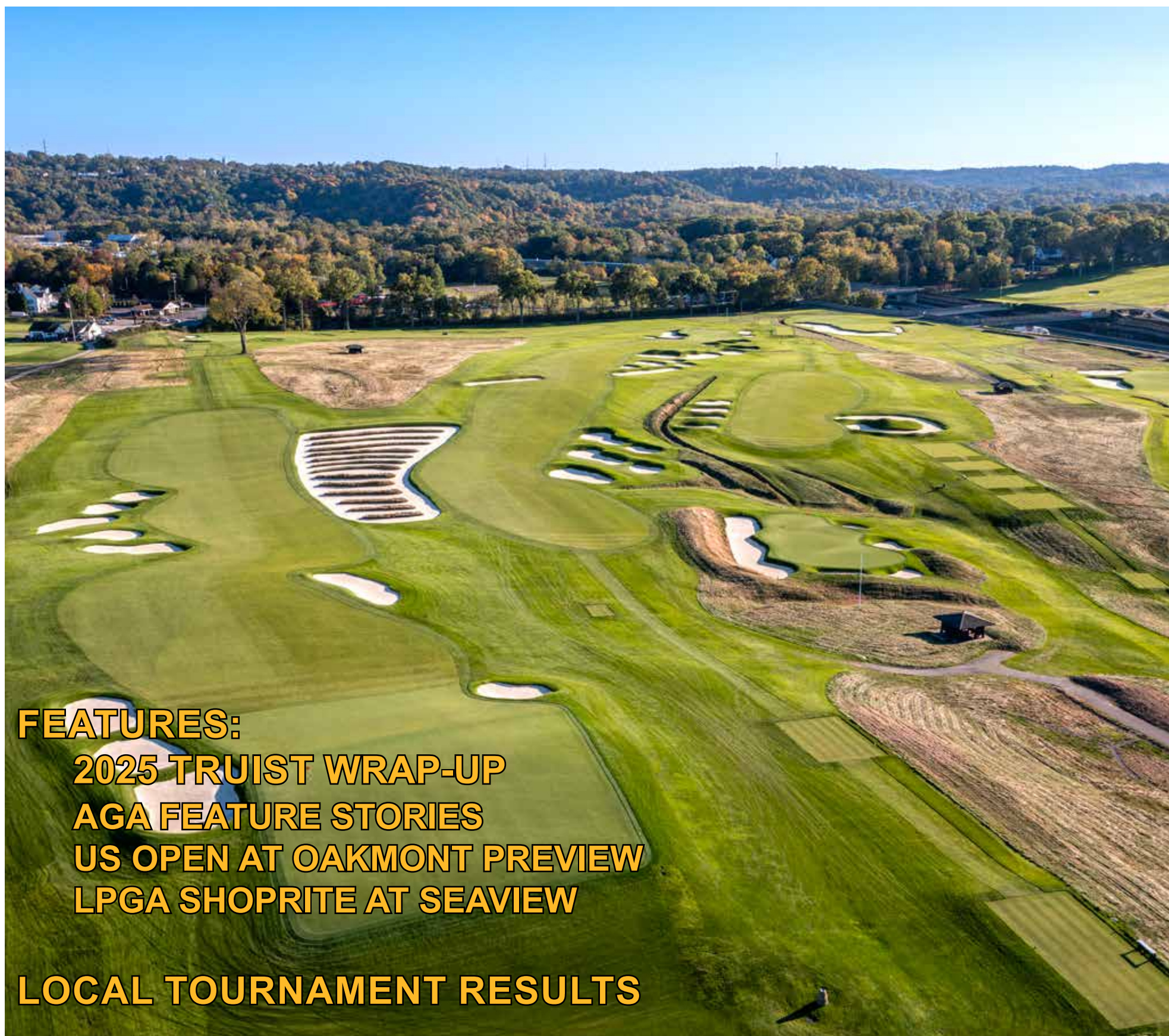


GOLF PENNSYLVANIA

GOLF NORTHEAST

Vol. XXXII No. 20

Early Summer 2025



FEATURES:

2025 TRUIST WRAP-UP

AGA FEATURE STORIES

US OPEN AT OAKMONT PREVIEW

LPGA SHOPRITE AT SEAVIEW

LOCAL TOURNAMENT RESULTS



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125TH U.S. OPEN AT OAKMONT



by Pete Kowalski

Oakmont Country Club adds to its legendary history from June 12-15 as the U.S. Open returns for the tenth time.

Why has the USGA designated Oakmont as a U.S. Open anchor site and why does it keep coming back to the Henry Clay Fownes-designed course in suburban Pittsburgh?

The easy answer is that the course is championship-ready every day. And it handily meets the USGA's criteria of using every club as well as testing the mental tenacity of each of the 156 players in the field.

The deeper answer comes from John Bodenhamer, the USGA's Chief Competitions Officer when he talks about the course.

"Oakmont is timeless, but it's never static," Bodenhamer said. "Since 2016, the course has undergone notable work to restore its bunkers to align with its original William C. Fownes design and expand greens to their original sizes while preserving its fast, firm conditions more closely. From a set-up standpoint, our aim is to present this course in its truest form, which is one of the toughest tests in golf, while remaining a fair, rigorous examination of every facet of a player's

game. Compared to 2016, the course will play about 153 yards longer, drainage ditches will be more penal, and there will be no graduated rough along fairways."

Bodenhamer and his USGA colleagues know that Oakmont is also a fan favorite, and the national governing body has an abundant set of activities and on-site fan experiences prepared. Here's an online look for fan information.

"Fans can expect everything they've come to love about Oakmont, which is a tough but fair test of golf on one of the cathedrals of the game," Bodenhamer said. "Designating Oakmont as an anchor site allows us to continue the U.S. Open's storied history at this venerable course and present a thorough challenge to the game's best players while elevating the experience for fans and players. We've invested in the property, whether it be enhancing the driving range or building out new areas of the property for new fan experience activations and viewing areas. There is a lot up our sleeve, and we can't wait to welcome people onsite."

For the record, the 125th U.S. Open is the 18th USGA championship to be contested at Oakmont. For perspective, Philadelphia's Merion Golf Club leads with 19. The USGA is also adding to the Commonwealth

Cont. on page 4

Cont. from page 3

of Pennsylvania's lead among all states with 95 championships.

"Pennsylvania has a rich golf heritage and a deep roster of world-class courses, but just as important, the people here embrace championship golf in a special way," Bodenhamer said. "Whether



Oakmont's Famous Churchpew Sandtrap

it's at Oakmont, Merion or other storied venues, there's a reverence for the game that resonates with everything the USGA stands for."

As for the U.S. Open, Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, N.J., is second in the hosting race with seven Opens, and Michigan's Oakland Hills, California's Pebble Beach and New York's Winged Foot have each hosted six times.

All of these courses, except Baltusrol, are on the upcoming calendar for the Open with Oakmont set for 2033, 2043 and 2049.

The 2025 championship set a record for most entries with 10,202 and Final Qualifying will be completed, weather permitting, at nine U.S. sites and one in Canada on June 2. On May 19, Final Qualifying was held in England, Japan and Dallas.



There are 85 players from around the globe already exempt from

qualifying.

The previous winners at Oakmont include six World Golf Hall of Famers: Ben Hogan (1953), Jack Nicklaus (1962), Ernie Els (1994), Tommy Armour (1927), Larry Nelson (1983) and Johnny Miller (1973).

Dustin Johnson captured the last victory at Oakmont in 2016, with an emphatic birdie on the 72nd hole.



Bodenhamer stresses that the 125th U.S. Open will accentuate the already deep connections the USGA has with Oakmont C.C.

"Our relationship with Oakmont is built on a shared commitment to championship excellence and the game's history," Bodenhamer said. "This year marks a record 10th U.S. Open hosted by Oakmont, and that doesn't happen without deep trust, mutual respect and a passion for testing the best players in the world. For our champions, it matters where they win, and we're looking forward to crowning another at Oakmont soon."



GOLF PENNSYLVANIA - GOLF NORTHEAST

TRULY “A SWING FOR LIFE”

By Scotty McAlarney
WGTF/IPGA

Never did I ever think that the name of our 25-year-old golf academy would be so fitting in a title of an article I would write – one that is meant to help bring awareness to a cause and possibly help save a life. At this moment, there is a young man fighting leukemia and is in need of a donor match.

Former and longtime A Swing for Life golf academy student Eddie Kaufman is 20 years old and is in the fight of his life – a battle against T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia. Eddie is currently at CHOP (Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia) and his parents are staying at the Ronald McDonald house in Philadelphia to be close to Eddie’s doctors.

I vividly remember getting the phone call on a crisp fall evening while sitting tranquilly by an outdoor fireplace. It was unusually late for a call but when I saw the caller ID – Eddie’s grandmother Carol, I picked up the call. Moments later I was sitting stunned at the news. Eddie was already on his way to CHOP to start chemotherapy ASAP. His condition was dire. My mind spiraled through a whirlwind of emotions.

For those not knowing Eddie, here’s a quick background on a young man that most, if not all, parents would want their daughter bringing home to be a part of their own family! When Eddie was younger, my wife and I would always kid him with adoption strategies! His quick bio: very intelligent, tall athletic build, handsome, respectful, caring, and always smiling. And if that isn’t enough to grab your attention – as a junior golfer and high school golfer, he won numerous golf tournaments, and received awards like the Scranton Times High school “Athlete of the Week” and a major honor of “Player of the Year” in golf!

Nope ... not finished yet ... it turns out that Eddie was a fantastic baseball player as well. No matter what level of baseball he played, he was dominant. During his junior year in high school, he was projected as the number 2 player as a center fielder in the state of PA in baseball combines on the east coast. He was actually recruited as a 2-sport player – in both golf and baseball, by Roanoke College. But as he told me during a phone call his freshman year one afternoon, he’d decided to stick with baseball, especially given the class work and the opportunity of Roanoke’s spring and fall baseball seasons. He gently broke the news that he wouldn’t be on the golf team but I couldn’t be more supportive. I knew he’d excel no matter which sport he chose. Before he started getting sick and diagnosed with this rare and aggressive form of leukemia, he was playing as a starting outfielder at Roanoke in addition to playing in the upstate New York summer baseball league.

Yes, talented indeed! And now, as I mentioned, he’s fighting for his life against a tough battle with an aggressive form of blood cancer – going through all of the issues that chemotherapy and his medication are doing to his body and mental state.

In our area of Northeastern Pennsylvania, there have already been numerous swab events, looking for his match in anyone 18 to 40 years of age. So many people in our area and his wide community of friends at Roanoke have all tested to see if they are a match. A 100% match is needed. A 100% match to Eddie will allow the life-saving process of stem cell donation to begin.

