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SNE GOLFER

PERSUADERS ISSUE



GOLF INFLUENCERS

[People Who Have Made the Game of Golf Better]

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BRITISH OPEN

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| 3. | Who won the first Open? | 3. | Prestwick Golf Club in Scotland |
| 4. | The Open is always competed at what type of course? | 4. | Coastal links |
| 5. | Who has won the most Open Championships? | 5. | Harry Vardon |
| 6. | How many? | 6. | Six |
| 7. | What famous land feature can you see from Royal St. George? | 7. | White Cliffs of Dover |
| 8. | When was Open last cancelled before 2020's Covid epidemic? | 8. | World War II |
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our third issue of 2021. The cover gives you a clue of what we have assembled in this issue. I would love to have you send me an email with a few people on your list who have influenced you in this great game. The email address is bruce@snegolfer.com.

Wasn't that an unbelievable performance by Collin Morikawa at the Open Championship in England recently? We had featured him in our Rising Star column in 2019, but no one could have predicted that he would already have won two majors, both in his first tries. He is the first, and I'm quite sure the last who will ever accomplish that feat. Isn't links golf so much fun to watch with its crazy pot bunkers, undulating fairways and greens, and rough that hasn't been cut for a couple of years?

I think you will enjoy reading our writers thoughts about golf's influencers. I did. This is a perspective that I don't think you will find in other publications. It has been fun this year talking about golf associations and municipal golf courses in our area, and I hope that it has given you some good insight about how are game has grown over the years.

As the summer gets into full swing, we wanted to give you some information about the winners of some of the events throughout southern New England. I know that you have seen the winners in your local area, but it's good to see how others are doing as well.

Joe Calabro has a good story about the Northeast Amateur. Collin Morikawa won that event, also. Scott Cordischi has a story about URI star Chris Francoeur. It interesting to see what plans golfers have after they complete their college years. Francoeur made the cut at the Northeast, but finished quite a bit out of the money.

Peter Weatherby has moved on from Rhode Island to Vermont, but Lynn Luczkowski had a good interview with Weatherby about his time in Rhode Island. We plan to visit Manchester Country Club some time before the next issue and will have a story for you.

I think my favorite story in this issue is about Alice and Pete Dye who were a couple of the best designers of golf courses in America. Alice might have been the key to Pete's work as you will see in the story.

Congratulations to all the winners of tournaments since last we published. It was great to see English-native Bobby Leopold back in the winners' circle in the Rhode Island Am. I had met him just after he moved to RI and helped him (not much) get into his first Northeast Amateur.

Imagine Paul Parajeckas playing in the Mass. Open and carrying his own bag at the age of 71? He has had a wonderful career. Enjoy the issue and we will see you again on October 2. The Ryder Cup will have been completed and we should have some fine analysis from our great band of writers.

Stay well and keep your head down and swing easy.

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INFLUENCERS IN THE GOLF INDUSTRY

This is our third issue for 2021. In our first issue we focused on the three golf associations in southern New England. Our second issue focused on municipal courses in the area as they have always been the backbone of public golf.

In this issue we wanted to continue our focus on making the game of golf better, and I asked some of my writers to find some people who have been influencers in the game of golf in southern New England in particular and also people throughout the golf industry.

I've written before about how I spokewithArnoldPalmerasa12-year-old at the former Wethersfield Open. Tim Geary actually sat down with the

King and shared a drink while talking about golf. He was one of the three individuals that Geary focused on.

Bruce Berlet said that he had to write about Andy Bessette who has been the backbone of the Travelers Championship in Connecticut. Paul Kenyon wanted me to talk about late Nathalie Price, who was a fellow teacher and a woman who really impacted women's public golf in Rhode Island as well as Joe Sprague, Sr. who became the first full-time head of the Rhode Island Golf Assn.

How could we leave out Brad Faxon and Billy Andrade, Rhode Island natives who have done so much for golf in our area, raising millions of dollars for charity? Mike Kirby talks about a couple who have

raised over \$1 million for a great cause in eastern Massachusetts.

We cover a few entrepreneurs who have made golf better in Matt Adams, Dave Pelz and Jim Hartenburg, and you will certainly enjoy Katharine Dyson's visit with Alice and Pete Dye who are probably the most famous couples ever in the golf architecture business. Wait until you read about all that Alice did to make Pete's designs better.

Hopefully you will get a different perspective on some of the people that we covered in this issue. I know that you can think of many more. Who influenced you? How did they do it? What made you stay with this wonderful game? ■

Bruce Vittner is the publisher/ editor of www.snegolfer.com and can be reached at bruce@snegolfer.com.

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Are You Making the Hole Smaller?

The regulation width of a golf hole is 4.25"... The width of a golf ball is 1.68"... Seems like a very easy task to roll a smaller ball into a much larger hole...Until you take into account break of the green, speed of the green, wind and pressure of making the putt... what seemed much easier only a moment ago has become a more difficult chore.

As a ball is moving faster, it has more of an opportunity to lip out. If you start a ball on a line at the edge of the hole and roll it only at 6 inches past (assuming no break), you have effectively decreased the hole size width to 3.8"! Imagine now the thinking that you need to putt a golf ball at a pace rolling 2 ft past the hole. The width of the hole at that point has effectively shrunk to 1.9" wide!!! Your task now has become increasingly more difficult.

In the end, speed is King when we are putting. You will be a far more effective putter if you can control the speed so that ball stops somewhere close to the hole, even if you don't have the perfect line. It also will help eliminate many unnecessary 3-putts. Adding some pace drills to your putting practice sessions will definitely pay off. Place a ball marker on the putting green and then place a golf club down about a foot past the marker and start making some putts. Your goal should be to stop the ball between the marker and the club. If you hit the club, your pace is getting to firm and potentially making the hole smaller. Try this drill from different lengths on the green, see where your distance weaknesses are, and spend more time on those areas.

Let's take a closer look at making the hole smaller. The hole as stated earlier is 4.25" wide... Assuming it's a straight putt and we hit the putt with a putter face that isn't exactly square to the target (which is difficult to do!!!), the ball may start on a line closer to the edge of the hole, depending upon how much the face was open or closed... Take a look at the consequences of the speed/distance past the hole vs the effective size of the hole:

Distance past hole vs. effective hole width

0' - 4.25"	2' - 1.9"
1/2' - 3.8"	3' - 1.4"
1' - 2.6"	4' - .9"

It really makes you think about hitting it firm into the hole... I get the concept of taking the break out of the putt and never up, never in, but if you are not able to square up your putter face or start it on the proper line, you are going to have to deal with the realization that you are making the hole smaller. By working more on speed control, you will find that you will make more putts as the hole is not as small!!!

If you need more help with your putting, we offer analysis of your stroke and speed on Sam PuttLab along with our virtual PuttView putting green. Please contact me to set up an appointment.

www.toddcampbellgolf.com, cell: 508-951-4371. ■

Todd Campbell writes an instruction column in each issue of snegolfer.com. His facility is in Cranston, RI.

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Menante Wins Northeast Amateur

Just weeks after helping Pepperdine University win a National Championship, Dylan Menante is taking home another trophy – the Northeast Amateur Championship. Menante posted a four-round score of 9-under par, including a bogey-free 67 in the final round at Wannamoisett Country Club to claim the title. “It’s super exciting, it has been a long wait in the process. I have had four seconds this year, and lost three times in a playoff, so happy I didn’t have to go to a playoff and won outright,” said Menante after the round.

Entering the final round with a two shot lead, Menante did exactly what he had to do, which was not make a mistake. On his opening nine holes, Menante parred every hole in pretty stress-free fashion. “I just tried to stay patient. I didn’t really have my game much on the front nine, I just kind of grinded it out,” Menante added.

Making the turn with his lead still intact, Menante birdied the 11th and 12th holes to widen the margin. “At 11 that I had struggled with over the last couple of rounds, today I hit a really good shot, then 12 I hit a really good shot, put myself in perfect position,” Menante said. The Pepperdine star would take a two-shot lead into the final hole and close out the tournament.

Earlier in the month of June, Pepperdine beat top-ranked Oklahoma in the National Championship. “I mean, at the National Championship the last day was super important. It taught me to just be patient, take advantage when you have it,” said Menante.

To make the victory even sweeter, Menante did it with his father caddying for him the entire week. “He has been on the bag a couple of times, he got fired a couple of times, so it is good that he finally belongs. We really got along well this week. He was helping me with numbers and yardages that I wasn’t comfortable with and kind of calming me down,” said Menante.

Menante held off challenges from Jerry Ji, Connor Howe, Joseph Weiler and Wannamoisett’s own Davis Chatfield. While Menante had a stress-free round, the same couldn’t be said for Chatfield. After a birdie on the first hole to get within one shot, Chatfield put his second shot on the second hole out of bounds. He ended up taking a seven on the hole. “One really bad shot. I just hit the wrong club, I forced a 5-wood, and

I should have hit 3-wood. I shouldn’t have done that,” said Chatfield after the round.

Chatfield fought back to even par for the day on a number of occasions, including birdies at five, ten and 13. However, he would come up short in the tournament. “I played really well, I’m happy with how I bounced back after that, it’s tough to do after the second hole of the day. So I was happy with how I battled. Today, obviously wasn’t my best, but still ended up being a solid round,” Chatfield added. ■



Photo courtesy Northeast Amateur

Dylan Menante

Northeast Amateur Top 10

1. Dylan Menante - 9-under
2. Jerry Ji - 7-under
- T3. Connor Howe - 6-under
- T3. Joseph Weiler - 6-under
- T5. Garrett Barber- 4-under
- T5. Kelly Chinn- 4-under
- T5. Davis Chatfield - 4-under
- T8. Ben Smith - 3-under
- T8. Hunter Wolcott - 3-under
- T8. Noah Norton - 3-under

Pelz, Adams and The King— Definite Golf Influencers

Over my almost 40 years as a sports writer, I have had the opportunity to sit down and interview many athletes from all walks, from a local Little Leaguer who saved a game with diving catch, to Pele and Bobby Orr. And I have interviewed many people in the golf industry.

Instead of highlighting just one, I chose three who have impacted the game in three very different ways; Dave Pelz, Matt Adams and an obscure fellow by the name of Arnold Palmer. Some of you may have heard of him.



Dave Pelz



Matt Adams

Dave Pelz

It was 1997 when I first met Pelz, at the Golf Writers of America conference in Myrtle Beach. We sat down in a small room inside the Dunes Club and he described his (then) revolutionary ideas involving the short game.

Pelz was originally a NASA scientist. He worked on both the Mercury and Apollo space programs. His background in physics and science were more than impressive and he used his analytics to devise a method for improving the most important part of the game of golf, 100 yards and in, where 64 percent of all scoring is registered.

Today Pelz is widely known and regarded as the foremost guru of the short game, but back then he was pretty much an unknown. He was more than eager to share his views and they were fascinating.

Since then Pelz has marketed his theories and his products to the point where he is undoubtedly not worried about where his next meal might originate.

There are several experts out there who teach the short game fundamentals but I dare say none of them has made such a significant impact on golf the way Pelz has.

His books, training aids and videos have sold in the hundreds of thousands.

Matt Adams

I first met Matt Adams in the early 2000s. He was dabbling in the golf media market, but his main gig was as President and General Manager of the newly opened Newport National Golf Club on Aquidneck Island. I interviewed Matt at that time and neither of us could imagine his rocket-like ascent in the golf world.

His family sponsored the highly prestigious Adams Cup tournament, hosted by the University of Rhode Island. It was an early season invitational that attracted many of the top golf programs in the country.

Matt was the co-founder and chairman from 1994 through 2013. He then moved to Florida and, alas, the tournament no longer exists.

After the move Adams founded the Fairways of

Life radio show for XM radio and everything began to snowball. "At the end of 2018 I pulled my FOL show off SiriusXM," said Adams.

"I decided that reaching less than 10% of the USA on a paid service was too small. So, I independently syndicated on every digital audio platform around the world, becoming the first live, daily golf talk show to do this, accomplishing the goal of reaching everyone, everywhere and for free.

"At the start of this year I started simulcasting FOL on television as well (it was a huge risk because I had to build a television studio). Once again we became the first ever, live, daily golf television show available around the world, for free to all. This month we surpassed 1 million viewers. The show airs live at 8 a.m. Monday - Friday on multiple platforms including YouTube, Twitter and Facebook."

Adams has been a regular commentator on PGA Tour radio, the Golf Channel, NBC, the BBC and ESPN. He hosts The Morning Drive, Golf Central and The Skill Code with Cameron McCormick.

He has covered the Masters, PGA, US Open, Ryder Cups, Solheim Cups, countless tour events, every PGA Show for 30+ years for television and radio as well.

He is also the author of 12 books, including his latest, "The Round I'll Never Forget". To anyone who follows golf, Matt Adams is a very familiar face and name.

Arnold Palmer

Yeah, this was a biggie for me and to be truthful it was not so much an interview as it was a meet and greet, but not an ordinary one.

The year was 2004 and the site was once again the GWAA conference at the Dunes Club in Myrtle Beach. This was the 50th anniversary of the GWAA championship and conference and as such Arnold had been invited as the guest speaker.

A couple of days earlier I had played in a team event, the "Joe Greenday/Buster Bryan" event and one of the foursome was Palmer's long-time publicity director, Doc Giffin.

Doc and I shared the same cart and we teamed very well, along with legendary Connecticut golf writer Bruce Berlet (whose stories have graced this publication for many years). I can't recall our fourth member but we won it.

Two nights later, prior to the dinner and during

the cocktail hour, Doc tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Follow me". We entered a small room and there, sitting in a chair, was 'The King'.

He immediately got up, walked up to me with a big smile, grabbed my hand in his huge mitt, and said, "So you're Tim Geary. Doc tells me you're quite the player." I was stunned and mumbled something like, "Doc's quite the liar."

We sat down, shared a private drink together and talked for about a half hour about golf, other sports and life in general. I had no tape recorder, no camera and no notepad.

I managed a column out of it, but I blew my shot at getting my photo taken with the most charismatic and popular golfer of all time.

A few years later I encountered Palmer again, at the CVS Charity Classic, at Rhode Island Country Club and he remembered me and asked how my game was? "It's pretty bad," I said. He grinned and said, "Welcome to the club." ■

Tim Geary is a retired sports writer for the Fall River Herald and writes a column in each issue of snegolfer.com.



Arnold Palmer

Five Influencers from Rhode Island

Who better to ask for advice when seeking names of people in the golfing world that had a positive influence in Rhode Island than Paul Kenyon? Kenyon spent over forty years as a sports writers and especially covered golf.

"There are so many people that made golf a better game in Rhode Island," said Kenyon in a recent telephone interview. I told him that I only had room to write about five, and these are the names he gave me—Brad Faxon, Billy Andrade, Nathalie Price, Joe Sprague, Sr. and Ed Mauro.

We will cover Faxon and Andrade together because they have done so much for Rhode Island as a pair. "Both Brad and Billy have done so much. Their lives are so intertwined—both great junior golfers, college golfers and successful professionals on the PGA Tour and now the Champions Tour," said Kenyon. "They both have moved to other locations in the country, but they still say they are from Rhode Island—and always get people coming up to them talking about Rhode Island," added Kenyon.

