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# **GOLF PENNSYLVANIA**

# **GOLF NORTHEAST**

Vol. XXXII No. 15

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**North Carolina Golf Course Reviews**

**Alabama Gulf Coast Courses**

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**PHILLY PGA, PA GOLF ASSOCIATION, AGA & GAP RESULTS**



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## SHOP RITE CLASSIC RETURNING TO SEAVIEW RESORT IN SOUTH JERSEY

By MIKE KERN

The biggest sporting event on the South Jersey calendar will be returning to Seaview Resort in Galloway from June 7-9.

It's the LPGA's ShopRite Classic, which is once again behind held on the famed Donald Ross Bay Course. The defending champion is South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai, who a year ago closed with a pair of 6-under par 65s to post a one-shot victory over Hyo Joo Kim.



Ashley Buhai Holds ShopRite Trophy

Buhai started the final round three strokes off the lead. But she hit all 14 fairways, and 16 of 18 greens in regulation, and played the front nine in 32. She added two more birdies on the back side, including one at the par-5 18th. Kim then nearly chipped in there for an eagle that would have forced a playoff.

It was Buhai's second win on the LPGA Tour, to go with the 2022 British Open title at Muirfield, but also her fourth victory worldwide in a year. She became the second player from her country to win multiple LPGA events, joining Sally Little, who had 11. But this was her first win in the United States, which she had set as one of her goals.

"I'm on the older side of the tour nowadays, one of the veterans," she said afterward. "When I put (it) all together, I know that I can compete and have a chance to win."

She hasn't won since then. But that's also part of life in professional golf.

"Every time you tee it up, it gives you a little bit more experience and confidence," Buhai said at a recent media day. "You never know what you can do. It only takes one week to change your life out here

"Obviously, the (British) was kind of my big breakthrough. But winning the ShopRite was almost the monkey off my back. So that

was a huge accomplishment for me.

"I've had really good results in the past at ShopRite. Seaview is a course I've always felt comfortable playing. It has kind of that linksy feel. The wind picks up. It's on the water there. You have to be creative. I always have good feelings when I go back. Looking forward to this year obviously trying to defend. That's always difficult to do. We would have played the U.S. Open the week before, and I'm starting to feel like my game is getting to a good place.

"It's been a little up and down but there are definitely glimpses of really good stuff. So hopefully I'm going to be ready to compete again."

Anna Nordqvist did that in 2016. She's the only one, in an event that's been around since 1986. Juli Inkster and Stacy Lewis came close, with two titles in three years. Annika Sorenstam is the lone three-time champ (1998, 2002 and '05).



Seaview Bay Course Hole#2

"This year's been a little different (for me)," Buhai explained. "I took some time off in the beginning because I played so late last season and went down to Australia. Like I said, there's been some glimpses but I definitely feel like I'm starting to trend in the right direction again.

"Putter has let me down a little bit. Ball-striking, I feel we are in a good place. So I know that once I start to get the putts rolling, I'm definitely going to be in contention for a tournament hopefully soon."

And what better spot than where you've lifted a trophy?

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"I think it brings in comfort," she said. "That's the way I like to play, being able to flight the ball. And obviously you bring back those good memories and try to feed off the past. That always helps.

"I was kind of trending going into that week. I was close. Played well the few weeks before that. To be honest, just all I remember was the first nine holes. I didn't play well. I only hit two greens but I hung in there. I just said to my caddie: I know I'm playing good. It needs to click.

"(So) I grinned out even or 1-under and I think I ended up shooting 3-under the first day. On Sunday, I was 4-under through five. That really got everything going. And then the finish. I didn't really know where I was until the 16th hole and I thought, 'If I par my way in, I'll be good.' Obviously Hyo Joo had other ideas. I'm looking at the leaderboard on 18 knowing I had to get up-and-down to make sure I gave myself a chance to win the tournament.



"I wasn't watching (Kim) finish. My husband (David, a caddie) was watching. I listened for the crowd's reaction. It was very nerve wracking. It just kind of happened. I had an inner calmness. That's how it works. Just incredible. It's another tick on your belt."

Which of course never gets old. Especially when it's at a venue you really enjoy. In that regard she's far from the only one. The ShopRite is considered by many to be maybe the best non-major the LPGA has to offer. And it's been that way for quite awhile not. With good reason.

Plus, the affinity is reciprocal.

"It's one of our longest-running tournaments," Buhai noted. "The community always really gets behind it. They love having us in town. Always get good crowds that come out to watch us, which is enjoyable for us players to play in front of.

"It's not one of the longest courses we play every year but you have to be smart about where you place the ball on the green. It's more of a second-shot golf course. It's also about patience, because we all know the greens can get a little bumpy in the afternoons with the poa (grass)."

The tournament has donated more than \$40 million to charity through the years. In 2023, the total was \$1.5 million, which went to help more than 50 organizations. So this is very much a community thing, which is not lost to the people who put on the show. There's a connection that's impossible to ignore. And it makes a difference.

"It's a huge priority (to play there)," Buhai said. "It's very much about the community, and how they support it. That's what you hope for. Hopefully they continue to support this for many more years."

Many LPGA stars got their professional career started at ShopRite, notably Paula Creamer, Brooke Henderson and Lexi Thompson. The last two then came back to win there. Never a bad thing. So there is some history. This year, sponsor exemptions have gone to four-time Junior All-American Gianna Clemente, University of Florida and all-SEC first-teamed Maisie Filler and Wake Forest fifth-year senior and NCAA All-American Rachel Kuehn.



Rachael Kuehn Wake Forest Golfer

"It's such a nice environment," said Filler, who is playing here for the third time. "It's really special. Everyone is so welcoming. I'm excited to have the opportunity again to see well I can do and learn more about my game as I prepare to turn pro."

Added Kuehn: "This is invaluable. Every golfer dreams of getting to test your game against the world's best. I've been really fortunate to have a couple of opportunities to do do. As amateur golf comes to an end, and I'm going to go to Q-School this fall and have goals of competing on the LPGA, it's really important for me to figure out where my game stands and what needs to improve in order to compete week in and week out.

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“It’s not very often that you get a chance to play against the best players in the world as an amateur ... It only takes one week to have the chance of a lifetime out here.”

TAP-INS: For ticket information go to [www.ShopRiteLPGAClassic.com](http://www.ShopRiteLPGAClassic.com). There are four options. Daily Grounds are \$20. Weekly Grounds go for \$40. Admission to the Hard Rock Suite, which is located near the 17th green and includes upgraded food and beverages, is \$175. And the Champions Club, at the 18th green hospitality, is \$275. All tickets will be completely digital and emailed after purchase. They can be printed out or scanned on a mobile device.

In case you weren’t aware, Seaview is where Sam Snead won the first of his seven majors at the 1942 PGA Championship ... The presenting sponsor is Acer, for the 11th straight year. ShopRite has been the title sponsor since 1992. Those who benefit from the money raised are area hospitals, food banks, youth and education programs. It truly does touch a lot of needy recipients. The Wakefern Food Corp. is the largest U.S. retailer-owned cooperative and the logistics, merchandising and distribution arm for ShopRite stores.

Among the early commitments include 2011 champ Brittany

Lincicome, 2003 winner Angela Stanford, Anna Nordqvist (2015, '16) and Stacy Lewis (2012, '14), as well as former world No. 1 players Jin Young Ko, Arita Jutanugarn and Yani Tseng.



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## COURSE DESIGNER MIKE STRANTZ &amp; MAVERICK GOLF

By Reid Nelson

Anyone seeking insight into the creative genius embodied in the late Mike Strantz need look no further than the name of his course design and construction business.

Maverick Golf.

A true renaissance man, Strantz was without question a maverick who looked at a landscape – be it an oceanfront coastal plain or rugged and rocky mountain range – and saw a canvas on which to create art. Boldly dramatic, yet aesthetically beautiful art. And arguably, nowhere is his artistic talent more evident than at Tot Hill Farm, a public-access course less than an hour's drive from Pinehurst and North Carolina's famed Sandhills, yet worlds away from anything one could ever imagine finding so close to the golf mecca that will again host this year's U.S. Open in June.



A restored 1840s farmhouse serves as the clubhouse at Tot Hill Farm.  
(Photo courtesy of Tot Hill Farm/Impact Marketing)

"The first time I saw the golf course, I kept thinking to myself, 'Where are we?' And I say that in the most positive way," said Greg Wood, director of golf operations since Charleston, S.C., businessman Pat Barber acquired the property two years ago. "It was hard to believe what we were seeing. It was like being transported somewhere, almost like the feeling you get going to Disneyland for the first time." In the very short time since taking ownership, Barber has invested untold dollars in Tot Hill Farm, making it a must-see, must-play for any golfer who appreciates the game's inherent ability to not only challenge one's skill but excite one's senses. With only one exception, everything has been done in accordance with Strantz's original design, that exception being the conversion of the greens to Prism Zoysia, a turfgrass that provides perfect putting conditions – it's almost impossible to find a ballmark on the tight, grain-free surfaces – in summer, winter, sunshine and shade. Everything else Barber and his excellent staff have done and are continuing to do at Tot Hill is guided by the intentions of the late architect.

In a career cut far too short when he lost his long battle

with oral cancer in 2005 at age 50, Strantz designed and built just nine golf courses – seven original designs and two renovations so major in scope as to be recognized as 'Strantz originals.' And while his portfolio includes layouts overlooking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Strantz called Tot Hill Farm "the best piece of land" he ever worked with.