“Team Eddie K” is working with the National Marrow Donor Program, or NMDP, to find a life-saving match for Eddie. A perfect 10 will reduce the chances his body would reject the stem cells. Testing to see if you are a match is as easy as swabbing the inside of your cheek. It could even take place right at home and then mailed to the lab. Very close to this article in this publication is an advertisement with all of this information. I’m asking every reader to look at it and consider testing for Eddie. Text “TeamEddieK” to 61474 or visit <https://TeamEddieK.com>.

Last November we ran a fundraiser for Eddie on our indoor golf simulator at Scott Greens Golf Club, where our golf academy is located. He and his family have medical expenses and traveling expenses that are not covered under insurance, and they are a continual expense. This May, we’ll be running another golf fundraiser, allowing golfers who want to help and be part of the “Swinging for Eddie K” campaign. Golfers can play multiple 9-hole rounds during May and green fee proceeds will go towards Eddie’s fight. As a thank you, those golfers will be using their scorecards as a raffle ticket entered in to the drawings for many prizes during the “Swinging for a Cause” party in June.

The “Swinging for a Cause” party will be great fun, featuring drinks and light fare in late June at Montage Mountain resort. Anyone can come help raise money along with taking swings at baseball and golf, and other contests as well. This event is sure to bring everyone together to show their support for Eddie, his parents Brian and Melissa, and sister Mae and their entire family on June 21st!

In the 10 years I served as Eddie’s swing coach and then as his head golf coach at Mid Valley high school, I’ve been in awe of his determination for success and have witnessed his fight to win. No fight can be as important as the one Eddie is facing now. I know there are prayer warriors on this with me. So, I ask, are you ready to join our “Team Eddie K” in prayers, awareness, or through support of whatever kind you can offer to help his family while Eddie continues his fight for life!



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TEAM EDDIE K
WORTH

TRUIST TOURNAMENT IN PHILLY IS A SIGNATURE EVENT

By Mike Kern,

A little over a decade ago, Philadelphia Cricket Club opted to do an Oakmont to its Wissachickon Course, which was already considered to be among the best in the area if not all of Pennsylvania. Oakmont, on the opposite side of the state, had of course removed many if not most of its trees between the time it hosted the 1994 U.S. Open and the 2007 championship. And most agreed that it had only made one of the best layouts in the country even better. And they said much



the same about Philly Cricket, which also has the newer Militia track that's also highly ranked.

By the way, Aronimink has done something similar, and it's going to host the PGA Championship next year. But we digress.

Since its transformation, Cricket has hosted a number of prominent events, including the 2015 PGA Professional National Championship, the 2016 Senior Players Championship (won by Bernhard Langer) and the USGA Four-Ball Championship last year. And now, it will take it up even another notch. On May 8-11 it will be the venue for the PGA Truist Championship, the first time the PGA Tour has been to Philly since the BMW Championship that was part of the FedEx Cup playoffs was played at Aronimink in 2018.

So, it's quite a big deal. And this is one of the handful of the Tour's designated signature events, which means only the best players on the planet will be showing up. That includes Rory McIlroy, who finally completed his career grand slam by winning the Masters last month. And if Philly has shown anything in the past, it's that it appreciates and will support sporting events that it deems to be first-class. It's looking like this will be no exception.

The Truist, by the way, is being played the week before the PGA Championship. It used to be sponsored by Wells Fargo, and was held at Quail Hollow in North Carolina. But Wells Fargo decided not to

renew its contract, and Quail Hollow is the site of the PGA, so they needed a new destination, if only for this one year. And it all came together for Cricket rather quickly. But all indications are it will be very much up to the task. And then some. Everyone on both sides of the equation seems extremely satisfied and excited about how it's all been able to come together. McIlroy, it should be duly noted, won this tournament four times at Quail Hollow. For whatever that will be worth here. But it probably can't hurt.

Jim Smith, the longtime Director of Golf and COO, has been there for the entire evolution. And he couldn't be prouder. About what's already happened, and this next chapter. In short, it's all good. Maybe even great. And don't forget that at the beginning of the 20th century, Cricket's original Chestnut Hill location was the site for the U.S. Open in 1907 and 1910. So there's been no shortage of history.

"We've obviously had our share of significant events before," Smith said. "But it's the highest profile event we've ever done (in this present era). I think our membership, I don't know if validate is the right word, but certainly for us to be a place where the Tour and Truist would want to bring here for an event of this magnitude, that says a lot.

"So in many ways this proves that all the investment and effort that's been made to just make it better and better and better over the last 20 years has gotten us to this point. And it's a great place to be. It kind of says, 'Hey, you made some really good decisions.'

"This is a level above. And you have to have a great course to be considered. But for the Tour and Truist to show this much faith in what can be done here, in looking for that special partnership, it has to go way beyond just the golf course. And that's what's happening ...

"You have to have a volunteer base, which we're getting not just from here but all over the greater Philadelphia golf community," he continued. "And our membership has helped drive the hospitality purchases, which are such a big and essential part of it. So far, if we asked them what they expected in terms of sales we're blowing them out of the water."

Indeed, there doesn't seem to be any downside, especially for a region that hasn't had a regular Tour stop since the old IVB Classic at Whitemarsh Valley ended its nearly two-decade run in 1980, in part because the Open was coming to Merion the following summer. It's a question that a lot of folks in this area have had trouble understanding, since we have as many big-time courses as anywhere. Not to mention a pretty solid fan base. But for whatever reasons, there's been a void. And even though this is a one-time thing, you never know what maybe it could do to change some thinking.

“I’m lucky,” Smith acknowledged, with a knowing smile. “I come here and they give me money to do what I do. Which is crazy. But I know how the membership feels about the fact that the whole world of golf is going to be looking at Cricket Club for a week. That’s something you can’t put a price on.”

“I was born and raised here, right. I think for many, many years, there has been a little bit of an inferiority complex. You know, that we were kind of stuck between Boston and New York and (Washington) D.C. And maybe we did get overlooked. What you’re seeing now is we can hold our own, especially as it relates to supporting events like this. This far exceeded what anything thought could happen. I hope it lays the groundwork for regular Tour events or large events to come to Philly. And you know as well as I do, it’s not just Cricket and Aronimink, or Merion (which has done history as well as anyone and is hosting another U.S. Amateur next year) or Pine Valley (the almost-always No. 1 rated course in the world). There’s 20 other phenomenal courses in our city. And all of them could probably host an event.”

Sometimes, it’s about circumstances, and situations. Cricket just happened to be positioned in the right spot when it mattered. Because it has to work, or else it’s not worth doing. And if it’s not done right, another opportunity might be come along.

“At the end of the day, this is about money,” Smith explained, correctly. “You can’t go to places if you can’t drive the revenue. You have to show them that the money is here. And I think you also see that Aronimink is killing it with PGA sales. So we’re saying to the world of golf, ‘Hey, Philadelphia is really a market that deserves something.’ And I don’t think what we’re doing and what Aronimink’s doing are going to take anything away from each other. We’re both going to succeed, I think in a big way.”

And at least in Cricket’s case, it had to come together quickly.

“If the sponsor was the state bank of Georgia, this probably wouldn’t have come to Philadelphia,” Smith duly noted. “It had to fall in place the right way, for us and Truist. In all honesty, it kind of got dropped in our laps. Basically you could call it dumb luck. I also think they called us because we had developed a good reputation. We got a call in January of ‘24, so it was a really short window. The phone rang and we had discussions. For an event in May of ‘25. Which is insane. I think the club originally was like, ‘OK, we’ve had our tires kicked before.’ So I’m not sure we really paid much attention to it. Maybe they were just making phone calls, you know.”

“In February, they sent an advance team out. And it was like, ‘Let’s figure this out.’ But we actually didn’t sign anything until July. And here we are. But until you know, you really don’t. I’m not aware whether they talked to anyone else. All I knew was we were dealing with a really compacted time frame. But it hasn’t been an issue.”

They really didn’t have to do much in terms of the course setup. Although, like with the Senior, the layout will be reconfigured so that the 18th is now the 11th, and the normal seventh, fifth, sixth and fourth will provide the finishing stretch to provide better viewing areas for the spectators, which

will be limited to fewer than a usual PGA event (around 17,500 instead of 20-25) to make the overall experience even better. In ‘16, those closing holes actually graded out as the most difficult. So there. The winning score was 1-over par, which is 70. The course will play at about 7,100 yards, about 400 more than it did for the older guys.

“The greens should be rock hard (at that time of year),” Smith said. “It’ll play firm and fast. The rough should be moderate, not crazy. Our team will be able to dial up the course to whatever the Tour says. I think people will be surprised at the type of test this is. It might depend on the (weather) conditions. If it’s soft, all bets are off. Because these guys are the best in the world. Of the 12 par 4s, my guess is they could be hitting wedge or 9 irons into probably seven or eight of them.”

“The Tour told us, ‘Don’t judge the quality of the course on what they shoot.’ It’s entirely possible there going to have the opportunity to make some birdies. All you want is the players to leave and say what a great city, what a great golf course, what great hospitality. That’s the goal.

“I will say this: the course record is 65. That will get broke. Without a doubt. It might get broken every day. Again, we’re talking about the best in the world.”

And the best of those are headed here, to find out exactly what a proper restoration can do. We’ll find out soon enough. Smith can’t wait.

“I’m just trying to make sure everything’s in the right place,” he admitted. “I have nothing to do with any of the (daily) operations. I mean, we’ve done this before, where we’ve had an Army of people coming in. This is just different. I couldn’t even tell you committees are doing what. So I’m not going to be the guy stressing out because some volunteer didn’t show up. I’m just super excited to show what we have.

“It’s a burden. But you give something up, you get something in return. I think we’re doing something a lot of other clubs couldn’t do, in terms of scope and timing. But we’re seeing a lot of direct benefits. It’s going to have a boutique feel to it. I think people will appreciate that. What’s cool is it’s an intimate golf course.

