,CH,PS,O

MAP KEY

() = Holes	PS = Pro Shop
P = Public	CH = Clubhouse
SP = Semi Private	O = Outings
X = Executive	SB = Snack Bar
CR = Cart Rental	CL = Club Rental
DR = Driving Range	

Our website
www.snegolfer.com
has directions and
information for each course.

SNE GOLFER LOCATOR MAP



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Hope Valley, RI 02832

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401-364-0700

Alpine CC's Unique Fundraiser

Alpine Country Club in Cranston, RI recently held a fundraiser unlike most others. Club President Alan Santamaria challenged his members to help raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

The impetus for this fundraiser was the recent "Fifty for Father" mission done by Pete Crozier to raise money to honor his dad who died 20 years ago from diabetes and his son who was recently diagnosed with stage one diabetes. Crozier's goal was to play fifty courses in fifty states in fifty days. He was highlighted in Golf Digest, and his 49th day and round was played at Alpine C.C.

Santamaria and his daughter, Ava, a fine junior player played a skins game with Kevin Dohoney and his daughter, Lauren, also a fine player. Since "Skins" is an individual betting game, it was each player against the other three. They decided to use the carry over rule

and also to double the pot if a player wins a skin with a birdie.

The stakes were \$50 per hole, so that made each hole worth \$150. Alan won the skin on the first hole, but alas, it was his only one of the day. Kevin made a sandie to save one hole, but he didn't win one either. Net, they both donated \$1,950 to the Diabetes Foundation.

Lauren was the big winner as she had 29 skins with carryovers, skins, pins and birdies and won \$3,850 and Ava won \$50 of their dads' money that was then donated. "We wanted to push Pete over the top, and this was a great and fun way to try to do it," said Santamaria who told those that thought he was teaching the children to gamble was really teaching them "how to raise money for charity."

What a fun and unusual way to help those who are less fortunate. Maybe it is something that other clubs might consider.

Name the Hole!



August 2019 Name That Hole

Name the hole above and win a 2020 Season Passport.

Email answers only to bruce@snegolfer.com.

Winner will be recognized in the Fall 2019 issue.



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June's Name the Hole Winner is Marc Soss.

The August Winner will be announced in the September 29th issue of SNE Golfer. If you know the hole above send your answers to bruce@snegolfer.com

TRIVIA

Near what major city do the following courses reside?

1. Merion
2. Valhalla
3. Riviera
4. Torrey Pines
5. East Lake
6. Bethpage
7. TPC Sawgrass
8. Doral
9. Olympic Club
10. Dunes Club

- Answers
1. Philadelphia
 2. Louisville
 3. Los Angeles
 4. San Diego
 5. Atlanta
 6. NYC
 7. Jacksonville
 8. Miami
 9. San Francisco
 10. Myrtle Beach



"Don't you think you're carrying this 'oversized' thing a bit too far?"

It's All In The Hips

Stand tall and turn your toes in toward each other. This is called hip internal rotation. Now turn your toes away from each other. This is hip external rotation. In the golf swing both hips need to be able to internally and externally rotate. On the backswing your back leg will go into internal rotation and your front will go into external rotation. On the downswing the opposite will happen. With many people the hips are where rotation starts to go wrong. I

Poor hip rotation on the backswing will cause many people to lose posture as they try to contort the rest of their body to create more rotation in other areas. The same is true of the downswing where the hips need to turn fully to the target. This lack of rotation can manifest itself into a sway or slide, a reverse spin angle, or early extension, all causing inconsistent contact and creating unreliable shot direction and distance. The good news is that you can work on this!

The first step is to get an assessment done, because if we don't test, it's just a guess. Then it's time to start a stretching and strengthening

program. Many people have "tight hips" and feel that stretching is the answer, but the truth is that tightness is often a compensation for weakness somewhere. This is problematic for two reasons. The first is that it means stretching alone is a temporary fix. The second is more concerning, and that is that when we stretch we loosen up the muscles holding the tension. If the tension they were creating was there to stabilize a joint we now have an unstable joint that we're rotating around violently and increasing the risk for injury. Our key to success is to add proper strengthening to this stretching program. Creating strength in hip flexion, extension, and rotation will work wonders for both your game on the course, and for how your body feels at the end of a long day of golf.

Steve Zarriello is the owner of Olympia Fitness and Performance, located in Cranston, RI. He has been training clients of all different ages, abilities and backgrounds to help them reach their specific goals for 10 years. His primary focus is on working with golfers to help improve their ability to play the game and keep them pain free.

Online Sales of Golf Products on the Rise

We found this story in the latest report from the National Golf Foundation

The Internet is changing sales tactics everywhere and as Amazon becomes a bigger force in retail – a place to buy not just books, but household goods, electronics and yes, sporting goods, too – it is affecting nearly every subset of retail in every vertical and category. The shift in consumer behavior and spending habits extends to golf as in other markets. Both brick and mortar and Internet-based retailers fear going the way of Circuit City, Toys 'R' Us and The Sports Authority and being eclipsed by bigger and more versatile rivals.

Golf is one of the nation's leading individual participation sports, which in turn fosters spending on equipment, apparel and accessories. NGF research shows that 37% of golfers bought golf-related merchandise online last year, rising from 35% the previous year, and account for a growing percentage of total golf merchandise sales. And when looking at adult core golfers (those who played eight or more rounds), that number climbs to 49% of core golfers who made a golf-related purchase last year, whether that was clubs, balls, bags, gloves, shoes or apparel.

The market for golf clubs and balls alone was \$2.7 billion in 2018, up about 6% from the previous year, according to NGF research.

As the market for golf equipment continues to evolve, Amazon and, to a lesser extent, eBay, are gaining a significant presence in the golf consumer space. A growing number of golfers are following buying habits elsewhere and more frequently turning to such non-endemic online options for many golf-related purchases.

More than half of those who purchased golf merchandise online in the last year did so at a general online merchandiser such as Amazon (57% for golfers and 58% for core golfers). When including auction sites, such as eBay, that

figure jumps to 63% for golfers overall and 64% for core golfers. By comparison, 45% of golfers and 47% of core golfers bought golf-related merchandise at an online golf-specialty store.

Direct-to-consumer sales are also on the rise, with 16% of core golfers saying they purchased goods directly from golf equipment manufacturers (Callaway, TaylorMade, Titleist), while 13% said they bought merchandise directly from golf shoe/apparel manufacturers (Adidas, Nike, Under Armour, etc). These represent higher margin sales for OEMs and apparel makers, but in the past had been frowned upon as potentially poaching from their retail network. Some smaller golf ball manufacturers, from OnCore and Cut to Vice and Snell, are focusing predominantly on the direct-to-consumer approach.

Consumers expect their favorite retailers to offer a satisfying cross-channel shopping experience, whether it is to browse and/or research online prior to making store purchases or order goods online followed by in-store pickup. Today, to compete anywhere, you have to be everywhere. This shift in consumer behavior extends to golf as in other markets.

The trend toward more online sales is causing reverberations among golf retailers. It's been a fascinating evolution to the golf retail sector over the last few decades. The majority of premium products were once sold at green-grass shops by club professionals, prior to the rise of off-course specialty retailers such as Nevada Bob's and Edwin Watts, and then the emergence of big-box stores such as DICK's Sporting Goods that bought in bulk and could offer even lower prices. In the Internet age, online specialty golf retailers started chipping away at the market share of those other channels.

It begs the question: Can Amazon steal share from online golf specialty retailers and make them an afterthought?

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