Set in the Caraway range of the ancient Uwharrie Mountains in central North Carolina, Tot Hill is a gallery-worthy piece of artwork sculpted from sprawling meadows, rocky crags and clear-flowing mountain creeks. Stark in its contrasts, the site features more than 250 feet of elevation change, most of it tumbling down from the hilltop site of an 1840s farmhouse that's been transformed into a welcoming clubhouse that sets the tone for what can only be described as the "Tot Hill Experience."

Located just 10 minutes from Asheboro, since 1976, home to the North Carolina Zoo and its more than 250 species of animals, Tot Hill Farm opened in 2000, giving travelers, at least those who love golf, a new reason to visit Randolph County. And depending on the individual tastes of the critic, the course quickly drew polarized reviews, some heaping praise and others serving equal portions of disparagement. (What do you expect of a course designed by a self-proclaimed Maverick?)

In 2007, Golf Digest named Tot Hill the seventh toughest course in the country. However, playing the course today, one has to question that appraisal.



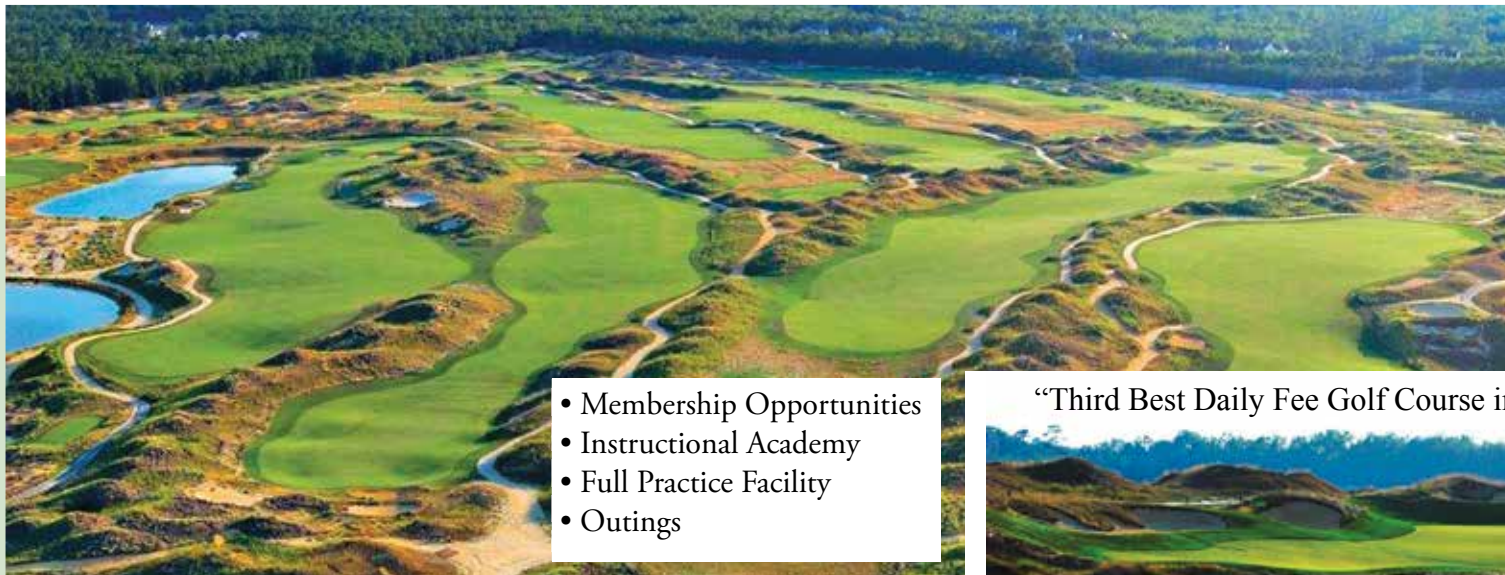
Tot Hill Farms Logo

Over the years, Tot Hill's original ownership group ran into financial difficulties and the course suffered accordingly. The once gallery-worthy piece of art began to fade. Maintenance suffered as greens shrunk and bunker faces eroded or grew over. Mother Nature didn't help either, as trees and other growth encroached, narrowing playing corridors and altering sightlines. The real estate recession of 2008 only exacerbated the problems.

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Fast forward to 2022 and enter Barber.

A highly successful medical staffing professional, Barber already owned two courses in South Carolina – The Links at Stono Ferry and The Plantation at Edisto, both just south of the historic port city. He immediately saw the potential represented in Strantz's vision for Tot Hill and upon purchasing the property, set about restoring the course to its original glory.

Wood, director of golf operations for all three of Barber's properties, emphasizes the word "restoration," as opposed to renovation. And Barber's team had plenty to draw upon as they set about their labors – the operative word in the phrase being "draw."

Blessed with numerous drawings by the architect, many of which now adorn the walls of the farmhouse/clubhouse, as well as videos showing the architect at work in the field, often on horseback, the new owner has spent untold dollars to faithfully transform Tot Hill Farm into a showplace that is sure to add to the ranks of the "Strantz Fantz Club" – devotees with their own Instagram address. In addition to installing the new Zoysia greens, more than 1,500 trees have been removed, restoring (there's that word again) fairway widths and playing angles. Bunkers were completely rebuilt or, if not part of Strantz's original design, eliminated. On two holes, bunkers that had been lost were re-established, and Wood added, another lost bunker will be rebuilt on the demanding par-4 17th hole later this year.



Sporting the No. 1 handicap, the par-4 17th hole at Tot Hill Farm, name The Road Hole, plays across rolling meadowland, culminating with a deep, narrow green guarded by a steep false front, a pronounced depression pushing into the left side of the putting surface and a stacked stone wall tight to the right, reminiscent of another great hole with the same name. (Photo courtesy of Tot Hill Farm/Carolina Pines Photography)

And since we mentioned it, what a hole the 17th is. A long par-4 stretched over rolling meadowland and boasting the No. 1 handicap, the Road Hole – every hole at Tot Hill is named – is

punctuated by a green that is true Strantz all the way. From the steep false front to the deep 'thumbprint' depression that presses in from the left to the stacked stone wall and the eponymous road tightly guarding the entire right side, the green demands a precise approach. Anything less and you face a tough up-and-down chance. But much can be said of just about any hole at Tot Hill. While the fairways are wide – generous, even – green complexes require precise, well-struck shots if you're seeking birdies. Even hitting the greens, pars can be hard earned, if you put yourself on the wrong side of Strantz's sweeping elevation changes that are best measured in feet, not inches.

Think about the bold contouring architects C.B. Macdonald and Seth Raynor built into their greens at classic courses like National Golf Links, Chicago Golf, Fox Chapel and Yale Golf Club. The greens at Tot Hill are that dramatic ... and that much fun.



The unique two-tiered green at Tot Hill Farm's par-5 fifth hole at Tot Hill Farm features an extremely narrow front portion that is much lower than the broad upper section, much of which is guarded by bunkers and rock outcroppings. (Photo courtesy of Tot Hill Farm/Ryan Barnett photographer)

More than once, Strantz offers greens with distinctly different targets. For example, the par-5 fifth green has a tiny, narrow and much lower front protrusion leading to a broad upper section, much of the right side of which hidden by tall rocks surrounded by artistic bunkers. At 13, a short par-3 set between a rocky creek to the right and a gentle up-slope to the left named "Strantz's Back Yard," the larger, more inviting part of the putting surface is at the front, with a very small adjunct climbing up and around a huge rock face to the rear. Knowing Strantz – as this writer did very well – it's not by accident that the smaller target also requires the longer tee shot.

And any review of Tot Hill wouldn't be complete without a mention of the 10th and 12th holes, two par-4s that share a double green that cascades down a very steep slope like a stair runner in

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in your grandmother's house.

The short 10th, called "Great Wall," gives players the option of driving over another of those stacked stone walls – think Irish links courses – or playing left and skirting the wall entirely. But the real excitement starts when you approach the two-level green. Higher in the front, the putting surface drops rapidly to a lower rear section before tumbling completely off the hill, down to the 12th green, which is surrounded by water. The grass connecting the two formal putting surfaces is mowed at fringe height, but it won't prevent a misjudged or poorly struck approach from going all the way down to the 12th, appropriately labeled "Old Dam."

And we haven't even talked about "The Rock," the par-3 third hole, which Golf Digest recognized as one of the 18 best holes built in America since 2000.

The fact is, any review of Tot Hill Farm could devote countless words describing any and every hole. But short of that, suffice it to say that every hole is its own canvas, most not revealed until you leave the previous green and reach the next tee. And no hole dictates strategy but instead presents options. As Wood is quick to point out, every hole offers multiple ways to play, depending on how one chooses to utilize corridor width, slopes and their own skill.

"The more you play this course, you realize that Mike gives you 10 ways to play a hole," Wood said. "If you want to shoot a score, you have to take on more risk. But he always gives players a 'safe route.' It's up to the player to decide which route they want to take."

Risk vs. Reward. Isn't that what great golf courses are all about? If so, then Tot Hill truly deserves the far-too-often used title of "Modern Classic."

For more about Tot Hill Farm, take a visual tour of the course or to book a tee time, go to the club's website, [tothillfarm.com](http://tothillfarm.com). And if you're heading to the U.S. Open and want to test Strantz's work of art during your trip, hurry. The tee sheet is filling quickly.

\* \* \* \* \*

(Long-time Charleston resident Reid Nelson spent more than 40 years in golf-specific public relations, working with more than 25 courses that earned "Top 100" and/or "Best New" accolades from major national publications. Over the years, he worked with Mike Strantz on several projects and was a founding member of Strantz's Bulls Bay Golf Club, just north of Charleston. Now retired and living in the North Carolina foothills, he is very happy to still be within easy driving distance of his late friend's designs.)



