

GOLFChicago

Chicago's Premier Multimedia Golf Source & Authority

March 2014, Vol. 18 No. 1



Chicago Golf Show

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Elevated Experiences At Lake Tahoe

Destination: Lake of the Ozarks

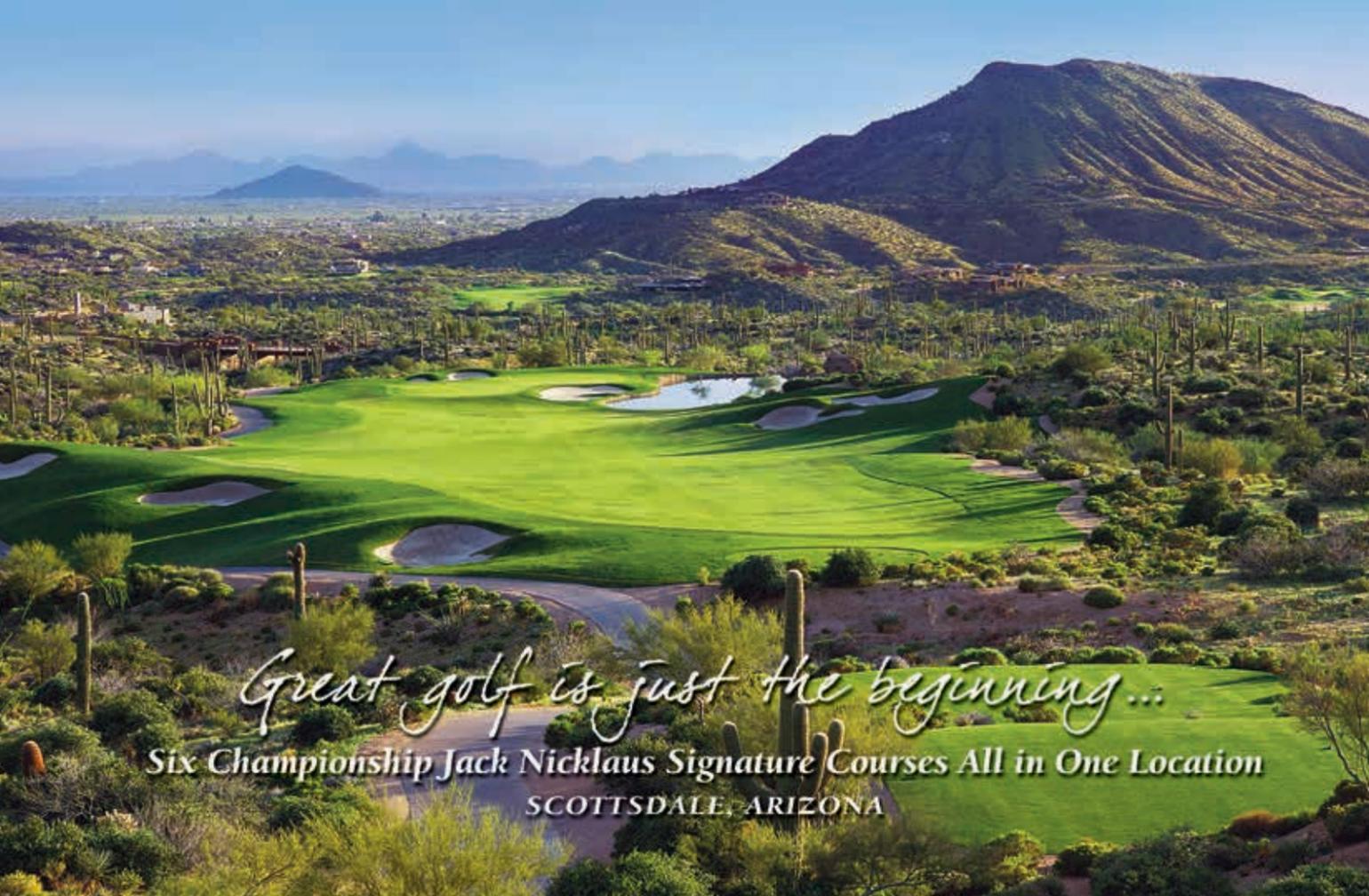


New Fore 2014: Driver Review

Dave Pelz: Short Game Advisor
Beyond Bunkers



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Features

6 31st Chicago Golf Show

Main Stage Schedule
Directory of Exhibitors
Show Floor Plan

20 Elevated Experiences

Lake Tahoe Golf
By Greg Jourdan

30 The Magnificent Six

Six Big Sticks That Offer a Mighty Bang



Squaw Creek Hole 5 Photo: Rod Hanna

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Departments

- 5 **Notes from Greg and Dave**
- 12 **The Good Stuff**
New Products
- 14 **Dave Pelz**
Short Game Advisor
- 16 **She Got Game**
Women and Golf
- 18 **The Fitness Edge**
Training for Better Golf
- 24 **Beyond Bunkers**
Golf Architecture
- 26 **Sweet Home Chicago**
News from the City and 'Burbs
- 32 **Members Only**
Flick Performance Center
- 34 **Destinations**
Central Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks,
- 36 **Profiles**
Bettinardi's Studio B
- 38 **Swing Alchemist**
Jason Guss on Enhanced Performance
- 39 **GOLFChicago Map and Directory**
- 44 **On the Shelf**
Golf Between the Covers
- 45 **On the Corkscrews**
Notes from the World of Wine
- 46 **From the Fringe**
Jim Owczarski on the PGA Tour

NOTES FROM GREG AND DAVE

This year's Chicago Golf Show is presenting golfers with fewer options. Oh, don't get us wrong, the resorts, courses, and equipment are here in force. However, we all remember those years when Mother Nature raised the mercury and Chicagoland's most fanatic golfers were on the course, not at the show.

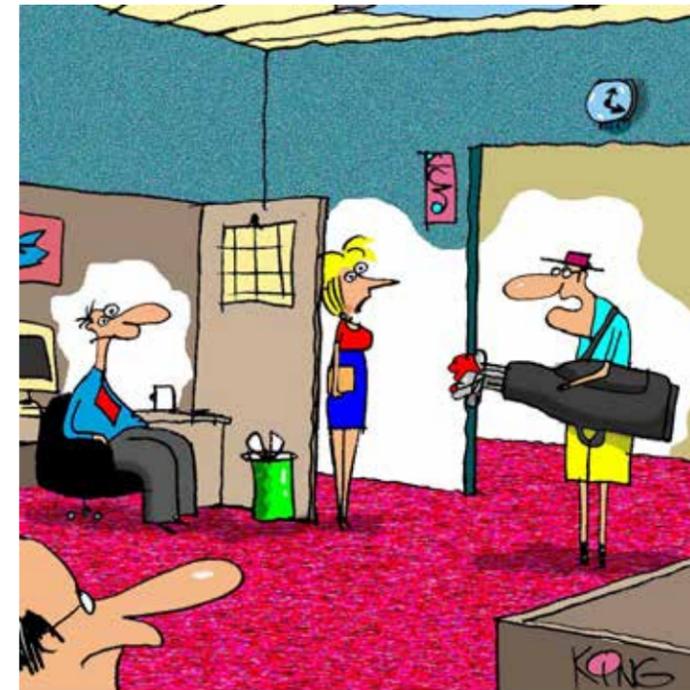
If you are a "glass is half full" optimist, The Golf Channel and indoor golf have kept your head in the game. The other half of the glass will not jump into the season until the turf begins to fly around their golf spikes. We will see both parties in attendance at the Chicago Golf Show. It is what makes this event our 2014 season kick-off. The talk rarely falls to Jay Cutler because you are looking for a new 3-wood. Chatter down the aisles isn't centered on snow drifts because you are on point to find that golf-away destination for the gang.

The aisles are full of golfers. Period. Each year we cherish the small talk that is chipped into our booth. There are three questions that we can toss out to our golf show patrons while they are within earshot:

- #1 What is your home course?
- #2 Are you going anywhere this year?
- #3 Where are the best deals?

Question #1 is the equivalent of asking someone about their kids. Even if we have played that course, it is better to hear this individual's review. These reviews are genuine and loaded with course management advice.

Question #2 is usually an ear-opening conversation about destinations on golf's main thor-



"Due to corporate cutbacks, we're all going to have to sacrifice. Which is why I'm only playing nine holes today, instead of my customary 18."

oughfares of travel. Or, we hear the personal stories about buddy trips to places with names that resemble hunting lodges. It is those buddy trips that carry the most distance with us. The dyed-in-the-wool golfer wants to play great courses; however, the course plays second fiddle to the history of the experience. We hear:

"My dad and his friends started going there..."

"We went there so the families could..."

"They give us a room for cards..."

While your home track is still under a few feet of snow, try to remember that new memories are taking root in the exhibitor booths across the Donald J. Stephens Center. We hear that data insists that golf participation is on the decline. Just one look around the Chicago Golf Show is proof that golfers are still whacking white balls across Chicagoland. Welcome to the show!

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*At participating golf courses

GOLFChicago

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Learn How to Hit Your Shots 10 Yards Further and Straighter

The Chicago Golf Show is excited to welcome another great lineup of teaching professionals to the 2014 Daily Herald Main Stage. Stop by to meet and learn from PGA Touring Professional Jeff Sluman and All-Pro Kicker Robbie Gould of the Chicago Bears. Both will be appearing with Mark Roling, NBC/Golf Channel on-course and tower analyst, on Saturday, February 22.

When our IPGA teaching pros take the stage, each of

them will focus on a specific aspect of the game: Pitching and Chipping, Irons, Hybrids and Woods and Driver. Pick the seminar that helps your golf game the most. Their instruction will be keyed to give you tips and tactics you can use immediately at the driving range or on the course to hit your shots 10 yards further and straighter!

View our full schedule below. And remember, all sessions of the Daily Herald Main Stage are free!

Thirty-one years later, the Chicago Golf Show is still the cure for "cabin fever."

Founded in 1984, the Chicago Golf Show always has maintained a late-winter position on the city's event calendar, serving as a beacon of Spring to those starved for sun, fun, and a lower handicap.

This year, though, cabin fever has lasted longer and claimed more victims than in most other years.

As of early February, Chicago's winter of 2013-14 had already produced 60 inches of snow, 34 days of "measurable" snow, 22 days of sub-zero temperatures and four consecutive months of below-normal cold temperatures.

The denizens of our estimable "city in a garden" also have learned a new meteorological term to describe such "cold-gone-wild" madness: the Polar Vortex. Sure, it sounds like the title of one of those futuristic movies, except that the effects have been real.

This year, the Encompass Championship presented by Career Builder is the Presenting Sponsor of the Chicago Golf Show, whose antidotes to cabin fever include former PGA Champion Jeff Sluman, All-Pro kicker Robbie Gould, and NBC/Golf Channel broadcaster Mark Roling.

"Attendees at the 2014 Chicago Golf Show presented by the Encompass Championship will have exciting opportunities to see a terrific lineup of high-profile stars from various sports, all of whom have at least one thing in common: they love golf," said show organizer Tom Corcoran.

Sluman is the third major champion

to appear at the Chicago Golf Show since 2008, when John Daly, winner of the 1991 PGA, rocked the convention center. Former Masters champion Craig Stadler—defending champion at this year's Encompass Championship—appeared in 2012.

Sluman and Gould will meet and greet fans with Roling in the expansive Golf Hawaii booth area, and are scheduled to appear on the Daily Herald Golf Academy Stage. Longtime Chicago Golf Show headliner Marty Joyce also will be back on the Academy Stage with his exciting trick shot show. WGN radio morning show host Steve Cochran will join well-known Illinois PGA pro Emil Esposito on the stage. And some of the Chicago area's top instructors, including Joe Bosco, Louis Sauer, and Dan Kochevar and others will be giving instruction there, too.

For the fifth consecutive year, everyone who attends the Chicago Golf Show is eligible to receive a free round of golf, courtesy of GolfVisions, which operates 11 courses in the Chicago area.

"It's our understanding that free golf is the perfect antidote for cabin fever," Corcoran said with a smile.

Meanwhile, the Encompass Championship will be offering half-price tickets at its booth to this year's tournament, June 16-22, at North Shore Country Club in Glenview. Sluman will be back in the field to challenge Stadler, and Gould will be playing as a celebrity for the second consecutive year.

A major reason people attend the Chicago Golf Show is to get bargain-basement prices on name-brand clubs, balls, shoes, golf bags, apparel, and more. Equipment from Titleist, TaylorMade,

Callaway, Nike, Mizuno, Adams, Tour Edge, and more is available at discounts so deep buyers can't help but leave the show with a heightened sense of self-esteem.

At the indoor Demo area, attendees can hit the latest clubs from top manufacturers, learn more about the products, and find out about getting fitted for clubs by top clubfitters onsite.

Over the course of the three-day show, some 50 Illinois PGA pros will give free one-on-one lessons on the full-swing, short game and putting.

The Illinois Junior Golf Association again will organize scavenger hunts for younger show attendees, whose search for various items will introduce them to many aspects of the show. Juniors and their parents also can find out how to join the IJGA and compete in tournaments across the area with youngsters their age.

The Chicago Golf Show also provides an opportunity for attendees to learn about domestic and international golf resort destinations. It is understood that many resorts located in warmer climates have openings now!

The Daily Herald Golf Academy Stage features top players and instructors who will help attendees learn how to hit the ball farther and straighter as well as how to sink more putts.