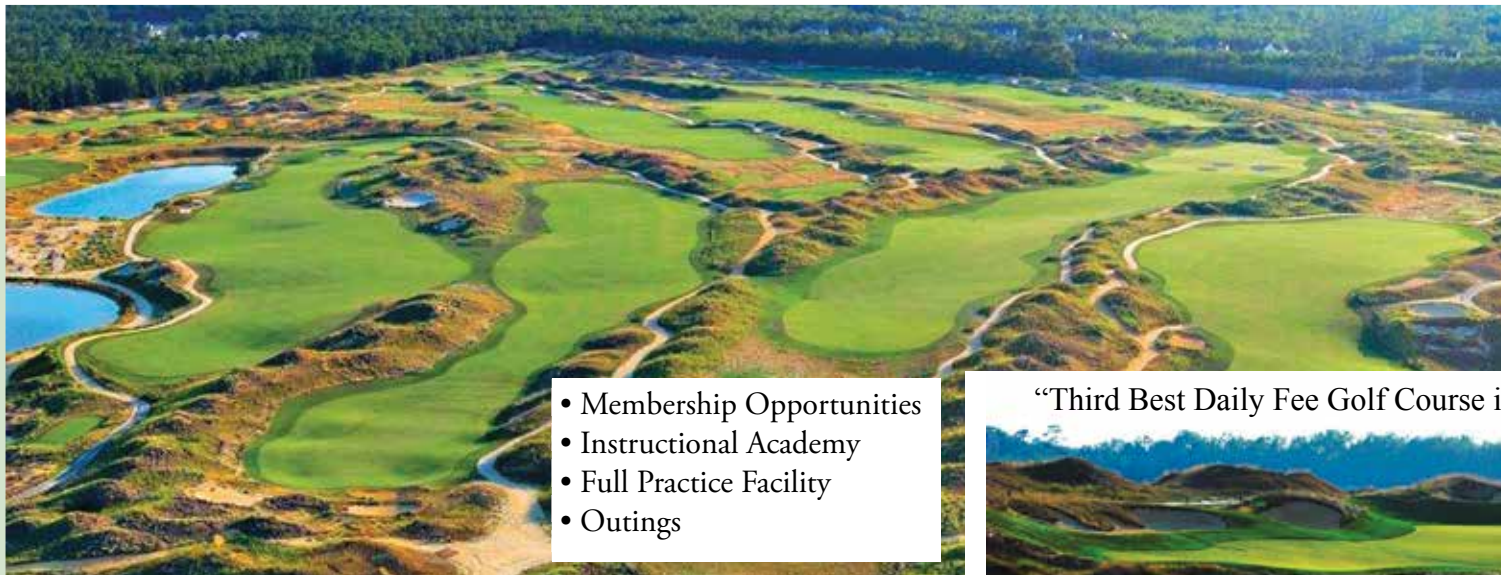
“If Mother Nature cooperates ... I think we’re going to get a lot of positive comments.”

Which is all anyone can really ask for, right? It just took some time to be given that chance. Hopefully they can make the most of it. For now, and possibly the future as well.



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CASEY, DANIEL CAPTURE WOMEN'S FOUR-BALL

Casey, Daniel capture Women's Four-Ball

CLARKS SUMMIT, Pa. — A subtle “let’s boogie” echoed from the first tee at Glen Oak Country Club (par 73, 5,486 yards) Wednesday.

Murmurs of “great drive” and “in the fairway” followed. Kathy Goeringer even summoned the late Ely Callaway before swinging a club.

The sounds reflected the spirit of the inaugural Women's Four-Ball at Glen Oak. Chants, cheers, and camaraderie. And channeling spirits.

“It was the theme today. I was using a Callaway golf ball, and so was [teammate] Ruthie (Dettore),” Goeringer, 67, of Tunkhannock, Pa., said. “God bless Ely Callaway for coming up with the company.”

The Women's Four-Ball, a better-ball-of-partners event, is officially in good company on the GAP/AGA calendar. It is open to any female member of a GAP Member Club with a handicap index of 32.0 or less. The Women's Four-Ball featured three divisions: Amateur, Senior (55-64 years of age) and Super Senior (65 years of age or older).

Berwick Golf Club's Amy Daniel and Pocono Farms Country Club's Mariah Casey carded a 12-over-par 85 to capture the event's overall title. In the Senior Division (par 73, 4,841 yards), Fox Hill Country Club's Wendy Cimoch and Wyoming Valley Country Club's Natalie Sokoloski prevailed with a 3-over-par 76. Home-club hopefuls Carolyn Beers and Marlene Smith fired a 5-over-par 78 to edge Goeringer and Dettore by a stroke in the Super-Senior Division (par 73, 4,841 yards).

Glen Oak absorbed close to two inches of rainfall the day prior. Mother Nature smiled upon an event needing water in its roots.

“Honestly, I’m shocked that we got it in, that the golf course was as dry as it was,” Goeringer said. “Last night, I had a bible study meeting, and you couldn’t hear anybody talk because of the rain coming down hard enough on the aluminum roof. It came down in buckets. I’m thrilled GAP stuck it out to see what the conditions would be. It turned out to be beautiful.”

A random league night pairing at Berwick in 2022 turned out to be the start of a beautiful friendship between Casey and Daniel. Competition, conversation, connection.

“When we had tournaments where we could pick our team, we’d like to go play together,” Daniel, 35, of Berwick, Pa., said. “We did a simulator league at [The Clubhouse 315] in the winter. We were the only women’s group, and we won. It was fun.”

Casey and Daniel, although unenthusiastic about the final number, embraced Wednesday's result. First Four-Ball Champions.

“I feel like we play with each other enough that we know what to say to calm each other down,” Casey, 26, of Jefferson Township, Pa., said. “We managed. We had our blowups. We had our good holes. We play well with each other.”

Daniel pointed to pars on Nos. 13 (par 4, 300 yards) and 14 (par 4, 325 yards) as a confidence booster. On the former, she slipped an 8-iron from 150 yards through a gap in overhanging trees. Daniel then two putted from the front of the green.

“The common thought is trees are 90 percent air, so when I hit it I was like, ‘You’re right,’” Daniel said of her approach.

Casey, who works for a biotech company and serves as an assistant golf coach at Marywood University, moved to Pocono Farms during the winter. Despite the club change, she and Daniel, an eighth-grade science teacher, plan to connect for rounds of golf this summer.

Wednesday was a good start.

Seconded by the sounds in the scoring area.

Susan Stravinsky's cellphone rang as she watched the leaderboard in the scoreboard. Her ringtone? The Rocky theme.

Emblematic of the event's fighting spirit.



Mariah Casey & Amy Daniel



results on following page

Amateur (Gross) - Amateur

i	Pos.	Players	Total Gross
☆	1	Casey, Mariah + Daniel, Amy <i>Pocono Farms Country Club, Berwick Golf Club</i>	85
☆	2	Antoine, April + Statsman, Jessica <i>Pocono Farms Country Club</i>	90
☆	3	Duffy, Marissa + Murphy, Kathy <i>Country Club of Scranton, Glenmaura National Golf Club</i>	108

Amateur (Net) - Amateur [Expand All](#)

i	Pos.	Players	Total Net
☆	1	Antoine, April + Statsman, Jessica <i>Pocono Farms Country Club</i>	72
☆	2	Casey, Mariah + Daniel, Amy <i>Pocono Farms Country Club, Berwick Golf Club</i>	73
☆	3	Duffy, Marissa + Murphy, Kathy <i>Country Club of Scranton, Glenmaura National Golf Club</i>	84

Super Senior Amateur (Gross) - Super-Senior Amateur

i	Pos.	Players	Total Gross
☆	1	Beers, Carolyn + Smith, Marlene <i>Glen Oak Country Club</i>	78
☆	2	Dettore, Ruth + Goeringer, Kathy <i>Elmhurst Country Club, Wyoming Valley Country Club</i>	79

Senior Amateur (Gross) - Senior Amateur

i	Pos.	Players	Total Gross
☆	1	Cimoch, Wendy + Sokoloski, Natalie <i>Fox Hill Country Club, Wyoming Valley Country Club</i>	76
☆	2	Andreychik, Valerie + McHugh, Bernadette <i>Frosty Valley, Huntsville Golf Club</i>	79
☆	3	Lunger, Beth + Walter, Merri <i>Irem Country Club</i>	81
☆	4	Harris, Tammie + Luciani, Nancy <i>Fox Hill Country Club, Glen Oak Country Club</i>	82
☆	5	Loughney, Denette + Mecca, Kim <i>Glen Oak Country Club</i>	84
☆	6	Zonneville, Penny + Scheller, Marie <i>Glen Oak Country Club, Elmhurst Country Club</i>	86
☆	7	Eget, Donna + Urnoski, Barbara <i>Glen Oak Country Club</i>	87
☆	8	Vansaun, Joanne + Welgus, Joan <i>Wyoming Valley Country Club</i>	88
☆	9	Farrell, Cheryl + Skeels, Jane <i>Glenmaura National Golf Club, Glen Oak Country Club</i>	89
☆	10	Holland, Laurie + King, Helene <i>Pocono Farms Country Club</i>	91
☆	11	Stravinsky, Susan + Voitek, Ruthann <i>Fox Hill Country Club</i>	97
☆	12	Flore, Beth + Pasqualichio, Mary Jo <i>Country Club of Scranton</i>	100

THREE TAKE TITLES IN SPRING STROKE PLAY AT IREM

Jonathan Wilson of the host club carded a 3-over-par 75 to capture the 17th Spring Stroke Play at Irem Country Club (par 72, 6,496 yards).Tuesday.



An even-par 36 on his inward nine gave Wilson the necessary edge to hold off Fox Hill Country Club’s A.J. Donatoni and Tyler McGarry by a stroke. In the Senior Division (par 72, 6,288 yards), Philadelphia Cricket Club’s Francis Vaughn won his first GAP/AGA trophy. He carded a 6-over-par 78 to prevail by a stroke over Jack Frost National Golf Club’s Bill Ianieri.

Wyoming Valley Country Club’s Joseph Weiscarger continues his impressive play in the Super-Senior Division (par 72, 5,467 yards). He posted a 3-under-par 69, the day’s lone subpar score.

Amateur Division - Amateur Division

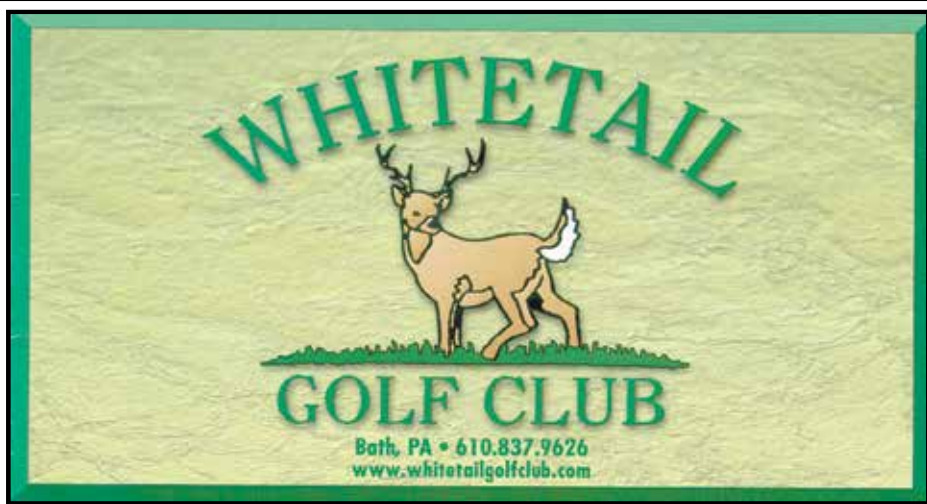
i	Pos.	Player	Total Gross
☆	1	Wilson, Jonathan <i>Irem Country Club</i>	75
☆	2	Donatoni, A.J. <i>Fox Hill Country Club</i>	76
☆	3	McGarry, Tyler <i>Fox Hill Country Club</i>	76
☆	4	Devos, Keith <i>Jack Frost National Golf Club</i>	77
☆	5	Williams, Eric <i>Honesdale Golf Club</i>	77

Senior Division (55-64) - Senior Division

i	Pos.	Player	Total Gross
☆	1	Vaughn, Francis <i>Philadelphia Cricket Club</i>	78
☆	2	Ianieri, Bill <i>Jack Frost National Golf Club</i>	79

Super-Senior Division (65+) - Super Senior Division

i	Pos.	Player	Total Gross
☆	1	Weiscarger, Joseph <i>Wyoming Valley Country Club</i>	69
☆	2	Corbett, Brian <i>USGA/GAP GC</i>	74



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LINNEA STROM SHOOTS 60 FOR HISTORIC WIN AT 2024 SHOPRITE LPGA ...