The original "double green" at the 10th and 12th holes are separated by a steep slope that is now mowed at fringe height. But that doesn't stop poorly played second shots to the 10th, approached from the bottom of the picture, from rolling all the way down to the green at No. 12, which is played to from the left of this picture. (Photo courtesy of Tot Hill Farm/Carolina Pines Photography)



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# KEVIN KRAFT WINS SENIOR OPEN



Brian Kast

SEWICKLEY, Pa. – History was made at the 4th Annual Pennsylvania Senior Open on Tuesday evening, with Kevin Kraft firing a three-under-par 69 in the final round to win the tournament's Open and Professional divisions and become the first player to hold both PA Open (which he won in August of 2023) and PA Senior Open titles at the same time.

The 53-year-old was three shots behind Oakmont CC's Bob Friend entering the second and final round but started strong, carding a birdie on hole No. 2 and an eagle on hole No. 3. A bogey on 12 was the only blemish of a fantastic round that included another birdie on the 18th hole.

"The round was stressful," said Kraft. "This golf course will wear you out. It was a tough day yesterday with the wind blowing and the course was extremely challenging, but today with the wind being down a little bit I knew it was out there – it was just a matter of making it happen. It's such a hard golf course to get good birdie looks. You have to take what the course gives you. If you miss some opportunities, it can get in your head, but I didn't panic (after the bogey on 12) and made the nice birdie on 18."

The clutch putt on 18 was all sorts of dramatic, with Kraft lining it up but then backing off, collecting himself, and making sure he knew what he wanted to do.

"I had a line and when I was standing over the putt, I asked myself, "Do you have this line, or are you just saying you have this line?" recalled Kraft. "So I backed off before fully committing, then hit the putt. It's hard backing off. It took many, many years for me to learn not to hit shots until you're absolutely ready. That was one where I knew I wasn't ready and I knew I needed to make that putt."

Kraft's accomplishment of holding both the PA Open and PA Senior Open titles will now be inscribed in the record books, and he knows that it is a feat that will not be easily replicated.

"It's the coolest thing," said Kraft. "Beating the young guys is so difficult because they hit it so far and they have no fear. I'm old enough, I have plenty of fear, but we have to just keep swinging. Last summer I was in really good form when that tournament came around and I had full control of my golf swing. Today, I haven't played enough to have great control of the swing, but it was a really good putting display the last two days. I made a lot of good saves, and that one birdie on 18 when I absolutely needed it."

Kraft edged out a trio of golfers by just a single stroke to claim the Open title—Woodloch Springs' John Pillar carded the lowest score of the day, a four-under 68, by sinking four birdies on the front nine, while Kevin Shields (The Club at Nevillewood) and Jeff Frazier (Carlisle CC) shot 70 (-2) and 72 (E), respectively, to join Pillar with two-round totals of 144. Behind them, Allegheny CC's John Aber (71, -1) and Friend (74, +2) tied for fifth place in the Open division.

Frazier was your wire-to-wire champion in the Amateur division after a pair of even-par rounds to finish two strokes lower than Jericho National CC's Colin Sanderson. Both golfers had up-and-down rounds: Frazier had four birdies and four bogeys, while Sanderson rebounded from a first round 75 (+3) to shoot 71 (-1) with five birdies and four bogeys. Connoquenessing CC's Rick Stimmel, the reigning Pennsylvania Golf Association's Senior Player of the Year, also recovered on the second day of the tournament, with a two-under 70 that included three birdies on the front nine to finish in third place. Heidelberg CC's Chris Fieger Sr. (74-74-148, fourth place) and Sinking Valley CC's Artie Fink (73-78-151, fifth place) rounded out the top five of the division.

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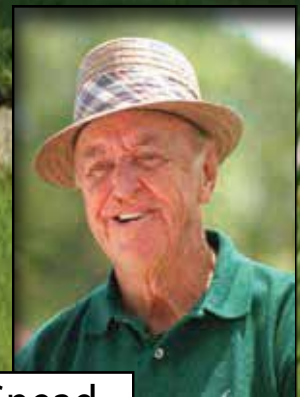


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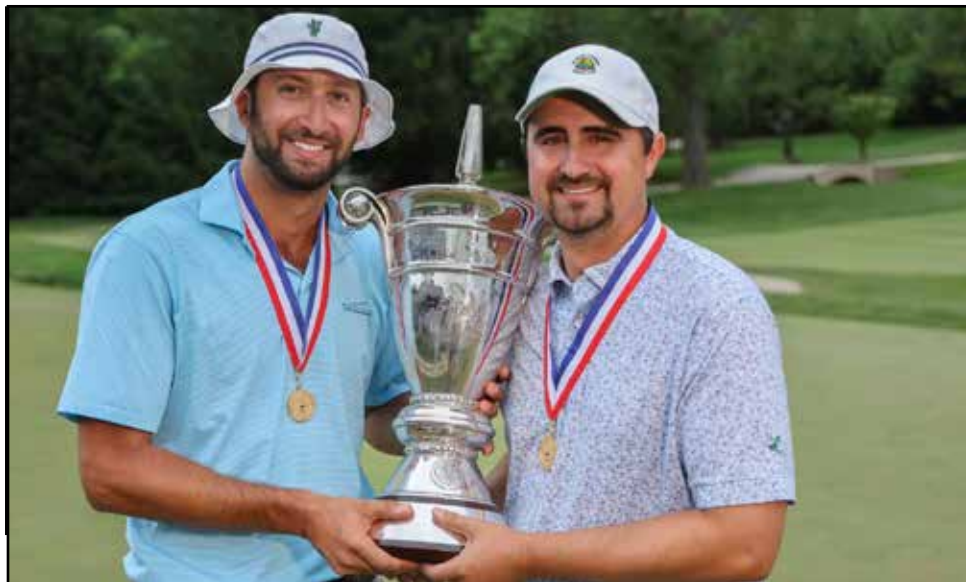
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## U.S. AMATEUR FOUR-BALL CHAMPIONSHIP AT PHILLY CRICKET

By Pete Kowalski

FLOURTOWN, Pa. – A pair of Arizona businessmen, Brian Blanchard and Sam Engel, outlasted two highly regarded Tennessee teenagers to win the 9th U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship at Philadelphia Cricket Club on May 29.



Arizonans Brian Blanchard (right) and Sam Engel took home the title at Philadelphia Cricket Club in their first U.S. Amateur Four-Ball appearance.  
(USGA/Jonathan Ernst)

“It’s why we grind,” said Blanchard of winning the national championship. “It’s why we’re out there after work until it gets dark, grinding all day.”

Blanchard, 31, a software engineer who did not play college golf at Arizona State decided to dedicate himself to golf after securing full-time employment.

Engel, a 29-year-old lefthander, who is about to start his own software company, shared his partner’s pride in their victory in which they never trailed.

“It’s hard to qualify for USGA championships, and if you just don’t have your best, best stuff, you go home,” said Engel. “There’s a lot of really great players. We brought it this week, and it is obviously awesome to ultimately bring home the hardware.”

In the well-played championship match, Blanchard and Engel held a 1-up lead through eight holes on Philly Cricket’s Wissahickon Course against USA national junior team member Blades Brown, 17, and the long-and-strong incoming freshman at the University of Tennessee Jackson Herrington, 18. Brown made the cut at the PGA Tour event in Myrtle Beach, S.C. earlier this year. The side advanced to the quarterfinals last year at Cassique in Kiawah Island, S.C.

“Honestly, I didn’t look up or research who we were playing all

week,” said Engel, who played collegiately at Cal-State Northridge before a brief stint on professional mini-tours. “I thought Brian and I were a really strong team. There was no reason for us to get in our own heads about who we were playing. We know we’re playing great players; we’re at a USGA championship. Those boys are awesome, awesome players, and we know that they have super bright futures ahead of them.”



Jackson Herrington (right) and U.S. National Junior Team member Blades Brown pose with their caddies after reaching the semifinals on Tuesday at Philadelphia Cricket Club.  
(USGA/Jonathan Ernst)

“We knew if we made birdie they couldn’t beat us unless they made eagle or something,” Engel said. “I think statistically over time if you have a lot of distance, you’re probably going to win, but today we were going to hit it closer, we were going to make more putts.”

All 10 of the holes won in the match – six by Blanchard and Engel and four by Brown and Herrington – were captured by birdies or better. The teenagers eagled the par-5 7th for a win.

“Those guys are unbelievable players,” said Blanchard of his side’s opponents. “I’m sure we’ll be watching them on TV for many years to come. But I think playing great players like that, for me personally, kind of takes the pressure off because you know you have to play great or you’re going to lose.”

Brown, from Nashville, and the 2023 Tennessee Golf Association Junior and Men’s Player of the Year, despite coming an inch short of giving his side a chance for extra holes, knows that he and Herrington, from Dickson, are a formidable pair.

“Coming down the stretch, I felt like Jackson, and I were mentally prepared to battle,” said Brown. “Unfortunately, we didn’t get it done this time, but we’re going to come back.”

Both Brown and Herrington have advanced to final qualifying for  
Cont. on page 16

Cont. from page 15

the 124th U.S. Open at Pinehurst No. 2 on June 3 at the Golf Club of Georgia in suburban Atlanta by virtue of their 69s in local qualifying at Jackson (Tenn.) Country Club in April.