Another perennial fan favorite is the famous Long Putt Contest, the proceeds of which go to charity. Players pay three dollars for three balls to try to make the 85-foot putt. They usually don't, but when they do, the crowd goes wild, and the winner gets prizes.

All these fun activities serve as the perfect therapy for cabin fever.

Friday, February 21st

- 12:30 p.m. Ian Hughes, GolfTEC
The Irons
- 1:30 p.m. Louis Sauer, Northmoor Country Club
Woods and the Driver
- 2:30 p.m. Kevin Weeks, Cog Hill Country Club
Pitching and Chipping
- 3:30 p.m. John Andrews, Pine Meadow Golf Club
2013 Illinois PGA Teacher of the Year
Full Swing Irons and Knockdowns
- 4:30 p.m. Dan Kochevar, Oak Brook Golf Club
Hybrids

Saturday, February 22nd

- 10:15 a.m. Tony Tinetti, Bonnie Brook Country Club
The Irons
- 11:15 a.m. Steve Cochran from WGN Radio mornings
Emil Esposito, The Glen Club
- 12:30 p.m. Jeff Sluman, PGA Touring Professional



During his 23-year PGA Tour career, Jeff Sluman won six tournaments, including the 1988 PGA Championship, one of golf's four Grand Slam titles. Since joining the Champions Tour in late 2007, the longtime resident of Chicago's western suburbs has five victories and 55 top-10 finishes, including a second-place finish at this year's season opener in Hawaii.

Appearing with Mark Roling, NBC/Golf Channel on-course and tower analyst.

Appearance courtesy of Golf Hawaii, booth # 1341.

- 1:30 p.m. Marty Joyce's Trick Shot Show

Saturday, February 22nd

- 2:30 p.m. Robbie Gould, All-Pro Kicker



On the field, Robbie Gould is the 3rd most accurate kicker in NFL history and the first place kicker in Chicago Bears history to be selected to the Pro Bowl after leading all kickers with 143 points during the 2006 season. Off the field, Robbie is founder of The Goulden Touch, a public charity that gifted close to \$300,000 to local Chicagoland and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, charities in 2013. The Goulden Touch hosts an annual celebrity golf tournament, The Robbie Gould Celebrity Invitational, which raises funds for different local charities.

Appearing with Mark Roling, NBC/Golf Channel on-course and tower analyst.

Appearance courtesy of Golf Hawaii, booth # 1341.

- 3:30 p.m. John McCartin, Chicagoland Golf Academy presented by Illinois Junior Golf Association
Woods and the Driver



Sunday, February 23rd

- 10:00 a.m. Joe Bosco, JoeBoscoGolf, The Glen Club
Pitching and Chipping
- 12:00 p.m. Connie DeMattia, Cantigny Golf
Woods and the Driver
- 1:00 p.m. Marty Joyce's Trick Shot Show
- 2:30 p.m. John Platt, Mistwood Country Club presented by Illinois Junior Golf Association
The Irons





2014 Exhibitors

| | |
|---|-------------|
| 2015 PGA Championship | 915 |
| 360 FG | 612 |
| Alabama Tourism Department | 1105 |
| Big Moss Golf Inc. | 625 |
| Billy Casper Golf | 1335 |
| Blackstone Golf Club | 1406 |
| Boyne Resorts | 1020 |
| Brighton Dale Links / Petrifying Springs Golf Course | 1313 |
| Brookwood Golf Course | 800 |
| Brown Deer Park Golf Course | 519 |
| Budget Golf. | 218 |
| Callaway Golf | Mat 6 |
| Cam Golf. | 1017 |
| Central Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks Golf Council | 1317 |
| Charleston Golf, Inc. | 806 |
| Chicago District Golf Association. | 1003 |
| Chicago Gutterglove LLC. | 620 |
| Chicago Tribune | 1214 |
| Chicagoland Golf. | 1415 |
| Chicagoland Golf Club | 406 |
| Chiro One Wellness Centers | 517 |
| Christmas Mountain Village | 1208 |
| Chula Vista Golf Resort | 1428 |
| Cleveland Golf/Srixon. | Mat 5 |
| CLUBSHIELDS. | 1328 |
| CMX Promotions | 908 |
| Coachman's Golf Resort. | 1127 |
| Coastal Golfaway Productions | 201 |
| COG HILL GOLF & C.C.. | 1010 |
| Crane's Landing Golf Club at Lincolnshire Marriott Resort | 923 |
| David Musty Putters | 412 |
| Decatur Area CVB | 1126 |
| Deerfield Golf Club | 727 |
| Devil's Head Resort | 1323 |
| Dominican Republic Tourism Board | 1411 |
| Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa | 400 |
| Eaglewood Resort and Spa | 416 |
| Eleven Main Golf, LLC | 1247 |
| Encompass Championship | 801 |
| Erin Hills | 1120 |
| Explore Minnesota Golf Alliance | 606 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| FitGolf Performance Center - Chicago (Formerly Body Balance for Performance) | 1326 |
| Florida Golf. | 1101 |
| Forest Dunes Golf Club | 1026 |
| Forever Sunglasses | 1110 |
| Foss Park Golf Course | 432 |
| Fox Hills Golf Resort and Conference Center / Fox Hills Resort | 1006 |
| Fox Run Golf Links. | 604 |
| Francisco Grande Resort & Golf Club. | 913 |
| French Lick Resort | 1107 |
| Fuzzy Zoeller's Covered Bridge & Champions Point Golf Clubs | 211 |
| GameDay Experiences | 525 |
| Gaylord Golf Mecca | 1100 |
| Geneva National Golf Club | 725 |
| GOLFChicago Magazine | 1319 |
| Golf Digest | Entrance |
| Golf Headquarters | 227 |
| Golf Now! Chicago | 1530 |
| Golf Pipeline | 1315 |
| Golf Pride / Northern Golf | 1528 |
| My Golf Concierge | 1404 |
| Golfdotz™ | 1128 |
| Golfer's Outlet | 210 |
| Golfing Nevada Magazine / Golf Mesquite Nevada | 401 |
| Golfsmith | 1435 |
| GolfTEC | 1350 |
| GolfTime Magazine | 705 |
| Golfvisions | 420 |
| Golfweek Amateur Tour | 1522 |
| Grand Geneva Resort | 1108 |
| Grand Traverse Resort and Spa | 1106 |
| Great Indiana Golf Packages | 1224 |
| Green Grass Clubfitting | Mat 2 |
| GroupGolfer.com | 1300 |
| Gull Lake Inn | 1118 |
| Gull Lake View Golf Club & Resorts, Inc. | 808 |
| Hamilton County Convention and Visitors Bureau / Indiana's Premier Golf Country | 1014 |
| Happy Feet | 1123 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Hawk's Eye Golf Resort | 1114 |
| Hawk's View Golf Club | 1228 |
| Hi End Golf. | 1232 |
| Hilton Chicago / Indian Lakes Resort | 1514 |
| Horseshoe Bay Resort | 624 |
| Hot Springs Village | 909 |
| Home Team Golf.com | 217 |
| iGadget | 616 |
| iGadget | 1229 |
| Illinois Junior Golf Association (IJGA) | 900 |
| Illinois PGA | 1205 |
| Impact Optics USA | 826 |
| Indiana Golf & Travel Guide | 1012 |
| ING Financial Partners. | 608 |
| JumboMax Golf Grips | 1450 |
| Kinley's Golf Sales | 825 |
| L & N International LLC | 1117 |
| Lafayette - West Lafayette Convention & Visitors Bureau. | 1008 |
| Lake Barrington Shores Golf Club | 418 |
| Lake Cumberland Golf Club & Resort | 1409 |
| Lake Lawn Resort | 408 |
| Lake Tansi Golf Course | 507 |
| Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. | 1025 |
| Let's Golf Travel Network | 1301 |
| Lost Marsh Golf Course | 513 |
| Lotus Golf Art | 1421 |
| Lowcountry Golf Course Owners Association | 500 |
| Lyons Golf | 200 |
| Makray Memorial Golf Club | 1201 |
| Maple Hill Golf Course | 601 |
| Maple Hill Golf Course | 1032 |
| Marengo Ridge Golf Club | 1526 |
| Mastershield Gutter Protection | 1218 |
| Metamora Fields Golf Club | 1027 |
| Midlothian Country Club. | 203 |
| Midwest Golfing Magazine | 1121 |
| Mississippi Tourism | 903 |
| Mistwood Golf Club. | 1512 |
| Mizuno USA | Mat 4 |
| Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday | 501 |
| Nevada Bob's. | 222 |
| North Iowa Golf | 813 |
| Northern Bay Resort. | 921 |
| Northwoods Golf Trail. | 610 |
| Oak Terrace Resort & Spa | 1227 |
| Oasis Eyewear | 1329 |
| Orange Whip Trainer | 1449 |
| Pheasant Run Resort | 1216 |
| Power Home Remodeling Group | 1210 |
| Pre-Driven Golf Balls Co. | 819 |
| Prescription Golf LLP. | 1429 |
| Prosperity Capital Advisors | 1424 |
| ProVisional Shot. | 1220 |
| PSA Sports Auctions | 619 |
| PSP Golf | 213 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Quad Cities Golf Destination. | 509 |
| RadiusRoll Putters (formerly R & B Putters, Hammy Putter, Inc.) | 1422 |
| Renewal By Andersen | 1015 |
| Robo Golf Pro. | 427 |
| Rolfing Sports | 1341 |
| Score72 LLC | 1206 |
| SentryWorld | 824 |
| Serola Biomechanics | 1129 |
| Shanty Creek | 1113 |
| Sharp Golf Ball Co. | 1002 |
| Shepherds Crook - Shiloh Park Golf Courses | 404 |
| SilverLeaf Resorts, Inc. | 911 |
| SKLZ | 1133 |
| Southern Destinations | 1109 |
| Southwest Tech | 614 |
| Spirit Hollow G.C.. | 1222 |
| Summerwinds Resort Services | 1327 |
| Sundance Vacations. | 521 |
| Sundance Vacations. | 1408 |
| Swan Lake Resort | 1204 |
| Synthetic Turf of Illinois. | 600 |
| Tauer & Johnson | 1307 |
| TaylorMade Performance Labs | Mat 3 |
| Texas Bound For Golf | 505 |
| The Bull at Pinehurst Farms | 1425 |
| The Chicago Institute for Health and Wellness | 1321 |
| The Golf Courses of Lawsonia | 925 |
| The Landings Club on Skidaway Island | 1516 |
| The Net Return | 1007 |
| The Perfect 4-Some / Sweetgrass, Timberstone, Greywalls and You | 1305 |
| The Resorts of Tullymore & St. Ives | 820 |
| The Village Links of Glen Ellyn | 1518 |
| Thoroughbred Golf Club. | 515 |
| Tour Edge Golf | 1235 |
| Tour Edge Golf | Mat 7 |
| Traditions at Chevy Chase | 410 |
| Trappers Turn Golf Club | 1024 |
| Traverse City Tourism | 1111 |
| Treps Golf, LLC dba Whispering Springs Club | 1412 |
| Turf Systems Inc. | 1217 |
| U.S. Kids Golf. | Mat 1 |
| Vacation Reservation Center | 707 |
| Versagolfer | 618 |
| WeaverRidge Golf Club | 1011 |
| Weston Golf Co. | 1137 |
| Whistling Straits and Blackwolf Run / The American Club Resort | 915 |
| White Pines Golf Dome | 209 |
| Williamson County Tourism Bureau | 1119 |
| Windowworks/Homewerks | 1230 |
| Wyndham Hotels & Resorts | 701 |
| Xfinity | 1510 |
| Yarrow Golf and Conference Center | 1116 |



2014 Show Floor





Hats Off To Antigua

Keeping a cool head on the course just became a few degrees easier. Performance apparel company Antigua has added hats to their 2014 collection. This season's spring line includes seven hat styles that include the company's Desert Dry and Desert Dry Xtra-Lite moisture-management technology. The new lids are included in the Performance 72 collection, which includes 17 shirt styles, 12 outerwear tops, and two shorts. While 72 is par for most courses, Performance 72 betters par with vibrant colors and a variety of styles.

www.antigua.com

Covering Your Swing

Water is the key to the new cover on Bridgestone's B-330 golf balls. The Tour B330 family includes the RX line that is ideal for golfers with swing speeds under 105 mph. Golfers will enjoy a distance surge with the new Hydro Core technology. Bridgestone infused water into the core and its engineers discovered that it produced 30% more gradation. This means more "real" distance and improved accuracy due to spin reduction from the inner and outer core regions.

For better players, the company's B330 line continues to rack up victories on the PGA TOUR. The four-piece cover construction and Dual Dimple technology provides more greenside spin, while delivering unbelievable distance off the tee. With the B330 line that includes the RX and RX-S, golfers will have the ammunition to play their best with a ball suited for their swings.

\$45 a dozen www.bridgestonegolf.com



Here's The Beef

PGA and LPGA Tour caddie Jeff King is the snack man for the health-conscious Tour stars. King's homemade beef jerky was a commodity on the Tour. The cultlike demand was over 170 pounds per week during the season. Players like Tiger Woods, Ricky Fowler, Dustin Johnson, and Matt Kuchar enjoyed King's efforts because his jerky was healthy and a great source of protein.