The Faxon and Andrade Charities for Children has raised millions of dollars for children in need. The CVS Health Charity Classic was founded 21 years ago by the duo with the help and support of Jack Ryan who was the CEO of CVS at the time. Brad Faxon holds an annual event at Button Hole for children. "I really believe that Brad and Billy have made Rhode Island a part of the professional tours," said Kenyon who added that he really enjoyed covering them during his career. "They are truly class individuals and a great credit to Rhode Island," he concluded.

Next up on Kenyon's list was the late Nathalie Price. Nathalie was a woman of color who taught in the public schools of Providence. She was a very good golfer, but did not belong to a private club, so was not eligible to compete in Rhode Island Women's Golf Assn. events. She sought to make that change and she enlisted the help of others to start the Ocean State Women's Golf Assn. that was open to all women golfers in the early 1990's. She died tragically, but her organization continued under the direction of Trudy Dufault.

"I have to include Joe Sprague, Sr. on my list," said Kenyon. Joe Sprague, Sr. was a teacher at East Providence High School and was the golf and hockey teams coach. When he retired from teaching about 1980 he became the first full-time director of the Rhode Island Golf Association, replacing Ed Perry who ran the RIGA

part-time out of his insurance office.

"Joe was a driving force in getting all the golf courses in Rhode Island to be in the RIGA. Until then, the courses allowed into the RIGA were all private. Sprague, who belonged to the prestigious Wannamoisett Country Club, recognized that the RIGA should be for all golfers and any club that wished could become a member," recalled Kenyon. Today, most every golf course in Rhode Island and a couple in Connecticut belong to the Rhode Island Golf Association and they run a great many events and all are welcome if they qualify.

On a personal note, when David Adamonis, Sr. and I decided to start a golf publication in 1989, it was Sprague who gave us a great deal of advice and put us in touch with many people and groups to get us off the ground.

Most of us have heard about and seen the great work that has happened at Button Hole Golf and Learning Center in Providence. "Button Hole was the brain-child of Ed Mauro," said Kenyon. "Mauro was a good friend of David Fay who was the head of the USGA in the late 90's. The USGA had just funded a new program called 'Grow the Game of Golf' and Mauro thought that Rhode Island needed a place where youngsters could learn about golf."

Recalled Kenyon, "Ed sent letters to all 39 towns in Rhode Island asking if they had any land available to donate to build a small golf course to teach the game. He asked me and a few others to be on the committee. About five towns replied to him saying they would donate land, but only one-Providence- was not in the suburbs." The land was a field full of rocks near housing projects off of Hartford Ave. in the western end of Providence. Most of the committee thought it would never work. "I remember Ed saying it has to be Providence, because that is truly the one where we will find youngsters who have not been exposed to the game of golf. He was correct, and led the charge to get a beautiful little 9-hole course designed and built," said Kenyon.

On a personal note, both of my grandchildren learned the game of golf at Button Hole. Both attended Brad Faxon Days at the course. There is an excellent driving range on the property and hundreds of golfers have donated clubs, balls and other equipment to make this a true oasis.

I was happy that I asked Kenyon for his thoughts of people who have influenced the game of golf in Rhode Island. I am sure that you have your own influencers, and hope that you tell them thank you if you can. ■

Bruce Vittner is the publisher/editor of www.snegolfer.com and is a member of the Golf Writers Assn. of America and the Golf Travel Writers of America. He is very happy to call Paul Kenyon a friend.

URI Star has Excellent Perspective

After a successful collegiate golf career at the University of Rhode Island, the world is Chris Francoeur's oyster. We caught up with the 22-year-old Amesbury, Massachusetts native after his third round of golf at the Northeast Amateur at Wannamoisett Country Club for a little Q & A.



Chris Francoeur (Left)

SNE Golfer: What's your experience been like playing in your first Northeast Amateur?

Francoeur: It's an absolute blast! Honestly, it has been everything that I thought it would be and so much more. Everyone at Wannamoisett has been awesome. The course is spectacular and it's run like a PGA Tour event. It's been amazing.

SNE Golfer: Since you mentioned Wannamoisett, what do you think about the course?

Francoeur: It's a very good test of golf for how short it is. I've hit it well for the last three days and I'm still 4-over par. It really emphasizes the importance of the short game. The rough is thick and hard to get out of, especially around the greens. It's a good test of golf.

SNE Golfer: What's it like having your dad (Michael) on the bag and your mom (Kelly) following you during the event? Is that a good thing or does it add a little pressure on you?

Francoeur: It's really nice to have them with me when I play and to have their support. Their presence keeps me calm. My dad just carries the bag and doesn't try to give me advice, so it works well.

SNE Golfer: You had a great career at URI. What stands out to you the most when

you look back at your college experience?

Francoeur: I'd have to say that my first semester in school was rough. I didn't play particularly well and I made some mistakes off the course like showing up late for practice and things like that. It was an eye-opening experience for me because I learned quickly that if you want to be successful, you have to focus on every aspect of things on and off the course. It really helped me become a more disciplined person and player.

SNE Golfer: In high school (St. John's Prep – Danvers, MA) you were also a good baseball and hockey player. How did you decide on golf as the sport that you would pursue?

Francoeur: Golf is the sport that I thought I could take the farthest. I'm not the biggest kid and got banged around a bit, so hockey wasn't going to be my future. I really liked baseball but I thought, a nice day out on the golf course beats a few hours on the baseball field so golf it was.

SNE Golfer: What did you graduate from URI with a degree in?

Francoeur: Finance
SNE Golfer: Now that you have graduated, what comes next?

Francoeur: With the extra year of eligibility due to COVID I am going to grad school to play golf at Louisville. I definitely

considered turning pro but, after talking with my parents, I figured I may as well take advantage of the extra year. There was some interest from Ole Miss, Virginia Tech and North Alabama, but I really liked Louisville. It's a 2-year program to get a graduate degree but I'll probably turn pro next year and possibly finish the degree later.

SNE Golfer: If being a pro golfer doesn't work out, what can you envision yourself doing?

Francoeur: I definitely would like to stay involved with the game. Whether it's teaching, caddying, whatever, I'd like to stay in the sport of golf.

SNE Golfer: What's in the bag?

Francoeur: I have a Titleist TSI 3 driver, a TS 3 3-wood, my irons are Titleist CB's, Vokey wedges and a Scotty Cameron putter. I just switched from the Pro V1x to the Pro V1 golf ball.

SNE Golfer: What's the best piece of advice you have ever received?

Francoeur: If things aren't going well, keep working hard and keep telling yourself that the hard work will pay off. Don't get down on yourself. If you keep digging out of the dirt, things will work out in the end.

SNE Golfer: If you had to give someone who loves the sport of golf a piece of advice, what would that be?

Francoeur: Don't put too much pressure on yourself. Golf is a great game. Have fun with it.

Editor's Note: Francoeur made the cut at the Northeast Amateur, but finished 58th out of 92 golfers. ■

Scott Cordischi has a weekly sports talk show and writes a column in each issue of snegolfer.com.

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Collin and Jordan were playing a match. They were both standing on the green and Collin dropped his putter. The putter hit the ball and it rolled about three feet closer to the pin. They were both not sure what to do, but Jordan said it must be a penalty. Is it?

Calvino Ruling:

There is no penalty if the ball accidentally moves, even if it is caused by one of the players. Collin would need to replace his ball as close as they can to where it had originally lay, and then would putt his ball with no penalty.

Leopold Wins RI Amateur



Bobby Leopold

Battling through rain and soggy conditions, Bobby Leopold won the 2021 RI Amateur Championship on Sunday evening at Kirkbrae Country Club. Leopold beat Notre Dame star Andrew O’Leary 5&4 to win his third Amateur title in four finals appearances.

“Andrew is a stud, I mean he hits it steady. I knew I had to make birdies to beat him. Back in 2019, he got the better of me, it wasn’t so much revenge but I knew what I needed to beat him and I played flawless golf,” said Leopold after the round.

It was his first title since 2014.

“This is special. I mean the first couple of times, not that you don’t appreciate it, but you don’t realize how hard it is. The last seven years, it’s been difficult, guys here are good, every time I go up against someone its a tough match. To me, this kind of validates practicing and playing. I still got it and I can still compete,” Leopold added.

For O’Leary, this is his second straight RI Amateur finals loss in his third straight appearance.

The Final Match

Due to course conditions from the rain, the first 18 holes were a little messed up. The championship match teed off on the first hole and then played, two, 12-18, 10, 11, 3-9, in that order.

“We are both playing the same hole, we are playing

each other so it doesn’t really matter. Andrew was fine with it, we knew we had to get it in, neither of us wanted to come back Monday,” Leopold said.

Over the first nine holes, Leopold took a four up lead on O’Leary, including an eagle on the third hole (12th hole at Kirkbrae) and a birdie on the 18th hole. O’Leary cut it to four down on the back nine, however, Leopold won the par 3 ninth to take a commanding five up lead into the second 18.

O’Leary got it back to four down in the first two holes, but Leopold kept his foot on the gas, winning the seventh and eighth holes to go six up in the match with nine to play. In the final nine holes, O’Leary won the 12th and 13th holes to cut Leopold’s lead to three up. The match ended on the 32nd hole with Leopold making a birdie and O’Leary just missing his birdie putt.

Silva Wins Medalist Honors

Earlier in the week, Kevin Silva took medalist honors with a two-day score of 10-under par. Silva fired a 68 on the first day and a sparkling 66 on Wednesday to post a two-day score of 134. He finished two shots ahead of Andrew O’Leary and three shots ahead of 2020 RI Amateur Champion Jamie Lukowicz. He would lose to McKinley Slade in the round of 16. ■

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Harris English Wins Dramatic Travelers Championship

CROMWELL, Conn. – Want to know how dramatic, riveting, compelling and heart stopping the 70th edition of the PGA Tour’s annual stop in Connecticut was?

Well, after new fan favorite Kramer Hickok’s 7-foot par-saving putt on the fourth playoff hole of the Travelers Championship disappeared to keep him alive against Harris English, longtime CBS announcer Jim Nantz offered, “How many times can you hold your breath? Wonder how the viewers are handling this?”

Two quite legitimate questions, but two guys who hardly knew each other before forging a blossoming friendship during their mano-a-mano were only halfway to setting a tournament record for overtime that lasted more than two hours and concluded in gathering darkness at 8:09 p.m.

And English’s 16-foot birdie for the win completed a trifecta of special moments that added to a litany of memories on TPC River Highlands’ 18th amphitheater green. Paul Azinger’s 45-foot chip-in for a second win in 1989, Olin Browne’s 45-foot chip-in for birdie on the first playoff hole to notch his first PGA Tour victory in 1998, Chris Stroud making a 51-foot birdie putt before losing a playoff to Ken Duke in 2016, Russell Knox’s 12-foot par-saving putt to beat University of Hartford grad Jerry Kelly in 2016 and – the granddaddy of them all – Jordan Spieth’s 61-foot bunker shot on the first playoff hole in 2017, the only such winning shot in PGA Tour history.

As the 24th playoff in tournament history continued toward darkness with enough fist pumps and congratulatory words and thumbs-up to last a lifetime, Nantz and CBS cohort Ian Baker-Finch quipped Harris and Hickok had played the 18th hole so many times (six) that PGA Tour officials said they wouldn’t have to play it next year. And

they marveled at the enthusiasm of the fans, who frequently did the wave and chanted “Kra-mer, Kra-mer, Kra-mer” while sounding as if there were 10 times more than the supposed limit of 10,000 after none a year ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Everyone’s wait finally ended when English, known for his usually stoic demeanor, sank his winning 16-footer and offered one final fist pump and walk toward the hole a la Tiger Woods on one of the all-time memorable days in golf history. The two combatants had made 15 consecutive pars before English notched his fourth career victory and became the fifth two-time titlist this season after going winless for seven years. He earned \$1,332,000 and was suddenly ranked 12th in the world after being 373rd in early September 2019.

“It was just awesome, and the fans were keeping us in it, got the juices from them,” said English, who won the Sentry Tournament of Champions to start the season, moved to second in the FedExCup points standings and continued to rise in his hope of being on the U.S. Ryder Cup team in September. “It’s what it’s all about, grinding it out trying to win. It wasn’t always pretty, but we both tried our hardest and made some tough par putts. I had had the same (birdie) putt a couple of times in the last two hours, so I knew the line.

“It’s hard to stay mentally into it, but I tried really hard to stay focused and sharp and really be on my toes because in a playoff situation it’s match-play scenarios so you have to be ready for anything. ... The fans are usually really good here, and you have to give them a shout-out. Hats off to Kramer for a good fight, and we were both joking that somebody had to make a birdie at some point.

“This is a validation win. It took me seven years to win this year in Maui, and I think this a validation of where my

game is now and that I’m doing the right stuff in Sea Island (Ga.)”

English, who began the final round two shots back, and Hickok survived a wild shootout in regulation in which a dozen players had a chance for the title, and each made two crucial putts to save par in the playoff, with Hickok also lipping out on the second and fifth holes for victory. The playoff tied the second longest in PGA Tour history to the 11 holes in the 1949 Motor City Open in which Lloyd Mangrum and Dr. Cary Middlecoff were declared co-winners because darkness had set in. The longest previous tournament playoffs were seven holes and won by Billy Maxwell and Bob Goalby in 1961 and 1962 at Wethersfield Country Club, the original home of the event that started in 1952 as the Insurance City Open.

Hickok, a former teammate and roommate of Spieth at the University of Texas who provided some advice the night before the final round, was trying to become the seventh first-time winner this season. That included close friend Sam Burns, who captured the Valspar Championship and watched the finish with Hickok’s parents and wife Anne, who surprised Kramer with her presence and brought their dog onto the 18th green after he finished several interviews.

“I’m tired and never thought I’d play (26) holes, but some pins were tucked so it was really hard to get the ball close,” said Hickok, alluding to winds that gusted to 20 mph and blew down the 18th hole. “It was a huge learning experience and just a tremendous day. It was just a hard-fought battle and kudos to Harris. There were times I put him in a tough spot, he put me in a tough spot, and he came out on top and is a true champion.

“Pressure is a privilege, and I just wanted to enjoy it and just take it like it is and soak it all in. I was just so happy to be in this situation, and I’m just going to draw on this going forward in my career.”

Hickok, 29, who shared the first-round lead at 63 and played in the final group with three-time champion Bubba Watson/, was trying to become only the fourth player to win on the MacKenzie

Tour, Korn Ferry Tour .and PGA Tour. He started the week 139th in the FedExCup standings but finished with his third Top-10 finish in 68 PGA Tour starts after three wins on the MacKenzie and Korn Ferry Tours.

Still, as Hickok walked off the 18th green one final time, chants of “Kramer Hickok” rang through the crowd, which obviously craved even more golf.

“I’ve never heard that in my life,” said a beaming Hickok, who had missed 10 of 19 cuts but earned \$866,600 this week.. “It was like a baseball game out there. It was so cool because all day all I heard was ‘Bubba, Bubba, Bubba.’”

Marc Leishman, the 2012 Travelers champion, shot a 4-under 31 on the back nine to get into contention and finished with a bogey-free 64 for 268, one out of the playoff. But he had other things on his mind after learning close friend John Mascatello died Sunday morning.