By Mike Kern

GALLOWAY, N.J. — When Sweden's Linnea Strom teed off in the final round of last year's 54-hole ShopRite LPGA Classic, her chances of winning were virtually zero. At least that's what the analytics said. Seriously. Common sense said the same thing. She was tied for 52nd, seven behind 36-hole leader Jenny Shin.



Strom hadn't been playing well. She hadn't even been making cuts. And she needed to make a 12-foot birdie putt on the last hole Saturday just to make it to Sunday. So there was all that. Turns out none of it mattered. Because by the time she had finished on Sunday, just after the final group had headed out, she had carded a closing 11-under par 60 on Seaview's Bay Course, for a total of 14-under 199. And that was good enough to give her a 1-shot victory over Megan Khang and Ayaka Furue, which made it the largest comeback in the history of the LPGA.

Who could have known?

She made nine birdies and an eagle (a chip-in on the par-5 ninth), and needed just 20 putts. It was the lowest score ever at the Jersey Shore event, and her first LPGA career win. The 27-year-old broke the previous final-round rally record of overcoming a deficit that had been set in 1987 by Ayako Okamoto at the Lady Keystone Open in Hersey. Back then, the great Japanese player had been tied for 23rd entering the last day. So by the numbers, this one was something else indeed. Off the charts.

Strom was ranked 165th in the world rankings coming into the week.

"That's very cool," said Strom, who made a 6-foot bird on the par-5 18th and then had to wait about four hours to collect her trophy, at the time. "I'm obviously very proud of that. But it's just golf, and you should never give up. I think that's what I told myself going into today. It's not over until that final putt has dropped. It was my personal best round as well, so that's pretty fun as well."

You think? She created snapshots that will last forever.

Strom was back at Seaview recently, for the media day for this year's Classic, which will be held June 6-8. And it afforded her a chance to relive those moments.

"I remember (just making the cut) was big for me," she recalled. "I had my dad here with me from Sweden. Two weeks prior to this tournament he decided to come over and booked a flight. So I'm just trying to put up a good score out there. Just enjoy playing with my dad there. That's kind of what I did. I told myself I'm just going to try and move up the leaderboard and hopefully have a good finish. I don't think I could have ever expected to have the kind of day that I had."

"I stayed with one of my best friends, Frida Kinhult, and she missed the cut. She said good-bye in the morning and she was like, 'Ok, I'll see you next week in Grand Rapids (Mich.)' Even when she left she had obviously no idea that was going to come. She felt horrible about not being there for my first win. But I think it's just golf. You never know what's going to happen. The whole final day was just kind of a blur. It's nice to be back and kind of recreate some memories that I had." But it was amazing. I think never once during the round



thought that I could potentially win. Because I was so far behind. I think that kind of helped me just to be in the present. I played one shot at a time, one hole at a time, tried to put birdies out there. It probably wasn't until I finished on 18 and they interviewed me after the round, that's when it kind of hit me. Maybe I have a chance of even winning the tournament ...

Cont. on page 13

Cont. from page 12

"I think for sure that really helped me enjoy it. I really did. I mean, the best round I ever had in my life. So this place will always have a special place in my heart and brings back great memories to be here (again)."

If nothing else, finishing so early allowed her to have lunch with her father. And try not to worry too much about what maybe could actually happen.

"It kind of built up," she readily acknowledged, honestly. "I was kind of expecting to stick around for one or two hours. I thought, you know, someone is going to take the lead and run away. But I know it's also golf and it's not easy to go out in a position leading a tournament on a Sunday, so I had that in the back of my mind because they saw my score being posted on the leaderboard.



"So I had a longer lunch. My (trainer) was there, my caddie, and then some of my other friends that are coming in. Everyone came up and said good round. I did a little bit of stretching, tried to keep the body moving a little bit. I couldn't just sit and not do anything. As it got closer (to the end) I kind of realized that I have to be ready in case there is a playoff. I hit some putts on the practice green and there were three girls standing there and they asked me if they could have a signed golf ball. So I gave away three balls. Then my caddie goes how many balls do you have left in your bag. You can't give away all your balls. I was like, 'OK, I (still) have two or three. If I lose a ball in a playoff, I'm probably not going to win (anyway).'"

Fair enough. But it never came to that. Furue was the last that had a chance to tie, but she failed to birdie 18 after being just off the green in two.

"It doesn't happen every week for me, so I think it was just exciting to be in that situation and see how I would handle that," Strom explained, who will be coming back to Seaview in much the same position playing-wise as she did a year ago. "I think my game feels better than what my scoring is showing. I think I'm still trying to

figure out why. I finished the year pretty good last year and I thought I would just keep building on that. It's golf. It's a very mental sport as well. Two out of the last four weeks (through early May) I missed the cut by a shot, which is very frustrating. It can be very hard to deal with, and you try to put it behind you.

"I think I'm just reminding myself that it's (only) one shot. If I wouldn't have made a birdie on the last hole (here last year), I wouldn't have ended up winning the tournament. I think I have that in the back of my head. One shot and maybe you have a good weekend and (it) ends up being a great tournament. Some weeks you have the luck on your side, and some weeks you don't. I think I'm just trying to stay positive. I know I have a fun summer coming up. So I'm just looking forward to what's coming. I'm going to kind of figure out what I can work on to prepare the best way for that.

"I know it's close Sometimes from the outside you see a score and the result and you see missed cut, missed cut, but I think it's so much more than that. It's tough because in my head I see the missed cut as well. I just need to stay strong, stay positive and believe in myself. I know I have a great team around me, and a great family that's supporting me."

We all understand that golf can be a difficult pursuit, even when you're good. There's always the next shot, the next week. And you hope you can get on a roll, whether it's for a day or whatever. The pursuit is never ending.

"I think it for sure took me awhile to understand what I had done," Strom said. "I don't think I quite understood it the day it happened. They were nice and sent the trophy all the way to Sweden. So I have the trophy at my parent's house. That's fun, considering my dad was here with me. It was kind of towards the middle of the summer (when it arrived). I was there, because we played some events in Europe. That was pretty cool. I grew up next to the golf course where I learned to play, and then have the trophy sent there. Just being in that environment, I think that's when it sunk in, too. You know, show it to my coach and the members of my golf club, it was just very special.

"It makes me very happy to look back at photos (from that day)."

She was the third Swede to win this tournament, joining of course three-time champion Annika Sorenstam and Anna Nordqvist, the only back-to-back winner (2015-16). That's pretty good company. And of course Sorenstam remains the only female golfer to card a 59.

"A lot of people come up (to me), they remember that I shot 60," Strom said. "Looking back at that day, it's not just the win but the fact that I shot 60 to win. And the comeback as well. So I feel like there were multiple things that happened that day. It's great (that people remember). It's always fun to get reminded. If you're struggling, it's

Cont. from page 13

just nice to hear sometimes that people know what you did. It's a good confidence boost to hear it.

"That's something I'm struggling with every now and then. Because I think a lot of times confidence obviously comes from results. (When you're) missing the cuts by a shot, that can pretty much ruin your confidence. But then you can look at it another way where it's like, 'Ok, I didn't have a great week but I still only missed by a shot.' Then you can try and convince yourself and turn it around into something positive. Which is hard, because that's how we are as human beings. We're being affected by the result. I came from missing a lot of cuts to all of a sudden I got a win.

"It's hard. You have to really work hard to keep that confidence. Professional athletes will feel this. We are probably surrounded by the best players in the world and I tell myself that as well. Week in and week out, you put a lot of pressure on yourself to be at the top of your game. No one is going to be at the top week in and week out ... Everyone out here knows how hard it is to win (even) one time. (Keeping) the confidence is hard. You have to work on it a lot and just convince yourself that you are good enough and you belong to be out here. It's the same for everyone. That day, I was in the zone for sure."

And if it can happen once, well, you never know.

"I just wanted to try and keep it going (that day), just see how low we could go," she explained. "I remember my caddie telling me that he was thinking about having a chat with me but he kind of noticed that he didn't need to. So he never really stepped in. He let me do my thing. Which was great.

"We kept our routine the same for every shot. I think he was kind of going between should I say something, do I not say anything."

What it was, it worked. On an all-time level.

"Just don't get ahead of yourself," Strom emphasized. "That's something that helped me a lot. You can't affect whatever you did last hole, and also not going to know what you're going to do in three holes, so you have to be in (the moment). If I miss a shot, OK, it happens. It happens to everyone. No one is going to hit every shot perfect.

"I know it probably sounds easier than what it is, but we (all) go through that kind of stuff. It's easy to think ahead of like what hole is coming next. That's probably what I did so good that final round. I did not think anything. All of sudden we were on 18 when. I had birdied 16, birdied 17, and then 18 probably got a little bit into my head. Hit a bad drive, but still managed to make birdie."

Of course she did. It was her day, her moment. And that can never

be taken away. So she will come back as the defending champ. This year, nobody else can say that.

"Obviously, haven't been in this position before," Strom said. "I'll try and not putt too much pressure on myself. But obviously I know what I'm capable of doing on this golf course."

And it's a feeling that shouldn't be going away anytime soon.

Tap-Ins: This is the 31st year that ShopRite is the title sponsor. That is by far the longest running for any title sponsor on the LPGA Tour. And this is the 37th edition. There was a three-year absence from 2007-09. The tournament was held at Greate Bay in Somers Point from 1988-97. Acer continues to be the Presenting Sponsor, which also makes it one of the LPGA's longest partnerships. World No. 1 Nelly Korda has committed to play, as has No. 2 Jeeno Thitikul. This event has donated more than \$40 million to charity, again making it easily the LPGA's highest number. This year it's projected to raise between \$1.5 and \$2 million to local and area communities. And many of those beneficiaries mainly depend on that assistance. And really, that's what the week is supposed to be all about.