KINGMADE Jerky has grown from a side business to a consumer product. His jerky recipe has five times less sodium and sugar than his competitors, and KINGMADE Jerky does not add any MSG or nitrates. KINGMADE Jerky is a gourmet jerky made from 100% flank steak. The result is a tender strip that crumbles as you chew. Just like the Tours biggest stars, Jeff King's tasty treats will be a fixture in our golf bags for the new season!

\$8 www.kingmadejerky.com



Dial In the Fairway

The Oven, Nike Golf's R&D facility, has taken innovation and their Tour data to a new level for single-digit handicappers. The new VRS Covert 2.0 Tour fairway woods are baked with game-changing improvements that begin with Nike's High-Speed Cavity Back. The redistribution of weight, along with a new profile, produces less spin with a higher launch angle. This results in more distance and accuracy. The stock Mitsubishi Rayon's Kuro Kage 70 graphite shaft provides more stability with a Titanium Nickel fiber in the tip section, which means better players can count on the VRS Covert 2.0 Tour to perform right off the rack without an post-market upgrade.

\$249 www.nikegolf.com

App of the Month

The USGA is offering free access to the 2014 Rules of Golf App until April 1st. No joke! The App was created for mobile devices and will be a resource to all golfers when drops, intention, and oscillations become a bone of contention in competition. Available for iOS devices and Android software, simply visit Apple's App Store or Google's Play Store.



Enter The Grind Matrix

There is no spoon...or niblick or rutting iron, for that matter. The new Titleist Vokey Milled 5 Spin wedges are the gold standard for scoring irons. With precisely designed TX3 grooves, the SM5 wedges generate more spin and absolute control with a seven percent increase in groove volume. Their Tour-proven grind and bounce matrix remain the industry standard, and are one of the reasons 40-something Steve Stricker is still the best Tour player when attacking pins inside of 120 yards.

Available March 1, Vokey's latest scoring sticks have a new, compact profile and three finish options (Tour Chrome, Gold Nickel, and Raw Black). These sticks will turn heads on the course, and the SM5 wedges will chew-up a few more greens, too.

\$129 www.vokey.com



Fly High and Land Soft

I've come up with countless ways to save strokes around the greens over the years. If I had to pick the most effective, I'd take the short-to-long pitch.

As the name suggests, you hit it by making a short backswing and a much longer through-swing. The combination produces extra loft and softer-landing shots, and who doesn't want that in their short game? Better yet, it gives you more-consistent yardages, because it makes you control distance with the length of your backswing, not by swinging faster or slower. Manipulating swing speed is a sure way to catch the shot fat or thin and leave it miles from the pin.

When hitting a wedge, weekend players tend to make the opposite of the short-to-long swing.

Say you're attempting a 20-yard pitch over a bunker. High-handicappers tend to take a long backswing (mostly habit from practicing full swings). But since you want to hit the ball only 20 yards, you are forced to decelerate on the downswing, which cuts your follow-through ridiculously short. You end up in a classic "long-to-short" finish and the results are not very pretty.

A short backswing gives you the confidence to properly accelerate through impact and produce a longer follow-through. Your finish makes it look like you're hitting the ball a long way, but because you paired it with a short backswing, it flew only 20 yards.

This is easy stuff, folks. The only challenge is knowing how far you're taking the club back, because your eyes are focused on the ball, not your backswing. So have a buddy watch you. Ask him to compare the length of your backswing to the length of your through-swing, and check that the former is shorter than the latter. A simple "yes" or "no" will do. If you don't get this right, you'll struggle, which is why most Tour players ask their caddies to watch them hit balls on the range. Even for elite players, the difference between feel and real can be massive. Nothing accelerates improvement like good feedback. In terms of hitting less-than-full-swing wedges, you may be wondering, "Should I ever swing long to short?" Yes—when the ball is buried in a bunker. Stay tuned. We'll talk about that in another lesson.



INSTRUCTION

SHORT
GAME
ADVISOR



Dave Pelz



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Wildcat Women's Golf: BIG 10, BIG Dreams

For Head Coach Emily Fletcher, being at Northwestern and entering her sixth season at the helm is the culmination of a big dream to take the women's golf program where it has never gone before and to continue to garner the program national attention. After one of its most successful seasons ever, Coach Fletcher is proud to represent and showcase her coalition of players from around the country as evidenced by this year's roster, and continuing with the recent announcement about who's joining the squad next year...namely two of the highest ranked junior players in the country. But, let's not head to next year just yet as there's plenty to praise about the 2013-14 Wildcats and their esteemed head coach who many simply call "Em."

The greatest compliment you can pay to any collegiate coach is that they have made a "name" for their program. Coaches like John Wooden, Pat Summitt, and Kelly Amonte-Hiller of Northwestern Women's Lacrosse are all giants in their fields and one truly feels that the way Fletcher is recruiting and leading her squads, her name might one day join the likes of those big name coaches. The facts tell the story — Northwestern has qualified for four straight NCAA Regionals. In the 2010-11 season, she was named Big Ten Co-Coach of the Year, the first Wildcat head coach to ever receive such an honor. She also earned Big Ten Coach of the Year honors in 2013 after leading Northwestern to a tie of its first Big Ten title ever in the program's history.

Last year, the Wildcats made their fourth consecutive NCAA appearance under Fletcher's tutelage, playing at the NCAA East Regional and on the final day jumped from 10th place to 6th carding a team total 4-under 284 thus qualifying for the NCAA Championships for only the second time in Wildcat women's golf history. The Cats finished 15th at the NCAA's Championship, outplaying four teams ranked in the nation's top 20.

Fletcher's squads have been successful in each of her seasons at the helm and the program is garnering national attention as can be proven with the late 2013 announcement of the signing of two of the country's top junior golfers. Sarah Cho and Hannah Kim (both of California) have signed letters

of intent to play for Northwestern in the fall of 2014. Cho is ranked No. 4 and Kim is ranked No. 9 in the nation.

We've been seeing the words "history," "success," and "Coach of the Year" tossed in Fletcher's direction. Not surprising with the impressive resume she brought into the job at Northwestern—she has over 20 years of experience teaching and coaching, including nine years mentoring on the LPGA Tour and serving as the swing instructor for now-retired tour player Jenny Lidback who won the 1995 DuMaurier Classic (a major at the time), and also had 20 top-10 finishes. Fletcher also held the position of assistant tournament director for the Wachovia Betsy King Classic from 1996-2004, and then she was asked by King to join her staff for the 2007 Solheim Cup held in Sweden (which the U.S. squad won on foreign soil!). Fletcher has spent the last 20 years with the Glen View Club as director of instruction, teaching pro, and assistant manager for golf operations. A 1987 graduate of Ferris State University,

Fletcher was an AIAW Division II All-American in 1981 and has been a member of the PGA since 1987, and was also named as a favorite instructor in *Golf for Women* magazine in 1997.

With such an impressive background in golf, Fletcher was expected to do well

SHE GOT GAME

Sherri Warren

at Northwestern, and with the results her teams are posting, she has far exceeded those expectations and then some. The Coach's philosophy shines through in a recent statement made through the university, "these are exciting times for our program and you



can feel the energy and desire of our team to continually improve and accomplish all that they are capable of achieving." Nicely said Coach, and it's a proven fact that those Big 10 dreams are becoming a reality thanks to your passion for excellence as exemplified by your golfers' performances. Go Cats!

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Add Kettlebells To Your Workout

Winter has delivered an especially brutal blow this year and, unless you are traveling, golf is several months away. However, now is the time to prepare your body for the perfect drive with the brand new driver that is waiting patiently in your golf bag. Whether that involves using the gym membership you purchased after the New Year or exercising at home, consider adding kettlebells to your exercise routine.

Kettlebells have been used for centuries and typically have a handle that is attached to a weight. The shape and weight distribution of the kettlebell allows a golfer to emphasize muscles in a different way than dumbbells. Many traditional exercises can be modified to enhance a golfer's game. Kettlebells have a wide range of weight, varying from a few pounds to over 100 pounds, but for most people weight ranging from 5 pounds to 20 pounds will meet most of their exercise needs.

A squat with a diagonal overhead lift utilizes muscles throughout the body and addresses the golf swing by moving in multiple planes, stressing the core, shoulders, and grip. The exercise starts with the kettlebell at the side of the right foot. Squat and reach your hands to the right while maintaining a neutral position of the spine and your knees in line with the toes (figure 1). Lift the weight by using your legs and trunk muscle, and in one fluid motion lift the kettlebell overhead and to the left as if you were placing it on a shelf (figure 2). Keep the kettlebell parallel to your forearms during the movement to strengthen your grip. Once you have fully extended overhead, return the weight to the starting position, reversing your motion. Then repeat to the opposite direction.

Squatting with a shoulder shrug is also a full body exercise that emphasizes the legs and shoulder muscles. Start the exercise with the kettlebell between your legs. Squat down with the knees over the toes while maintaining a neutral spine and grab the kettlebell. Next, lift up with the legs and at the same time lift your hands to your chin, keeping the elbows up and out to the side (figure 3). Then return to the starting position while maintaining good posture and lifting mechanics. Challenge

your shoulder and forearm muscles further by lifting the weight up to shoulder height with your arms straight (figure 4).

Both of these exercises will strengthen the muscles that drive the club head through impact. Generating power during weight

shift and trunk rotation will pay huge dividends to your drives and accuracy with your irons. Using lighter weights will allow you to perform 15 to 20 repetitions and prepare you for the endurance to produce a repetitive swing for an 18-hole round.

These exercises also decrease the chance of injury by promoting good posture, body mechanics, and balance. Kettlebells are a great way to enhance your exercise program and your golf game, not to mention an old-school addition to your workout.

THE FITNESS EDGE

Brad Jourdan PT, DPT



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4

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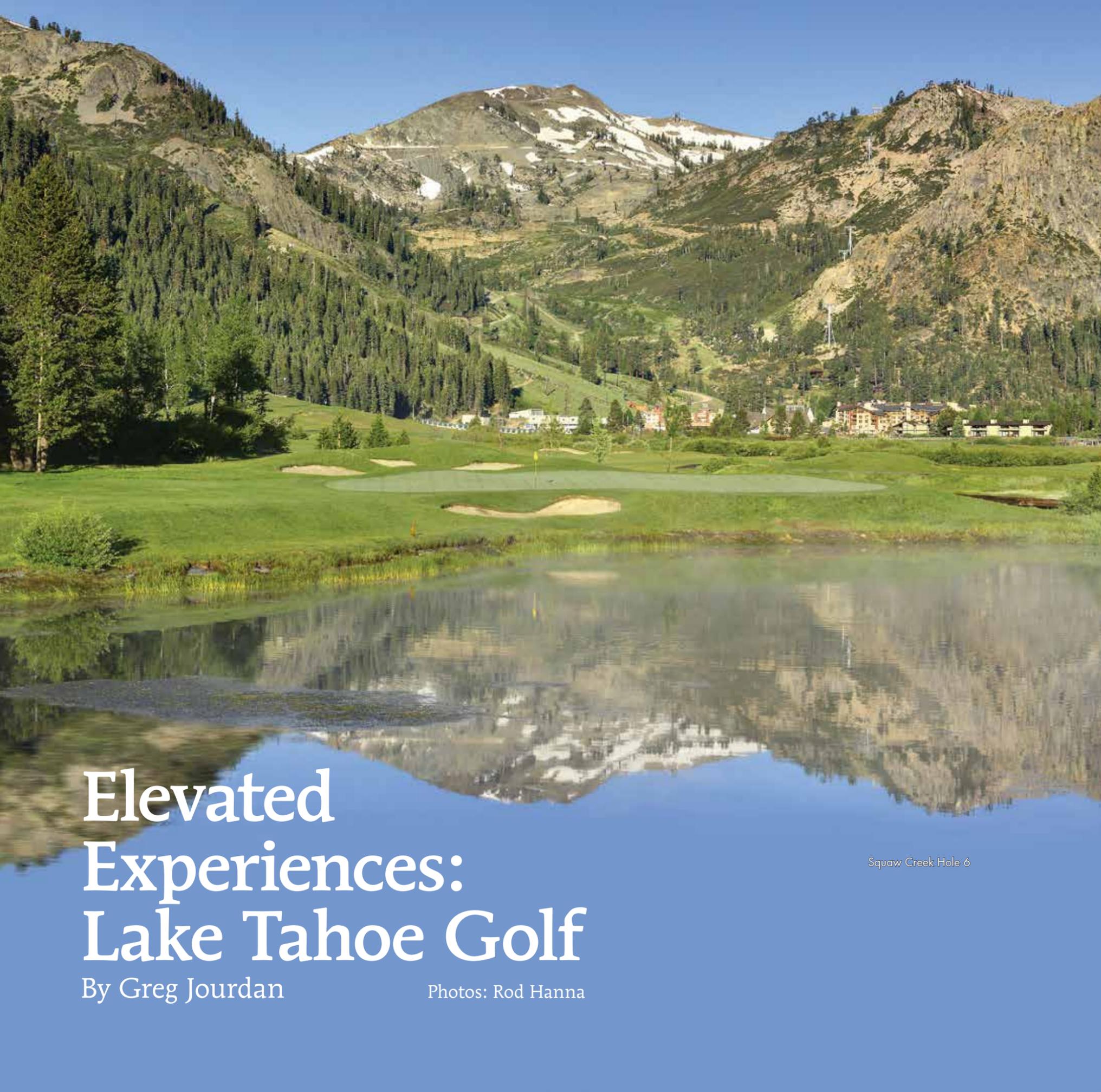
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Elevated Experiences: Lake Tahoe Golf

By Greg Jourdan

Photos: Rod Hanna

Squaw Creek Hole 6



Whitehawk Hole 18

From the Comstock Lode to the 1960 Winter Olympics to the PGA Tour's Reno-Tahoe Open, the Lake Tahoe Basin has been a treasure trove for outdoor enthusiasts. With majestic, snow-draped peaks and towering, scented ponderosa pines, the region is a sensory overload for Midwesterners. If smart phones distract drivers in Illinois, then the panorama around Lake Tahoe could send drivers of rental cars to a neck-cracker as they crane left and right to take in the visual wonder that lies between the Carson Range and Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Lake Tahoe is our country's largest alpine lake, and it is only second to Oregon's Crater Lake in depth. Yet, the communities that surround Lake Tahoe are second to none in activity options. Metropolitan dwellers should set their GPS systems to Truckee, Donner, or Tahoe as soon as their clubs roll off the baggage claim. These alpine towns are worlds away from the urban pound of Chicago, and an equal contrast to life in suburbia. "Earthy and organic" meet "laid-back Sierra highs" is a synthesis of the local scene. Most travelers from Chicago will fly into Reno, a cozier and

lovelier Las Vegas in the foothills of the mountains. After arriving in Reno, it becomes decision time as to on which side of the lake you'll begin your ponderosa playground retreat. About two-thirds of the Lake Tahoe Basin is on the California side, while the remaining third fronts Nevada's Carson Range. Both states flank a clear, mountain-fed lake that has become a four-season playground. This destination should not be tackled in a whirlwind stop-n-pop from course to course. Each course is suited for multiple plays and this approach will leave a lasting impression.