Blanchard and Engel are exempt from qualifying for the upcoming U.S. Amateur at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Minnesota and the U.S. Mid-Amateur at Kinloch Golf Club in Virginia.

The U.S. Amateur Four-Ball was slated to be played at Philadelphia Cricket Club in 2020 but was cancelled because of COVID-19 pre-cautions. Because of the quality of the golf courses,

Wissahickon and Militia Hill, the USGA and Philly Cricket quickly agreed to 2024.

Established in 1854 by English-born cricket enthusiasts from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Cricket Club is one of the oldest sporting clubs in the United States.

The 2025 U.S. Four-Ball will be conducted at Plainfield Country Club in Edison, N.J. and the 2026 champion is slated for Desert Mountain Golf Club in Scottsdale.



After failing to qualify for match play in their first two U.S. Amateur Four-Ball starts, Mike Smith (left) and Will Davenport find themselves in the semifinals of the 2024 edition at Philadelphia Cricket Club. (USGA/Jonathan Ernst)

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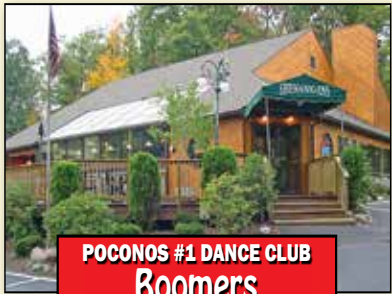
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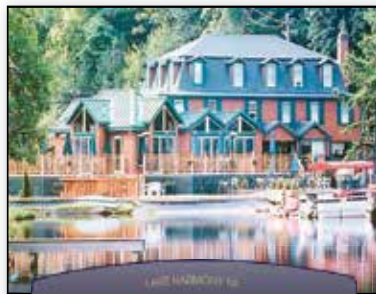
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## SCRANTON'S VASSIL CARDS CONSECUTIVE ACES



Michael Vassil rolled golf's version of snake eyes.

Two golf balls played, two swings, two 1s.

Vassil, playing alongside good friend and golf mate Barry Westington, notched two aces on No. 2 (par 3, 150 yards) at Country Club of Scranton (Falls) on April 15. He used a 7-iron to record his career 12th and 13th hole-in-one.

The odds of an individual recording two aces on the same hole when playing two balls is 1 in 156,000,000, according to US Hole In One, a leading provider of hole-one-insurance based in Newtown Square, Pa.

"I was kind of numb," Vassil, 69, of Dalton, Pa., said. "It was such a nice day that we just finished out the round, yucking it up about what happened. Barry was saying, 'Thank God they were both yours. If one was yours and one was mine, and we're out in a twosome, nobody would believe it.'"

"I got to admit that if I didn't witness it, I'm not sure I would have believed it," Westington, 66, of South Abington Township, Pa., added. "To have one hole-in-one is pretty cool. To have two back-to-back is crazy."

Friends since their days at Abington Heights High School, Vassil and Westington set out for a friendly nine-hole venture at Scranton. Temperatures in the mid-70s compelled the two to make it an 18-hole day.

"There were a couple of groups in front of us, so we said, 'Why don't we just play two balls?'" Westington said. "It's cart path only. We're walking out there anyway. I'll play you in a better-ball. We'll make a little competition of it."

"I'm still kind of speechless over it."

With the inward nine at Scranton closed, Vassil and Westington diverted to the Falls course for the round's completion. Westington, holding tee honors, hit a pair of shots left of the hole location. Vassil executed the right stripes: approximately 25 and 10 feet, respectively.

The makeup of No. 2 clouds visual certainty from the tee. It offers a two-tiered green with a significant slope.

"When we got to No. 2, I actually commented, 'Good. At least we got the

hole-in-one pin.' Generally, if you hit it right, it will feed into the low area, right where the pin was," Vassil said. "From where we were, you couldn't actually see the bottom of the pin."

Vassil and Westington entered search mode upon arrival at the green. Only two golf balls on the green. Westington inspected and identified both as his. Vassil noticed the markings and confirmed. So what port welcomed Vassil's vessels? The bottom of the cup, Westington speculated.

So what port welcomed Vassil's vessels? The bottom of the cup, Westington speculated.

"As soon as he said that, I got to the pin, looked down and both balls were sitting in there," Vassil said.

"We both looked at each other like, 'Did that just happen?'" Westington said. "The whole time [afterward], we were texting our buddies and responding to texts. We got done and we were sitting around having a drink. We still couldn't believe it happened."

Frankly, it almost didn't happen. Tom Bowles and Chris Hoban planned to join Vassil and Westington that day for a match, but work commitments prevented their participation. All the more incentive for Vassil and Westington to implement a two-ball match.

"I saw Tom later and thanked him for not showing up," Vassil said.

"We told them that we'll give them a rematch, but we can't promise that [back-to-back aces] will happen again," Westington added.

For the record, Vassil and Westington did finish the round once the fervor calmed.

"I was winning on the front, but he definitely won on the back," Westington said.

"The fact that it was just a knockaround round of golf, it deflates it a little bit. Just the uniqueness of it happening ... I'm still kind of speechless over it," Vassil said.

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## PABST'S GOLD RIBBON: ELMHURST'S OWN MEDALS



MOSCOW, Pa. — A miracle to Mike + The Mechanics is a double bogey to Billy Pabst. All he needed Monday.

After carding the dreaded score on his ninth hole in U.S. Open Local Qualifying administered by GAP at Elmhurst Country Club (par 71, 6,824 yards), Pabst proceeded to play the last nine in 5 under. By doing so, the home-club hopeful medaled with a score of 3-under-par 68 and earned one of three invitations to U.S. Open Final Qualifying.

David Powers, a touring professional out of Jupiter, Fla., carded a 2-under-par 69 to advance in regulation. Logan Paczewski, the reigning Joseph H. Patterson Cup Champion, converted a 10-footer for birdie on No. 2 (par 5, 525 yards) to grab the final qualifying position in a sudden-death playoff.

The 124th U.S. Open will take place June 13-16 at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club (Course No. 2) in Village of Pinehurst, N.C.

"After the double bogey on No. 18 [Pabst's ninth hole], it was now or never. Looking at the leaderboard, there were definitely some low scores," Pabst, 20, of Roaring Brook Township, Pa., said. "I needed a good front nine for sure. Swing and let it happen. I didn't try to force it, and putts started falling."

On the aforementioned 18th hole at Elmhurst, which imprisons those who fail to touchdown on its back-to-front sloping runway, Pabst missed the green long right, an admitted "no-go," with a 9-iron from 137 yards. A three-putt for double bogey followed.

"I've been trying to do my best to stay more relaxed out there, to keep the pressure off myself," Pabst, a rising junior at Penn State University, where he majors in finance, said. "Oddly, [the double bogey] helped. I've also got to give my caddie, Ryan Ruddy, a shout out. He kept me calm all day."

The Pabst red ribbon on Elmhurst's front nine went as follows: a pitching wedge 125 yards to 10 feet on No. 1 (par 4, 440 yards), a gap wedge 111 yards to 15 feet on No. 4 (par 4, 398 yards), a 5-iron to 10 feet on No. 5 (par 3, 229 yards), a wedge 80 yards to 18 feet on No. 8

(par 4, 367 yards) and an 8-iron to five feet on No. 9 (par 3, 182 yards).

Monday's homecoming rejuvenated Pabst, who competed in five events this spring for the Nittany Lions. Mixed results. Nothing to write a hit song about.

"I think I struggled a little bit at school. I put too much pressure on myself sometimes playing these competitive rounds," Pabst, the 2019 GAP Junior Sportsperson of the Year, said. "I definitely was tense on the front nine [today]. It almost kind of helped me because I loosened on the back a little bit. The swing took care of itself. I wasn't stressing too much."

Logan Paczewski birdies No. 2, the second playoff hole, to advance. Knowing the property like Neil deGrasse Tyson knows astronomy alleviates stress. Pabst started playing golf at Elmhurst at age 10. He's worked in the bag room for the past five years.

"It's a great spot. I live right off No. 14, so it's a short walk right through the woods. I've pretty much grown up here," Pabst, the 2021 men's club champion at Elmhurst, said.

Pabst will head to Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, Md. on June 3 for U.S. Open Final Qualifying.

Like Pabst, Powers also molded Monday into a homecoming of sorts. He is close friends with John Roche, Elmhurst's head golf professional. The two previously worked together at Woodloch Springs.

"Every time I come home, they are great to me at Elmhurst," Powers, 25, a Glen Spey, N.Y. native, said. "So, I'm pretty familiar with the golf course. The rough is pretty thick out here, so there was definitely an emphasis on hitting the fairway. I was just trying to keep it in the fairway and hit the greens. It wasn't set up easy."

Powers, a St. Peter's University alum, held status on PGA TOUR Canada from 2021-22. He currently competes in Minor League Golf Tour and GPro Tour. Powers will head to Country Club of Ocala in Ocala, Fla. next week as Q School for PGA Tour Americas. Then it's off to The Bear's Club in Jupiter, Fla. for U.S. Open Final Qualifying.



Cont. from page 24

Fla. for U.S. Open Final Qualifying.

Paczewski, 20, of Dallas, Pa., is thrilled to advance to the next stage after six years of effort.

“May has been a rough golf month for me. To finally come out to a course close by me, and to get through with my buddy Billy Pabst, is really fun,” Paczewski, who just completed his sophomore season at Rutgers University, said. “It’s great to finally hold a [U.S. Open] invitation and say, ‘I’ve done it.’”