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JEFFERSON LEHIGH VALLEY CLASSIC TO DEBUT ON PGA TOUR CHAMPIONS SCHEDULE IN 2026

Lehigh Country Club will host the annual stop on Champions Tour

Proceeds to benefit local charities, including the inaugural tournament's primary beneficiaries, Valley Youth House and Eagles Autism Foundation

ALLENTOWN, PA. – Today officials from Jefferson Health, the PGA TOUR Champions, and Lehigh Country Club announced a five-year partnership to host a new professional golf tournament: the Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic, which will debut on the PGA TOUR Champi-



ons schedule in fall 2026. The competition will be held annually at Lehigh Country Club in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and is expected to provide a \$50 million boost to the local economy.

The inaugural Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic will be hosted the week of September 28, 2026 and will feature a field of 78 PGA TOUR Champions players, with legends of the game, including Stewart Cink, Ernie Els, Padraig Harrington, Bernhard Langer, and more.

Proceeds will benefit local charities in Northeastern Pennsylvania and throughout the greater Philadelphia and Lehigh Valley regions, including the primary beneficiaries of the inaugural tournament, Valley Youth House and Eagles Autism Foundation.

All three rounds of the Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic will be televised on GOLF Channel, the exclusive cable-television partner of PGA TOUR Champions. Internationally, PGA TOUR Champions coverage is available in more than 170 countries and territories via 22 media partners.

HNS Sports Group, an Ohio-based event management LLC specializing in golf, will manage the event.

Tournaments for Charity, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity, will serve as the tournament's host organization.

"We are thrilled to partner with Jefferson Health and bring PGA

TOUR Champions golf to the Lehigh Valley," said PGA TOUR Champions President Miller Brady. "Golf legends and World Golf Hall of Fame members will have an exceptional week of competition at a first-rate golf course in Lehigh Country Club. We're excited to bring local golf enthusiasts an unforgettable experience and look forward to making a lasting, positive impact on the community for years to come."

The tournament's title sponsor, Jefferson Health, is one of the nation's largest nonprofit healthcare systems, and is committed to delivering exceptional clinical and compassionate care to patients in the Philadelphia region. Jefferson aims to reimagine health care and higher education to create unparalleled value in the greater Philadelphia region, Lehigh Valley and Northeastern Pennsylvania, and southern New Jersey. More than 65,000 people strong, Jefferson is dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate clinical care for patients; making our communities healthier and stronger; preparing tomorrow's professional leaders for 21st-century careers; and creating new knowledge through clinical and applied research. They are dedicated to training future health professionals and conducting research to improve clinical care and offer a wide range of disciplines and programs designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in their respective fields. Through innovative teaching methods and hands-on training, they prepare future healthcare providers to meet the evolving needs of the community.

"This is all about making a long-term, positive impact on the Lehigh Valley and the surrounding areas," said Dr. Joe Cacchione, CEO of Jefferson. "As we continue to integrate our two leading health systems, it's important that we drive awareness and access to our uncompromising care throughout the region."

"While we don't know which player is going to win the inaugural event, we already know that our charitable partners will be the real winners," said Nick Ragone, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer for Jefferson. "We want the Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic to be among the most charitable and well-attended events on the PGA TOUR Champions schedule beginning in year one."

Lehigh Country Club is regarded as one of the top golf destinations not only in the Lehigh Valley, but in Pennsylvania, routinely being ranked among the top courses in the state. The club moved to its current location in 1928, with the course designed by the renowned architect William S. Flynn. The 206-acre site was previously farmland owned by the Kemmerer and Kline families and was purchased by a group of forty-two club members. The fairways at Lehigh Country Club are known for their masterful routing, featuring significant elevation changes.

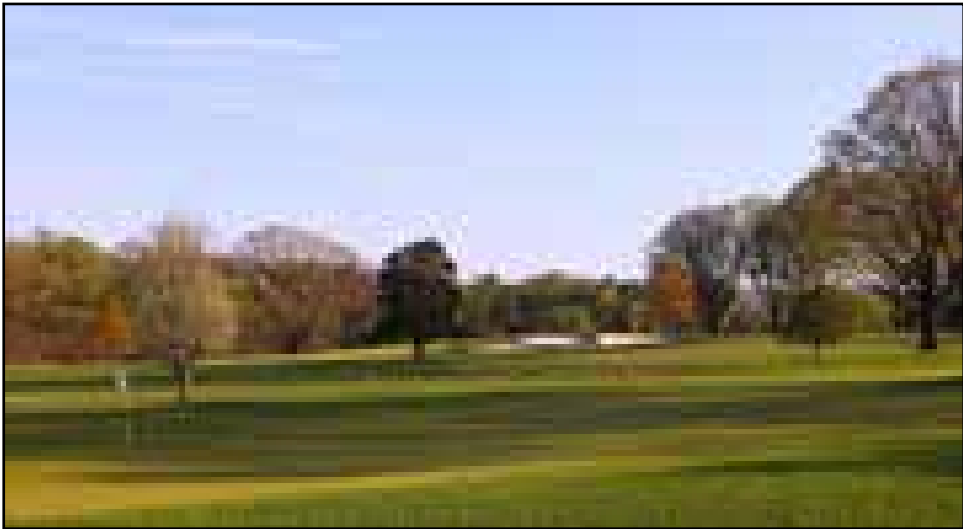
Valley Youth House is a catalyst for youth to achieve their desired

Cont. from page 16
futures through genuine relationships that support families, ensure safe places, and build community connections. They partner with each young person they meet to help them create the best possible outcome for their unique situation.

“We are deeply honored to be named beneficiary of the Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic through this incredible partnership with Jefferson Health and Lehigh Valley Health Network. At Valley Youth House, we believe every young person deserves a safe place to call home and the opportunity to reach their full potential,” said Christina Schoemaker, Senior Vice President of Advancement for Valley Youth House. “This generous commitment will help us continue to provide critical support, housing, and resources to young people in our community. We’re grateful to work alongside organizations who share our dedication to caring for our community and building healthy futures for all.”

On the field, the Philadelphia Eagles are united by one objective: victory. Off the field, the team is drawn together by an even larger goal: taking action for autism through the Eagles Autism Foundation. The Foundation’s biggest strength is bringing people together through research, advocacy, empathy, and unity. Together, the Eagles Autism Foundation is making an impact that echoes around the globe.

the beneficiaries of the inaugural Jefferson Lehigh Valley Classic,” said Ryan Hammond, Executive Director, Eagles Autism Foundation. “We are grateful to collaborate with like-minded organizations like Jefferson Health, that continue to serve under-represented communities including those on the autism spectrum. 100% of this generous donation from Jefferson Health will help fund innovative autism research and care programs, making a transformational impact in our Eagles autism community.”



“The Eagles Autism Foundation is proud to be recognized as one of

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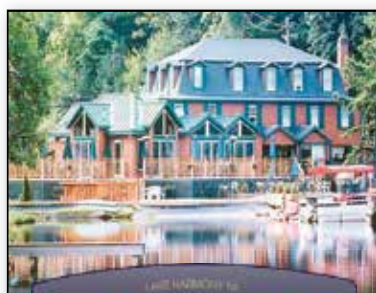
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U.S. Amateur Four-Ball at Plainfield C.C.



EDISON, N.J. – Dan Walters, a native of Lancaster now living in Winston-Salem, N.C., loves the golf courses of the Northeast.

“I like bent/poa greens, bent fairways, rye fairways, and rye rough,” said the former Wake Forest assistant coach. “It feels like home.”

Walters, 40, who has played in two U.S. Mid-Amateurs, qualified both times on Pennsylvania courses (Carlisle C.C. in 2021 and Wyncote G.C. in 2021).

“When I qualified for my second U.S. Amateur in 2015 at Cherry Hills, I went to New Jersey to qualify,” he said. Walters played in his first USGA championship at the U.S. Amateur at Merion Golf Club in 2005.

Combine Walters’ golf course preferences



Beck and Walters in quarterfinals photo Simon Bruty USGA

and a strong partner, and it wasn’t surprising in the changing spring weather conditions and the challenging course set-up at the 10th U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship at Plainfield Country Club in central New Jersey, that Walters and Evan Beck, the 2024 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion, flourished.

At the timeless classic Donald Ross-design, Walters, a former associate head coach at Wake Forest and his four-time partner Beck, 34, of Virginia Beach, Va., a Wake All-American, advanced to the championship match against a pair of teenagers and U.S. National Junior Team members Will Hartman (18) and Tyler Mawhinney (17) who are both headed to Vanderbilt for college golf.

The youngsters prevailed, 3 and 1, in the final match.

“Yeah, it was challenging, there's no question about it,” Walters said. “It felt like Scotland or Ireland or something. I'm not exactly aware of their record, but they played some great golf today. I think as Evan said, they hit some better shots in the last six, eight holes, and obviously we were 1-up through nine. We got beat on the back nine. Hats off to them. It was wonderful to be in this situation, and hopefully, we can be there again.”

Previously, Walters and Beck had advanced to the semifinals at the 2022 U.S. Four-Ball but dropped a 2-and-1 decision to Drew Stoltz and Drew Kittleson.

In the quarterfinals, Walters and Beck defeated a pair of Wake Forest alums, Chad Wilfong and Davis Womble, who was Walters’ first recruit in his Wake coaching tenure.

A two-time first-team All-American at Rollins College and a 2016 inductee into the school’s athletic Hall of Fame, Walters honed his game

under the tutelage of well-regarded teacher Ted Sheftic and at Meadia Heights Country Club.

He played for Hempfield High School. His father, Skip, was the golf coach at Manheim Township High School for 31 years, where his teams won a slew of district titles and individuals included 1987 PIAA champion and 2003 U.S. Open champion Jim Furyk. The elder Walters still works as an administrator for golf tournaments.

“I coached against my son for four years and we couldn’t beat Hempfield in those days,” Skip Walters said.

In his youth, Walters won three Lancaster County Opens and one Lancaster County Amateur.

He also finished fourth at the 2008 Pennsylvania Open as the low professional, taking home the winner’s check because Mike Van Sickle, the winner, and Nathan Smith and Robert Galbreath, the co-runners-up, were amateurs. He ended his professional career in 2008 and coached at Wake Forest from 2009-2018.

Now working in the paper and packaging industry, Walters keeps his game in shape around the schedules of his wife and two active sons. He won the 2021 North Carolina Mid-Amateur.