The biggest crime when golfing the Reno/Tahoe area is to jam an intimate experience into a hustle from course to course. Even Ben Hogan advised golfers to stop and smell the flowers.

Lake Tahoe

The newly renovated Resorts at Squaw Creek (squawcreek.com) sit at the base of Olympic Valley, site of the 1960 Winter Olympics, and an ideal starting point for your Tahoe golf tour. The golf course is links in style, yet this Robert Trent Jones Jr. track is tight and requires precision. Without the breathtaking surroundings, golf at Squaw Creek is a wetlands experience. Humbly, the course plays second fiddle to her panorama, yet provides more than enough character to entice players to push their dinner reservations back for another loop before sunset.

The site of the American Century Championship—a celebrity gala on a championship course—has the most dramatic views of Lake Tahoe. Edgewood Tahoe (edgewoodtahoe.com) is a 7,555-yard George Fazio-designed treasure that epitomizes alpine golf. Tom Fazio upgraded his father's 1960s design and preserved the experience for future generations. With sneaky doglegs and elevated greens, Edgewood Tahoe is manageable for all golfers, yet a strategic journey for players looking to best old man par. The lake is featured on 14 holes, so bring a camera because this course could fill a 12-month calendar with awe-inspiring images that do not require Photoshop.

Truckee

Truckee is just 15 minutes from Tahoe, so Tahoe Donner Resort (tahoedonner.com) is in the wheelhouse of must play courses in the area. This alpine layout is challenging and thrilling. The course received a complete bunker renovation project a few years ago. The results were a facelift that brought new life to the property which now competes with the peaks for your attention. The resort's clubhouse also received a complete

remodel. Ed Leinenkugel, director of golf, has a real gemstone under his wing. Leinenkugel, grandson of legendary Wisconsin brewmaster Jake Leinenkugel, is quick to share his enthusiasm over the changes. "This is how Tahoe Donner was meant to be played," he says. "The renovations are complete and we are excited to show golfers just how good this golf course is." Good? Tahoe Donner was my favorite day on the alpine green. While the course is narrow, it is enchanting with unique green complexes that shine with gorgeous bunkering.

At 6,300 feet above sea level, Coyote Moon Golf Course (coyotemoongolf.com) is a journey in isolation. The property is free of home sites and manmade distractions. Golfing at Coyote Moon in the Sierra Nevadas surrounds your foursome with ponderosa pines, granite bluffs, and the peaks of mountain ridges. Set on 250 acres, each hole will leave you howling with delight as each challenge cascades over ridges and into valleys.

Jack Nicklaus' design at Old Greenwood (oldgreenwood.com) opened its fairways 10 years ago. The 7,528-yard course is a more traditional design than most of his recent creations. The club has a nostalgic feel and Golden Age charm. The bunkering and green complexes are more subtle than most designs that have Jack's name on the scorecard. With the exception of one throwaway par 3, Old Greenwood is gentle and esthetically appropriate. While some golf architecture aficionados balk at anything by Nicklaus, Old Greenwood is a treat.

Formally known as Timilick Lake Tahoe, Schaffer's Mill Golf Club (schaffersmill.com) opened in 2008 and offers serious elevation changes on her Mountain Nine. Those views include the Martis Valley, Lookout Mountain, and the Carson Range. The views on the Meadow Nine are fantastic, but the Mountain is a case study in extremes with elevation changes of over 400 feet.



This destination should not be tackled in a whirlwind stop-n-pop from course to course. Each course is suited for multiple plays, and this approach will leave a lasting impression.



Designed by Johnny Miller and John Harbottle, the 6,982-yard, par 71 track is the best of both worlds in Truckee.

Graeagle

I am pretty sure a golf car cannot outpace a grizzly bear. And while playing the brilliant Bob Cupp design at Grizzly Ranch Golf Club (grizzlybeargolfclub.com) I only hoped that the huge beast would at least let me finish my round before taking chase for dinner. Grizzly Ranch is another experience in isolation. The heroic layout, much like its namesake, requires power and skill to defeat it. Hole 12 is a three shooter like none other. An elevated green is visible throughout the hole, yet it seems like an impossible journey to reach it. The club is in Portola, 45 minutes from Tahoe, and home to the aforementioned bears, mountain cats, and deer. I did see a few deer and an eagle, but thankfully, no bears had to play through.

There are very few golf courses that stir something inside me that says, "I'll never tire of playing here. Everything make sense." I had that feeling during the front nine of my round at Whitehawk Ranch Golf Club. Located 40 miles from Truckee, Whitehawk Ranch (golfwhitehawk.com) is a pristine layout that blends meadows with forests and golf holes seem to appear where the pine, cedar, and aspen trees steer the mowers. While the first few holes of the back nine are challenging, these holes are not as special as the front nine.

Although the charms of the Sierra Nevada Mountains may have been lost on Springfield's Donner Party, if you are teetering on planning your Tahoe vacation, remember that there are 300+ days of sunshine. Even a gambler on a Reno blackjack table doesn't get those odds for a successful trip.

For more information, visit www.graeaglegolftrail.com, www.tahoedonner.com, www.truckee.com, www.gotahoenorth.com, and www.mytahoevacation.com.



In Praise of Public Golf

BEYOND BUNKERS

Greg Martin

The landscapes that surround our communities define us. Whether cornfield, mountain, desert, forest, or seaside, we are shaped by what we see and where we drive. Trees, mountains, and wetlands are integrated into the panorama of our lives. River town, bayou, farm town, mountain hamlet, coastal village, or cottage country all evoke an image of life in a community.

The existence of a golf course shapes our communities. The character and aesthetic of a golf course is borne from unique characteristics of the setting and the surrounding landscape. Creeks, rivers, trees, valleys, floodplains, and hilltops converge to create the foundation of a unique golf experience. Sometimes, golf is created on “pancake” sites, parcels of land with minimal landscape character, but provide an enhanced recreational outlet. Golf courses, whether public or private, exist in those environments in ways that are constructive and unique, exposing rich landscapes, either subtle or dramatic.

Public golf has the unique opportunity to fulfill a variety of community needs. Whether water quality, stormwater management, preservation, or landscape enhancement, golf courses are flexible enough to work with these demands in ways that will offer results to communities seeking win-win solutions. Golf can serve as a buffer to sensitive wetlands, watersheds, and creek corridors. Golf courses can help stabilize landfills and mined sites. These degraded sites can morph into safe, recreation green space. If designed properly, golf courses will improve water quality, stormwater management, and create wildlife habitat. Not only does public golf have the opportunity to accomplish so much, it has a responsibility to do so.

Golf can offer cultural solutions by providing an alternative to inactive children, an outlet for seniors, and stimulus for the handicapped. More and more, golf course architects are developing unique alternative courses to provide easier access for novice and disadvantaged golfers. These courses transform communities by providing a desired “third place” – that destination beyond home, work, or school.

Golf is more than a game; it is a sport played in, around, and amongst the most beautiful and precious resources on earth. If developed properly, golf can preserve those resources while providing controlled and specific access to those environments. Every year we witness the splendor of the Monterey Peninsula; golf allows us to visit

the hill country of Texas, the dunes of the Carolina coast, the pure links of Scotland, the oak-hickory parklands of the Midwest, and acres of arroyo in the desert. We are enriched and enlightened because of these encounters. The same happens every day in our hometowns, yet on a smaller, more intimate scale.

Golf courses are places that enrich communities, but only if they are conceived to do so. Golf can be private, but it can be perceived as “public,” in the broadest sense of the word. It can enrich communities; it can better lives; it can expose and protect landscapes; and mostly it can become part of the fabric that defines who we are and where we live.



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One of the best parts about living in Chicago is that the city never ceases to produce great people with great stories. As Chicagoans, we take pride in our city, sports teams, history, and traditions. Our tallest building will always be the Sears Tower, ketchup does *not* belong on hotdogs, and Michael will always be better than LeBron (or anyone else for that matter).

So when a lifelong Chicagoan decides to open a golf store, it's safe to say that they know "how we roll" here in the Windy City.

Enter: Ken Kaulen. In June of 2012 Kaulen opened Chicago Style Golf, a boutique "mom and pop" store that gives the city so much more than its 2,500 square feet would appear to. While you can find Mizuno, Cobra, Wilson, and Taylormade in Kaulen's store, it's what you can't find most other places that's turning heads towards Chicago Style Golf.

In addition to carrying a great selection of equipment, Kaulen prides himself on carrying brands and services that you can't find anywhere else in our area. After all, what's the use in being a boutique if you're not unique?

GOLFChicago sat down with Kaulen to find how the idea of Chicago Style Golf

was hatched and how it's becoming a must visit for linksters.

GC: What gave you the idea to open the store?

KK: I honestly felt there was a need for our type of business here in Chicago. Going to a "big box" store and paying full sticker price has never appealed to me, and I think Chicagoans will appreciate that there's a place they can come to have a great experience and get a good deal.

GC: It wasn't just yourself that started the business, correct?

KK: No. I started the business with my brother (Bert) and my dad (Ken Sr.). One day we were talking about how great it would be to have our own golf store, and two months

later we signed the lease. My dad was a huge influence on me and got me started in the world of golf. He worked at Country Lakes Country Club in Naperville for 25 years (20 as the General Manager) so essentially growing up around the course was a lot of fun.

GC: What makes Chicago Style Golf unique?

KK: There aren't many places like us in our area. The opportunity for golfers to work with a small business is a big part of it. In addition, we offer brands such as Stitch Golf and Sub 70 clothing, both of which are hard to find in stores. We're one of the largest Mizuno shops around in addition to Wilson, Cobra, and Tour Edge. If there's a local company that we can carry, I love it that much more.

GC: Tell us about the restoration and club work that you do.

KK: It was something I started doing for fun and realized it would be a good addition to the store. I love finding beat-up Scotty Cameron putters and bringing them back to life. Our customization services are just about endless and if it's fun and different I like it that much more. We can even give your white driver a sleek matte black finish. We also offer a full repair service with a "no questions asked" policy. If you snapped your putter in half, we'll take care of you. We don't charge for grip installation if you purchase the grips from us (24 hour turnaround guaranteed). If it's just a handful of clubs

you're bringing in, sit on the couch while you wait and enjoy a complimentary beer, soda, or water.

GC: Why would we ever leave? Speaking of the couches, explain why your shop also looks like a man cave/downtown loft.

KK: I decorated it with the intention of having people feel comfortable while they're here (the mounted flat screen never leaves the Golf Channel (unless the Bears are playing). I think some people just come in to talk golf and relax, which is fine by me.

GC: In your opinion, what is "Chicago Style Golf."

KK: My brother and I are fifth generation Chicagoans. We say it's our heritage. I love this city and that's why the Chicago flag is in our logo. The fact that we can cram a golf season into six months, seven if you're a diehard, says a lot. Chicago golfers are true fanatics and that's our style.

In addition to Chicago Style Golf being a retail store, they also offer lessons and club fittings with teaching professional Tim Overman. Kaulen (a 2-handicap) offers free group clinics throughout the summer. And if fantasy golf is your scene, contact Kaulen to get in on the fantasy drafts for all four major tournaments (free to join!). —Todd Mrowice

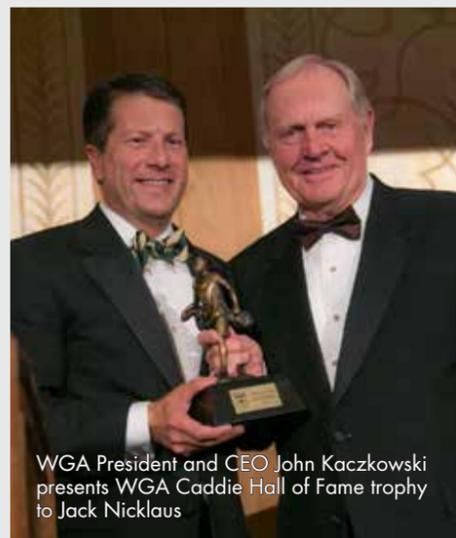


in January became the 16th state golf property to be managed by KemperSports. The property features three 9-hole championship courses along with the 9-hole Cantigny Youth Links and the acclaimed Cantigny Golf Academy. KemperSports will be responsible for management of all golf and hospitality operations with current Cantigny staff in these areas becoming KemperSports staff. The transition was scheduled to take place in mid-February.