In the playoff, Paczewski’s drive on No. 2 bounced off the cart path and landed in a manageable hole. He then sent a 4-iron from 225 yards to a knight’s sword from the right greenside bunker. A pitch-and-putt resulted in a fist-pumping 4.

Paczewski, an amateur out of Huntsville Golf Club, will head to Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit, N.J. for U.S. Open Final Qualifying.

Qualifiers

Name,	city,	state	Score
(a) Billy Pabst,	Roaring Brook Township,	Pa.	68
David Powers,	Glen Spey,	N.Y.	69
*(a) Logan Paczewski,	Dallas,	Pa.	70
Alternates (in order)			
*Andrew Turner,	Lititz,	Pa.	70
*(a) David Mecca,	Clarks Summit,	Pa.	71
Failed to qualify			
*(a) Patrick Sheehan,	Doylestown,	Pa.	71
*(a) Chuck Tragesser,	Murrysville,	Pa.	71
*(a) Gregor Meyer,	Pittsburgh,	Pa.	71
*David Quinn,	Marlton,	N.J.	71
*Anthony Sebastianelli,	Clarks Summit,	Pa.	71

*Patrick Ross,	Dunmore,	Pa.	71
Zachary Barbin,	Elkton,	Md.	72
Rusty Harbold,	Abington,	Pa.	72
(a) Eli Ropietski,	Harveys Lake,	Pa.	72
Matthew Bergstrom,	Lindenhurst,	Ill.	73
(a) Noah Moelter,	Doylestown,	Pa.	73
Maclain Huge,	Charlotte,	N.C.	73
Andrew Cornish,	Pottstown,	Pa.	73
(a) Isaiah Williams,	Flemington,	N.J.	73
Danny Lewis,	Philadelphia,	Pa.	73
Bryan Dougherty,	Middletown,	N.J.	74
(a) Boyoung Chang,		Korea	74
(a) Jackson Debusschere,	Wallingford,	Pa.	74
(a) Michael Thomas,	Scott Township,	Pa.	75
(a) Cael Ropietski,	Harveys Lake,	Pa.	75
Jordan Eck,	Williamsport,	Pa.	75
Brett Wagner,	Cresco,	Pa.	75
(a) Grant Gronka,	Bloomsburg,	Pa.	75
Michael Young Jr.,	Erie,	Pa.	75
(a) Jake Haberstumpf,	Bethlehem,	Pa.	75
(a) Zachary Cozza,	Scottsdale,	Ariz.	76
Michael Molino,	Dallas,	Pa.	76
(a) James Gradisek,	Wayne,	Pa.	76
Andy Brock,	Bernardsville,	N.J.	77
(a) Alex Anderson,	Bear Creek Twp,	Pa.	77
(a) Sean Madden,	Moosic,	Pa.	78
David Horn,	Coudersport,	Pa.	78
(a) Robert Munley,	Clarks Summit,	Pa.	78
(a) Matthew Vital,	Bethlehem,	Pa.	78
Josh Bernard,	Tulsa,	Okla.	78
(a) Tyler McGarry,	Pittston,	Pa.	79
Mariano Medico,	Palm Beach Gardens,	Fla.	79
(a) Cade Kelleher,	Clark’s Summit,	Pa.	80

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By TONY LEODORA

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And that first golf trip was followed in short fashion by a trip to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. That was in 1985 ... and I have been back every year since ... one, two, three, four and even five times in a calendar year.

I am addicted to the golf trip.

Golf trips have taken me (in groups from 4 to 48) across the country -- Las Vegas, Mesquite (NV), Tucson, Scottsdale, Colorado, Utah, Illinois, Northern Michigan, French Lick (IN), all over Florida, Reynolds Plantation (GA), Cashiers (NC), Greenville (SC), Hilton Head Island, Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains, Nemaquin (Western PA), The Homestead (Hot Springs, VA), the Jersey Shore, New York's Catskill Mountains, Ocean City (MD), Williamsburg (VA), Biloxi (MS). And around the world -- Ireland, Scotland, Morocco, South Africa, Mexico, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Jamaica, Nevis-St. Kitts.

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The quest for new places to play and new things to do never ends. People are always asking about someplace different to visit on their next golf trip.

That's why this latest trip to the Gulf Coast of Alabama was such an eye-opening and rewarding experience.

The two areas of concentration were the beach town of Gulf Shores -- lovingly known as the Redneck Riviera -- and the historic city of Mobile -- the southern extension of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail.

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Placed in that setting, the latest golf trip was guaranteed to be nothing short of a spectacular success.

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Visit Mobile

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But an amazing renaissance has taken place in recent years. New buildings have been constructed. Old buildings have been renovated. The historic downtown district is now a bustling collection of historic hotels, sophisticated and charming restaurants and lively night spots.

"What has been happening in Mobile is truly amazing," said David Clark, president and CEO of Visit Mobile. "Corporations and vacationers are coming here and spending inordinate amounts of dollars. Our tourism industry is booming."

That industry will get a boost soon with the completion of a new downtown airport that will feature many more non-stop flights from cities across America.

The most notable addition to the downtown district is the historic Renaissance Battle House Hotel & Spa.



Battle House Hotel - Mobile

This luxury hotel has roots back to 1852 but literally rose from the dead thanks to a major renovation in 2007. It had been closed for more than 30 years until it was purchased by the Retirement Systems of Alabama and made part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail Hotel Collection. The historic style of the hotel is complemented nicely by modern amenities.

The spacious suites, the magnificent rotunda over the main floor, the streetside bar, the Trellis Room restaurant, the state-of-the-art spa and the rooftop pool all combine to make the perfect launching point for a Mobile-based golf trip. And it is directly across the street from the second-tallest building in Mobile, the 34-story RSA Trustmark Bank Building.

On the top floor is the spectacular Dauphin's Casual Fine-Dining Restaurant. Providing panoramic views of Mobile Bay, it is a must-visit for dinner while in Mobile. Local wild-caught Cobia and Red Snapper, plus giant sweet oysters, were just some of the superstars on the menu. The restaurant was founded by former Miami Dolphin and University of Alabama standout defensive lineman Bob Baumhower. He is CEO of Aloha Hospitality, operating 15 restaurants across Alabama.

While Dauphin's is the flagship, the most exciting of his

Cont. on page 28

Cont. from page 27

properties sits 424 feet below in the basement of the building. Las Floriditas is an authentic Cuban speakasy that serves “comida tipica”, traditional Cuban food, and craft cocktails ... all in a colorful Havana-style atmosphere. On Thursday nights, the place really hops to the sounds of a contemporary Cuban orchestra. Las Floriditas harkens back to the famous Havana-Mobile trade route that resulted in the creation of Sister Cities.

A few miles outside of town the RTJ Golf Trail begins at Magnolia Grove. This property includes two excellent Robert Trent Jones-designed courses, the Crossings Course and the Falls Course. Plus, it boasts the No. 1-rated Short Course in America, an 18-hole, par 54 championship layout. The new Mini Verde Ultradwarf greens are a treat.



Magnolia Grove - Crossings - No. 5

Continuing the short drive to Fairhope, Alabama brings visitors to one of America’s most luxurious hideaways, the Grand Hotel, a sprawling property along the shore of Mobile Bay. This 175-year-old hotel represents the height of southern hospitality and charm. It sits on 550 acres of stunning natural beauty and despite all of its history, is a modern sanctuary of golf, tennis, beach, resort-size pools, fine dining restaurant and spa.



Magnolia Grove - Crossings - No. 17

Although the two golf courses – the Dogwood and the Azalea -- are part of the RTJ Golf Trail, they were not designed by Robert Trent Jones. They are the collaborative effort, over many years, of Perry Maxwell, Joe Lee and Ron Garl -- then renovated by Roger Rulewich, the chief designer for Robert Trent Jones.

“The pedigree of the courses at Lakewood is amazing,” remarked Niall Fraser, the director of golf operations, who also worked for many years managing the construction teams for Trent Jones and Rulewich.

“The courses were designed by great architects, then given the most loving and considerate renovations possible,” he continued. “The result is two solid golf courses that have stood the test of time.”

To recap, a golf trip to Mobile provides a choice of two luxurious, historic hotels, an amazing array of fabulous dining options, four championship golf courses and the No. 1-rated short course in America.

Gulf Shores

About 60 miles south of Mobile, hard on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, sits the beach towns of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.

In some ways, they are your typical beach towns – crowded in high-season, t-shirt stores on every corner, the Mecca of the flip-flop crowd. Except for two differences. The range of high-quality seafood restaurants is amazing. And the quality of the golf is even better.

For those who want the family beach scene, there are scores of beach condos, high rise hotels and motels. For those who want to get away from the noise of the crowd, there are two great options.

The Beach Club is a series of 15-story modern condo buildings on the beach and away from the crowded areas. They feature a good collection of amenities and are just a short drive from restaurants and golf courses.



Beach Club View

The other option is the Kiva Lodge, overlooking the Jerry Pate-designed Kiva Dunes golf course. You can fall out of bed and onto the first tee ... of one of the finest public courses in the state.



Kiva Lodge

Cont. from page 28

Kiva Dunes has withstood hard hits from a couple of hurricanes



Kiva Dunes #12

... and come out better than ever. It is a stark departure from the tree-lined courses that make up the majority of the golf landscape in Alabama. It is a magical march through the dunes, with very few trees and a nice collection of spectacular vistas. The ever-present breeze also helps to temper the summer heat.

Just down the road in Gulf Shores is Craft Farms Golf Resort. It is 36 holes of masterful Arnold Palmer design work. The Cotton Creek course and the Cypress Bend course are both playable and enjoyable layouts that are intended to appeal to golfers of all levels. Both have five sets of tees and the consistently good conditions provide for a wonderful walk in the park.