His friendship with Beck, who was the runner-up at the U.S. Junior Amateur in 2008 and defeated Jordan Spieth en route to the championship, began in Beck’s first year at Wake.

“My freshman year was his first year as the assistant coach,” Beck said. “We met my first day of school. It’s worked out really great. He’s a great friend and has been for a lot of years.”

Walters directs his success at the Four-Ball to his partner.

“I am fortunate to be partnered with the best player in the field,” Walters said of Beck. “That’s not a bad thing.”

Walters believes his partner is also destined for more success – the USA Walker Cup team which will meet Great Britain and Ireland at Cypress Point in September.

“He's going to be on the Walker Cup, and he should be,” Walters predicted. “And I look forward to watching him play at Cypress.”

No doubt, Arnold Palmer, another Wake Forest product from Pennsylvania, will be looking on proudly.

Stableford Tourney held at Huntsville

Wemberly Hills Golf Club’s David Mecca, the 2023 Middle-Amateur Champion, joined forces with Cory Calvert of Country Club of Scranton to capture the 16th Modified Stableford (par 72, 6,358 yards).



Dave Mecca & Cory Calvert

The team posted 43 points to break a three-way tie at 40 points. It is the first Modified Stableford title for the Mecca and Calvert team.

In the Senior Division (par 72, 5,998 yards), reigning GAP/AGA Senior Player of the Year Ken Bolcavage and 2023 honoree Mark Bartkowski edged two teams by a point for the top spot. Bolcavage, an Elkview Country Club member, and Bartkowski, who hails from Pocono Farms Country Club, posted 39 points.

In the Super-Senior Division (par 72, 5,333 yards), Emanon Country Club’s Len Coleman and Nittany Country Club’s Vince Scarpetta posted 41 points. A Coleman birdie on No. 18 (par 4, 338 yards) allowed the team to squeeze past Wyoming Valley Country Club’s Joseph Weiscarger and Charles Brand of the host club.

The Modified Stableford Tournament is a better-ball-of-partners event.

Amateur - 18-54 years

	Pos.	Players	Stableford Points
🏆	1	Mecca, David + Calvert, Cory Wemberly Hills Golf Club, Country Club of Scranton	43
🏆	2	Biscotti, Tom + Plisko, Eric Wyoming Valley Country Club	40
🏆	3	Kalamar, Scott + Fry, Nathan Green Pond Country Club	40
🏆	4	Anderson, Alex + Kacvinsky, Frank Huntsville Golf Club, Country Club of Scranton	40
🏆	5	Runyon, Tom + Gordon, Neil Doylestown Country Club	38
🏆	6	Davis, Christian + Scarpetta, III, Vincent Glenmaura National Golf Club	38
🏆	7	Evans, Eamon + Jackson, Brandon Glenmaura National Golf Club, Wemberly Hills Golf Club	37
🏆	8	Troutman, Jason + Brown, Dan Frosty Valley, Manada Golf Club	37
🏆	9	Devos, Keith + Ianieri, Bill Jack Frost National Golf Club	37
🏆	10	Williams, Eric + Stephens, Wayne Honesdale Golf Club	37
🏆	11	Orcutt, Ryan + Pritchard, Kyle Green Pond Country Club	37
🏆	12	Saracino, Dave + Majikes, Scott Stonewall, Wyoming Valley Country Club	36
🏆	13	Mikiewicz, John + Donatoni, A.J. Fox Hill Country Club	36
🏆	14	Schiel, Jr., Frank + Weiscarger, Brian Wyoming Valley Country Club	36
🏆	15	Hastings, Brian + Wade, Christopher USGA/GAP GC	35
🏆	16	Mussina, Mike + Mussina, Peyton Williamsport Country Club	35
🏆	17	Grimes, Michael + LaRue, Damien Huntsville Golf Club, StoneHedge Golf Assn.	35

Senior - 55-64 years

	Pos.	Players	Stableford Points
🌟	1	Bolcavage, Ken + Bartkowski, Mark Elkview Country Club, Pocono Farms Country Club	39
🌟	2	Lykon, Andy + Heck, Harry Wedgewood Golf Course, Elkview Country Club	38
🌟	3	Strohl, David + Fryer, Rich Moselem Springs Golf Club, Southmoore Golf Center	38
🌟	4	Blichar, David + Hudson, Jeff Olde Homestead Golf Club	37
🌟	T5	Clauson, Christopher + Czerniakowski, Mark LuLu Country Club	36
🌟	T5	Gray, Scott + Myers, David Nittany Country Club	36
🌟	7	Klem, Robert + McCloskey, Bob Wemberly Hills Golf Club, Elmhurst Country Club	34
🌟	8	Bowen, Floyd + Pabst, Sr., William Wyoming Valley Country Club, Elmhurst Country Club	34
🌟	9	Pritchard, Larry + Banas, Stan Olde Homestead Golf Club	33
🌟	10	Sherma, Jim + Gruzeski, Paul Hershey Country Club, Elkview Country Club	32

Super Senior - 65+ years

	Pos.	Players	Stableford Points
🌟	1	Scarpetta, Jr., Vince + Coleman, Len Nittany Country Club, Emanon Country Club	41
🌟	2	Weiscarger, Joseph + Brand, Charles Wyoming Valley Country Club, Huntsville Golf Club	40
🌟	3	Gelso, Charles + Hoover, Jim Huntsville Golf Club, Fox Hill Country Club	38
🌟	4	Tolerico, John + Heck, Michael Elkview Country Club	38
🌟	5	White, Tom + Miller, Tom Elmhurst Country Club	37



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SEPP STRAKA FIRST AUSTRIAN TO WIN ON PGA TOUR

by Mike Kern

Sepp Straka acknowledges that he's not the world's best when it comes to hitting shots out of fairway bunkers. But after what happened on Mother's Day at Flourtown's Philadelphia Cricket Club, he may have to rethink that.

The first Austrian to ever win on the PGA Tour, who just turned 32, hit his drive into a sand trap to the left of the fairway on the par-4 72nd hole of the Truist Championship. That left him with just over 200 yards to the pin, holding a 1-stroke lead over final-group playing partner Shane Lowry, your 2019 British Open champion, whom he had started the closing round tied with. Not to worry. Because from there he knocked a 4 iron onto the front of the green and watched it roll about 30 feet past the flagstick. He would get down in two, leaving himself just a short one for the victory, while Lowry, needing to make to have any chance, 3-putted long from about 25 feet right of the cup to finish in a tie with JustinB Thomas, two back. Nothing to it, right?

"The drive was not a terrible drive, but the wind was a little bit off to the right and just turned it over a little too much," Straka explained, after winning for the second time this season (also the American Express in January) and fourth time since 2022. "I was just hoping for a good lie walking down there, and I got that. We had I think about 212. I can't remember exactly. My fairway bunker game has historically been pretty bad. This week it's been really good. I was able to kind of capitalize on that and make good contact.

"Yeah, it was one of the better shots I hit all week."

You think?

He closed with a 2-under par 68, for a total of 16-under 264. When he won his first PGA title three years earlier, he'd beaten Lowry by one. Lowry is still looking for his first individual title outside of the DP Tour since that major victory at Royal Portrush, where the Open will again be held this July. Thomas, who got within one heading to the 15th before missing two short putts that took him out of contention, had just won in April the week after the Masters for his first trophy since the 2022 PGA. Straka had taken the lead on the front nine but gave it back with bogeys at 10 and 11. He went in front for good

when Lowry bogeyed the par-3 16th after missing the green left, just as Thomas had done before them.

Straka admitted he was nervous leading up to the last round.



"It was just hard to eat," he said immediately afterward. "I felt kind of nauseous. I just had to fight through it. (Even now) I can't feel my arms or legs ... I hit a lot of really good shots. But I made way too many mistakes (as well).

"It's not the best ball striking week I've had. Off the tee the first two days, I hit it terrible. I felt like I had the high odds going out with the driver the second round. Made a little bit of, kind of a tweak, with my takeaway. Just a little sequence thing. From then on, striking it really well.

"Iron play was decent. I wouldn't say it was great, but the putter was just excellent this week. I didn't miss above the hole very often, and was able to kind of take advantage of that. Made a lot of mid-range putts, and that's something you have to do when you want to win a golf tournament."

The Truist, formerly the Wells Fargo, moved here this year for one year because the PGA was being played the following week at the tournament's usual home, Quail Hollow in Charlotte, N.C.

"I like the routing a lot," Straka said, of the highly-regarded Wissahickon course. "I love the way it finishes naturally. I thought they did a really good job (of setting it up). There was a little more room for infrastructure, which probably helped. It's a really cool place.

"I think it was fun to play it in kind of four different (weather) conditions. The first day being very benign and then kind of the rain, the the wind, and then today it started getting a little firmer but not quite as much wind. It kind of made you think a lot, especially teeing off."

On Thursday, Keith Mitchell, playing on a sponsor's exemption, had shot 61. But the rest of the week was more, well, normal, so to speak. Which led to a wonderful finish.

Straka, by the way, was without his regular caddie, who had suffered a back injury the previous week. So he used a friend whom he plays

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with a lot. It obviously worked out. The same thing had happened to Thomas, by the way, when he won a few weeks earlier. Go figure.

"I was pretty comfortable being beside him," Straka said. "It was a lot of fun having him on the bag, really. I'm just really grateful for those two guys. Dewey (Mathers) has been here all week supporting us. He was also there to hug me on the 18th green. Just really, really thankful."



Being a Georgia Bulldog, Straka said it felt even better to have won in a place where the recently-crowned Super Bowl champs have so many Bulldogs on their top-ranked defense.

"It was incredible, awesome," he emphasized. "You always hear about Philly sports fans, and it really is true. They get into it. They were out there during the practice rounds all the way through the end on Sunday. You could really feel that everybody was happy to have the event here. It made it so much fun to play in front of those fans."

"I rooted for the Eagles a little bit last year, because (of the college connection). Every time I heard a 'Go Birds,' it was kind of fun to hear that. It was an experience to play in front of them. I think maybe next year the PGA (Championship) is coming back here (to Aronimink, in Newtown Square), so I'm really looking forward to that opportunity."

It's been some ride/journey, considering that his brother was actually more heavily recruited than him. And now he finds himself near the top of the world rankings.

"Junior golf, I wasn't all that good," he recounted. "I definitely had some talent. I could hit the golf ball fairly well, but very rough around the edges. At Georgia, I just felt like I kept getting better. Had a quick bout with the chipping yips my junior year and redshirted, but other than that ... After I graduated, same thing. I just kept trying to improve my golf game regardless of where I was compared to other people in my class because my high school class was pretty stacked. A lot of guys ended up finishing early and going onto the PGA Tour, and I

was definitely not one of those.