Since the course opened in 1989, Cantigny Golf has engaged more than 800 local students in its caddies program with nine selected as recipients of Evans Scholarships.

Golden Bear, WGA Team Up To Assist Evans Scholars

One of golf's premier champions visited Chicago recently and left after raising almost \$1 million earmarked for scholarships to deserving area



WGA President and CEO John Kackowski presents WGA Caddie Hall of Fame trophy to Jack Nicklaus

caddies. Some 350 golf enthusiasts attending the WGA's third annual Green Coat Gala in downtown Chicago were treated to an interview with Jack Nicklaus by two-time U.S. Open champion Andy North. Winner of 18 major championships, Nicklaus was inducted into the WGA's Caddie Hall of Fame by WGA President and CEO John Kackowski during the event.

Golf Course Closings Continue to Outpace Openings

For the eighth consecutive year, golf course closings across the U.S. exceeded course openings, according to the National Golf Foundation. The foundation figures for 2013 showed that 157 courses were shuttered while only 14 courses were unveiled. Only six of the closed courses were private, while 66% were lower-priced facilities that averaged green fees of under \$40 per round. Since 2006, 643 golf courses across the country have ceased operations.

Performance Golf Center Opens in Lincoln Park Area

A 7,500 sq. ft. golf fitness and performance center has opened in Chicago's Lincoln Park area. Touted as a one-stop shop for golf instruction, coaching, physical fitness, club-fitting, repair, practice, and indoor virtual golf simulation, Catalyst Golf Performance features two Trackman hitting bays, a 1,300 sq. ft. putting green, a 2,000 sq. ft. performance training gym, and an on-site custom club fitting area.

"The center is for the golfer of any and all skill levels who is committed to assuring his golf performance and improvement is equivalent to what Tour pros expect on a daily basis," according to Michael Napoleon, Director of Golf Instruction and Managing Partner of Catalyst Golf Performance. "Catalyst deploys an integrated and team approach of coaching, instruction, physical fitness, conditioning, and rehabilitation incorporating golf's leading tools, technologies, and expertise."

Instructors and trainers at the center are certified by the Titleist Performance Institute, a highly acclaimed research facility dedicated to the study of how the human body functions in relation to the golf swing.

The facility is located at 1650 N. Throop Street just off North Avenue and the Kennedy Expressway. For more information, visit the web at: www.catalysgolfperformance.com.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Tim Cronin

Watson Harpoons A Shark

Tom Watson and Greg Norman were at the top of the golf world in 1984, the players to beat each week. In the 1984 Western Open, they were at the top of the leader board in the final round, with Watson prevailing on the third hole of a sudden-death playoff at Butler National Golf Club in Oak Brook. But before Watson sank a curling 25-footer for birdie to win his third Western, there was chaos.

The final day started with a plane crash. A single-engine plane lost power over the course as the leaders were on the first fairway, and battling gusty winds glided to a crash landing on the adjacent Oak Brook Golf Course, ending up overturned on the 14th fairway. The pilot and two passengers suffered minor injuries.

Then the madness began on the golf course. Watson didn't hit many more fairways than the pilot, but made par from the forest to the right of the third fairway, from the dead zone to the left of the 17th green, and in between, from a concession stand on the par-3 11th.

A near shank put him behind a soft-drink trailer. After a free drop, he chipped off the hardpan, under a tree limb, and to within 20 feet. Sank it, of course. Norman, not for the first time in his career, was stunned.

"I said, 'Geez, that's the best par I've ever seen, including the ones I made at Winged Foot,'" quoth the Shark, who had lost a playoff for the U.S. Open to Fuzzy Zoeller three weeks before.

Norman, who had beaten Jack Nicklaus in Canada the week before, had led Watson by a stroke at dawn, scored a final round 71 to Watson's 70, and nearly had a stroke after missing a 30-footer for birdie on the third playoff hole, Butler's treacherous 18th.

"I gave it my best shot," Norman said. "He was better than me." "I made everything I looked at," Watson said.

For Norman, it was his closest brush with the J.K. Wadley Trophy. He would finish second or tied for second five times, a tournament record, but never win.



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During a late fall test drive at Tour Edge HQ, our editor reported to our staff that there is something special coming out in 2014. It is here and the muscle car power in the XCG7 is ready for your lead foot. It is fully adjustable and offers a complete sensory charge at impact with an armor-piercing cry.

www.touregedgegolf.com



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The intriguing 588 is loaded with purpose. There are 12 settings that include loft, lie, face angle, and an interchangeable weight port. After last year's Classic XL delivered a retro visual experience, the 588 is back in black with a high tech sole and dynamic accuracy.

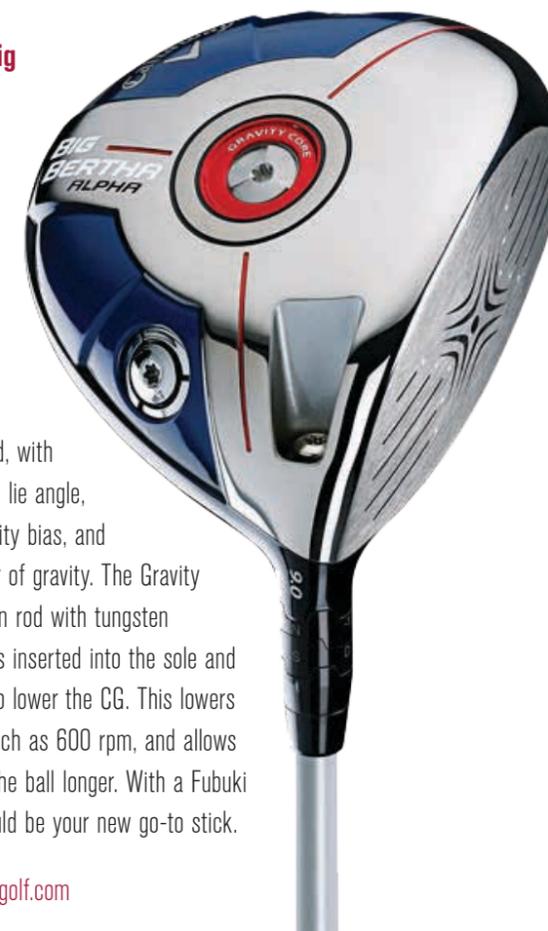
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This is the most adjustable driver that Callaway has ever developed, with control of loft, lie angle, center of gravity bias, and vertical center of gravity. The Gravity Core is a nylon rod with tungsten weights that is inserted into the sole and repositioned to lower the CG. This lowers spin by as much as 600 rpm, and allows you to carry the ball longer. With a Fubuki shaft, this could be your new go-to stick.

www.callawaygolf.com



TaylorMade SLDR \$399

The current #1 driver on the PGA TOUR is giving golfers more options this season. The SLDR 460, which is already in many Tour bags, incorporates a sliding 20-gram weight that delivers 50% more movement than the company's R1. The 21-point weight track can influence ball flight to the extreme. New in 2014 are the 430cc and high loft models.

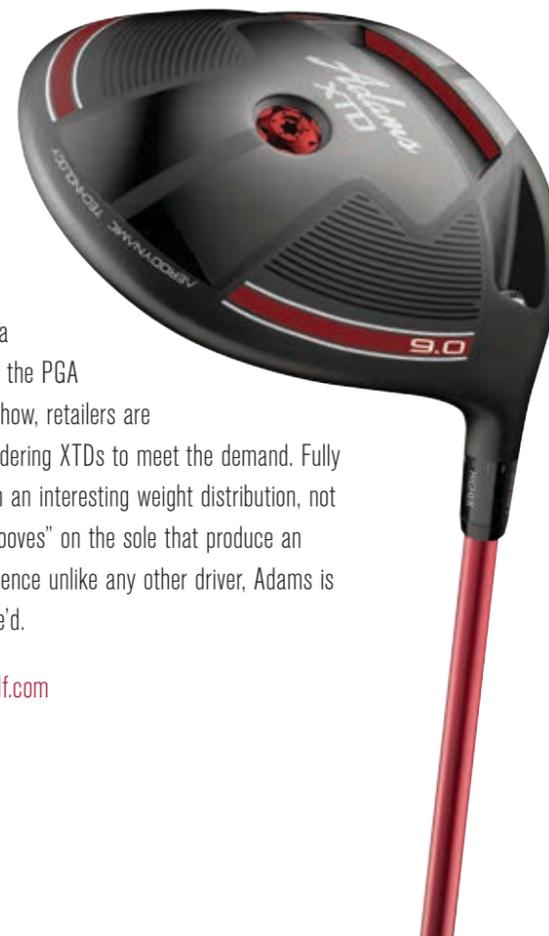
www.taylormadegolf.com



Adams XTD \$399

After creating a huge splash at the PGA Merchandise Show, retailers are already backordering XTDs to meet the demand. Fully adjustable with an interesting weight distribution, not to mention "grooves" on the sole that produce an auditory experience unlike any other driver, Adams is ready to be tee'd.

www.adamsgolf.com



Mizuno JPX-EZ \$299

This is a driver for players who pay green fees. Designed for mid- to high handicappers, the JPX-EZ is adjustable and offers eight hosel positions to help golfers with trajectory and ball flight. With an out-the-door price under \$300, Mizuno is looking to equip the masses with the most impressively priced driver we tested.

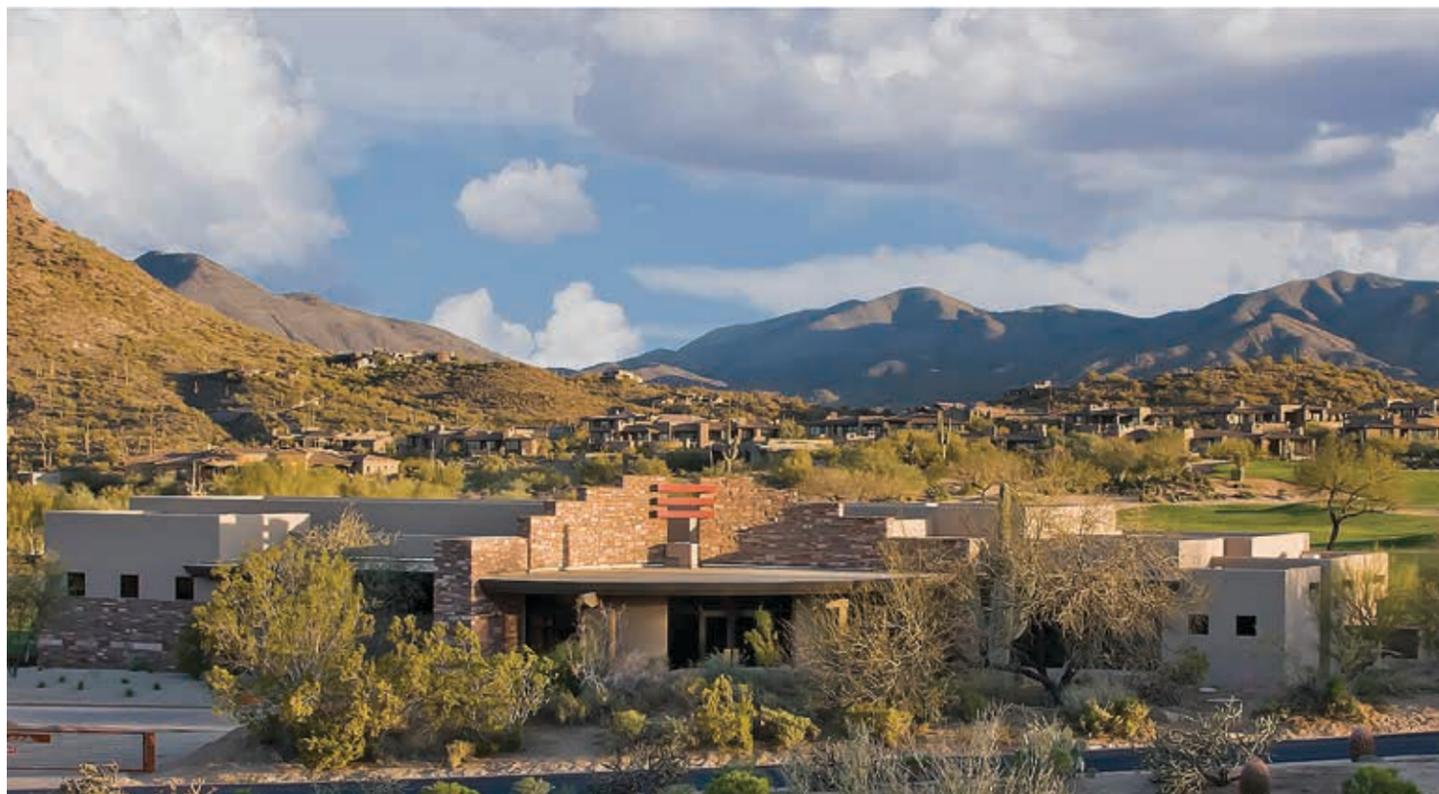
www.mizunousa.com



Flick Performance Center Opens in Scottsdale

MEMBERS ONLY

Neal Kotlarek



Arizona's Scottsdale area has long been a preferred destination of Chicagoans looking to spend a few weeks or months away from the cold, wind, and snow. The absurdly frigid conditions of this past winter, of course, have made those among us known as "snowbirds" look downright brilliant in their decision-making. Along with the warm temperatures and blue skies, this community serves as the spring training home to three major league teams: the San Francisco Giants, the Colorado Rockies, and the Arizona Diamondbacks with other Cactus League clustered nearby.