“It was a tough day,” said Leishman, who finished nearly two hours ahead of the leaders and was on the practice range when English made his birdie

putt on the 18th hole to eliminate the Aussie from a playoff. “I was definitely thinking about John, and things like golf are obviously not the “be all end all”. I was thinking of his family. Not getting over the line is kind of irrelevant at the moment.”

The second biggest story of the day was the late collapse of Watson, who was trying to tie Hall of Famer Billy Casper for most tournament wins (four). Watson started the day tied for the lead and had a one-shot after a 3-under 32 on the front nine that he held through the 12th hole. But he started howitzing shots all over the place as he made four bogeys and a double bogey in the last five holes to shoot 73, which dropped him into a tie for 19th at 273.

“I thought I hit good shots but just came out of a few and pushed them or they came up short,” Watson said. “It was one of those things that if it would have happened on the front nine, we wouldn’t be talking about it. But I’m glad that I was there, had the opportunity. I would love to do it again next week,

throw up on myself again. It would be great. I want the opportunity and chance to win.”

Watson had earned his first PGA Tour victory at River Highlands 11 years ago on Sunday and was trying to tie Casper for tournament victories at 42, the same age that Casper won 5his fourth at Wethersfield Country Club. Though disappointed, Watson again proved how classy he is by giving Hickok a pep talk after they shook hands on the 18th green. “You played great,” said Watson, who has been working diligently to revitalize Pensacola, Fla. “Go get ‘em, just like you did for 18 holes.”

Hickok certainly heeded Watson’s advice but just came up one shot short.

Dustin Johnson, who was trying to join Phil Mickelson (2001-02) as the only repeat winners in tournament history, shot 274 to tie for 25th place. Mickelson, who became the oldest winner of a major championship (50, now 51) when he captured the PGA Championship in May, tied for 61st at 279. The 2022 tournament is June 23-27. ■



Age: 24
Birthplace: Glendale, Cal.
Family: Single, Girlfriend Kat
College: Univ. of California-Haas Business

Collin Morikowa

Two years ago, we featured Collin Morikowa as a rising star. He had just graduated from the University of California and had been an All-American all four years at Cal. He had made the cut in his first five professional events and won his sixth event.

What we did not know at the time was that he was going to go on to win his first Major at TPC Harding Park in the PGA Championship. What he did on July 18, 2021 was even more amazing. He won The Open Championship at Royal St. Georges in England in his first appearance at this major that was being competed for the 149th time.

No player has ever won two majors the first time that they have played them. What an accomplishment! He is already earning comparisons to a young Tiger Woods, and he is earning those accolades. He had only played one event in Europe—the Scottish Open the week before his triumph at Royal St. Georges, so he had no experience playing the much different style of golf that is played in Europe with its hundreds of pot bunkers, two-foot high rough, undulating fairways and slow sloping greens. He played them like an expert and never made a bogey the final round to capture the title.

Collin Morikowa has changed the title of this column from Rising to Risen. There seems no limits to what he will accomplish in his career. His acceptance speech at the Open was classy and thoughtful. We are seeing a talent like very few that have ever played the game. He currently ranks 1st in FedEx Points and has earned \$6,950,768 this year.

RISEN STAR

ANDY BESSETTE: A Major Force behind the Travelers Championship's Success

Being a former Connecticut resident and friend of many of the tournament's staffers, PGA Tour writer Jason Sobel admits being a bit biased when he says the Travelers Championship is a major. But Sobel has been right on through the years about how Andy Bessette and "the good people at Travelers essentially saved the tournament at the 11th hour, swooping in to take it off life support and keep it on the annual schedule."

Travelers' saving and resuscitation of Connecticut's premier sporting event came in 2007 after Buick ended its title sponsorship, and Bessette, the Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for the insurance magnate, is a major reason it usually draws many of golf's marquee players despite being played the week after the U.S. Open at cozy TPC River Highlands in bucolic Cromwell, Ct.

Much of the tournament's success can be traced to the 66-year-old Bessette's motto "The status quo is never acceptable" that began from his days as an athlete and training for the Olympics.

"When it comes to the Travelers Championship, I always say that we have to keep trying to get better," Bessette said. "The only way to stay a world-class event is to never rest on your laurels and to keep trying to improve. Our goal is to be the best stop on the PGA Tour, to attract the best players, to represent our brand and to generate as much money for charity as possible."

To achieve those lofty goals, Bessette became the first executive of a title sponsor to help recruit players. He and tournament director Nathan Grube have formed what many insiders consider the PGA Tour's best management team since Travelers became title sponsor, and it was especially tested during the changing protocols caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March 2020.

"We thought it would be important for players to get to know us and to build relationships with them," Bessette said. "We wanted to hear from them on what they liked about the event, what they didn't like and how we could deliver a great experience to keep them coming back. Over the years, we've gotten to know them as people, not just golfers. We know their families, we keep in touch during major life events like sending them onesies with a red umbrella on them when they have babies. And we try to do the little things to make their lives easier when they come to play the tournament."

Grube is fully aware of the benefit of having Bessette on the road with him. "It's a huge asset to have Andy on Tour building relations with the guys," Grube said. "It's just not normal for them to see a title sponsor, and they



Andy Bessette

love it. Combine that with the fact that Andy competed at the highest level himself, and it makes for a special rapport with the guys that takes the relationship to a different place. We wouldn't have the field we have year after year without him."

Bessette earned more brownie points when he and Travelers chairman and chief executive officer Alan Schnitzer followed, mostly on foot, the eight playoff holes in heat and humidity as English outlasted Kramer Hickok with a 16-foot birdie putt on TPC River Highlands' 18th green for his fourth PGA Tour victory and second this season. It was the longest playoff in the tournament's 70-year history and tied the second longest on the PGA Tour to the 11 holes in the 1949 Motor City Open when Lloyd Mangrum and Dr. Cary Middlecoff were declared co-winners when darkness stopped play. A similar situation was approaching when English holed his decisive stroke at 8:09 p.m.

Bessette said his major benefit from the tournament

is seeing how charities benefit. The event has raised more than \$22 million in 15 years, including more than \$2 million this year after \$1.6 million in 2020 despite no fans and few amenities that was mostly offset by unwavering support from most sponsors.

"Helping charity is extremely rewarding and a big reason why Travelers sponsors the event," Bessette said. "Supporting the community is part of the culture at Travelers. The company gives more than \$22 million to nonprofits each year outside of the Travelers Championship, and our employees give much of their time to volunteer during the tournament.

"When I look at the kids and families that go to The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp (in Ashford), how much joy they experience and the fact that they can have fun while battling some extremely serious situations makes me so proud of the work that we do at the Travelers Championship. It makes all of the effort well worth it."

When the first year went well, Fishman kept asking Bessette to stay, and he kept accepting. "I couldn't be more proud of what we've built," Bessette said, "and all that's been accomplished to make this a world-class tournament that does so much for the region."

Bessette was born in Woonsocket, R.I., and started working for his father's business when he was seven, washing floors and windows as his parents demanded hard work.

"We weren't that wealthy so everyone had to pitch in, and that's what we did," Bessette said. "I also played with my friends so I worked hard but also knew how to play."

Bessette graduated from the University of Connecticut and got his master's degree at the University of Rhode Island. He worked for Sheraton Hotels for three years before starting at Travelers in 1980 in the mail room. He became a member of the Travelers Management and Operating Committee who is responsible for Corporate Real Estate, Administrative Services, Community Relations, Aviation, Internal Investigations, Event Management and Business Continuity. He is also responsible for sports sponsorships, including the company's official marketing partnership with the PGA Tour and title sponsorship of the Travelers Championship for which he serves on the board of the Greater Hartford Community Foundation.

Bessette is also a member of the UConn Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors of the UConn Health Center and serves as Vice Chairman of the Capital Region Development Authority. He works with Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, serves on Hartford Hospital's Board of Governor, is a past chair of the MetroHartford Alliance Board of Directors and serves on the executive and compensation committees. He also serves on the board of the Greater MSP in Minneapolis.

Bessette qualified for the 1980 Olympics in the hammer throw but was unable to compete because the

U.S. boycotted the Games because of the Soviet-Afghan War. "I don't focus on what might have been," Bessette said. "I focus on now and making things the best they be in the future."

That unfortunate situation in Bessette's life has given way to being a major factor in Travelers and a PGA Tour event that has received 12 awards in the past few years, including Tournament of the Year, Players Choice, Most Fan Friendly and Best Charity Integration.

"What I like about the tournament is the continuity that Travelers has brought," said two-time winner Stewart Cink, who made his pro debut in the event in 1995 on a sponsors' exemption. "With Andy and Nathan, they're two faces you know right away when you see them on the range that they are for the Travelers Championship and have put everything into it. They listen to suggestions, and there's not a lot you can suggest on how to run a better golf tournament than they do. But when you do have something that you see is maybe a concern or something that could be improved, they do it. They don't just say, 'Okay, we'll look into it.' It gets done. It's really amazing and shows their commitment to the event and to the charities they support. It's fabulous just to be a part of it."

"I know there are few tournaments on the PGA Tour that when players talk amongst each other that we don't refer to by the city, but we refer to it by the sponsor. Travelers is one, and John Deere is the one. It certainly used to be Hartford, the GHO, and now it's Travelers. That's just an organic change. I've noticed that change in the years since Travelers has been here, and it's so great to see that they've committed all the way through their contract extension to 2030. That's just amazing."

So, too, is what Bessette has accomplished to add to the legend of the premier sporting event in Connecticut. He truly is someone who has done a great deal for golf. ■

Bruce Berlet is the retired sports writer for the Hartford Courant and writes a Connecticut column in each issue of snegolfer.com.

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Blanchard Wins Conn. Senior Open

The third time proved to be the charm for Charlie Blanchard in the Connecticut Senior Open at Shennecossett Golf Course in Groton, Conn.

A day after shooting his competitive low and tying the course record to share the first-round lead, Blanchard birdied four of the first seven holes to open a five-stroke advantage and cruised to a two-shot victory over Kirk Hanefeld.

"I hit some good shots starting out and got a nice lead," said Blanchard, who finished fifth and second in his previous tournament starts. "Then I was just trying not to do something stupid."

Blanchard, the men's golf coach at Bryant College, from Warwick, R.I., notched his first professional win with a closing 3-under-par 68 for a 36-hole total of 9-under 133. Blanchard received the \$4,000 first prize and Bill Fox Trophy, named after the golf professional who started the tournament in 1983 as a friendly 18-hole get-together that now has a 156-man field.

Blanchard, who plays out of the famed Wannamoisett Country Club in Rumford, R.I., joined Ralph Salito (2007) as the only lefthanders to win in the 39-year history of the tournament. He finished with 11 birdies and only two bogeys to add this title to a multitude of others, including the Rhode Island Amateur Championship in 2002, when he swept all five of the state's major championships and was recognized as the New England Golf Journal New England Player of the Year.

Blanchard, a soccer and lacrosse standout at Ohio Wesleyan University whose Bryant teams have won two Northeast Conference titles, also captured seven R.I. Mid-Amateur Championships, four R.I. Stroke Play Championships and five John P. Burke Memorial Championships. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan, where he was a two-time All-American, he played professional lacrosse as member of the Boston Blazers in 1990-97 and was selected to the first Major Indoor Lacrosse League All-Star Game.

Blanchard now focuses on being the most successful player in Rhode Island Golf Association history in the 21st century, having won Player of the Year an unprecedented seven times. He has been inducted into three Hall of Fames and played in the prestigious Northeast Amateur on his home course 18 times.

But the Shennecossett links has understandably

become one of his favorite courses.

"It really sets up for my game," Blanchard said. "I hit it fairly long, which gives me a lot of wedge shots, the strong part of my game."

Blanchard, who began the day tied with Hanefeld, hit wedge approaches to 10 and 12 feet on the first two holes to set up birdies and take a lead that he never relinquished. He chipped to 2 feet for birdie at the par-5 fifth hole and then sank a 40-foot putt to cap his early birdie binge and open a five-stroke advantage on Hanefeld, who opened with six pars and a bogey at the fourth hole.

Hanefeld, 65, who shot his age for the first time in the first round, got within two when he birdied the eighth, ninth and 12th holes. But he missed three good birdie chances down stretch and couldn't get up-and-down to save par at the tough par-3 15th hole.

"Charlie got off to a great start and then certainly gave us an opportunity to catch him," said Hanefeld, who finished in the top five in his previous two



Charlie Blanchard

tournament appearances. "But I just couldn't do it, which wasn't the first time and won't be the last. But I shot my age for the first time, which was kind of neat."

Hanefeld's numerous achievements include winning the New Hampshire Junior Championship in 1971-73, the N.H. Amateur in 1974 and 1976 and the New England Amateur in 1977. He played on the University of Houston golf team from 1974-77, and after turning pro, he captured five State Opens. He also played in three PGA Tour majors and 26 PGA Tour Champions majors among his 71 starts on the 50-and-over circuit. He was the director of golf at four notable clubs in New England and was named the New England PGA Player of the Year twice and the National PGA Player of the Year once. The NHGA Junior Player of the Year Award is named after Hanefeld for his numerous accomplishments in the Granite State.

John Elliott, 57, an All-American at Central Connecticut State University who played on the PGA Tour and Nationwide (now Korn-Ferry) Tour, was only one stroke back starting out after making seven birdies and an eagle in an opening 66. The 2017 champion birdied the fifth hole to get to 6 under and tied for second with Hanefeld but bogeyed No. 8, 9 and 10 to fall out of contention.

"I played good for six holes and had 5-iron into the (par-5) eighth hole but hit a terrible shot and then three-putted being too aggressive," Elliott said. "Then the two other bogeys kind of turned the day around. I drove the ball perfect, but my irons were off. I just couldn't get my distances down."

Elliott did have a memorable ending to his day, holing a 50-foot chip on No. 18 for birdie 4 and 73, which got him a tie for fourth at 139 with Jerry Courville of Stratford (70) and Alan Sorensen of Bakersfield, Calif. (69). Frank Bensel of Jupiter, Fla., who will shoot for a record-tying fourth Connecticut Open title on July 26-28 at the Country Club of Darien, birdied the 15th and 16th holes to shoot a second 69 and finish third.

Dick Stevens of Woodbury was the low amateur after shooting 74 for 144 and tie for 14th. Two-time Connecticut Open champion Jim Becker, who became the first three-time Connecticut Senior Open titlist when the event was last played in 2019, shot 147 to tie for 26th at 147.

The tournament, played for the 24th consecutive year at the Donald Ross redesigned course, had a \$30,000 pro purse and was sponsored by Mohegan Sun and the PGA Tour's Korn Ferry Tour. The 2022 tournament will be played again at Shennecossett on July 11-12. ■

9

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Siviter Captures Conn. Women's Open

Melissa Siviter struggled on the front nine of the final round, but excelled down the stretch to notch a four-stroke victory in the Connecticut Women's Open at the Black Hall Club in Old Lyme. Siviter shared the first-round lead with amateurs Angela Garvin and Kaitlyn Lee at even-par 72, fell one back at the turn in the second round and then rallied for her first professional victory, putting a stranglehold on the title with a 15-foot birdie putt on the 16th hole that elicited a fist pump.

"This win means a lot to me," said Siviter, who plays out of the Golf Club of Georgia and earned \$3,000. "It has been a long time coming. I have been close a number of times and just haven't gotten it done so to get it done this time means a lot. You never know if you can do it until you get over the edge, so I am just super happy right now."