Although not part of the latest trip, Peninsula Golf and Raquet Club is another option in the immediate area. I played it years ago and it contains 27 holes – the Marsh, Lakes and Cypress nines. Alabama native Earl Stone did the design work.

While in the Gulf Shores/Orange Beach area, exploring the many seafood restaurants is a must. Zeke's Restaurant at Zeke's Marina Landing in Orange Beach is a highlight. Outdoor seating

affords a great view of the many boats and spectacular sunsets. I had my first taste of Redfish, a local favorite, and really enjoyed it.

Of course, no trip to Gulf Shores is complete without a stop at the iconic Flora-Bama bar ... possibly the largest beach bar in America. This sprawling complex straddles the boundaries of two states. It is a maze of indoor and outdoor rooms, many of which have different variations of live music every night. And don't leave without sampling their signature cocktail, The Bushwacker.

A golf trip to Gulf Shores is guaranteed to be an action packed experience.



Craft Farms Cottonwood #12

All of this leaves us asking a poignant question. Is a trip to the Gulf Coast of Alabama appealing to the golfers from the Mid-Atlantic region of America? Give me a resounding, "Hell, yes!" It is the kind of change of pace that makes golf the most interesting travel sport.

Bottom line – relax and enjoy the Southern hospitality of the Mobile area ... then rock the beaches of Gulf Shores from morning to late at night. Pick your favorite, or combine the two for one of the

most unique golf trip experiences in America.



# Philadelphia PGA Section

## SCOREBOARD



### PGA OF AMERICA GOLF PROFESSIONAL JOHN PILLAR WINS 26TH HAVERFORD PHILADELPHIA PGA CLASSIC AND \$100,000 PRIZE IN PLAYOFF



By Matt Frey

Plymouth Meeting, Pa. (May 28, 2024) — PGA of America Golf Professional John Pillar of the Country Club at Woodloch Springs in Hawley, Pa., won the 26th Haverford Philadelphia PGA Classic at Sunnybrook Golf Club on the third sudden-death playoff hole in front of hundreds of fans. Pillar's \$100,000 winner's check is the largest first-place prize available from any event across the PGA of America's 41 nationwide Sections.

Pillar turned in a 2-under-par 70 in regulation, good enough to tie fellow PGA Members Braden Shattuck of Rolling Green G.C., who recently earned Low Club Professional honors at the 2024 PGA Championship, and Kyle Early of Waynesborough C.C.

Shattuck was eliminated following a bogey five on the first playoff hole, the 390-yard par-4 18th hole; Pillar and Early tied with pars. Both went on to birdie the second playoff hole, including a dramatic 25-footer from Pillar. Pillar took the title and top prize with another birdie on the third playoff hole.

"Winning the Haverford Philadelphia PGA Classic is a life changer, to be honest," Pillar said during the trophy presentation. "I did not know when I was going to win again. At 57 years old, it's overwhelming, and I am so grateful."

Pillar is no stranger to the winners circle, having won the Philadelphia PGA Professional Championship, the Philadelphia Senior PGA Professional Championship, and the Section's Comeback Player of the Year Award in 2004. He said he's driving to Indiana on Wednesday to play in a U.S. Open qualifier.

Pillar went on to thank the event's title partner, The Haverford Trust Company, their founder and director George Connell, Sunnybrook Golf Club and its membership, and staff, for their dedication to the Philadelphia PGA Section and its nearly 900 PGA Professionals.

Four players finished tied for fourth place at 1-under par: Michael Little, Clubhouse 54; Rusty Harbold, Philadelphia Cricket Club; Brian Bergstol, Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort; and Stephen Swartz, Carlisle C.C..

Pillar finished atop the Senior Division as well, bettering Dave McNabb, Applebrook G.C., by two-strokes. Five PGA Professionals finished tied for third place at 1-over-par.

Ian Natale finished with Low Amateur honors after turning in a 1-over-par 73 to top Binney Wietlisbach by one stroke.

📍	Pos.	Player	To Par Gross	Total Gross
☆	1	John Pillar CC at Woodloch Springs	-2	70
☆	T2	Kyle Early Waynesborough Country Club	-2	70
☆	T2	Braden Shattuck Rolling Green Golf Club	-2	70
☆	T4	Michael Little Clubhouse 54	-1	71

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**BRADEN SHATTUCK, PGA, BREAKS BELLEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB COURSE RECORD  
TO WIN 2024 DELAWARE VALLEY OPEN**


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By Matt Frey

Pottstown, Pa. (May 20, 2024) — PGA of America Golf Professional Braden Shattuck of Rolling Green Golf Club in Springfield, Pa., broke Bellewood Country Club's course record to win the 2024 Philadelphia PGA Delaware Valley Open with an 8-under-par 63. Coming off an impressive finish at the PGA Championship in Kentucky, where he earned Low Club Professional honors, Shattuck bettered Louis Kelly of Gulph Mills Golf Club by two strokes. The tournament is a Philadelphia PGA Rolex / Haverford Trust Company Philadelphia PGA Player of the Year points event, and the second Silvercrest Cup qualifier of the year.

Shattuck made eight birdies and zero bogeys en route to surpass Bellewood's course record by two strokes, which was made even more impressive by the fact that he drove 10 hours from Louisville, Ky., following the PGA Championship's trophy ceremony, in order to make his 2:30 p.m. tee time today. To watch Shattuck accept the Low Club Professional trophy, [click here](#).

"I didn't get into too much trouble today," Shattuck said of his round. "I had a lot of short clubs in my hand, which made it a little easier, having a 130-yard approach compared to 230 yards at Valhalla."

Returning for the third season, the Silvercrest Cup series will include four qualifying events for Philadelphia PGA Professionals, and will culminate in a \$30,000 Silvercrest Cup final on September 16, hosted at Union League Liberty Hill in Lafayette Hill, Pa. For more information on the season-long race to the Silvercrest Cup, [click here](#). In addition to receiving the winner's share of the purse, Shattuck also took home an additional \$2,500 from the Silvercrest Cup qualifier bonus pool.

"It's amazing," when asked about his Silvercrest Cup bonus. "We're fortunate that they take care of us through the Silvercrest Cup final and qualifier bonuses. I am personally very thankful for Silvercrest and Allen Gray for what they do for us. I couldn't be

happier."

Shattuck went on to thank the Rolling Green members and Rolling Green PGA Director of Golf Scott Chisholm for being so supportive, the Philadelphia PGA Section staff, his fiancée, family, and friends, for being there when he needs them.

"Being on the road for a long time can be hard, and I'm lucky to have everyone around supporting me," said Shattuck.

The University of Delaware's Brendon Post and Sandy Run C.C.'s Trevor Bensel tied for third place at 4-under-par. Seven PGA Golf Professionals tied for fifth place at 1-under-par.

Brendon Post, PGA, topped the Senior Division leaderboard at 4-under-par, bettering fellow PGA Professionals Terry Hertzog, Bent Creek C.C., and Terry Hatch, Royal Oaks G.C., by three strokes. Pete Lovenguth, Sandy Run C.C., and Bill Walker tied for fourth place at 1-over-par.

The Philadelphia Cricket Club's Bill Sautter, PGA, took the top prize in the Super Senior Division, finishing at 2-under-par, five strokes ahead of a trio of PGA Professionals: PGA Life Members Wayne Phillips and Michael Versuk, and Greg Farrow, Deerwood C.C. PGA Life Member J.R. Delich, 82, finished in fifth place and turned in a round of 78, making it the 400th time he has shot or bettered his age on the golf course. Well played, J.R.!

The Philadelphia Assistants' Organization (PAO) held an event concurrently with the Delaware Valley Open, with Louis Kelly emerging victorious. Trevor Bensel finished in second place two behind Kelly. Jeff Fick, Moselem Springs G.C., and Robert Fenton, Sunnybrook G.C., tied for third place at 1-under-par. Fifth place was rounded out by Matt Finger, DuPont C.C., Zach Barbin, Chesapeake Bay G.C., and Alex Knoll, Glen Brook G.C., all of whom shot even-par 71s.

## Pocono Professional Golf Series

Philadelphia Section

PGA of America



## 2024 PPGS Event Calendar

Updated May 1, 2024

Date	Event	Host Course	Course Contact	Host Professional
Tuesday, April 16	Spring Pro-Pro	Glen Brook Golf Club	570-421-3680	Dustin McCormick
Thursday, May 2	Pro-Am	Woodstone Country Club & Lodge	610-760-2777	Gregg Meyer
Wednesday, May 22	Pro-Am	Buck Hill Falls Golf Club	570-595-7730	Brian Fruehan
Wednesday, June 5	Pro-Am	Olde Homestead Golf Club	610-298-4653	Kevin Edwards
Tuesday, June 18	Pro-Am	Glen Brook Golf Club	570-421-3680	Dustin McCormick
Wednesday, June 26	Pro-Am	The Country Club at Woodloch Springs	570-685-8102	John Pillar
Wednesday, July 3	Pro-Am	Pocono Farms Country Club	570-894-8441	Kyle Monahan
Thursday, July 11	Pro-Am	Wyoming Valley Country Club	570-825-9489	Pete Korba
Tuesday, July 16	Pro-Am	Great Bear Golf Club	570-223-2000	Howie Van Buskirk
Wednesday, July 24	Pro-Am	Elmhurst Golf & Country Club	570-842-7011	Mike Molino
Wednesday, July 31	Pro-Am	The Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort	570-424-4019	Nick Lussier
Tuesday, August 6	Pro-Am	Pinecrest Lake Golf & Country Club	570-646-4444	Jeff Garner
Thursday, August 22	Pro-Am	Pocono Manor	570-839-7110	Greg Wall
Wednesday, September 4	Pro-Am	Green Pond Country Club	610-691-9453	John Kulhamer
Wednesday, September 11	Pro-Am	Skytop Lodge	570-257-2114	Justin Alunni
Tuesday, September 17	Pro-Am	Scranton Canoe Club	570-378-9982	Spencer Lunger
TBD	Pro-Am	Country Club of Scranton	570-587-3514	John Rodgers
TBD	Pro-Am	Elkview Country Club	570-222-4555	Jared Cottell
TBD	Pocono Cup*	TBD (Pocono Mountain)	TBD	TBD
TBD	Fall Pro-Pro*	TBD	TBD	TBD

\* Season-ending events will be announced at a later date.