Most important to us is the fact that Scottsdale is home to some of America's greatest golf properties. The two courses at Troon North, Grayhawk's Talon and Raptor courses, and the two courses at TPC Scottsdale are all ranked among the state's top 25 public golf layouts by *GOLF* magazine.

The 8,000-acre private community of Desert Mountain stands alone as one of America's greatest golf and recreational properties. Six golf courses designed by legendary Tour superstar and architect Jack Nicklaus stretch across the

property. "Desert Mountain has been one of the highlights of my career as a golf course designer," Nicklaus has said of the complex. "I believe it will always be recognized as one of the greatest golf clubs in the world."

Prospective members from the Chicagoland area should feel right at home on the property as 6.8% of Desert Mountain membership—136 members in total—are Illinoisans. Of that number, almost half are from the city.

It is easy to forget over time that Nicklaus basically invented desert golf in the 1980s by creating courses that preserved native saguaro cactus plants, paloverde trees, and other varieties of cacti. The dramatic effect includes forced carries over natural desert land and waste bunkers dotted with brush and natural vegetation. At Desert Mountain, golfers get to enjoy vistas of the lush Sonoran Desert on most all of the community's 108 holes. Dramatic elevation changes are a marquis attraction of the property, from the 2,700-foot Renegade Course (the first 18 built at Desert Mountain) to the 3,400-foot Outlaw Course. The 7,019-yard Cochise Course should be familiar to the public as it

hosted the 2012 Champions Tour event, the Charles Schwab Championship in 2012. The course is contracted to host that tournament again this year and in 2016.

The newest golf amenity at Desert Mountain is the \$1.6 million Jim Flick Golf Performance Center. Touted for featuring the most advanced technology in the industry all in one place, the center features a wide variety of equipment to analyze and improve swings, including a 3-D motion capture, Doppler radar, and four-camera video motion analysis. While other performance centers have a putting station, the center features



a SAM PuttLab that includes an analysis and training system based upon ultrasound measurements. Think you have a bad tendency or three? The lab analyzes the 28 most

important parameters of a putting stroke and displays the results in a simple graphic report. Likewise, a Quintic Ball Roll Monitor utilizes a 260-frames-per-second high-speed

camera to capture the ball movement as it rolls from the putter head to check for ball speed, side spin, initial ball roll, skid, and launch angle.

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Lake Effects: Golf in The Show Me State

DESTINATIONS

Greg Jourdan

At Central Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks, the ease of travel is never on a sabbatical. Just a seven-hour drive from Chicagoland, this hassle-free golf getaway is loaded with unique golf courses and a cozy charm that has been a favorite retreat for Chicagoans for nearly three generations. Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks is the perfect destination for a buddy trip, or a much-needed family vacation without the flight delays and TSA pat-downs we've grown to expect from air travel.

The Lake's upscale courses offer reduced rates during early spring, and Central Missouri golfers are usually on lush turf, playing it down, by mid-March. Affordable golf and an early thaw are the perfect excuses to book a spring trip with the regular pigeons to knock the rust off a snowball season swing.

Must Play Tracks

Playing the masterful Tom Weiskopf design at Old Kinderhook for the regular rate of \$69 is one of the best deals in golf, but their early season rate of \$55 is the biggest steal in the golfing world. At 6,855 yards, this par 71 will be on your short list of top courses. Since opening in 1999, players can count on Augusta-like turf and bunker conditions and PGA Tour-ish green speeds. In addition to the best collection of par 3s at the Lake, the short par 4s at #6 and #17 are lessons in risk/reward on perfect, sporty two-shooters.

The Lodge of Four Seasons offers guests access to the exclusive Jack Nicklaus design at Porto Cima; however, The Ridge Course is one of my favorite tracks in the area. At just 6,447 yards from the tips, length off the tee is not a premium, but it does help. The resort layout has parkland and alpine elements that blend into a wonderful collection of solid golf holes nestled between Ozarks hillocks and ridges. The Ken Kavanaugh design's final hole has 13 bunkers visible from the tee. I dubbed it "Swiss Cheese" and this uphill conclusion will inspire presses from gamblers.

Tan-Tar-A's Hidden Lakes course is a sporty shot-making delight where drama steps to the forefront on each tee box. This nine-holer is the answer to extra holes before sunset and a quick early round before the family hits the outlet mall. While Hidden

Lakes is no pushover, it is ideal and sporty for taking out beginners and juniors. In just nine holes, the challenges are formidable and the lake views are on par with the other courses at the lake. Tan-Tar-A Resort's The Oaks Course affords guests and visitors another one of Lake of the Ozarks' best buys. Adults can play at the spring rate of \$50 with a cart while kids can play for \$25 each; the entire clan can play a tournament quality track for less than the cost of one 300 level Chicago Bulls ticket. The Oaks presents a difficult, Carolina feel throughout the 6,432-yard layout. Director of Golf Paul Leahy shared, "If you can match your handicap at either of our courses, then I will tip my hat to you."

Leahy adds, "Poor course management and errant drives will result in humble pie and a bloated scorecard." This track demands focus and probably a replay to get your arms around it.

Osage National Golf Club offers the only 27-hole layout at The Lake. The Arnold Palmer Design Team carved three distinct loops just north of Osage Beach. Plan on spending a day out at Osage National and playing all 27 holes; multiple lines of play and some ticklish greens provide the stimulus; you bring the shots. My favorite loop is the Mountain course. With the strongest opening stretch of holes at the lake, these nine holes are a lesson in fight or flight.

If your game is on, then swing out of your shoes. However, if you are still knocking the kinks off a sore back, use your head and attack the course from its elevated tees with a bogey mindset. The River Course steers golfers along the Osage River and provides dramatic views of the craggy bluffs. As the course's name suggests, water features abound at the River and a blunder is as likely as a birdie on every hole. These two courses stretch beyond 7,150 yards, so be sure to pack plenty of ammunition and prepare for a plethora of approach shots with hybrids and fairway woods.

In the heart of Osage Beach, two courses offer something for golfers of

all abilities. Dogwood Hills Golf Club is centrally located, and its villas and accommodations are perfect to meet the needs of a golfing caravan heading south. The course is a parkland style 18-hole layout that allows you to steer those carts off the cart paths anytime! While Dogwood Hills has never fancied itself as the lake's marquee course, it is a great platform to spend time with your vacationing foursome. Booking a room at Dogwood also puts travelers a short drive from Sycamore Creek Golf Club, a truly remarkable club designed, owned, and operated by the Kahrs family. And while you're there, be sure to ask about their

world-renowned fishery that is a feature on the front nine. Sycamore Creek is an experience that is unique to the lake. I recommend it to all visitors and while its doglegs and routing is quirky at times, this course is thoroughly enjoyable and extremely difficult. You'll talk about this track long after your trek back to Illinois!

Saying "Central Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks Golf Trail," is a mouthful, but it is a destination that should make your short list of early spring golf options this season. For more information, visit www.lakeoftheo-zarksgolftail.com, or call 800-490-8474. This is where your vacation package can be secured and the best rates are found.



Osage National Golf Club



Tan-Tar-A



Old Kinderhook



Old Kinderhook



Osage National Golf Club



Elegant Design and Tour Success Define Bettinardi Golf

PROFILES

Neal Kotlarek

Before I pulled into the parking lot of Bettinardi Golf's world headquarters in Tinley Park, I was fully aware of the passionate following of the company's product line. Cases in point:

A close friend had experienced the misfortune of a garage break-in. The perpetrators walked away with a number of valuable possessions, including the fellow's golf bag. "I was ready to replace the irons and woods, anyway," the victim said in attempting to reconcile his fate. "But I wish those idiots would have at least had the decency to leave behind my Bettinardi putter," he sighed.

Five years ago, I was driving across the southwest suburbs of Chicago with a business associate who, as he studied an area map, suddenly directed me to make a series

of turns onto a street alongside I-80. "Where are we?" I asked. The associate directed me inside the lobby of the machine shop from where his beloved Bettinardi putter had been produced. The fellow walked about the atrium and studied the artifacts and plaques on the walls that celebrated the championships won by Tour players who earned their titles using the company's putters. "Now what do we do?" I asked. The fellow asked the receptionist if he could say a few words to a company staff member. Someone appeared from a side office and my friend shook his hand in gratitude for producing his favorite club in his golf bag.

I was on the first hole of a city golf course one Saturday a few summers ago. When my playing partners and I got to the green, I noticed that one of the guys had made a dramatic equipment

change. "You got rid of your custom-made putter?" I asked, slightly astonished. He gave me a sheepish grin. "Nope," he replied. "Since I was unfamiliar with this course, I didn't want to risk the chance that someone would run away with my Bettinardi putter."

I relayed a few of these stories to owner Bob Bettinardi on a frigid day in February and he greeted each with a laugh. "We don't make putters," he says. "We make fine jewelry." This assessment seems like overstatement until one holds a hand-crafted, custom-fitted Bettinardi putter in his or her hands. Set aside for a moment the engineering that went into the design and disregard the 20 points of inspection that goes into the quality assurance of the finished product. Appreciate, instead, the golf club as a piece of art. "It is artwork!"

says Bettinardi, reflecting on this assessment. "And we've come to an important conclusion: that golfers—whether Tour pros or players new to the game—will make more putts if they have confidence in their putters. And to have that confidence," he adds, "they have to like what they see when standing over the ball."

As the company owner speaks, a cabinet a few paces from the couches in Studio B—the company's club-fitting area—affirms the many reasons why Bettinardi putter owners should trust their equipment. The cabinet holds gold-plated replicas of the putters used by Tour players en route to their victories. Most prominent in the display is the model used by Tour star Matt Kuchar in his two 2013 victories at the Memorial Tournament and the Accenture Match Play Championship.

While a Bettinardi Golf customer can purchase the exact model Kuchar carries in his bag, such a decision would miss the point explains Studio B general manager Mike Orvis. "I've personally performed over 700 fittings," he says, "and I've seen over 700 different putting strokes during those fittings." The putting stroke, it turns out, is as unique as a snowflake. The purpose of a custom fitting is to construct a putter based upon a player's height, address position, eye line, hand size, stroke length, and stroke angle, and adapt those to putter-head preference. Orvis uses a state-of-the-art V1 Pro four-camera laser fitting system to perform the analysis. "We fit the person to the putter," he says. "Our clients leave Studio B with a putter suited precisely to their tendencies."

Orvis walked with me across the machine shop where every Bettinardi putter is manufactured. "It all begins right here," he says, pointing to a stack of carbon steel beams—100% U.S.-produced as are all components of a Bettinardi Golf product. The beams get cut into sections before they are precision-milled by CMC equipment. From there, each putter head is refined by hand until it meets each of over a dozen specification points. Those that don't are set aside for scrap.

A walk upstairs above the machine shop reveals a rack of finished Bettinardi putters, no more than 300 in total. "That's our entire worldwide inventory," Orvis marvels. Next to that rack is a table of ball markers, belt

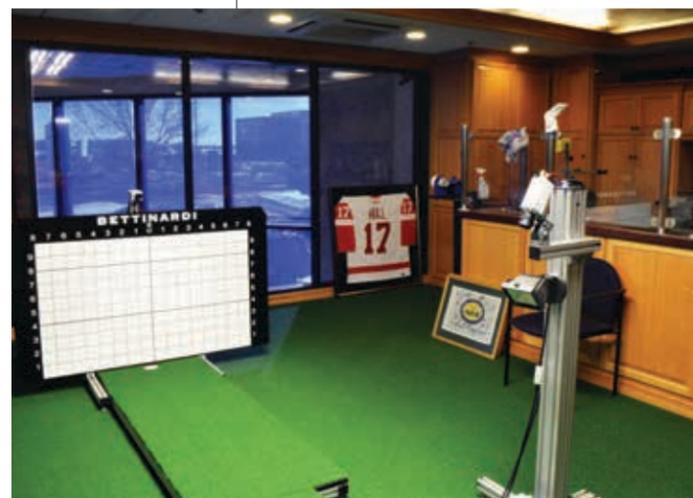
buckles, and ball repair tools all hand-painted and each emblazoned with the signature Bettinardi honeycomb logo. "Players of Bettinardi Golf equipment like to promote our brand," Orvis notes.

Back in Studio B, Bob Bettinardi relates the origins of Bettinardi Golf. "I'm an industrial engineer and I'm a golfer," he says. "I walked into a pro shop back in 1991 and picked up a putter that said 'milled' on it. 'I could see immediately that it was made using an older technology.' It took six months of research and development—much through 'trial and error' says the owner—before the first prototype was ready in 1993. Six years later, Jesper Parnevik needed only 99 putts over 72 holes to win the Greater Greensboro Open using a Bettinardi putter. In 2000, Phil Michelson shot a 63 on his final round to win at Colonial using a Bettinardi putter. In 2003, Jim Furyk won the U.S. Open at Olympia Fields using a you-know-what.