Siviter, 30, closed with a 74 to finish four ahead of four-time champion Liz (Janangelo) Caron, Ami Gianchandi of Yale University and Sophia Sarrazin, winner of the 2020 Connecticut Women's Amateur.

Lee, who plays out of Westchester (N.Y.) Country Club, birdied the eighth hole to take the lead at the turn at 1 over, one ahead of Siviter, who plays on the Women's All-Pro Tour. Siviter took the lead when she parred the 10th through 14th holes while Lee was making bogeys on Nos. 11 and 14. Siviter bogeyed the 15th hole but gained a shot when Lee made double bogey. Siviter then all but clinched the title when she made the critical putt on the 16th hole.

"When that putt went in, I thought I really had a chance to win," Siviter said. "But the par-3 17th hole isn't an easy shot with the water on the left. But I stuck it to 15 feet, and that kind of settled the nerves. ... I knew par was going to be my friend, so I didn't try and pull off any crazy shots. I just kept hitting one shot at a time until I got to the 18th. I didn't really know where I stood, so I just kept telling myself par is my friend."

Caron is a teaching pro at the Mill River Club in Oyster Bay, N.Y., where her husband, Jason, is the 0head pro after playing on the PGA Tour and Korn Ferry Tour. She won a record five consecutive

Connecticut State Women's Amateur Championships before becoming a four-time All-American at Duke and being part of two national championship teams and the Player of the Year twice.

Sarrazin is a Westport resident who plays on the Hamden Hall Country Day boys golf team. Gianchandani (Watchung Valley GC) was the 2020 Ivy League Player of the Year after being the 2015 New Jersey State Golf Association Junior Girls champion, a four-time New Jersey PGA Player of the Year and a four-time NJPGA Girls All-State Team selection. ■

Grzywinski Wins Hartford Women's Open

Mia Grzywinski's father Geoff caddied for his daughter in four of her early victories, but mother Lauren was batting zero in her limited times on the bag entering the Hartford Women's Open. The parents often split time during multiple-round tournaments, with Geoff scheduled to carry in the final round at Keney Park Golf Course. But after Mia played so well in shooting a 1-over 71 for second place in the first round at Goodwin Park Golf Course, the Grzywinkis decided that mom would do the duties with the pull cart the final round.

The strategy couldn't have worked better, as Mia birdied four of the first five holes on the back nine on the way to a personal-best, 5-under-par 30 and a career-low 4-under 66 for a 36-hole total of 3-under 137 and a three-stroke victory over pro and first-round leader Aimee Caligiore, the 2019 champion.

When the final putt dropped, Mia hugged and kissed mom, then was doused with water by several friends whom she knew and has often played with, including defending champion Angela Garvin, and then headed for dad, who was a spectator behind the 18th green and heartily embraced his daughter. Talk about a terrific family and friends affair!

"I was a little nervous, but my mental side was just great," said Grzywinski, 20, a junior at Quinnipiac University in Hamden. "I just took it one shot at a time, and it was the best that I've ever done that. I just stayed in the moment."

Grzywinski began the day one stroke behind

Caligiore and took the lead when she hit an 8-iron shot to 18 inches for a birdie 2 at the sixth hole. The duo each bogeyed the eighth hole, and Caligiore was even after Grzywinski three-putted from 60 feet on No. 9.

The duel continued and the fireworks began when both two-putted the par-5 10th hole for birdie, and Grzywinski moved ahead for good when Caligiore three-putted the par-3 11th from 35 feet. Caligiore drove the 295-yard, par-4 12th hole and two-putted for birdie, but Grzywinski matched that with 25-foot putt that drew a fist pump.

Grzywinski doubled her lead when she hit an 8-iron shot to two feet for birdie at the par-3 14th, and each birdied the par-5 15th in impressive fashion. Grzywinski hit a 3-wood second shot from 191 yards onto the green and two-putted from 30 feet for her fourth birdie in five holes. Caligiore's drive left her behind some trees, then she pitched into the fairway, hit her downhill third shot 40 feet past the cup and slammed the putt in off the flagstick, drawing a coy smile.

When Grzywinski, Caligiore and playing partner Jordan Lintz left the 14th green, they had combined for nine birdies and one three-putt bogey in five holes. Grzywinski all but clinched the biggest win of her career at the 15th hole, where her approach bounced over the green while Caligiore was 15 feet from a birdie. But Grzywinski lofted a deft chip that stopped 3 feet from the cup and Caligiore failed to convert.

After each of the frontrunners made routine pars at the 16th hole, Grzywinski did clinch her win, hitting a 7-iron shot from 141 yards to 10 feet and making her fifth birdie on the back nine. A closing par gave her a tournament-record, nine-hole 30 and 66, one off the record shot by Kelly Whaley in her win in 2018. Three weeks later, Grzywinski finished a stroke behind Dree Fausnaugh of New Hampshire in the New England Women's Amateur.

"Mia was just awesome on the back nine," said Caligiore, 30, a graduate of St. Lawrence University and now an assistant pro at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club in Orlando, Fla. "My ball-striking could have been better, but I hung in there and made a lot of good par putts. I gave it my all on all my shots, so that's all I can ask."

Caligiore's consolation for the positive outlook that she shared with her father/caddie Sandy was the winning pro check of \$1,700 from a \$4,000 purse. Lintz, 43, the owner of Jordan Lintz Golf who played on the LPGA and Futures Tour, also lauded Grzywinski's

play. Lintz started two strokes back and was only one behind when she birdied the seventh hole but finished the front nine bogey-double bogey for 38 before shooting 35 on the back side to finish third at 145 and earn \$1,000.

Garvin, 20, a junior at the University of Maryland from Feeding Hills, Mass., shot 72 to tie for fourth with Yun Kiu Tiffany Chan of South Korea and a junior at the Kent School (73). Garvin, a five-time winner of the Connecticut Section PGA Girls Junior Championship, has now finished in the Top 5 in each of the six Hartford Women's Opens.

Grzywinski was a two-time Central Connecticut Conference champion while at Farmington High School and finished third in the Connecticut State Women's Amateur Championship last year but said she made extensive improvement while competing less and practicing more during the COVID-19 pandemic. She worked with friend Jeff Goefftwohill and Jim Bunel at Fairview Farms CC in Harwinton.

"She really worked hard and improved all parts of her game," Grzywinski's father proudly said. "A lot of (the improvement) is skill, but it has been even more mental," Mia said. "My swing completely changed so I wouldn't drop down at the top, but the biggest thing is I got back to enjoying the game again so there was no stress. And watching good players like Angela and (multiple state men's champion) Chris Fosdick got me to think like them." ■

Fosdick Repeats As State Amateur Champion

A year ago, Chris Fosdick and Cody Paladino battled through what was arguably the best final in the history of the Connecticut State Golf Association Amateur Championship at Shorehaven Golf Club in Norwalk. If anyone believes that's hyperbole, consider that each finalist shot 9-under over 36 holes, and they carded 20 birdies and two eagles between them. Several times birdies didn't even win a hole, and there were only six bogeys in the match. In the afternoon 18, Fosdick shot an 8-under 63, one off the course record, and still couldn't clinch victory until the 36th hole in beating his second consecutive

former pro after being 5-down after 16 holes.

Against that backdrop of brilliance, Fosdick and Paladino renewed their golfing acquaintance 356 days later at Hartford Golf Club, and while the play wasn't as spectacular on a more difficult course with firmer greens, the finish was arguably even more riveting. Fosdick made a 30-foot putt on the first hole for the first of three birdies in the first five holes that gave him a lead that he never relinquished, though he was tied twice in the afternoon 18. But he became the first player since Will Strickler in 2007 and 2008 to win back-to-back titles when he made an 18-foot birdie putt on the final hole for a second successive 1-up victory. It also was the first time since 1920 and 1921 that the same two competitors met in successive finals.

"I had a good feeling on that (18th) green all week," said Fosdick, 20, a sophomore at the University of Virginia who plays out of Wallingford Country Club. "I made a similar putt for birdie in the semifinals, and I was fortunate to match the line and the speed. "This means a lot, which is why I got really pumped up. It was awesome to finish it like that and to win the Palmer Cup (in May) and now this tournament. I know it doesn't happen very often and to be able to put myself in that position and fighting all the way, it felt really good to be so clutch at the end."

Fosdick when 5-up when he birdied the 13th hole in the morning round, but he bogeyed No. 14 and Paladino birdied the 15th hole to get to 3-down. And Fosdick had only a 2-up lead when he 3-putted the 18th hole from 35 feet, missing a 3-footer for par.

A Paladino three-putt on the first hole in the afternoon gave Fosdick a 3-up lead again. But Paladino won the par-5 fourth when Fosdick hit his second shot out of the bounds, sandwiching par-saving putts of 25 and 20 feet on Nos. 4 and 6. Paladino made a 4-foot birdie putt at the seventh hole and then got even for the first time when Fosdick hit his tee shot over the green on the eighth hole and missed a 6-footer to save par 3.

"After I got 5-up, I got a little sloppy and my putter got cold, but fortunately I made a few coming in," Fosdick said. "I didn't really think about last year because I knew it was going to be a great match. I was nervous early, but then I loosened up. I really wanted to play Cody again because I thought it would be fun, and I'm glad we had another good match." ■

Four Qualify For PGA Junior Nationals

Tiffany Chan, Catarina Petrovic and Josephine Genereux all said they had no idea how they stood headed down the backstretch of Connecticut Section Junior Golf Association Championship at Keney Park Golf Course. Probably just as well for the teenagers as only two of trio would advance to the PGA of America Junior Girls Championship on July 27-30 at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky., home of the national organization.

Fittingly, it came down to the final hole of 36 played in a 100-degree-plus heat index over two days. Chan, 17, who lives in Hong Kong and will be a senior at the Kent School, had a one-stroke lead over Petrovic and Genereux playing the difficult par-3 18th hole and all but clinched her spot in the nationals with a tee shot to 10 feet. She did two-putt for par, a 5-over-par 75 and a 36-hole total of 7-over 147.

"The back nine was definitely a roller-coaster, but it was nice to make the par at the end," Chan said, alluding to four pars and five bogeys in an incoming 40. "It was very challenging because of the heat so I just tried to stay in the shade and under my umbrella a lot. I lost my focus on a few shots, but I just kept telling myself to stay focused. I'm really excited about going to Kentucky because I've only been there once for three or four days."

So it came down to defending champion Genereux and Petrovic, whose opening 69 was a career low and gave her a three-stroke lead over Chan. Both hit the green, but Genereux's shot rolled about 40 feet past the pin while Petrovic was 15 feet below the hole. Genereux, of Greenwich, ran her first putt 10 feet past the cup, while Petrovic needed only 2 feet to make par for 79. When Genereux left her par bid inches short, she was relegated to first alternate for the nationals after shooting 76.

"The difference between my two rounds was 100 percent putting," said Petrovic, 16, who had five birdies on Tuesday and none Wednesday. "All my putts went in yesterday, but today I just couldn't any. And my approach shots were very good, either. I love a lot of practice to do, but I'm really excited about

going to Kentucky because I've never been there. Plus, I like traveling a lot."

Petrovic's father is Stephen Petrovic, who used to caddie for his older brother, Tim, a winner on the PGA Tour and now enjoying success on the PGA Tour Champions, having finished second three times. Catarina won the CIAC Division I Girls Championship this year playing for Farmington High School, but she and the rest of the family were scheduled to move to Naples, Fla., on July 29. Those plans had to change with Catarina being in Louisville that week.

The boys' division wasn't nearly as riveting as the girls as far as the berths in the national championship, but Ryan Downes certainly made it interesting as far who would receive the winner's trophy. Downes and Connor Goode shared the top spots after the first round at 67, and Goode took a one-stroke lead after making four birdies in a 2-under 33 on the front nine.

Goode, 17, of Glastonbury, maintained his advantage on the back and was two ahead going to the 18th hole. Downes hit his tee shot right on a mound but managed to hole a 60-foot chip shot for a birdie and 70.

Goode could afford to be in a good mood after he two-putted from 25 feet, making a 3-foot comebacker for 69-136 and a one-stroke victory. He and Downes earned spots in the Boys Junior PGA Championship on July 12-15 at Kearney Hill Golf Links in Lexington, Ky.

"Ryan's chip shot got me a little nervous, but it felt good to make the 3-footer to win," Goode said. "I played steady and made some nice birdie putts, which was nice because I knew Ryan wasn't going to give it away. I shot 7 over in the tournament last year, but I've started to figure out where to put the ball in the right spots and didn't have any double bogeys in two days.

Downes is the son of Bill Downes, a longtime standout in the Connecticut Section PGA who has qualified for the Travelers Championship out of GREATHORSE Country Club in Hampden, Mass. He had three birdies in the finish of his third start in the championship.

"I played all right but couldn't get any putts to drop," Downes said. "I thought I might have a chance to make the nationals, and I think it's a great achievement and something that I've been looking forward to."

Jackson Roman of Kensington finished third at

140.... Roman, Colin Spencer (Mashpee, Maas.) and John Broderick (Wellesley, Mass.) earned spots in the U.S. Junior Amateur in qualifying at Quinnetisett CC in Thompson. Roman, who won the Borck Junior in May, shot a 4-under 68 to capture medalist honors, finishing one ahead of Spencer and two in front of Broderick, who advanced in a four-for-one playoff with a 20-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole. The trio played in the national championship July 19-21 at the Country Club of North Carolina.

At the Nationals Ben James of Milford shot 13-under 271 to finish in a four-way tie for second in the Boys Junior PGA Championship at Kearney Hill Golf Links in Lexington, Ky. He finished three strokes behind winner Caleb Surratt of Indian Trail, N.C., who shot a record 62 in the third round. But James won a playoff for one of four spots on the United States Junior Ryder Cup Team. ■

Sennett Finally Wins A Major State Title

Jean Sennett might have set an all-time golf record for perseverance by winning the Connecticut Women's Golf Association Championship at Shuttle Meadow CC in Kensington. After failing to win a state title in 37 attempts, the 66-year-old Sennett birdied the 18th hole to defeat defending champion Leslie Li 1 up in the final.

"It was a good close match where we each shot (1-over-par) 74, so I'm really happy," Sennett said after her 22nd appearance in the championship. "Winning wasn't as much relief as I thought it would be maybe because it was such a tight match. I didn't have time to think about 'What if?'"

Neither finalist had more than a 1-up lead, and Li, who will be going to the University of Hartford in the fall on a full scholarship, got even when Sennett three-putted the 15th hole. After each player made a bogey and par on the 16th and 17th holes, Li drove into trouble on the par-5 18th played from the men's tee and had to pitch her second shot into the fairway. Li (Tumble Brook CC-Bloomfield) was on the back of the green on her fourth shot, while Sennett hit her

third shot with 7-high bred to.3 feet and made the putt for that elusive first major title in her fifth trip to the final.

"You never know in this game," Sennett said. "Mimi Schreck won two years ago, and she's older than I am, so as long as you can beat the youngsters, you keep trying, especially because of the format (match play)." Schreck was the qualifying medalist this year with a 78, which included a hole-in-one on the 13th hole. She finished one stroke ahead of three players, including Sennett.