For more information and updates, visit the PPGS web site ([www.golfppgs.com](http://www.golfppgs.com))

or view the PPGS Facebook page (@golfPPGS).

### Glen Brook Golf Club Spring Pro-Pro Results – April 16, 2024

## Two-Person Scramble

Finish	Score	Team (Pro)
T-1	62	Evan Grube and Gregg Meyer John Pillar and Brian Bergstol Alex Knoll and Dave Fields
T-4	65	Kevin Edwards and Wayne Phillips Ray Silnik and Paul Viola Dustin McCormick and Mike Molino Jeff Fick and Mike Grabosky Greg Wall and Howie Balbach

### Woodstone Country Club Pro-Am Results – May 2, 2024

## Team

Finish	Score	Team (Pro)
1	132	Woodstone (George Petrole)
2	134	Olde Homestead (Kevin Edwards)
T3	135	Philadelphia PGA (Terry Hatch)
T3	135	Glen Brook (Alex Knoll)
T5	136	Glen Brook (Dustin McCormick)
T5	136	Shawnee (Brian Bergstol)

## Individual

## Professional – Low Score

Finish	Score	Golfer
1	68	Alex Knoll
T2	71	Brian Bergstol
T2	71	Terry Hatch
T4	72	Brent Wallace
T4	72	John Pillar
6	73	Evan Grube

## Amateur – Low Score

Finish	Score	Golfer
1	69	Dave Figura
2	72	Randy Kurzinsky
3	73	Trevor Buss

## Senior Professional – Low Score

Finish	Score	Golfer
1	72	John Kulhamer
T2	76	Ray Silnik
T2	76	Bob Fritz
T2	76	George Petrole

## Senior Amateur – Low Score

Finish	Score	Golfer
1	77	Pete Warner
2	79	Al McCormick



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## REVOLUTIONIZING GOLF LESSONS: THE PYGO APPROACH

by Scotty McAlarney

W.G.T.F./I.P.G.A. Top 100 Instructor

In Olyphant, Pennsylvania, a revolution in golf lessons and player development is underway. As Director of Golf at Scott Greens Golf Club with over thirty years of experience teaching the game, my focus goes beyond swing mechanics but consists of a holistic approach that emphasizes fitness as a crucial component of player development. This passion for fitness and golf has given birth to PYGO and the HZ Golf Swing Trainer – both of which I have created to take golf instruction to the next level.

PYGO, an acronym that stands for Pilates, Yoga, and Golf, is not just a program but a philosophy that integrates the fluidity of Pilates and Yoga with the precision of golf. The idea is simple yet profound: use Pilates and Yoga movements to simulate and hold golf swing positions, thereby aiding in the understanding of the swing while simultaneously building core and body strength. This approach has been a game-changer, allowing golfers to develop a swing that is not only technically sound but also physically robust.

The HZ (Hitting Zone) Golf Swing Trainer, is my patented invention, and it serves as the cornerstone of my golf instruction. It allows students to learn and perfect their golf swing from the comfort of their homes. This innovative tool has eliminated the need for an actual golf club, making the learning process more accessible and convenient.

The DrillFreakGolf.com website (our brand) and the accompanying Drill Freak Golf YouTube channel are treasure troves of resources, offering four distinct PYGO programs at no cost. These programs cater to a diverse range of needs, from the novice seeking to understand the basics to the seasoned golfer aiming to enhance power and precision.

"The Not So Senior Swing," the latest video series, is a testament to the adaptability and inclusiveness of the PYGO philosophy. This 5-part series, with its concise and engaging 6–8-minute videos, has sparked the creation of a new PYGO Challenge program. It's designed not only for seniors but for golfers of all ages who aspire to improve their flexibility and core strength.

The success of these programs is evident in the invitations I receive each summer to teach PYGO Challenges at prestigious private and semi-private golf facilities. Some notable participants have been actor Bill Murray and former N.Y. Yankees all-star Jorge Posada.

Witnessing the swift progress made by participants is a source of joy and a reaffirmation of the effectiveness of the PYGO approach. During a live version of my "The Need for Speed" challenge a few years ago, it was gratifying to see the club head speed increases students had from before and after launch monitor readings. One player in particular broke the average 6-8 mph gain with an increase of 11 mph club head speed – that was remarkable.

Each winter, I escape to Florida for two weeks in January and four weeks in March to host four-day boot camps. These days start on the beach and end on the golf course. That's right! The program begins with sessions on the sandy beaches of Hollywood, Florida, where the unstable terrain provides a challenging environment to teach balance and ground pressure, the fundamental aspects of a solid golf swing.

Each subsequent session starts as early as 7:00 a.m. in the morning, and every session begins with a warmup consisting of various PYGO exercises. The transition to the more stable grounds of the range allows for the refinement of newly acquired skills.

The integration of Pilates and yoga techniques along with body motion drills not only improves flexibility and core strength but also contributes to the fluidity and precision required in golf. The subtle incorporation of these disciplines ensures that students are improving their golf mechanics, often without being acutely aware of it. The PYGO program fosters an environment where natural and repeatable body movements are developed, emphasizing muscle groups essential for an effective golf swing.

The exclusivity of the boot camps, with a cap of four participants, ensures personalized attention and a conducive learning atmosphere. This intimate setting is ideal for a transformative experience, as evidenced by the diverse groups that attend, ranging from couples to friends, and even an entire college team on one occasion that traveled to Florida from upstate New York – all seeking to elevate their performance. The rigorous four-day schedule is designed to push the participants to their limits, ensuring that they leave with a sense of accomplishment and tangible improvements in their game. Instruction also includes on-course play and course management mid-week to break up the technical range and swing instruction. The curriculum is meticulously crafted to cater to all skill levels, ensuring that each participant, regardless of their proficiency, gains from the comprehensive instruction and PYGO training.

The visible progress from the start of the week to its conclusion is a source of motivation and gratification for both me and the students. Whether or not they are fitness-minded when starting out, they certainly leave more knowledgeable about golf fitness, and they understand the importance of proper warmup and stretching after learning the PYGO principles that are instilled during our sessions. Students are trained to apply the fitness concepts after they leave and it is easy to do with online access of my other fitness programming on YouTube.

Participants of a PYGO challenge using HZ swing trainers gain enhanced skills and the motivation to continue their golfing fitness journey. The gratitude expressed by the students is a reflection of the program's impact on their game and the lasting impression it leaves on their approach to golf.

Scotty McAlarney is the owner and Director of Golf at Scott Greens Golf Club and a 5x top 100 golf instructor W.G.T.F. /I.P.G.A. in Olyphant, Pennsylvania, a.k.a. Drill Freak.

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## THREE TEAMS TAKE TITLES AT FOX HILL



Joe Weiscarger &amp; Rick Berry

Tyler McGarry of Huntsville Golf Club and Jay Vasil of Moselem Springs Golf Club won the Amateur Division in the 24th GAP/AGA Ben Marshall Spring Four-Ball at Fox Hill Country Club (par 71, 6,492 yards) Wednesday.

The duo carded a 6-under-par 65 to prevail by a stroke.

In a match of scorecards, StoneHedge's Bob Andrejko and Steve

## AMATEUR DIVISION

Name	club	Score
Tyler McGarry/Jay Vasil,	Huntsville Golf Club/Moselem Springs	65
Frank Schiel, Jr./Eric Plisko,	Wyoming Valley Country Club	66
Frank Kacvinsky/John Mikiewicz,	Country Club of Scranton/Fox Hill	67
Eric Williams/James Gardas,	Honesdale Golf Club/Glenmaura	67
Doug Nardella/Stephon Draper,	Elmhurst Country Club/Scranton	67
Joe Kelchner/Corey Bierly,	Berwick Golf Club	67
Sean Carey/Tony Bevevino,	Emanon Country Club/Irem Country Club	68
Stephen Rice/Randy Kurzinsky,	Schuylkill Country Club/Valley Country Club	68
Michael Grimes/Damien LaRue,	StoneHedge Golf Assn.	69
Bob Shoemaker/Jeff Lewis,	Wyoming Valley Country Club	69
Jonathan Wilson/Lou Belgio,	Irem Country Club	69
Billy O'Dell/Dylan O'Dell,	Elkview Country Club	70
Joe Healey/John Wanas,	Elkview Country Club	70
Jason Considine/Dave Maddock,	StoneHedge Golf Assn./Glen Oak	70
Michael Lynch/Michael Sewack,	Country Club of Scranton	71
Luke Morgan/Ryan Laudeman,	Schuylkill Country Club	71
Ken Sorick/Bill Krenitsky,	Fox Hill Country Club/StoneHedge Golf Assn.	72
Chris Killiany/Nick Paone,	Elkview Country Club/cranton	72
Keith Devos/David Figura,	Jack Frost National Golf Club	72
Bob Pipcho/Dave Lopatka,	Elmhurst Country Club	74
Bill Dessoye/Bill Ianieri,	Jack Frost National Golf Club	75
Mike Haley/Gershon Spengler,	Fox Hill Country Club/Scranton	75
Sean Shanley/Joseph Roche,	Glenmaura National Golf Club/USGA/GAP GC	75
Tom Buckler/Tak Yoo,	Glenmaura National Golf Club	77
Michael Harostock/Jasonn Wood,	Glenmaura National/StoneHedge Golf Assn.	77
Marc Cloruri/James Dougherty,	Pocono Farms/Glenmaura National	77
John Mekilo/Matt Torrisi,	Glen Oak/Scranton Canoe Club	79

Mazur defeated Huntsville's Bill Lydick and Bob Gill of the host club to take the Senior Division (par 71, 6,268 yards). Both teams tied at 3-under-par 68. In the Super-Senior Division (par 71, 6,034 yards), Wyoming Valley Country Club's Richard Berry and Joseph Weiscarger won with a score of 5-under-par 66.