Today, Kuchar and Brian Gay are both under contract as Bettinardi Tour Staff members. Kuchar putts with a Kuchar Model 1 Arm Lock putter using his distinctive style that earned him \$5.6 million on the Tour in 2013. Gay uses a prototype model known as the "BB8" which placed him third on the tour in 3-putt avoidance last season.

"We like to think of our putters as elegant and beautiful," Bettinardi says. "If they look good to your eye and they feel good, you are bound to become a better putter."

Along with its manufacturing, distribution, and custom-fitting headquarters in Tinley Park, Bettinardi Golf has custom-fitting studios in Minnesota and at the Country Club of the South in Georgia. The product line is also available at select retailers, clubfitters, and green grass pro shops across Chicagoland. For more information on Bettinardi Golf, visit the web at: www.bettinardi.com.



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Turn Your Game Around

The most common thing I hear on the driving range on a day to day basis is you have to turn more. Now don't get me wrong; turn in the golf swing is very important. I will always ask my students when they are trying to turn more these questions: Turn what? Turn how much? Turn when? These are all very important questions. Most students I see don't turn their shoulders and hips enough on the backswing. Generally they tend to slide their hips away from the target, which inhibits their shoulders from turning. The ideal turn for the shoulders should be around 90 degrees, depending on your flexibility. In order for that to happen for most people the hips would then need to turn around 45 degrees. If you are someone who is struggling with turn on the backswing here are a couple tips to facilitate that. The first tip would be making sure your shoulders are parallel to your foot line. Put a club on the ground parallel to your foot line, this will also help encourage you to aim correctly. Then put a club parallel and across your shoulders and make sure it is parallel to the club on the ground. If the shoulders are open 10 degrees at address then that is 10 more degrees you have to turn on your backswing, just to get back to acceptable turn. The second tip would be turning the toe of your trail foot out away from the target, or clockwise. This will help free up your right hip joint and allow the hips and shoulders to turn more freely.

Now that we have the backswing in a perfect position what is the next move? Well most students I ask this question to say "rotate or turn." It is very important to rotate on the downswing; we just have to make sure it happens in the correct sequence. The first move to start the downswing should be a lateral move of the lower body towards the target. To give you a clear vision, at the top of the swing your belt buckle should be pointed behind the golf ball. As you start the downswing I want you to shift your weight to your forward foot while keeping that belt buckle behind the ball for a brief instant. If you make this move correctly it will help make the club swing down on the correct plane. Once the shift has been made to the front foot and the shoulders and belt buckle have remained pointed behind the ball, now you can turn. This is a power move that most

great players make. So yes, they do turn and rotate on the downswing, but it's done in the right sequence. Those of you who are turning your shoulders and hips too soon to start the downswing are probably hitting some big slices and maybe pulls.

So remember: most average golfer's slide their hips back on the backswing and turn their hips to start the downswing, while most

good players turn their hips on the backswing and slide their lower body a little to start their downswing. These couple thoughts, if performed correctly, can start to turn your game around.

Jason Guss is Director of Golf Performance at the Jason Guss Golf Academy at Hawk Hollow Golf Course in East Lansing, Michigan



INSTRUCTION

SWING ALCHEMIST



Jason Guss

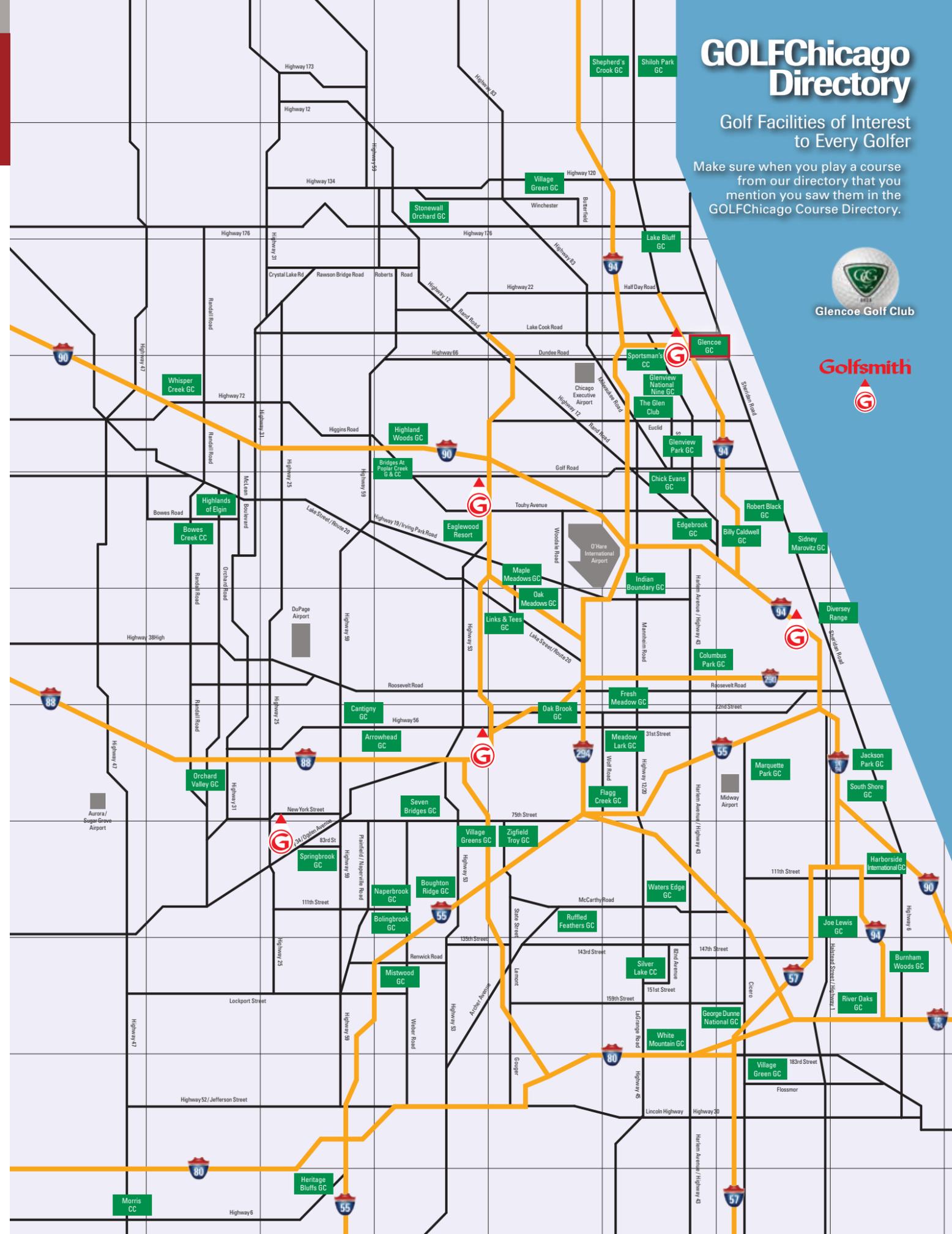
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Glencoe Golf Club





Arrowhead

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bowescreekcc.com
bowescreekcountryclub.com

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355 W Washington Ave
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Mistwood Golf Club

815-254-3333
1700 W. Renwick Rd.
Romeoville, IL 60446
mistwoodgolf.net

Mistwood Golf Club, with its recent multi-million dollar renovations and new state of the art golf-learning center, has become one of the premier golf experiences in the Chicagoland area. Mistwood, host of the Illinois Women's Open, features new Scottish style stacked sod-wall bunkers, which are not something seen in traditional American golf. Other amenities include a full-service pro shop, golf instruction, and wonderful dining.



Orchard Valley Golf Course

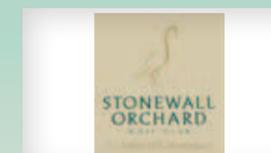
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To learn more, visit stonewallorchard.com or call 847-740-4890.





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White Mountain Golf Park

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Tinley Park, IL 60477
708-478-4653
whitemountaingolfpark.com

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whitepinesgolf.com

36-hole championship course situated on over 240 acres, has been a favorite among Chicago area golfers since 1928. Ten minutes from O'Hare International Airport, White Pines in Bensenville is a perfect choice for anyone looking for a challenging game of golf any time of the year.

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Blackberry Oaks
630-553-7170
Bristol

Bonnie Brook GC
847-360-4735
2800 N. Lewis Ave.
Waukegan, IL 60087
waukegangolf.org

Boughton Ridge
630-739-4100
Bolingbrook

Coyote Run Golf Course
708-957-8700
800 Kedzie
Flossmoor IL 60422
coyoterungolf.com

Par 71
Yardage: 6,478
Weekday: \$50 w/cart
Weekend: \$60 w/cart
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes, \$31 w/cart, Mon.-Thu. only
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Eaglewood Resort and Spa
630-773-3510
1401 Nordic Rd.
Itasca, IL 60143
eaglewoodresort.com

Par 72
Yardage 6,015 - 5,410 yds.
Weekday: \$39.00 w/cart (Spring Rate)
Weekend: \$45.00 w/cart (Spring Rate)
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

The First Tee of Aurora & Fox Valley
630-499-0680
1001 Hill Avenue
Aurora, IL 60505
thefirstteeaurora.org

The First Tee of Greater Chicago
773-885-8258
2901 W. Lake Avenue, Suite A
Glenview, IL 60025
thefirstteegreaterchicago.org

Flagg Creek Golf Course
708-246-3336
6939 S. Wolf Road
Countryside, IL 60525
flaggcreekgolfcourse.org

Par 33
Yardage: 2493 – 1865
Weekday: \$14 (resident) \$18 (non res.)
Weekend: \$16 (resident) \$20 (non res.)
Cart Fee: \$16
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Fox Bend Golf Course
630-554-3939
3516 Route 34
Oswego, IL 60543
foxbendgolfcourse.com

Par 72
Yardage: 6,890 – 5,325
Weekday: \$38 walk \$54 ride
Weekend: \$43 walk \$59 ride
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes
Resident rates available

Grand Geneva Resort and Spa
262-248-8811
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Green Meadows Golf Club
630-810-5330
18 W 201 West 63rd Street
Westmont, IL 60559
[DuPageGolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

Par 30
Yardage: 1,888 - 1,545 yds.
Weekday: \$14 walk \$22 ride
Weekend: \$16 walk \$24 ride
*Frequent specials on course website
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: No
Banquets/Outings: No

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Indian Oaks Country Club
815-824-2282
Shabbona, IL
9 Holes
3,379 yards
indianoaksccl.com

Kids Golf Foundation of Illinois
Golf Changes Kids' Lives
630-466-0913
P.O. Box 610
Sugar Grove, IL 60554
kidsgolffoundation.org

Links & Tees Golf Facility
630-458-2660
Addison, IL
Recognized in 2011 by *Golf Range Magazine* as one of the top 100 learning facilities in North America.
addisonparks.org

All information in this directory is provided by participating courses. GOLFCChicago is not responsible or liable for errors or incorrect information. Map © Copyright 2013 GOLFCChicago Magazine. All rights reserved.

Maple Meadows Golf Club
630-616-8424
272 Addison Rd.
Wood Dale, IL 60191
[DuPageGolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

West 18 - Par 70
Yardage: 6,438 - 5,339 yds.
Weekday: \$32 walk \$49 ride
Weekend: \$41 walk \$58 ride
*Frequent specials on course website

East 9 – Par 34
Yardage: 2,815 - 2,427 yds.
Rate: \$16 walk / \$25 ride
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Martin Design Partnership, Ltd.
Golf Course Architecture and Design
630-482-2532
335 N. River Street
Suite 201
Batavia, IL 60510
mdpltd.com

Naperbrook Golf Course
630-378-4215
2220 W. Hassert Boulevard
Plainfield, IL 60585
golfnaperville.org

Par 72
Yardage: 6677
Weekday: \$38
Weekend: \$48
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Oak Brook Golf Club
630-368-6400
2606 York Road
Oak Brook, IL 60523
oak-brook.org/recreation

Par 72
Yardage 6541 - 5341 yds
Weekday: \$67.50 w/cart
Weekend: \$71.50 w/cart
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Oak Meadows Golf Club
630-595-0071
900 N. Wood Dale Road
Addison, IL 60101
[DuPageGolf.com](http://dupagegolf.com)

Par 71
Yardage: 6,718 - 5,628 yds.
Weekday: \$32 walk \$49 ride
Weekend: \$41 walk \$58 ride
*Frequent specials on course website
Discount Program: Yes
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: No

SentryWorld
Closed for renovation for 2013 season
866-479-6753
Stevens Point, WI
18 holes
Par 72
6,951 yards
sentryworld.com

Shepherd's Crook
847-872-2080
351 N. Green Bay Rd.
Zion, IL 60099
shepherdcrook.org

Shiloh Park
847-746-5500
23rd and Bethesda Blvd.
Zion, IL 60099
shilohparkgolf.com

Springbrook Golf Course
630-848-5060
2220 W. 83rd Street
Naperville, IL 60564
golfnaperville.org

Par 72
Yardage: 6,896
Weekday: \$40
Weekend: \$50
Jr./Sr. Rates: Yes
Twilight Rates: Yes
Banquets/Outings: Yes

Village Greens
630-985-3610
Woodridge

Western Golf Association / Evans Scholars Foundation
westerngolfassociation.com

White Pines Dome
630-776-0304, ext. 5
Bensenville, IL
whitepinesdome.com

Zigfield Troy Par 3
630-985-9860
1535 W. 75th Street
Woodridge, IL 60517

Course Managers:
For inclusion in this directory, or to update your listing, please call 815.741.8005 or email us at dweretka@golfchicagomagazine.com



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Hurry Up And Wait

The Art Of Fast Play: Solving Golf's Maddening Problem of Slow Play
By Sam Dunn
123 Pages
\$14.95
www.vineyardstories.com

It is a traffic jam. No air is moving. An entire legion has been reduced to texting and updating their facebook status while behind the wheel of their rental car. While this scene does occur during rush hour in the Loop, it is more annoying when you are waiting on a par 3 and the sun is setting. Pace of play is golf's dirty secret. It is always the group in front of you. It is always someone else's fault.