Sennett is a 20-time winner of the club championship at Wampanoag CC5 in West Hartford, starting in 1992 and running through 2018. She has captured the Super Senior division in the Connecticut State Women's Amateur Championship that she has played 15 times. She also was a runner-up in the CWGA Super Senior Championship.

In the Founders Cup final, Cheryl Ziebka defeated defending champion Pam Burt 3 and 2 between members at the Country Club of Farmington. ■

Cedar Knob Recognized

The future of golf and growing the game at the youth level have been major objectives for officials at Cedar Knob Golf Course in Somers for more than half a century. Excellence in those areas were major reasons the 18-hole course designed by Geoffrey Cornish on a 144-acre farm was selected for the 2021 Walter Lowell Public Golf Course Distinguished Service Award from the Connecticut Section PGA.

The award is given to a model public facility for its efforts to provide accessibility and an enjoyable golfing experience and was presented at the annual Walter Lowell PGA Tournament at The Tradition Golf Club at Oak Lane in Woodbridge. A well-established junior golf camp, hallmarked by free play for children when accompanied by an adult, underscores the knowledge and the importance of honesty and integrity in the game of golf perpetuated at Cedar Knob.

"It's an honor," said Cedar Knob head pro Stephen Sawka, who accepted the award with his sister, Jennifer. "I am thankful that the outstanding

efforts of Jeff Swanson and John Gale have been recognized. I am excited to accept the PGA Walter Lowell Award on behalf of the Cedar Knob Golf Course family, and it increases my enthusiasm to carry on Jeff's legacy and promote the game of golf."

Swanson died unexpectedly of a heart attack at 55 on Feb. 20 after 25 years at Cedar Knob. A Cromwell native whose first golf job was the former Edgewood Golf Course, and after several years at the current TPC River Highlands, home of the Travelers Championship, Swanson earned his PGA of America certification while working at Rockledge GC in West Hartford. After several winters working at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra, Fla., home of The Players Championship, he went to Cedar Knob in 1995 and quickly established himself as a player-friendly pro. He created "Cedar Knob's Golf for Kids," a summer camp for junior golfers, where he worked closely with young players on all aspects of the game. He was also devoted to the men's and women's clubs at the course.

Section president Howie Friday said Cedar Knob was "a very deserving facility" for the Lowell Award. "This recognition is a wonderful tribute to PGA professional Jeff Swanson who served as the head professional for 25 years and is truly missed by all his friends," Friday said.

Since 2001, the award has honored a public golf course in the Section in recognition of their dedication to the promotion of the game. The award was inaugurated in honor of the Canton Golf Course owned by the Lowell family for the standards it set serving the community and providing playing opportunities for all those who want to play and learn the game. ■

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UConn Golf Coach Dave Pezzino and Top Junior Instructor Bob Sparks Making a Difference

Even though he understood the politics and economic reasons behind the planned move, University of Connecticut men's golf coach Dave Pezzino wasn't going to let the school eliminate his program without a darned good fight. UConn's department of athletics needed to cut its budget last year by 25 percent, its financial situation made much direr by the COVID-19 pandemic. The golf program was targeted for elimination.

"The world was imploding around college athletics at that time," said of the decision to cut men's golf from the UConn athletic program. "I totally understood and respected the challenges that were facing not just college athletics, but the entire world during those tough months."

But as the head golf coach at the University of Connecticut, Pezzino felt it was his "responsibility and obligation" to care for the program. "I wasn't going to let 80 years of college golf go away because of finances. We have an amazing group of alumni, and our current players' parents are in our corner. The outpouring of love and support for our program was, and is, humbling."

Pezzino smelled the wind and felt a storm was brewing last year. "I knew we had challenges, and a couple of our alums also knew that. John Bierkan and Greg Stebbins organized our fund raising efforts. These two Huskies got everything started. They were supported by several other alumni and one of our current players' parents. They did it because they love UConn and they love our golf program."

During the fund-raising effort, Pezzino said Zoom calls were run like business meetings. "Each member had something to offer and their follow through was outstanding. These could have been rough meetings, but our group wouldn't let any negativity be a part of our process."

Donors indeed helped Pezzino keep the golf program operating, eventually raising one million dollars, and lo and behold, the team not only kept playing but won the 2021 Big East title this past spring after a seven-year absence from the conference and earned a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Under Pezzino's steady guidance, the Huskies have also excelled in the classroom. UConn was honored



Bob Sparks

for the second consecutive year as a National All-Academic Team, and UConn had two players cited as Srixon/Cleveland Golf All-America Scholars for a second straight season. The team earned its 14th consecutive NCAA Public Recognition Award, signifying an APR in the top 10 percent of its sport in the country. The eight UConn players who were named to the conference's All-Academic Team brings Pezzino's total in that category to 60 student-athletes.

As for the tumultuous year, Pezzino said, "Our young men handled it so well. I was so proud of them during the whole process. They asked great questions and they stuck together when they all could've left. A couple of them would call me weekly to check in on me to see how I was doing. Those phone calls were amazing, they would call to pump me up and ask about my wife and kids. Our goal was: We want to be a positive part of the solution."

He added, "Our guys came back early in the spring. They went into a short quarantine and then had to test to be able to start practicing. They sacrificed a lot to be able to compete. This group of young man will forever be known in our golf program for the group that came back."

The UConn mentor said his team's fortitude and ultimate success "should show young aspiring golfers that being a part of the UConn golf program isn't a four-

year thing it's a lifelong relationship". He concluded, "When our boys completed the Big East Championship my phone melted. So many of our alumni were so proud and excited for our boys. It wasn't just these nine guys it was the guys who graduated in the 1970's, 1980's, 1990's, 2000's, 2010's and all our incoming guys too."

Bob Sparks, head golf professional at Torrington Country Club in Torrington, Connecticut, is making a difference as one of the driving forces behind junior golf in the state. He operates the Bob Sparks Golf Academy and is the US Kids Hartford Tour Director.

"I have been involved with junior golf since I started in the business and always had a passion for teaching youth. I find it challenging to keep golf fun and enjoyable while keeping kids safe. Junior golf was always assigned to young guys getting into the business, but I enjoy doing it and love the challenge. Here I am, 30 years later on the National Youth Development Committee, and our project is building a guide book on how to instruct, manage and operate junior golf clinics and camps."

Sparks believes he has made an impact with his

efforts on behalf of juniors. "Our junior golf programming has grown every year. With the many tours developing and PGA Junior League there are many more opportunities for kids to play and compete. I have operated the US Kids Hartford golf tour for the past seven years and the growth has been tremendous. It has been very rewarding watching the kids grow and compete as they get older and further their careers, as well as the many friendships the players and families have made."

Sparks believes more can be done to bring youngsters into the golfing fold. "We need to help young PGA Professionals by educating them how to instruct juniors. I believe the work our National Committee is doing will be a stepping stone for young PGA Professionals to see the value and reward in teaching youth. Youth instruction gets better every year as we incorporate the ADM model and we continue to grow athletes." ■

John Torsiello writes a Connecticut column in each issue of snegolfer.com.

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[The Indomitable Dyes]

Anyone who knew Alice and Pete Dye will remember their keen wit and constant repartee they carried on when together. They were a team on and off the course. They were funny, they jousting with each other, and just when you thought one had finished speaking, the other would jump in. When the Dyes left this life — Alice died in 2019 at 91; Pete died one year later at 94; son Perry died this year—they left behind an incredible legacy of exceptional golf courses including TPC Sawgrass, Whistling Straits, Harbour Town Golf Links, The Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, French Lick and Crooked Stick in Indiana, plus many more.

I was so fortunate to share a few hours with them 10 years ago when my husband and I went to Gulf Stream, Florida, to sit down with them in their comfortable home Alice called, "Pete's Castle." Sixty, their white German Shepherd was there too. "She's supposed to protect me, but all she does is wag her tail at strangers," laughed Alice. Sixty was a constant companion, on and off the course.

A man of incredible energy, Pete constantly walked his courses, tested the soil, and tweaked his designs. He ate lunch on his feet and hardly ever sat down. What many don't know is that his wife, Alice, was an integral part of his design "team."

Pete (Paul B) Dye grew up in Urbana, Ohio, where his father built a nine-hole course on the family farm. Playing and working on the course from an early age, Pete quickly developed a love of golf and an understanding of the land.

Alice who was both his business and life partner, ever since they married in 1950, was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. They met on the driving range while attending Rollins College in Florida. Pete was captain of the men's team, she of the women's team. Both were excellent golfers. She won more than 50 amateur championships, was the first woman president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, the first woman to serve as an independent director of the PGA and a member of the 1970 U.S. Curtis Cup Team.

When I asked Pete how many staff he had he said, "If I had to fire anyone, I'd have to get a divorce. Alice is my only permanent staff. We work from home. We don't have an outside office."

It was Alice who set up the forward tees, critiqued her husband's work and had creative ideas of her own. She's the one who put the board wall up in front of the 13th green at Harbour Town; who added the formidable bunker in front of the green at the 17th at Whistling Straits; and convinced Pete to turn the 17th at TPC in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., into an island green, today one of golf's most iconic holes.

And Pete never worked from drawings. "I like to build. If I had to draw plans and give them to someone to build, I'd still be peddling life insurance," he said. If at times for bank purposes, drawings were necessary, Alice took care of those.

When they were building the Ocean Course, Alice suggested they raise the greens so you could see the water. "When Pete came to a large dune, he looked at it from all sides, then realizing it would make a perfect green, told the crew to lop off the top. It was built in a day."

There are a lot of adjectives you could apply to a Dye design: tough, innovative, controversial, diabolical, impossible, fun, thoughtful— more than one golfer has come off playing one of his tracks ready to kill him. But Alice described their courses as "Deceivingly difficult."

What you can expect is the unexpected. "When he became known for using rail ties to shore up banks and bunkers, other architects started doing the same thing, so he stopped using them. Pete hasn't used a sleeper (rail tie) in years," said Alice.

"Courses like Harbour Town may look scary from the tee, but when you get out there, it opens up. Pete tricks you. You get out there and you wonder why you thought it was so hard with such wide landing areas, but good players get into trouble especially with their drivers. Pete sets it up for this."

"We also want forward tee players to get off to a good start so they'll play the hole well. The worst place to put a problem is right in front of these tees. When we started out they didn't do a lot of watering then. All you had to do is drop the ball and the ball would run forever.

"Distance became a problem when they started watering. The grass grew faster and thicker, the fairways got softer and you didn't get nearly as much roll. The cost of maintenance went up too. Everything changed. So, courses started adding forward tees to make it easier for shorter hitters. In many cases these tees were tokens, not really thought out well."

"Everyone who builds a course these days, wants a strong ranking and slope. They think the harder it is, the more people will come. I was a lot better player when I played our earlier courses," she said.

As for par 3s, Alice said, "We think 90 yards is about right. We can put a lake or anything we want in front because we know they can carry that distance.

"On green approaches she said, "With our clay soils and watered fairways, bump and run doesn't work. But if you leave an opening, women can hit their wood up one side or the other. We try never to block the green all the way, but we try to give them a place to go.

"Look at the TPC (Sawgrass). It's a nice easy course for women, but difficult from the longer tees. It would be nice if we could get two tees for women but do you think I can get this? No." "But we found out if we lowered the middle tee, and raised the forward tee, women could get more distance. When you lower the tee, you take about 20 yards off the drive."

"What's a good length for women?" I asked. "Normally 4,800 yards is about right for women playing watered fairways," she said. "We don't do that because women look at the card and think that's too short. It's not. It's a mental block. They'll play 5,000 yards, but scoff at playing 4,800. I'd like to see less

water, firmer fairways.

"It's the same for men," added Alice. "While 5,800 yards is good for the gentleman player (i.e., whites), they want to play 6,000 or more yards. It's all about the zeros. If I had my way, I would never total the yardage on the card."

Even cart paths came under Alice's scrutiny. "Women prefer to have the cart on right hand side so when they bend over, their butt is not visible from the left. We try hard to set all this up in a good way."

Obviously proud of his wife, Pete said, "She's played with Snead, Byron Nelson, Patty Berg, Zaharias. And every Tuesday, she plays with three women who can't break 130. Then she goes out and looks at a course we're working on and asks, 'How in the world is Mary Smith going to play this course.'"

When asked what word he'd like to applied to their courses, he replied, "Playable." And what does Pete think about Dye designs? "All bad," he said with a wicked smile. ■

Katharine Dyson is a member of the Golf Writers of America and the Golf Travel Writers of America and writes a women's column in each issue of snegolfer.com



Pete & Alice Dye

Golf Tournaments- A Great Fund-Raising Source

Sammi Robertson remembers the day when she and her husband Doug learned that their son Bailey was severely autistic. It was 20 years ago this summer, in June of 2001, just before Bailey's second birthday. What would they do? Could they cope with Bailey's needs? They knew their family's path would change forever.

"We were numb," she says. A few weeks later, Sammi came across a brochure. It told of a fundraising walk for autism in Brighton, the first of its kind in New England. The brochure explained how badly funds were needed and how little the public at that time knew about autism. "I felt like it was meant to be that I found this brochure," she says, "and it all happened from there – raising funds and awareness."

Doug and Sammi Robertson formed a fundraising group, Bailey's Team for Autism, and began raising money. What really kicked the effort into overdrive, they say, was in 2004 when they organized a charity golf tournament. The first events were held Blackstone National in Sutton. In the years since, the tournament has also been played at Metacomet Country Club in East Providence and Crystal Lake Country Club in Burrillville, R.I.

Many of the same players participate each year while others have joined in to help the cause. The tournament, which has even had comedian Lenny Clarke serve as emcee, has been a sellout many years. "We had participated in a walkathon which kicked off our fundraising efforts, but we wanted to try to reach beyond the autism community and our own friends and family," said Sammi Robertson, who is the head of the organization. "The golf tournament enabled us to go beyond our already-established audience by attracting golfers from the general population, including Doug's professional work colleagues and their friends. Soon we were attracting patrons who we didn't know and with that came an opportunity to not only increase revenue, but it also allowed us to both spread the word about autism while seeking a whole new level of fundraising through corporate sponsorship, which is common for events such as golf tournaments.

"Our tournament has played an enormous role in our fundraising success, bringing in an average of \$30,000-plus net each year," she said. "This amount has accounted for anywhere from 30 to 50% of our annual net income, allowing us to fund more and more important research and programming."

In the 20 years that have passed since Bailey's Team was formed, the North Attleboro family has distributed more than \$1.2 million to organizations who fund research, education and programming in support of individuals with autism and their families. All of that has been accomplished by an operation basically run on the Robertsons' kitchen table.

"I think it probably would have been unimaginable" Sammi Robertson said when asked about crossing the seven-figure mark, "but having worked with such a generous community, I must say our patrons have stuck with us from the beginning and it soon became inevitable."



That \$1.2 million has gone to 27 organizations and programs, all vetted by what Sammi Robertson calls her "wonderful" board of directors. The donations have ranged from national associations such as The Autism Project and Autism Science Foundation to more regional groups such as the Hockomock Area YMCA's Integration Initiative.