"I just hoped that at the end of it, I was good enough to play out here ... The big thing was switching to John Tillery as my swing coach. Just the stuff we worked on. Once I started working with him, my iron play got really good. It just kind of naturally happened. I felt if I could just get the ball on the fairway, I could take advantage of that with my iron game. It wasn't like a crazy switch. But yeah, I've been able to hit a lot fairways in the last couple of years."

And even sometimes when he doesn't, he can still make it work.

"I was able to be a bit more aggressive off the tee the last two days," Straka explained. "I felt like I did a really good job of taking every shot for what it is. I looked at the leaderboards, but I didn't really pay too much attention. I knew, if I executed, that I'd have a chance. Fortunately, I was able to kind of keep centered and keep trying to just execute. Those two bogeys (to start the final nine) were pretty tough. I was in a pretty good spot there going into the back nine. The three-putt on 10 was kind of up against the collar. So it was kind of a tough lag putt."

"After that, I just told myself to keep at it. Fortunately, that was good enough. (Lowry) is one of my favorite people to play with. He's a fiery competitor, and a good friend as well (and potential Ryder Cup teammate for the Europeans). So it was fun to hear support for him (from the many Irish fans in the gallery). It was really fun battling with him. I'm just grateful."



And how about what the week meant for Philly Cricket, which didn't even find out it would be hosting until a little over a year before?

"I would say probably two things resonate most with me," offered Jim Smith Jr., the club's longtime Director of Golf and COO. "One, I got so much joy out of seeing the joy of the other people while the tournament was going on. I'm talking mainly about the members."

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There was a lot of pride. They were coming up to me saying they were getting texts and emails from all over the world. It's really cool to see them be so appreciative and happy.

"And Part B, I'm really proud of Philadelphia, the community. I feel like Philly came out in force and supported the event. It wasn't just the Cricket Club that got the spotlight. The whole area, the whole region did. I just think the whole town just ate it up. We have a reputation for having tough fans, but I just kept hearing how wonderful everyone was.

"To see how impactful it all was, and the overall response, it was almost like 'Oh my God.' The merchandise tent was sold out by Friday. They told me that's the first time that's happened on the Tour. They had to order more stuff for Saturday. How crazy is that?"

Nobody ever doubts that Philly will support what it perceives to be a big-time event. And as Smith noted, it didn't hurt that the Eagles were in a down time, the Phillies were still early in the season and the two winter pro teams weren't in the playoffs. Not that the drawing power of one of the PGA's signature events needed much in the way of help. All of the top players except Scottie Scheffler, who had taken off after winning the week before in Houston, where he was the defending champ, were here. That of course included just-crowned Masters champ and career grand-slam winner Rory McIlroy and Xander Schauffele, who won two majors in 2024.

"I mean, we had this drop in our laps," Smith said. "A lot of it came down to the circumstances. It was the right event at the right time. The success we had, and I know the success that Aronimink is going to have next year with the PGA, is going to cause a lot of smart and influential people to look at Philadelphia as a great (golf) market. At the end of the day, though, everything has to come together. You have to have a sponsors. And these days, it's big numbers and a big commitment you're talking about. That's just the reality of what has to happen.

"But it was nice that we could have this, and not be competing with any of the other sports in town, and get all of the eyeballs in golf on us. There's not too many places that ever get to say that. And the great thing that I learned was, and I wasn't surprised by it, was the players are good guys. They're not just extremely good golfers. They were wonderful to the staff, and showed as much appreciation for being here as we tried to show them."



Keith Mitchell blast out while shooting 61

A win-win. Can't get much better than that.

And the course showed it could handle the best players on the planet. How's that for a nice bonus? And the best thing is, Philly will get to do it all over again next year. Not to mention 2030, when the U.S. Open returns to Merion. Maybe we're just luckier than we think Or just pretty worthy too. See you at Aronimink. Straka will be there. And he will always have that close-out bunker shot at Cricket. Goes well with the trophy.



SHAWNEE INN & GOLF RESORT'S BRIAN BERGSTOL, PGA, COMPETES IN 2025 PGA CHAMPIONSHIP



By Matt Frey

Lower Gwynedd Township, Pa. (April 30, 2025) — PGA of America Golf Professional Brian Bergstol of Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort in Shawnee on Delaware, Pa., has secured his place on the Corebridge Financial PGA Team, and will compete in the 2025 PGA Championship, May 12-18, at Quail Hollow Club in Charlotte, N.C.; it will be his second major championship appearance (2008 U.S. Open).

Bergstol qualified as a result of his impressive play this year's PGA Professional Championship at PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, Fla. He carded rounds of 69-69-73-72-283, 4-under-par. To view the full leaderboard, [click here](#).

Corebridge Financial broadened its partnership with the PGA of America to include the title sponsorship of the Corebridge Financial

PGA Team at the PGA Championship, Senior PGA Championship and KPMG Women's PGA Championship. For the PGA Championship, the team consists of talented PGA Professionals from across the count



Bergstol was part of a 15-player-strong contingent representing the Philadelphia PGA Section in the 2025 PGA Professional Championship. The group also included: Trevor Bense, Sandy Run C.C.; Joanna Coe, Merion G.C.; Rusty Harbold, Philadelphia Cricket Club; Jeff Herb, Waynesborough C.C.; Terry Hertzog, Bent Creek C.C.; Michael Meisenzahl, Tavistock C.C.; Zac

Oakley, Bidermann G.C.; Dave Pagett, Whitemarsh C.C.; Tony Perla, Huntingdon Valley C.C.; Dave Quinn, Laurel Creek C.C. Braden Shattuck, Rolling Green G.C.; Billy Stewart, Union League Liberty Hill; Andrew Turner, C.C. of York, and Brett Walker, Chester Valley

IN MEMORIAM: BOB SIMONS

Bob Simons, a former GAP/AGA Committee member (2007-12) and longtime Honesdale Golf Club member, died April 20. He was 76.

"Bob Simons was an absolute pillar of the golf community here in Northeast Pennsylvania, from coaching at Wallenpaupack High School to bringing new players into the game with his summer clinics at Honesdale. He has mentored so many young people," Patrick Lloyd, GAP Director of Northeast Operations, said.

Simons served as the Wallenpaupack Area High School golf coach for 54 years. He amassed a 682-239-23 record that included four Wayne County League championships, six Lackawanna League championships, two District 2 and eight District 12 team titles.

Simons is the state's winningest golf coach at the high school level.

"Pennsylvania golf lost a legend. No one was more committed to the game, to juniors. In our area, he was not only a great player and supporter, but his coaching was unmatched," John Pillar, Sr., Director of Golf at Woodloch Springs, said. "I wouldn't call him the greatest teacher, but he knew enough to get you back on track, get through the season, get through a round. He volunteered his time relentlessly to driving kids all over the place: to practices, to events all over the state. We don't know the lives of juniors and what goes on behind the scenes. But I'd be willing to bet the moments and memories that he had with them were probably the best moments of their lives when they were young."

Pillar is among a conga line of student athletes that evolved under Simons' leadership at Wallenpaupack Area High School. His sons — John, Jr., Kyle and Alex — also learned from Simons.

"He was a wonderful mentor to me. Truth is I started golf late in high school. He was my first coach. He's still my coach even in his passing," John Pillar, Sr., 57, of Hawley, Pa., said. "The reality is I wouldn't be where I'm at had he not given me an opportunity to get into the business of golf. He offered me an opportunity to work at Fernwood Resort through one of his former players, Bruce Hooper. I was at a time in my life when I wasn't making good decisions, destination unknown. The moment I said yes to that opportunity, here we stand. He saved my life and gave me an opportunity to prosper in golf."

"You mention golf [in this region], and Bob Simons name always came up. He not only mentored student athletes, but also a lot of coaches," Greg Kopich, who served alongside Simons as an assistant golf coach at Wallenpaupack for 17 years, added. "He gave more time than anybody I know. He had a lot of patience, never a bad thing to say. He will be sorely missed."

Simons started as a caddie at Honesdale, a place that immediately gripped his golf heart.

"Honesdale is where he grew up playing the game. He loved Honesdale Golf Club," Greg Wall, 73, of Clarks Summit, Pa., said. "It's no surprise how special that place was to him. It's what shaped his whole life I think."

Wall, son of Art Wall, Jr., grew up playing golf alongside Simons at

Honesdale. As did Irv Williams, who graduated Honesdale High School with Simons in 1966. The two became lifelong friends.

"We just got along like two peas in a pod. Never had one bad word," Williams, 77, of Honesdale, Pa., said. "This really knocked me on my butt. It really bothers me."

Simons attended Bloomsburg University and represented its golf team. He twice competed in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Championships and, in his senior year, competed in the NAIA Tournament in Texas. Upon his graduation in 1970, Simons started in the Wallenpaupack Area School District, where he worked for the next 35 years — 25 as a sixth-grade teacher and 10 as a disciplinarian — before retiring in 2005.

Coaching golf combined Simons' life passions: the game and its next generation.

"He loved the kids who were playing for him as much as they loved him. He totally enjoyed it," Wall, Pocono Manor's golf professional, said. "If you knew Bob as a coach or as a friend, you were very fortunate."

"He's done so many things for kids that you can't even begin to imagine. A lot of the kids he coached are great human beings today. He taught them how to live," Williams, also a Honesdale Golf Club member, added. "He did a lot for the community. He put clinics on for young kids in July at Honesdale. He dedicated his life to children."

Simons, affectionately known as "Si," won the Positive Coaching Alliance Double-Goal Coach Award presented by TeamSnap in 2018. The award distinguishes coaches who strive to win while also pursuing the goal of teaching life lessons through sports. In 2021, Simons received the Joseph M. Butler Memorial Award in recognition of his contribution and services to high school athletes. He is a Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame inductee.

Simons, a seven-time men's club champion at Honesdale (1971-73, 1976-78, 1995), served on the club's Board of Directors, on and off, for half a century. He represented Honesdale on the Anthracite Golf Committee following the passing of Walter Markowski and John Anabelle.

"Incredible human being. He always had Honesdale Golf Club in his heart," Dan Pahls, Honesdale President, 57, of Honesdale, Pa., said. "Jack Nicklaus was always The Bear, but there was only one Arnie. I don't think they'll ever be another Arnold Palmer. I don't think they'll ever be another Bob Simons."

Bob Simons

1948-2025





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MOSELEM SPRINGS, BERKLEIGH REVIVE GALV READING OPEN

by Matt Frey
Fleetwood, Pa. (May 15, 2025) — Moselem Springs Golf Club, in collaboration with Berkleigh Golf Club, is proud to announce the return of the GALV Reading Open, an iconic professional tournament that was a regular PGA Tour stop in the 1940s and 1950s, previously held at storied venues such as Berkshire Country Club and Reading Country Club. With past champions including legends like Sam Snead and Ben Hogan, the tournament is being reimagined for a new generation of PGA of America Golf Professionals, while honoring its prestigious roots.