Pace of play is golf's biggest problem. Time is a luxury and the footprint of a round of golf can stomp out a weekend. In a perfect world, author Sam Dunn's *The Art Of Fast Play* will out sell Ben Hogan and Harvey Penick. In a golfer's

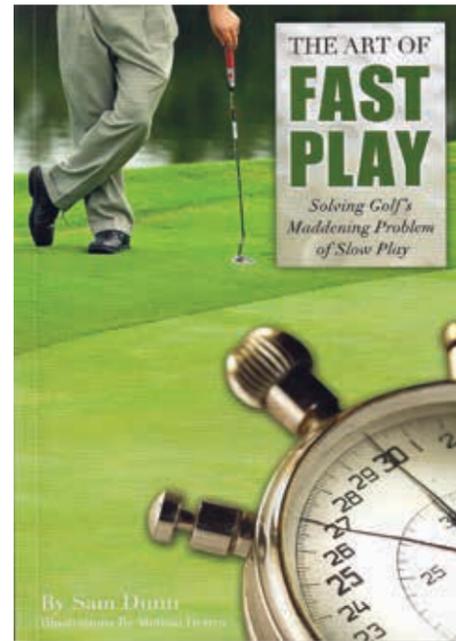
utopia, Dunn would be quoted like Lee Trevino on every first tee. Sam Dunn's advice to hit the damn ball and move could ensnare occasional golfers to play more rounds.

"Playing in four hours isn't about hurrying; it's simply not wasting time. An efficient round requires awareness and teamwork," shared Dunn. *The Art Of Fast Play* is a lesson in the obvious, yet these simple routines are often the exception on many courses. Let's face it, most rangers are paper dragons to the sloths who plumb bob their four-footer for a quad-bogey and walk off yardage after they just chunked their fourth shot. Dunn's lessons stress leadership and awareness, not to mention when you should do your housekeeping and how it is never acceptable to leave the golf car without a couple clubs.

I hope that *The Art Of Fast Play* will send vibrations across our golfing nation like Paine's Common Sense; then we may have time to squeeze our lives in...in between rounds.

ON THE SHELF

Between the Covers



That's Like, Gnarly, Dude

ON THE CORKSCREWS

Stephen Hawk

Hey, man, check out this gnarly wine. Gnarly Head wine, actually. Starting from San Francisco, go about 100 miles east and a bit north and you'll reach Lodi, California, home of Gnarly Head Winery.

And, where does that unusual name come from?

In 2005, the founders of Gnarly Head went in search of a vineyard suitable for making the Zinfandel they dreamed of. They found it in Lodi, when they came upon some of the oldest vines in California. Old vines are also known as heritage vines, old world vines, and most importantly gnarly vines. The 30- to 80-year-old vines have twisted, old trunks and branches sprouting in all directions—truly gnarly heads. The free-standing mop-topped 'head trained' vines found in these old vineyards were the nursery for Gnarly Head Old Zinfandel. Grapes from these old vines are small and few, but offer the big flavor the winemakers were looking for.

Since 2005, the winery has expanded to include a total of nine selections in the house style, including the original Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, a red blend and a white blend. 2012 Chardonnay \$10

If you are not a big fan of Chardonnay, especially in the oaky style, this could be the one for you. Gnarly Chard is almost colorless in the glass, it is so pale. The nose features suggestions of melon and pineapple.

These flavors continue on the palate, which also adds pear, plenty of citrus, and a touch of vanilla on the finish. It's much like a Pinot Grigio, although Gnarly Head makes one of those, as well. The 2012 Gnarly Head Chardonnay is crafted using grapes from specially selected vineyards in Lodi and Monterey.

Spring may seem impossibly far away now, but it will be here before we know it. When it does arrive, have this wine ready to pair with Tuna au Poivre, Sea Bass with Olives and Roast Tomatoes, or Poached Chicken with Avgolemono Sauce. ●●●● 2012 Malbec \$12

Although based in California, Gnarly Head isn't afraid to travel the world in search of

wines that match their product philosophy, in this case down Argentina way. Famous as the epicenter of Malbec, Mendoza abuts the eastern foothills of the Andes, 220 winding miles from Santiago, Chile.

The vineyards of Mendoza are some of the highest in the world. The difficult sandy soils there stress the vines, leading to concentrated juice.

This 2012 is Gnarly Head's inaugural Malbec offering. The deep-purple color in the glass follows on with aromas of dark berry fruits. The fruit character was preserved by aging the wine for six months in split lots, some in oak and some in stainless steel to restrain the tannins (but not too much). Finishes with plenty of blueberry and blackberry.

Enjoy this value wine with Aegean Lamb Casserole with Pasta, Beef Tangine with Prunes, or Herb Braised Rabbit. ●●●●



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The Best To Never... The Major-less Debate Continues

When the gates to Magnolia Lane open and players begin filing into Augusta National for The Masters the week of April 7th, the PGA Tour season will be exactly six months old and 26 tournaments deep. The thought of it is slightly nauseating, actually, considering there are another five months and 24 tournaments after someone slips on the green jacket. The Masters, the middle of the golf season—who'da thunk it?

The first major, which many in the Midwest consider the start of the golf season, is now actually a better barometer for those participating in the age-old debate of “who is the best player to have not won a major.”

That argument has become more “inside golf” than ever after Phil Mickelson finally got over the hump in the 2004 Masters at the age of 34. Since then you could make an argument about a variety of guys being “the best” to not have a major, but no one really moved the needle among casual fans like Mickelson had.

Since the dawn of the Tiger Woods era at the 1997 Masters, 35 different men have claimed their first major championship. That means 51 percent of the time—including Woods' historic win in '97—a player captures his first major. Keeping with that percentage, of the world's top 30 golfers, half already have a major championship. Six of the top seven already have their jacket, or trophy. So that means the “best to have never won” list is pretty thin heading into major tournament season in 2014.

Is this more fun, or less exciting? Do we have fewer career grinders to root for? Or do we find ourselves hoping that more “young phenoms” actually prove to be just that? Really, we're just left with a bunch of 30-somethings who are probably due, but aren't exciting to watch or don't inspire great passion from the casual fan. Heck, some of these guys even put golf aficionados to sleep.

The “best to never win a major” speaks to golf's parity now, and Woods' recent inability to harness his putter when it matters most. It also means we should change our criteria for debating this topic, especially since the game has changed so much since Woods' first major victory in 1997.

I mean, of course Steve Stricker (12 PGA Tour wins) and Lee Westwood (39 professional wins) are the “best players to have never won” a major in their careers.

But are they the best players now? No.

That's not to say they can't win a major or that they won't. I just feel they've aged out of the discussion. I

mean, even Ernie Els winning at 42 and Mickelson winning at 43 are oddities—and those guys have done it before. To get your first one in your 40s? It can be done, but you're no longer the best of anything for more than four days at a time.

So, to determine my list of the “best of who haven't won,” I began by eliminating anyone who will be 38 or older when the Masters begins. Since '97, only Darren Clarke (42) and Mark O'Meara (41) captured their first major at an older age. You can make a lot of money until you're 50 on the PGA Tour, but it's really hard to win a major at the back end of your 30s.

In fact, only seven players have won their first major at 35 or older since 1997.

Then, I dismissed any player 24 or younger. It's incredibly rare to win a first major at that age. Only Woods (21) and Rory McIlroy (22) have done that since '97.

So, 25 seems to be the opening of the major window, with it closing at 34. Justin Leonard, Martin Kaymer, and Keegan Bradley all broke through at 25. David Toms, Shaun Micheel, and Mickelson all won their first at 34. It makes sense. That decade between 25 and 34 is your prime, when you should be playing at your highest level, the “best” level.

So, that's the group of players I started looking at. That narrows the list. Of the world's top 50 players, only 17 fit that category. Then, I looked at their careers, and their impact in the game. Sorry, Gonzalo Fdez-Castano, Graham Delaet, Branden Grace, and Chris Kirk, you just haven't done enough. And there are plenty of guys like you, too.

So that made the list really, really easy.

Dustin Johnson
Jason Day
Brandt Snedeker
Hunter Mahan

If you want to be generous, you could include Ryan Moore and Nick Watney. (I really can't say Sergio Garcia. He'll be 34 at the Masters, but he's just so damaged. You'll be able to knock me over with a feather if he ever wins one.)

That's it. Right now, heading into the Masters Tournament of 2014, they are the best players to have not won a major.

The sextet has 25 combined PGA Tour wins, and has made noise nationally and globally. Johnson, Day, and Mahan have six top 10s in majors. Snedeker has five, Moore and Watney have two each.

So what does it mean? That's the fun part of the debate, isn't it?

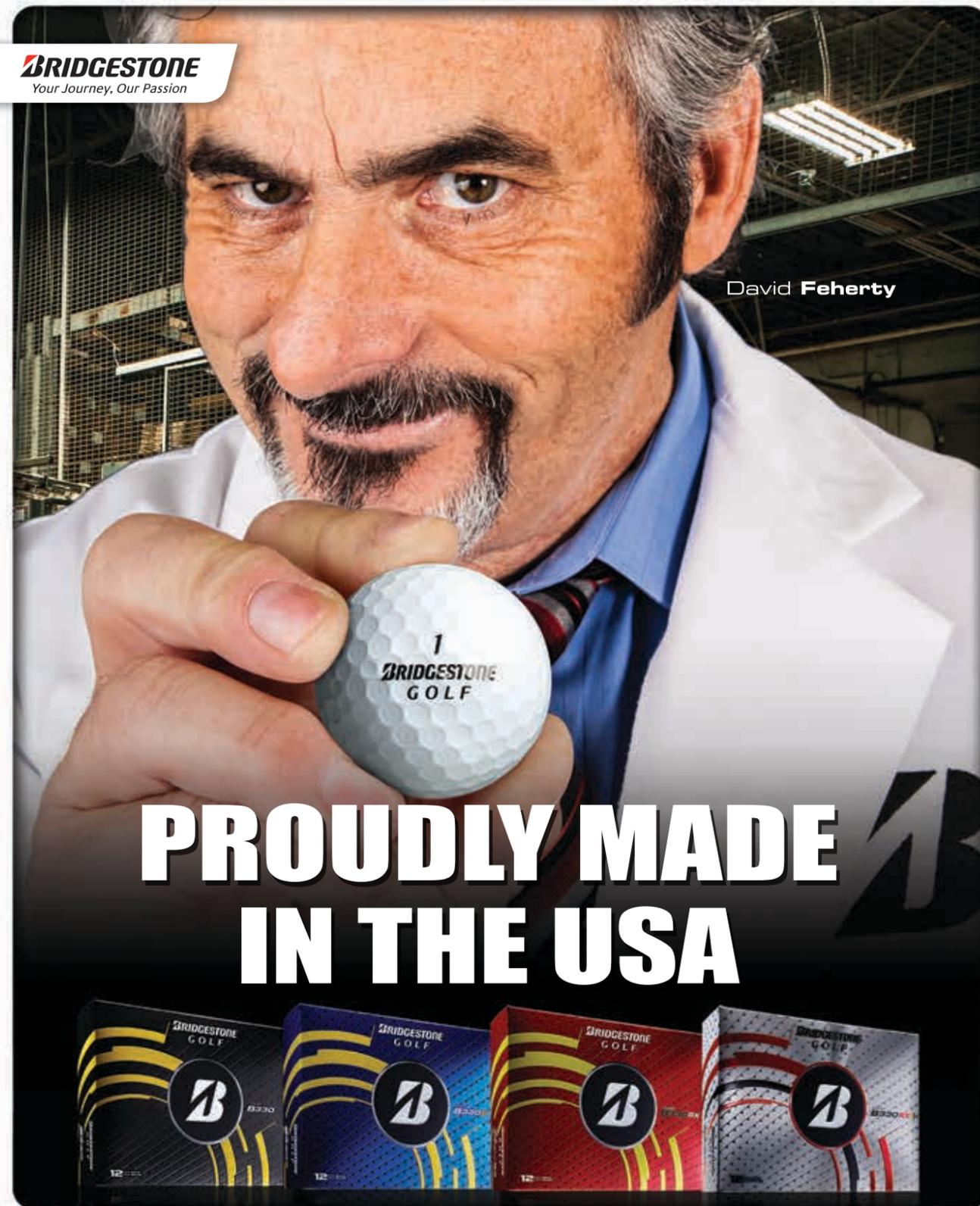
FROM THE FRINGE

Insights on the PGA Tour



Jim Owczarski

The first major, which many in the Midwest consider the start of the golf season, is now actually a better barometer for those participating in the age-old debate of “who is the best player to have not won a major.”



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