In addition, Bailey's Team has launched an education series to teach the public about autism, a developmental disability that will be diagnosed in 1 in 68 children this year. The Robertsons' own journey with Bailey has been a challenge. This was especially true in the years just after Bailey's diagnosis when neither the boy nor his family had the skills to cope with his inability to communicate. "It was a time when he was very difficult to manage due to his challenging behaviors that we later learned were a result of his inability to communicate his feelings, his needs and his pain," Sammi said.

After receiving help from the schools and from the state, both Bailey, his parents and two siblings have managed to do far more than what they thought 20 years ago. Now, not only can he relate his needs, he can tell others what he likes to do – such as dance.

That uncertain path the Robertsons faced two decades ago has become a little less bumpy. "Bailey has made tremendous progress over the past 20 years," Sammi Robertson said. "In fact, we never thought we would be able to communicate with him, have him learn and understand feelings, nor did we think we would be able to truly understand him to make him happy. We learned early on that every step of the way takes so much work – but we never gave up." ■

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

The Man Who Invented The Orange Whip



Jim Hackenberg

It's called "The Orange Whip." And if you're into golf, you're familiar with the immensely popular training device. I'm one of the 600,000 golfers who have bought one.

Surprisingly, while watching the Massachusetts Open earlier this month at Oak Hill Country Club in Fitchburg, I met the man who invented The Orange Whip—Jim Hackenberg, who is also a terrific golfer and who fired an even-par 70 in the second round.

The Easley, South Carolina resident, who played at Arizona State on the same golf team as Phil Mickelson, has qualified for seven Mass. Open championships and owns a couple of course records. But, Hackenberg is more famous for his ingenious invention that is sold all over the world.

Designed to help develop a smooth, balanced golf swing, The Orange Whip has an ultra-flexible golf shaft with an orange ball, about the size of a baseball attached where a golf head would be. A counter-weighted golf ball

is on the grip end. The affable, 53-year-old Hackenberg agreed to a sporting conversation about golf and his unique training device which has proven more successful than he ever dreamed.

How does The Orange Whip develop a better golf swing?

The real important part of the golf swing, once you learn the basics, is finding the rhythm, the right tempo and the sequence of events. I was fortunate that I came up with a tool that would help a lot of people become better golfers and swing with rhythm.

Before golfers play a round, what's your recommendation for using The Orange Whip?

Before golfers hit range balls or even just after putting their golf shoes on is a good time, just to loosen up the body and help find the rhythm for the day and synchronize the motion. Also there are drills to use it on days when they don't play to help loosen up the back and work on creating an athletic swing.

You played golf on a high level in college. What was your post-college golf like?

I played on mini-tours for five or six years before I realized that I wasn't making enough cuts or enough money. So, I decided that I would just go out and try to work in some aspect of the golf industry.

How did you come upon the idea of creating the Orange Whip?

After I gave up trying to play golf for a living, I focused on becoming a golf teacher. I was teaching at Edgartown Golf Club on Martha's Vineyard. Then in January 2003, I caddied on the PGA Tour for Patrick Moore, and he was a very good player, the leading money-winner on the Nationwide Tour in 2002. He was going to be a star, but he had injuries. But while I was watching PGA Tour guys during Patrick's brief time out there, I used to see top players like Geoff Ogilvy and Ernie Els on the range and I saw this amazing rhythm, and I started asking myself why does it look so easy for them? They weren't that technical, they just had beautiful swings, so I started to see in my mind the golf club as a weighted ball on the

end of a chain with a handle. In order to swing that kind of club, you have to be in perfect rhythm to make that work and that became my whole philosophy. So, I started to experiment on making something.

How did the process of creating The Orange Whip develop?

I had a little workshop near the range at the Edgartown Club on Martha's Vineyard, and I started to make these things out of fiberglass fishing rods instead of a chain. I made a couple of them just for me to use in my lessons and everyone who used it started swinging better immediately. My students asked me if they could buy them, and a lightbulb went off. What if started to sell them? I made 30 by hand and then took it farther.

What was your initial investment?

I was lucky to meet some people who had very positive financial lives and four people gave me \$10,000 each and I chipped in my own 10 grand which was everything I had at the time. So I started with \$50,000, moved to South Carolina and built The Orange Whips out of a house I rented. Within 13 months I was able to pay all those guys back the money they gave me to start up. They weren't looking to be part of the business, they were just trying to help me out.

How have the sales progressed since you began?

I began selling The Orange Whip to the public in January 2008 and I sold 4,000 by the end of that year. Currently, we sell between 8,000 and 10,000 units a month. The full retail price is \$109 each. We manufacture them all in Easley, South Carolina and all the parts are from the United States and we're very proud of that. We've grown every year and it's been a great ride.

How did you decide on a name for your product?

I needed a ball on the end of the whip, and I knew it had to be a brightly colored ball. Well, while sitting at home one night watching "The Blues Brothers" movie there was this scene where John Candy points and orders orange whip drinks for a couple of police officers. I thought right away that name would be perfect to go along with the whipping motion of what I had created.

When you were a young golfer, what touring players did you admire?

I had two favorites—Seve Ballesteros and Tom Watson. And actually, Watson's golf swing is very much what The Orange Whip motion was for me. When he almost won and then lost the British Open at age 59, I think that was my most heartbreaking day in golf.

On today's PGA Tour, what's the visibility of The Orange Whip?

We have quite a few Tour Pros who use it, and we pay caddies \$50 a day if they carry The Orange Whip in their players' bags. Granted, they can't use it during the round, but it sticks out and you can really see it. We have between eight and 15 players carrying The Orange Whip every week on Tour, including Harris English who was right in the hunt at the U.S. Open. In three years of doing this program, we've had 16 wins on Tour with guys carrying The Orange Whip. ■

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

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Labritz Wins Mass Open-- Parajeckas at 71 Still Competes

He didn't make the cut at this year's Massachusetts Open last month, but Pleasant Valley Country Club's head professional Paul Parajeckas still made a big splash. The 71-year-old Parajeckas, the oldest golfer in the field, matched his age by carding a 1-over-par 71 in the second round. Remarkably, Parajeckas walked and carried his own bag at Oak Hill.

Although he didn't make the cut for the final round, his score was lower than many of his younger competitors including the youngest—15-year-old Patrick Ginnity, who shot 81-77.

Like Phil Mickelson at the recent PGA championship, the youthful-looking Parajeckas has inspired older golfers before. He won the NEPGA Sectional Championship at the age of 59 and won the NEPGA Senior Sectional Championship 10 years later when he was 69.

"I've shot my age many times, but not too often in competition, and I haven't really played a lot this year," said Parajeckas, who, before teeing it up in the Mass Open, had not played in a tournament since March.

"My advice is to never give up. I just grinded out there today," said Parajeckas, who admitted that the long par 4 holes at Oak Hill were a real challenge for him. "These young guys, how far they hit it just amazes me. I had to use hybrids for my second shots on the par 4's a lot, but I putted very well overall and the pin placements were in tough spots, so you had to be careful."

About shouldering his own bag, Parajeckas said, "I was going to get a caddy, but they didn't have caddies

here, and my bag is light, so I didn't mind walking the 36 holes. And to be totally honest, when I was driving up here Monday, I was thinking that if there was a young man who had never played in a Mass. Open and he was waiting around as an alternate, I would have given him my spot."

Rob Labritz, a PGA Professional from Pound Ridge, New York, was the overall winner, firing a final round 1-under-par 69 and finishing the 54 hole tournament in 5-under-par for a 205 total and the \$15,000 first-place prize.

"I'm an emotional guy and I work my tail off at the game," said Labritz when it was over. "I'm a director of golf, I work a lot. I practice a lot and my family sacrifices are immense. It seems like they are the ones that take the brunt of the sacrifices all so I can do this. Anytime this happens, it's pretty emotional. It means the world to me to come out here and

compete against the best qualifiers, winners and champions. To have my son (Matthias) out here with me as a caddy, it's beyond words."

Labritz tied 1965 winner Jim Browning as the only other person to win the Mass. Open at age 50. David Spitz of George Wright GC tied for second at 4-under-par 206 and was the low amateur. Also tied for runner-up were Jason Thresher (West Suffield, CT), David Pastore (Stamford, CT), Shawn Warren (Falmouth ME) and Max Theodorakis (Danbury CT). Said Spitz, "It will be nice to take home a trophy at least, a consolation prize. It's always an honor to be a low amateur. There's a lot of good amateurs here, so to be able to be on top of that, it's special. It's great." The top 20 players and ties are exempt into the 2022 Mass. Open which will be held June 8-10 next year at Longmeadow CC. ■



Paul Parajeckas

Thorbjornsen Captures 113th Massachusetts Amateur With Historic Performance In Final Match

WEST NEWTON, M.A. -- In one of the most stellar performances in the history of the Massachusetts Amateur Championship, Wellesley's Michael Thorbjornsen defeated Brockton's Matt Parziale, 8&6, in the 36-hole final match Saturday at Brae Burn Country Club (par-72, 6,770-yards).

Thorbjornsen, a 19-year-old rising sophomore at Stanford University, is the first player under the age of 20 to win the Mass Amateur since Jim Salinetti captured the title in 1997. Parziale, 34, won the Mass Amateur in 2017 and made his first final appearance in 2008.

According to research from the United States Golf Association (USGA), Saturday was the first time two past USGA champions were competing in a state amateur final. Thorbjornsen (Wellesley Country Club) won the 2018 U.S. Junior Amateur, and Parziale won the 2017 U.S. Mid-Amateur. Both players competed in the 2019 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach.

Match Summary: Thorbjornsen opened up a giant lead early by making birdie on 12 of the first 16 holes, including his first five of the match, to finish with 6-up through the first 18 holes. Though Parziale, shot 5-under-par through the first 18, Thorbjornsen held a commanding lead at the break. Thorbjornsen made birdie on the first hole to make it 8-up, and though Parziale made birdie to win holes 6 and 9, Thorbjornsen took a 7-up lead to the par-3 12th hole, and though Parziale hit the flag, he missed the birdie putt and conceded the match. ■



Photo Credit: Allyson Mollining

Michael Thorbjornsen

Inaugural AmateurGolf.com Myrtle Beach Challenge to be Played September 9-11

**54-Hole Event Will Attract
High Level Amateur Golfers**

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. -- The Golf Tourism Solutions tournament division will be hosting the first annual AmateurGolf.com Myrtle Beach Challenge September 9-11 at Prestwick Country Club in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The 54-hole, stroke play event, which will cater to high level amateurs, will have men's and women's divisions, with an emphasis on collegiate players and recent graduates looking to keep their game sharp. Men and women will each have an open division and a mid-am flight for players 25 and older. All players must be at least 15 years old and have a handicap index of 5.0 or below. Entry into the tournament is \$275 and the field will be capped at 120 players.

"We look forward to hosting the AmateurGolf.com Myrtle Beach Challenge, providing players an opportunity to test themselves against a highly competitive field on an outstanding golf course," said Scott Tomasello, tournament director for Golf Tourism Solutions. "Myrtle Beach, which enjoys nonstop flight service from more than 50 markets and is easily accessible as a drive destination, is the ideal home for the tournament and will certainly enhance the event's appeal."

A Pete and P.B. Dye design, Prestwick Country Club is one of the Myrtle Beach area's most underrated layouts. Prestwick plays 7,086 (74.6/140) yards from tips and was built to challenge elite players. Prestwick is home to the railroad ties, pot bunker and rolling greens so often associated with the Dye name, and the layout will certainly identify the best player in the field.

"We've been helping Golf Tournament Solutions market the World Amateur for many years," said AmateurGolf.com founder Pete Wlodkowski. "After helping them establish strong scratch divisions in that event, I'm excited to partner with them on an event solely focused on collegiate and mid-am players."

The AmateurGolf.com Myrtle Beach Challenge is one of 11 events the GTS tournament division runs, including the World Amateur Handicap Championship and the Veterans Golf Classic. For more information on the AmateurGolf.com Myrtle Beach Challenge, visit <https://www.playgolomyrtlebeach.com/amateurgolf-com-myrtle-beach-challenge>. ■

As the golf season heats up-between the record rainfall amounts- here is a smattering of recent ongoing in the Western Massachusetts golf world.

Legendary teacher returns for summer: Northampton native and long-time PGA teaching professional Tom Toski has made his trek back up from Florida recently, as he celebrated his 96th birthday on July 3. Toski will be back at the Western Mass. Golf Center in Hadley this summer.

During his teaching career, Toski was voted one of the Top 50 Golf Instructors, is a WMass Tee Party honoree and is a member of the Western Mass Golf Hall of Fame. He is one of four Toski brothers of Haydenville, and older brother to Bob, a five-time PGA Tour event winner and World Golf Teacher Hall inductee. "We didn't know much about the swing when we started. Now I look at the players on tv and they have every part down to a science, and they are making some pretty good money," Toski said.

Southampton resident makes U.S. Senior Open field: On June 9, Southampton native Jim Patterson, a member at The Orchards Golf Club in South Hadley, shot a 2-under-par 68 at the U.S. Senior Open qualifier at Thorny Lea Golf Club in Brockton, earning medalist honors and a spot in the 2021 U.S. Senior Open. The excitement was apparent in Patterson's voice during a phone interview before traveling to Omaha, Nebraska.

"This is the pinnacle for me and I am loving the opportunity. I am super excited," Patterson said. "To be teeing it up with guys I watch on television like Fred Couples and Tom Lehman, I am looking forward to learning from and seeing how they work on the course."

The 41st U.S. Senior Open was conducted at Omaha Country Club in Omaha, Nebraska from July 8-11. Patterson -who missed the cut - was one of 156 competitors in the field. There were 2,999 entries to this event, the third highest in championship history.

Patterson, 53 and an amateur, credited lessons with his former golf instructor Tom Sullivan as instrumental to his recent success on the course. Sullivan died last fall after being caught in a thunderstorm at Wyantenuck Country Club.

"My last lesson with Tom was last fall. I was playing to protect my score and Tom told me to think more about the process, not the score, about getting off the tee, then to the fairway...That was my mindset playing at Thorny Lea (qualifier site)," Patterson said. "The confidence he instilled made you feel like you had everything to go play."

Springfield native Vinny Del Negro beats John Smoltz: In a sudden death playoff in the American Century

Championship celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe on Sunday. It was the fourth playoff in ACC history.

In addition to playoff nerves, Del Negro was dealing with the emotions of his father recently passing as well.

"Everyone was saying, 'Why are you walking so fast in the fairway?'" And I like to walk fast anyway. But I wanted to walk fast because I was just talking to my dad. I just wanted to make him proud, Del Negro said in a post tournament interview. "I didn't really want anybody to know. I spent the last week with my dad before I got here. It was a special time. He's been struggling. And then I found out Wednesday morning. I just wanted to represent him well, my family, and my wife. And just kept walking and talking and kind of focused in on each shot."

Del Negro won \$125,000 for his win. "I don't even care about that. I just care about my dad. I care about celebrating with my wife, my buddies and representing American Century, NBC and the tournament the right way. I've been doing it a long time here. It's been incredible," Del Negro said. "To be the first basketball guy to me is special. But at the end of the day, it's about the memories. We're all going to pass sometime, but you've got the memories, you know what I'm saying?"

Del Negro, who played and coached in the NBA, said he drew on his basketball experience to get through the tournament. He considered withdrawing and going back to Boston, but said his father would have wanted him to stay and compete.