The Ben Marshall Spring Four-Ball is a better-ball-of-partners.

## SENIOR DIVISION

Name	club	Score
Tom Mitchell/Mike Pettitt,	Tyoga Golf Course	62
Bob Andrejko/Steve Mazur,	StoneHedge Golf Assn.	63
Bill Lydick/Bob Gill,	Huntsville Golf Club/Fox Hill Country Club	64
Joseph Orsulak/Mark Choi,	Olde Homestead/Saucon Valley	65
Chris Kearney/Gerard Byron,	Honesdale Golf Club/Emanon	65
Mark Bartkowski/Mike Bartkowski,	Pocono Farms/Wemberly Hills	66
Tom Sohns/Mark Ambrose,	Elmhurst Country Club	66
Kenn Bolcavage/William Pabst, Sr.,	Elkview/Elmhurst	67
Paul Gruzski/Jim Sherma,	Elkview/Hershey Country Club	67
Fran Hamm/Jerry Dougherty,	Scranton/Scranton Canoe Club	67
Mike Domanish/Edward Knight,	Elmhurst Country Club	70
Bill McDermott/Dave Torrisi,	Scranton Canoe Club	72

## SUPER-SENIOR DIVISION

Name	club	Score
Joseph Weiscarger/Richard Berry,	Wyoming Valley Country Club	63
Michael Mulcahey/David Kohler,	Tyoga Golf Course	64
John Tolerico/Michael Heck,	Elkview Country Club	65
Michael Vassil/Brian Corbett,	Country Club of Scranton	66
Joe Nespoli/John Nespoli,	Berwick/Lehigh Country Club	67
Bill Burkavage/John Voigt,	Country Club of Scranton	68
John Martines/John Gershey, Jr.,	Country Club of Scranton	68
Robin Bonda/Tom Miller,	StoneHedge/Elmhurst Country Club	68
William Erskine/Thomas Brennan,	Philadelphia Publinks/Moselem	69
Len Coleman/Gene Chiavacci,	Emanon Country Club	69
Charles Gelso/Charles Brand,	Huntsville Golf Club	69
Walter Savitts/Anthony Andrejko,	Wemberly Hills/StoneHedge	69
Robin McCool/Craig Scott,	Saucon Valley/Glen Brook Golf Club	70
Barry Westington/Pat Farrell,	Scranton/Glen Oak Country Club	71
Stanley Cuneo/Gordon Kent,	Woodloch Springs	72

\* — won in scorecard playoff



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## AFTER MAKING HIS GOLF MARK AROUND THE WORLD DANA FRY HAS HIS EYE ON GREATEST PROJECT YET

By TONY LEODORA

Ronald Reagan started out as a play-by-play baseball announcer on radio. Crooner Perry Como was a barber. Bob Hope was a boxer, long before he ever told his first joke.

As a member of the University of Arizona golf team, Dana Fry's focus for his career path was strictly on playing golf. After all, he had just set the course record (64) at Randolph Park in Tucson, then went home to Kansas City in the summer and set another course record (62) at Minor Park golf course.

In 1983, the summer before his senior year, Fry met Andy Banfield, lead designer for renowned golf course architect Tom Fazio. The meeting turned into a summer job offer, working on the monumental project at Ventana Canyon Golf and Raquet Club in Tucson. The project was one of the greatest technological efforts of its time. While Fazio and Banfield created golf holes by blasting through the rock walls of the canyon, Fry had the less exciting job of flagging Saguaro cacti for transplanting before the blasting took place.



Dana Fry

Soon he learned how to operate a bulldozer and became engulfed in the intricacies of golf course design. Fry never finished his studies at Arizona. He put his golf clubs aside, for the most part, and went to work full-time for Fazio. His real education had only begun.

He worked alongside visionary Fazio disciple Mike Strantz, most notably at Callawassie Island near Hilton Head.

In 1988 an offer came along to join Dr. Michael Hurdzan and his architectural firm. Their first great joint project was Devil's Pulpit in Canada. Two years later they followed with another course, Devil's Paintbrush, in the same area.

During the golf course building boom of the 1990's and early 2000's, the Hurdzan/Fry team created more than 100 courses, the vast majority of them in the United States.

Many were located in America's Northeast – well-known courses such as Shelter Harbor in Rhode Island, Fieldstone in

Delaware, Glenmaura National in Northern Pennsylvania, Jericho National in New Hope, PA, Olde Stonewall near Pittsburgh and the Militia Hill Course at famed Philadelphia Cricket Club. He also did a unique design in 1999 at Sand Barrens in South Jersey, a course that was purchased 20 years later and dramatically re-designed by Fry as Union League National.

The crown jewel of that era was Erin Hills in Wisconsin. Opened in 2007, it hosted the U.S. Open only 10 years later and stands as one of the great courses of the Upper Midwest region of the country.

In 2012 Fry ended his partnership with Hurdzan and joined with Jason Straka, who had worked in the Hurdzan/Fry ranks for 17 years. The new Fry/Straka team took their talents worldwide.

They now have courses in many exotic locations such as Abu Dhabi, China, Vietnam, Italy and more to come. Fry even moved to Hong Kong for five years to cultivate the very active Asian golf market. But in 2013 he returned to the United States and made Naples, Florida his home.

It was a natural move. Two of Fry's greatest accomplishments were his designs at Calusa Pines and Naples National. The two courses are universally regarded as the Nos. 1 and 2 courses in all of Southwest Florida.

And it led to Fry's involvement in what might turn out to be his greatest project yet.



Course Rendering Along Myakka River

Miakka Golf Club (spelling taken from the old Indian name), located about 30 miles east of Sarasota, Florida is a project of mammoth proportions.

Start with the fact that it already has TerraNova Equestrian Center, one of the most magnificent equestrian centers in Florida. Now add the fact that the entire golf project will engulf an unheard of 1,100 acres for the course, short course, practice area and putting course.

Miakka Golf Club is the brainchild of Steve Herrig, an entrepreneur and CEO of a large insurance company in nearby Bradenton. His first connection was to bring his Bradenton neighbor and former PGA Champion Paul Azinger onboard as a consultant.

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Choosing an architect was a more difficult task. After conducting a national search, and with direction from Azinger, he decided on Fry/Straka.



Steve Herrig and Paul Azinger

"It was clear to me, relatively quickly, that Dana and Jason were very highly organized and they complement each other perfectly," said Herrig at the ground breaking ceremony in April. "Dana is sort of the mad scientist and Jason is the technical expert."

Once that partnership had been formed, Fry picked up the ball and ran with it. "My goal is to make this course the best golf course in all of Florida, if not the world," was Fry's bold statement from the outset.

That kind of goal is impossible without a like-minded commitment from the owner.

"The one common trait – well, we have a lot of common traits – but the one that has the most effect on this project is our passion for building the very best golf course that we can do." said Fry. "That came across in very short

fashion. I've been doing this for a long time and, now that I have gotten to know Steve, he is the most committed owner I have ever seen."

That commitment extends the clubhouse and cabins, designed by renowned Pennsylvania architect Mark Myers in a "Florida Cracker" style with large porches and weathered wood. The fairways and tees will use Stadium Zoysia, an expensive strain of grass that allows the ball to sit up and provides perfect lies. The greens will feature the finest bermuda hybrid strain of grass.

While the club is meant to promote an intimate relaxed atmosphere, make no mistake, it is ultra-exclusive. All memberships are by invitation only and each prospective member must meet with Herrig first.

Since the course runs along a two-mile stretch of the Myakka River, the environment also is of utmost concern. Rather than cut down trees, large live oak trees were uprooted and transplanted to other parts of the property. About 350 acres of the property are being preserved as native areas. Drainage is a major design concern and the grass will require about a third less water to maintain.

"Relocating live oak trees is only part of the effort to maintain the natural environment here," explained Straka, who is the engineering mind behind the project. "Since the Myakka River is a protected river, everything we do has to get filtered. Even all of the drainage will go into filtration areas. People won't even know about them when they are playing golf but they are there."

If it seems as if every aspect of making Miakka Golf Club one of the grandest projects in the world has been considered ... well, it has. Fry's career has brought him around the world and now back to Southwest Florida, where he makes his home. The grand plan – along with the leadership of Herrig and the consulting expertise of Azinger – all points toward a golf statement that will be heard around the world.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025 ... and golfers everywhere are waiting to see it.

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