Del Negro played for Jim Valvano at North Carolina State University. As a senior, he was selected to the All-Atlantic Coast Conference team after averaging 15.9 points, 3.6 assists and 4.9 rebounds per game. In his junior season, Del Negro led the Wolfpack to the 1987 ACC Tournament championship and was named tournament MVP before going on to playing in the NBA.

Local Junior Ryan Downes, of Longmeadow, Mass. continues his excellent season: At the AJGA Junior Golf Hub Jr. All Star tourney in Pennsylvania, July 6-8, Downes placed 4th with a 69-63-77 showing. The 63 is a personal best and the tournament low record. At the Connecticut Jr PGA Championship, June 29-30 at Keney Park GC, he placed 2nd with a 67-70 finish.

Downes fired a 71 at a U.S. Junior Amateur qualifier on June 28th to earn 1st alternate status for the USGA championship to be played at the Country Club of North Carolina July 19-24. Downes, 15, was the youngest player at the Mass Amateur Championship at Brae Burn Country Club as well as in the upcoming Francis Ouimet Memorial in July. ■

Chris Miracle writes a Western Mass Notebook in each issue of snegolfer.com

Husband and Wife Each Get Hole in Ones Within Three Weeks



Lauren Andrews



Darrel Andrews

Darrel Andrews was thrilled when he carded the first hole-in-one of his life this spring at The Haven Country Club in Boylston. He was even more exuberant when he witnessed his wife, Lauren, record her first career ace just three and a half weeks later.

On May 22, Darrel used a 6 iron to ace the par-3 17th hole from 178 yards. His son-in-law, Ryan Walker, witnessed. On June 16, Lauren played with her husband and she also used a 6 iron to ace the par-3 third hole from 127 yards. Darrel and Lauren are 56-year-old grandparents who live in Hudson.

"I'm more excited about her hole in one," Darrel said. "She's only been golfing for three years and she threatens to quit on me." "At least once a week," Lauren interjected.

Lauren described the two aces as "really cool," but admitted she's been taking a lot of grief from people who say she's so competitive she couldn't let her husband enjoy his glory by himself. Neither Darrel nor Lauren had ever witnessed a hole-in-one before and neither saw his or her own ball enter the cup.

The 17th green sits atop a steep hill and isn't visible from the tee. Darrel saw his Callaway Supersoft ball bounce off a hill to the left of the green and kick toward the back-center pin, but he didn't see the ball roll into the hole. Expecting to have to chip on, Darrel took his 60-degree wedge and putter to the green. Walker looked in the cup and shouted in excitement, "Oh my God, it's in the hole."

Asked if they jumped up and down, high fived or screamed, Darrell answered, "All of the above. It was the strangest feeling. I was beside myself." Darrell said he was so excited, he forgot to put away his ball for safekeeping and used it on the 18th hole. At the end of his round, he gave it to head pro Hal Jacobs, who has plaques made with the golf balls for each ace.

Darrel, a finance director at Raytheon Technologies, doesn't keep a handicap, but he said he breaks 90 on a good day. He shot a 96 the day he carded his hole-in-one.

Darrel took up golf again about five years ago and has played for 15 years or so in all. This is only Lauren's third year and she still considers

herself to be a beginner. Lauren, a project manager at Hewlett-Packard, said she had a "horrible week" when she was scheduled to play with her husband on the night of June 16.

"I was so stressed out, I didn't even want to go," she said. "We went to the practice range, I couldn't even hit the ball. It was like I had never even played before. I really said to Darrel, 'Let's just go home.'"

Darrel convinced her to stay and after struggling on the first two holes, she hit a 6 iron on the third tee. She thought her shot was headed into the front right bunker. "So I turned around and started getting my sand wedge ready," she said. "Darrel said, 'That's going in.' I said, 'Yeah, in the bunker.'"

No, it went in the cup and golfers on the nearby fifth green and fourth tee jumped for joy when they heard Darrel get excited. "I thought they were all confused," Lauren said.

Darrel said he became so excited, he's not even sure if he played his own ball on that hole. He thinks he just picked up and began texting relatives with the news.

Darrel tried to record Lauren as she walked to the green, but he was so exuberant he got his finger in the way of his cell phone camera. He did record her taking her Srixon Ladies ball out of the cup, however. The couple hugged.

"I think I started laughing because I couldn't believe it," she said. "Then I had all these guys telling me I had to buy them drinks." Neither ace proved costly. Very few people were in the clubhouse after both so they hardly had to pay for any drinks at all.

Lauren doesn't usually keep score, but she figures she shot a 52 for nine holes that day.

Jacobs is in his ninth season as head pro at The Haven and he's been a PGA professional for 16 years. He said he's never heard of a husband and wife making holes in one in such a short period of time. "I think it's awesome," he said. "For Lauren, she's a relatively new golfer. So to be able to share the experience is great." ■

Bill Doyle, the retired writer for the Worcester Telegram and Gazette writes a column in each issue of snegolfer.com.

Power Fades Continues to Blossom

By Bruce Vittner

In the June issue we talked about a new website introduced by former Boston Globe golf writer Jim McCabe. It is called Power Fades and it continues to offer excellent stories about golf in our area. After leaving the Globe McCabe went to work for the PGA Tour as a writer and has done other things in golf.

McCabe's insights and knowledge of golf makes for excellent reading. I look forward to it every week and am never disappointed. The column comes out each Wednesday and it is free to subscribe at www.powerfades.com. ■

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Tee it High, Let 'er Fly in the High Sierras

Golf in Reno-Tahoe More Affordable (and a Lot Cooler) than in Las Vegas



Incline Village's 16th Hole

Now that the world of golf travel is opening up again, consider making a beeline to the High Sierras and Lake Tahoe. With a couple dozen golf courses – from high-end resorts like the Edgewood-Tahoe Golf Resort to unpretentious munis like the Lake Tahoe Golf Course – Reno-Tahoe has choices for any budget.

Most importantly, while both the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe and Las Vegas feature

gaming and casino hotels, Reno-Tahoe will go far easier on your wallet than Vegas. And a bonus: Tahoe's summer and early-fall climate is far more welcoming than Sin City's. The high at Lake Tahoe in late June, for example, was 77 while on the same day Sin City sweltered through 102.

First, some geography: Lake Tahoe, the second-deepest lake in the United States, lies smack-dab on the California-Nevada border

about 85 miles northeast of Sacramento and about 335 miles northwest of Las Vegas. On the south end is South Lake Tahoe, California, Next door is Stateline, Nevada.

Toward the lake's north end is Tahoe City, California, and Incline Village, Nevada. A bit north of the lake itself is the ski town of Truckee, California, which features several quality mountain courses.

Your starting point likely will be the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, a gem of an airport 21 miles as the crow flies, northeast of the lake. The airport is served by all the major carriers. (From Providence or Boston, you'll likely connect through Chicago, Denver, Houston, Dallas or Phoenix.)

The rental cars are handily located across from the baggage claim and access to any shore of the lake is easy from I-580, which runs right by the airport. OK. Now that you're oriented, let's talk about the golf. Maybe the easiest way to do this is by price, starting with the most expensive:

Edgewood-Tahoe Golf Resort in Stateline, Nevada,

home of the televised American Century Championship celebrity golf event, was designed by George Fazio in 1968 and later renovated by his nephew, Tom. The parkland-style course is mere steps from the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe and three holes – Nos. 16, 17 and 18, have lake frontage. Pristine is the best word for the conditioning of its undulating, tree-lined fairways. Edgewood-Tahoe costs \$190-\$320, depending on the season.

Coyote Moon Golf Course near Truckee is a wonderful mountain course through Ponderosa Pines 6,200 feet above sea level, where your ball will fly about 15 percent farther than at home. Despite the mountainous terrain, the golf course varies in elevation by only about 145 feet across its 18 holes. It was designed by Brad Bell and opened in 2000. Coyote Moon costs \$135-\$185 depending on the season.

The Golf Courses at Incline Village are an interesting pair. The par-72 Championship Course, designed by Robert Trent Jones in 1964, is cut dramatically through a pine forest and lined with luxury homes. It's close enough to Lake Tahoe to offer lake vistas through the trees on several holes. The much shorter par-58 Mountain Course, designed in 1969 by Jones's son, Robert

Trent Jones Jr., is a dizzyingly up-and-down affair over the same terrain, just squeezed into a much tighter space. Rates for the Championship Course are \$140-\$199, depending on the season. The Mountain Course costs \$55-\$75.

The Tahoe Donner Golf Course in Truckee, which opened in 1975, is a mountain course that meanders through a pine forest 6,400 to 6,600 feet above sea level. Tahoe-Donner is quite narrow and plenty of towering Ponderosa pines come into play off the tee. That's code for telling you that just hitting the fairway won't always give you a clear shot into the green. The par-4 No. 1, billed as "arguably the toughest opening hole in the High Sierras," plays 328 to 452 yards, all of it uphill. It costs \$130-\$180.

The William Bell-designed Lake Tahoe Golf Course in South Lake Tahoe is a flat and easily walkable layout through a tranquil mountain meadow just a few miles south of the lake. This Audubon-certified muni plays 5,703 to 6,741 yards but it's harder than the back-tee's 71.3/129 rating/slope would indicate. Still, its generous fairways and wide swaths of mostly tree-less rough give a directionally-challenged player a fair chance at recovery. Rates are \$79-\$99.

Genoa Lakes, in the town of Genoa, Nevada, south of Carson City, has two golf courses, the Lakes Course and the Ranch Course. Set in the Carson River Valley, the Lakes, the more challenging of the two, was co-designed by PGA Tour pro Peter Jacobsen and John Harbottle III. It's mostly flat, but its defenses lie in some forced carries and a few blind tees shots, and water comes into play on 14 holes. The Lakes Course costs \$75-\$125 depending on the season. ■

Trip-planning resources:

Reno:

www.visitrenotahoe.com

North Lake Tahoe:

www.gotahoenorth.com

South Lake Tahoe:

www.tahoesouth.com

Carson Valley:

www.visitcarsonvalley.org

Dan Vukelich, a member of the Golf Writers Association of America and the Golf Travel Writers of America, lives in Albuquerque. He edits newmexicogolfnews.com and is the online editor of alabamagolfnews.com.

Great Golf and Deals in Maine

POLAND SPRING, Maine - How would you like to make one phone call to book two nights at a hotel and rounds at three different golf courses? Does it sound too simple? It's not. You can stay at the Poland Spring Resort in Poland Spring, Maine, and play The Links at Poland Spring, Spring Meadows Golf Club in Gray and Fox Ridge Golf Club in Auburn. It's called the Maine Trifecta.

The three courses are located within about 20 minutes of each other. Visit polandspringresort.com and click on golf packages or rates for more details, but to book the trifecta, you must call the resort at 207-998-4351.

The cost for two people for two nights at the resort, three rounds of golf with carts and a bucket of range balls at each course ranges from \$567 weekdays at the Presidential Inn to \$663 weekends at the Maine Inn with a mountain view. Two buffet breakfasts and two buffet dinners are not included at this time because of staffing shortages due to the pandemic.

The trifecta took a hit last year because of the pandemic, but the courses expect it to be popular again this year. Each course provides a different experience.

Poland Spring is all about nostalgia and history. "This started as a stagecoach stop," owner Cyndi Robbins said. "If you're looking for glitz, you're not going to find that here. You're going to find a relaxing vacation. That's why at the entrance it says, 'Stress Free Zone.'"

Since 1794, people have visited the resort because of the believed therapeutic powers of the Poland Spring water. The resort is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites.

In 1896, Poland Spring opened the first resort golf course in the U.S. Famed architect Donald Ross redesigned the original nine holes and designed another nine from 1912-1915. A Ross expert restored the course about 15 years ago.

The Links at Poland Spring has generous fairways and little trouble in front of the greens

so you can run your approach shots up onto them. The course plays to a par 71 from 5,002 yards from the front tees to 6,156 from the back. It's exactly what resort golf should be - a fun, enjoyable experience. Last year, the club hosted 20,000 rounds.

Robbins started at the resort in May of 1971 as a waitress, so this is her 50th year on site. Four years later, fire destroyed the 360-room Poland Spring House. Her late husband, Mel Robbins, bought the resort in 1982.

In addition to golf, the resort offers three grass tennis courts, an Olympic sized swimming pool, mini-golf, disc golf, shuffleboard, bocce, horseshoes, hiking trails and other outdoor activities. Guests can read one of the 10,000 books in the resort's library while relaxing on an Adirondack chair on the Maine Inn's front porch which overlooks the golf course.

The Poland Spring Bottling Museum and the Maine State Building, including the Maine Golf Hall of Fame, are located behind the Maine Inn. A Poland Spring bottling plant is also located nearby. The resort is a six-minute drive from the Oxford Casino.

Babe Ruth, Walter Hagen, President Theodore Roosevelt, President William Howard Taft and President Warren Harding all golfed at Poland Spring. Sonny Liston trained at the resort in 1965 before Muhammad Ali knocked him out in the first round in nearby Lewiston to retain his heavyweight championship.

The four Pollard brothers opened nine holes at Spring Meadows on their former dairy farm in October of 1999 and the course expanded to 18 holes in 2001. A 1922 barn was converted into a clubhouse. The course plays to a par 71 from 3,617 to 6,660 yards. Forced carries over water and wetlands provide a challenge.

"It's got some very unique holes," owner-operator David Pollard said. "It's got a lot of doglegs, left and right. It's a thinking person's course. You just can't get out the driver and hit away. You've got to think about what you want to do. There are some berms and wetland areas."

When people tell Pollard that they hope to shoot a low score, his response is always the same. "We don't sell the score here, we sell the experience," he said.

Last, Spring Meadows hosted 28,000 rounds,

the most since the club opened. Two years ago, rock star Alice Cooper played the course and then left third-row tickets and backstage passes for his concert in nearby Westbrook for head pro Ben Morey.

Last December, Spring Meadows became the first Maine golf course to be named New England Golf Course of the Year by the New England Golf Course Owners Association.

Fox Ridge opened in 2001 and plays to a par of 72 from 2,115 yards to 6,814 over 200 acres of rolling hills, native fescue, babbling brooks, century old stone walls and stone bridges. "I think it plays tougher than the other two, for sure," Fox Ridge head golf pro Jerry DiPhilippo said. "We usually get a lot of wind here, so it definitely plays a little tougher."

To make Fox Ridge friendlier for the higher handicappers, trees have been removed, fescue has been cut back and fairways have been widened. DiPhilippo said Fox Ridge hosted 23,000 rounds last year, the most in his five years at the club, and is on pace to surpass that this season.

The signature, par-3 fifth hole plays downhill onto a peninsula green surrounded by a pond. The par-5 ninth and par-4 18th also play over water. Three divers retrieved 16,200 golf balls from the ponds this spring. They said they didn't get all of them and that they'd probably return in August. The club sells some of the retrieved balls in the pro shop, 12 lower end balls for \$10 and Titleist Pro Vs for \$2 each, and uses the rest for the driving range.

The day we played, a member of the grounds crew was watering while barefooted. He told us that his bare feet told him if the grass was hot and if it was, it needed water.

The day before we played, Fox Ridge hosted a Maine Amateur qualifier, and no one beat par. We didn't either. For more information, visit polandspringresort.com, springmeadowsgolf.com or foxridgegolfclub.com. ■

Bill Doyle is the long-time sports writer for the Worcester Telegram and writes a column in each issue of snelgolfer.com.



Cyndi Robbins

An Interview With Pete Weatherby

Pete Weatherby, the newly minted Head PGA Golf Professional at Manchester Country Club in Manchester VT, grew up around the game of golf in Rhode Island and started at a young age. Now in his first season as a head pro, Weatherby is applying many of the ideals and experiences he learned on Aquidneck Island to his new role.

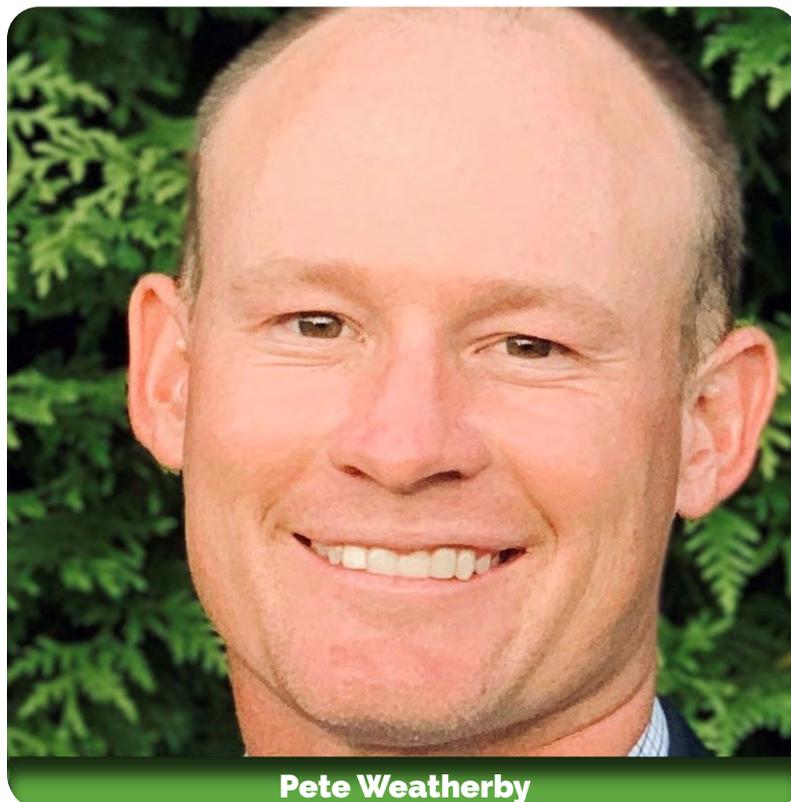
Pete has been involved in golf instruction and all facets of golf operations over the past decade. His accomplished playing career includes first place finishes at the Vermont Sectional Championship in 2019, The Mountain Lake Challenge in Lake Wales, Florida in 2017, the NEPGA Stroke Play at Montcalm Golf Club in 2018 and NEPGA Stroke Play at Turner Hill Golf Club in 2016. He was also runner up in the 2019 National Rental Car PGA Assistant Championship, finished fourth in the Rhode Island Open in 2019 and had a top ten finish in the 2018 New England Open Championship.

What are your ties to Rhode Island?

I grew up in Portsmouth where I learned the game of golf. My parents (Gregg and Jane), sister and brother-in-law (Brittany and Matt) and lots of great friends still live on Aquidneck Island today. I attended Elmhurst Elementary School, Portsmouth Middle School and Portsmouth High School.

Share a bit about your golf experiences in Rhode Island?

So much of my golf career can be attributed to my experiences in Rhode Island. As a young golfer I played anywhere and everywhere I could on Aquidneck Island. My grandmother and parents would take me to the driving range when I was around five years old. I ended up joining a great course named Green Valley Country Club in Portsmouth at a very young age. I landed



Pete Weatherby

there because the golf pros (brothers) Gary and Mike Dorsi were always so helpful and friendly to me and encouraged me to play, practice and compete. It was affordable, close to my home, and full of fun people, so I was there a lot. My friends and I all went to the summer golf camps at GVCC, which were terrific. I also caddied at Newport Country Club and The Aquidneck Club for nine summers for the golf privileges and a little spending money.

You mentioned parents and grandparents put clubs in your hands...are they still in Rhode Island and golfing?

My family is still in Rhode Island. They were always very supportive of my love for the game. My Grandmother, Judy Collins, was also a major influence for me getting the golf bug when I was so young. She would take me to the driving range and tell me to hit it as far as I could. Here is the cool part, she would also make sure I swung in balance and kept a good grip (grandma with a golf game!). My grandma and I are still best buddies to this day, golf was an

amazing gift she shared with me.

Any influencers in golf, the PGA or at clubs you've played that have impacted you?

I have spent time on many different courses and have on various occasions been in the company of Brad Faxon, as well as Brett and Dana Quigley. They have always been inspirational golfers to me so being out there with them throughout my adult career has been very special.

A PGA Pro named Mike Mitchell who was at the Aquidneck Club was a very influential person to me. His son Eric and I became close friends back in high school because we both loved golf. Mike is a great example of a golf pro who works hard but always made time for his family. We have all remained close to this day, Mike and Eric (my best man) even made the trip to me and my wife Grace's wedding in the Bahamas.

How often do you get back to visit the family and play in RI tournaments?

I try to get back to play in the Rhode Island Open every few years. It is a great event with an extremely strong field from all over the U.S. My wife and I will usually stay at my parent's house during the tournament and I'm lucky to have a lot of old friends from home who have caddied for me in the tournament. Two years ago, it was at Green Valley CC where I grew up playing. This was easily the most nostalgic experience I've had on a golf course. I had lots of friends, family and members of the course come out to follow my rounds and support me. I ended up fifth that year which I am proud of considering it is essentially the same field from the New England Open. It is back at Green Valley this year and I plan on winning it for the home team with my buddy Dan Desmond on my bag.

What programs and experiences are you bringing to Manchester in your new role that you learned from your Rhode Island playing days and

formative years?

Manchester CC OF Vermont is one of southern Vermont's premier golf courses and family friendly clubs. This year we introduced a new Premier Junior Golf Program that combines professional training, instruction, and competitive play. I wanted to gear it toward middle school, high school and college prep players and ensure top notch instruction. My goal is to provide these players with the ability to transfer learned skills into competitive play situations through weekly clinics and regular (monthly) tournaments. We provide small group and individual coaching so players can learn fundamentals of the rules, scoring, and etiquette of competitive golf as well as skills practice and the ability to compete at the next level. What is so important is this junior program adds a family dimension to the MCC golf experience. We are all about introducing a fun, welcoming and organized experience where the students can identify their own goals and take their game to the next level.

What is your teaching philosophy?

I look at every player I work with as a unique 'swing riddle'. There is always a simple swing solution that can be found using slow motion video and trackman. The part that I think is the most important in this process is to find the root of the player's ball flight woes without overwhelming them with unnecessary information. My advice to young teaching pros just starting out would be to avoid thinking out loud as you work through a lesson. Find something simple in the player's setup that can change their dynamic swing for the better. It really is amazing how much changes in grip, stance, and alignment can determine the efficiency of a person's golf swing. ■

Lynn Luczkowski owns L2 Communications, is a member of the Golf Travel Writers of America and writes an occasional story for snegolfer.com.

Tour Edge Introducing New Clubs

Tour Edge, the highly-rated golf club manufacturer whose factory is located just outside of Chicago is making a new limited-edition small batch of their Exotics Pro 721 Series to the public. Only 1000 of each will be made available to the end consumer in this special small batch "Straight from the Tour Van" series.

The series consists of a "straight from the tour van" ultra-low spin and player shaped driver, fairway wood and hybrid that will be available at selected retail locations and online on August 13.

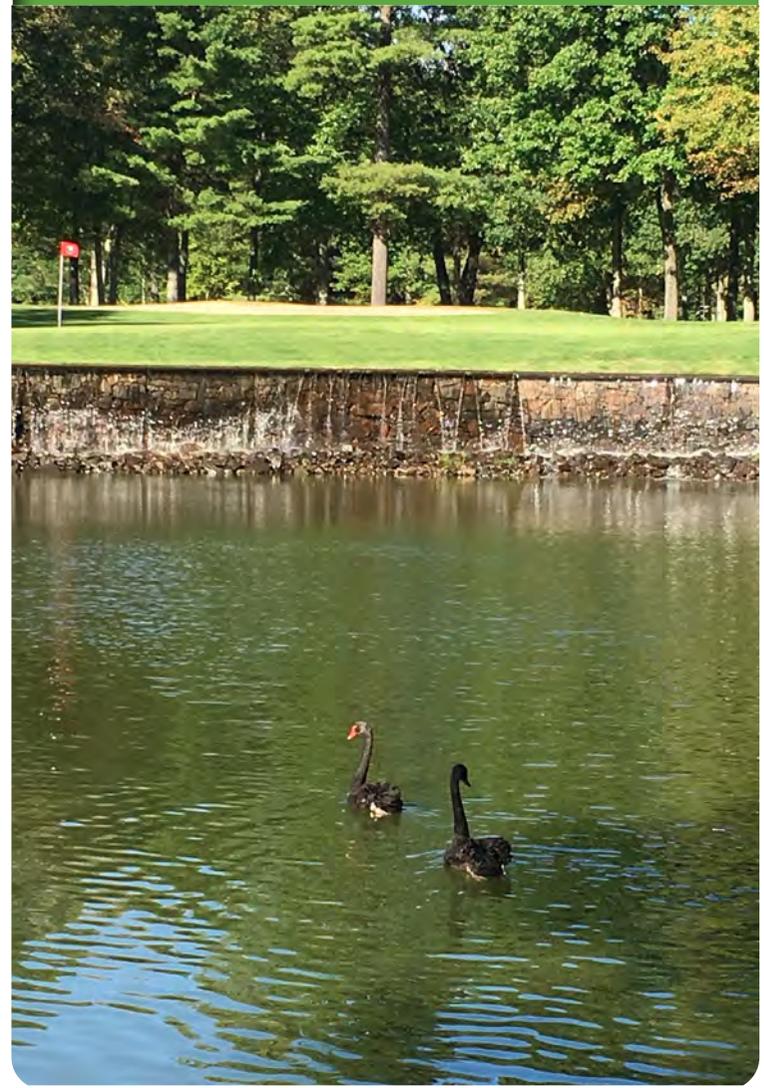
The more forward Center of Gravity Pro 721 metals were designed for the players with faster clubhead speed to produce low-spinning, penetrating shots. The all-new designs feature more compact heads and with deeper faces that sit open at address for the driver/fairway and perfectly square at address for the hybrid.

The tour-inspired metalwoods showcase the extremely popular and highly effective Ridgeback support system in a new matte finish on the driver and fairway metals, while the hybrid features a matte finish stainless steel crown.

Diamond Face 2.0 technology is utilized on all three of the metals. The Pro 721 metals were designed with the feedback from the 120 PGA Tour professionals who have played Tour Edge over the past few seasons, including over 25 players choosing to play Exotics drivers in tournament play. ■



NAME THAT HOLE

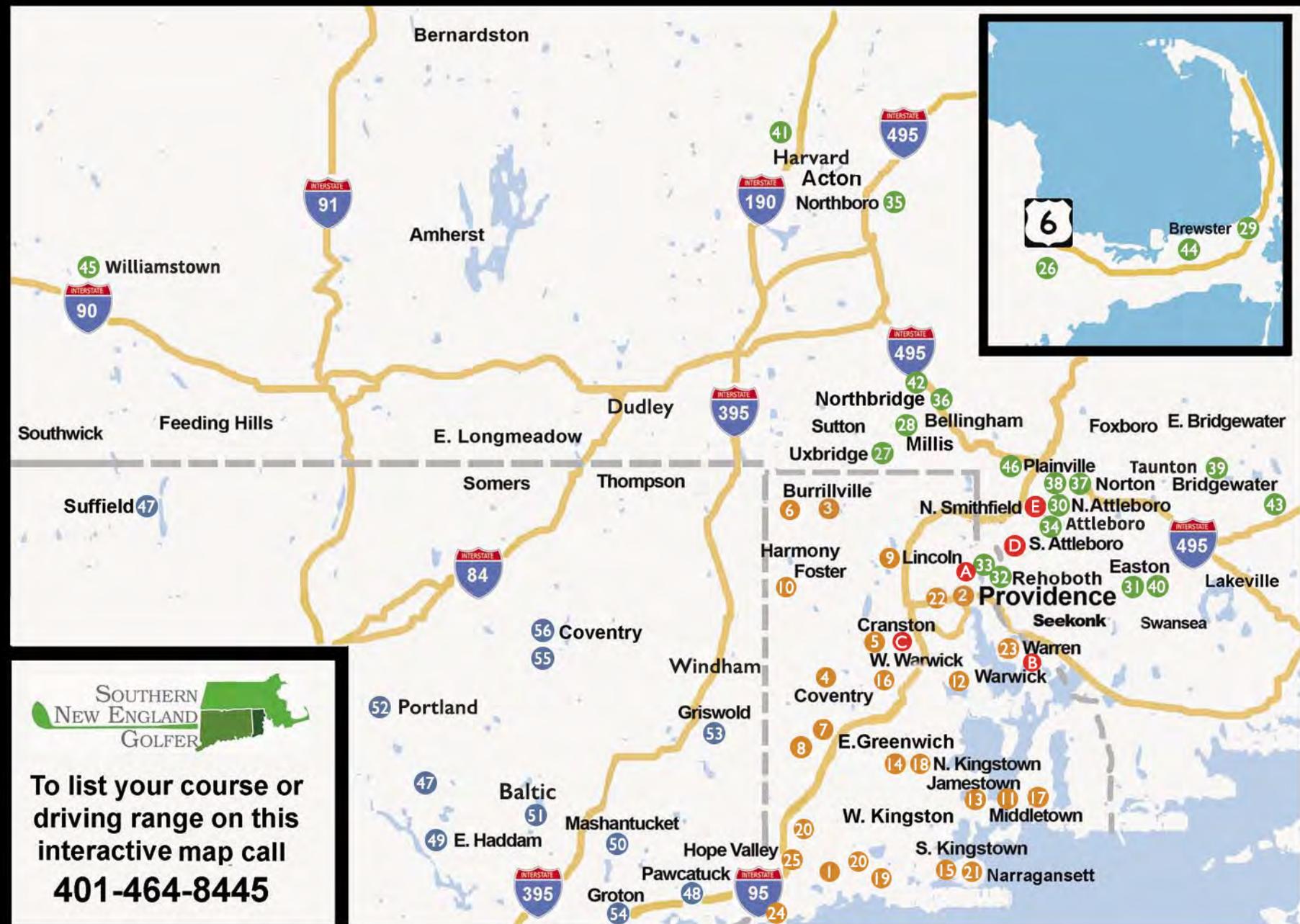


Lucien Garand was the winner of last issue's Name that Hole. It was the **5th at Mt Washington GC in New Hampshire.**

Lucien please contact Bruce Vittner to claim your prize as we could not connect to your correct email address.

A few people had the correct course but the wrong hole.

Entries for this issue's Name That Hole are to be sent via E-Mail at bruce@snegolfer.com.



To list your course or driving range on this interactive map call **401-464-8445**

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