The 2025 GALV Reading Open is scheduled on July 7-8, with rounds played at both Berkleigh Golf Club and Moselem Springs Golf Club. The final round will be hosted at Moselem Springs, showcasing top PGA Professionals from golf facilities across the region, and delivering elite-level competition to the heart of Berks County. The tournament is a Rolex / Haverford Trust Company Philadelphia PGA Player of the Year event.

“We are thrilled to bring back an important piece of Pennsylvania

golf history,” said Moselem Springs Golf Club General Manager Chris Walton. “Our partnership with Berkleigh, the Philadelphia PGA Section, and the Golf Association of Lehigh Valley, sets the stage to envision and create a new future for the Reading Open.”

The event is designed with the community in mind: spectator admission is free, and photography is permitted. Organizers are inviting local businesses and individuals to get involved as partners to help support the event’s revival and future growth.



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Glen Brook Golf Club
Spring Pro-Pro Results – April 23, 2025

Two-Person Scramble

Finish	Score	Team (Pro)
1	61	Jim Muschlitz and Bob Fritz
2	62	Mike Molino and Dustin McCormick
T-3	63	John Kulhamer and Peter Clarke Brian Fruehan and Spencer Lunger
T-5	64	John and Alex Pillar Evan Grube and Gregg Meyer Kyle Monahan and Gary Clark Kevin Edwards and Wayne Phillips Jeff Fick and Mike Grabosky Ray Silnik and Paul Viola

IN MEMORIAM: JAY R. SIEGEL

R. Jay Sigel, arguably one of the greatest amateurs in the history of golf, a charter member of the GAP Hall of Fame and one of the most well-respected individuals on and off the golf course, died April 19 from pancreatic cancer at the age of 81.

"He was a dear friend and somebody that we will remember forever, and take a lot of inspiration from," said Kevin Hammer, the USGA's president-elect and chair of the Championship Committee who had become close with Sigel and his family over the past 20 years, in a USGA release. "Best amateur since Bobby Jones hands down.

"Not only was his career as an amateur – and as a professional [on the PGA Tour Champions] – incredibly successful and legendary, but he [also] participated alongside all of the members [at Delray Dunes Golf & Country Club in Boynton Beach, Fla.] in team matches, supported the club, helped the juniors and just was inspirational at every level. His legacy extends far beyond his playing credentials, which are extraordinary."

Sigel's roots in golf began as a caddie at Bala Golf Club. Bala became instrumental in his development as a young player. Following consecutive Junior Boys' Championship runners-up (1959-60) and Pennsylvania Golf Association Junior Championship victories (1960-61), Sigel eventually took his talents to Wake Forest University (1962-65), after graduating from Lower Merion High School. At Wake Forest, he earned the prestigious Arnold Palmer Scholarship and became an All-American.

On a straight and narrow path to becoming a professional, Sigel's trajectory in golf was altered by a freak accident. As Sigel exited his campus residence, his left hand broke through a pane of glass on a swinging door, resulting in 70 stitches. After spending nine days in the hospital, Sigel abandoned his professional aspirations.

Sigel's GAP resume includes: A record six Philadelphia Open Championships, five Joseph H. Patterson Cups, six Silver Cross awards and two Philadelphia Amateurs. His national record features two U.S. Amateurs and three U.S. Mid-Amateur crowns. Sigel earned low amateur honors in the Open Championship (1980), The Masters (1981-82, 1988) and the U.S. Open (1984). He claimed the British Amateur in 1979.

He won 11 Pennsylvania Amateurs and four Pennsylvania Opens. Sigel, a long-time Pine Valley Golf Club member, claimed a record-nine Crump Cups. He hoisted numerous invitational victories including the Northeast Amateur (1984-85, 1991), Sunnehanna Amateur (1976, 1978, 1988) and Porter Cup (1975, 1981, 1987).

Sigel's first taste of GAP success came in the 1970 Joseph H. Patterson Cup at Merion Golf Club (East/West) with a four-shot victory. It resulted in his second-consecutive Silver Cross Award. He'd win six Silver Crosses (1969-70, 1972-75).

The syrupy-swinging Sigel went wire-to-wire to claim his first Philadelphia Amateur in 1973 at Manufacturers' Golf & Country Club in an 8&7 rout over Don Sowers of Reading Country Club. He added one more in 1987 at one of his favorite Philadelphia courses, Torresdale-Frankford Country Club, now Union League Golf Club at Torresdale.

"Yeah I've choked in this tournament before," Sigel told Ray Didinger of the Philadelphia Bulletin after his 1973 Amateur win. "It seems like every year I point to the City Amateur and every year I am disappointed ... I was jittery. I had a restless night last night. I didn't get the sleep I did the rest of the week. This final was working on my mind."

He claimed his first Philadelphia Open Championship in record fashion in 1975 at Bidermann Golf Club. His 12-shot victory is still a tournament record. The Open in 1987 at Gulph Mills Golf Club was his last GAP victory. It was his record sixth Open title (1975, 1977-78, 1980, 1986-87).

"The Philadelphia Open helped keep my game tuned," Sigel said in the Summer 2024 issue of GAP Magazine highlighting the Philadelphia Open's history. "There was extra pressure playing against the pros and I liked that. I always enjoyed it when an amateur beat a professional in golf.

"To have the most victories in Philadelphia Open history is satisfying. Those wins in the Philadelphia Open helped build confidence in my game. Look at the history of golf in Philadelphia. This area had a ton of great players back then. GAP always had great venues for the championships and playing in GAP events helped me prepare for when I started playing more regional and national events. The competition was key and to be able to rise to the top of that is a great personal achievement for me."

Sigel's national recognition began to evolve in the years following that record-setting win. His first taste of USGA success came in 1961 when he made it to the U.S. Junior Amateur Final.

In 1977, Sigel, now a member of Aronimink Golf Club, received an opportunity to play in the U.S. Amateur there, an event he desperately wanted to win. He lost to eventual champion John Fought in the semifinals. That year was the beginning of what would become Sigel's impressive USGA resume. He competed in his first Walker Cup at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. He would not miss the biennial event for each of the next nine editions. He served as captain of the 1983 team at Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake, England and the 1985 team at Pine Valley. Sigel holds the record for most U.S. matches played with 33 and U.S. match victories with 18.



"Back in 1985, Jay was the only person to beat me that summer," Scott Verplank, five-time PGA TOUR winner, 1984 U.S. Amateur champion and member of the 1985 Walker Cup Team, said. "He rolled in a 40-footer to beat me at the Northeast Amateur in Rhode Island, which always kickstarted the summer golf calendar. I definitely took note of Jay and his accomplishments then. That always stuck with me. A couple of months later he picked me to play with him in the Walker Cup at Pine Valley. It was a dream. The other members on a team joked with him why he got to pick the best player as his partner. He said, 'Because the captain gets first choice.' He always had a good sense of humor."

In the 1980s, Sigel was a national force. His first USGA championship came in the 1982 U.S. Amateur in an 8&7 rout of David Tolley at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass. He'd repeat with a victory in

1983 at North Shore Country Club in Glenview, Ill. in another 8&7 rout over Chris Perry. Sigel and Tiger Woods (1994-96) are the only players to win consecutive U.S. Amateur titles in the last 69 years.

Along with the U.S. Amateur in 1983, Sigel won his first of three (1983, 1985, 1987) U.S. Mid-Amateur titles. He is the only person to win both the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Mid-Amateur as well as winning both championships in the same year.

In 1985, he battled with fellow GAP Hall of Famer, O. Gordon Brewer, Jr. in the U.S. Mid-Amateur Final at The Vintage Club (Mountain Course) in Indian Wells, Calif. Sigel held off Brewer, 3&2.

It would be the last national championship on his amateur resume.

The next chapter of his legendary career came when he turned 50 years old. He joined the Senior PGA TOUR in 1994 (now the PGA TOUR Champions) and became its Rookie of the Year. He would go on to win eight events on the senior circuit.

Sigel's success wasn't limited to the golf course. He developed his own insurance business and was the Senior Vice President, Benefits and Insurance Services at CBIZ MHM, LLC in Plymouth Meeting, Pa. for 28 years.

The Jay Sigel Invitational Tournament, created in 1992, is one of Sigel's proudest accomplishments. For the past 33 years, the tournament has raised \$5.1 million for breast cancer and prostate cancer research and patient care. The money goes toward helping find more and better treatments, uncover factors that may cause cancer and improve patients' quality of life at the Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania. It's held annually at Aronimink.

"Because of the successes I had in golf, I needed to give back," Sigel said in an interview for GAP's 125th Anniversary in 2022. "In 1979 when I won the British Amateur, I realized there was a greater force in my life and I needed to pay it back. My dad died of cancer and I wanted to give back in that regard. Cancer used to be a death sentence. There's been some great things that have happened as a result of this tournament. Success is important but significance takes precedent."

Sigel is a recipient of the Bob Jones Award (1984) which is the USGA's highest honor. The award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the spirit, personal character and respect for the game. He earned the Ben Hogan Award, given by the Golf Writers Association of America to a golfer who overcomes a physical ailment or handicap to play golf again, in 1984.

Sigel is survived by his wife of 57 years, Betty and his three daughters Jennifer, Amy, Megan and six grandchildren.

LANSDOWNE CONTINUES TO IMPRESS

By Phil Sokol

Fifteen years is a long time.

How long? Well in this time span, we're about to have our fourth different president, we just witnessed the fourth Olympic summer games in Paris, 2024 was another leap year and it took me 15 years to return to Lansdowne Resort!

I've been extremely fortunate over the years to visit some of the greatest resorts and golf courses in the United States, even making return visits, such as I did with Lansdowne Resort.



Lansdowne # 1

Although it took a long time to return, I was equally impressed, not only with the two wonderful courses, but the resort was better than I remembered.

Let's start off with the 45 holes of golf. That's right, two outstanding 18-hole venues, the Norman course and the RTJ II course and the fun Shark Bite 9-hole course. "We have about 670 golfing members and we do about 67,000 rounds of golf," said Director of Golf Dan Warnick. "The majority of our rounds are member rounds but we host members, members guest, resort guests and outings here at Lansdowne."

"Lansdowne is unique in the sense that we offer two completely different experiences when it comes to golf," said Warnick. "I don't know of many facilities that have what we have. Two different course designers and two different grass types giving you two completely different golf experiences."

The Norman layout stretches to over 7,300 yards and features what Greg Norman called the "Hardest Mile in Golf." Originally holes 15-18, before the nines were reversed, these four holes, which now comprise holes 6-9, are combined to equal 1,760 yards (exactly one mile). Picture this, two par fours over 400 yards, a par-5 that reaches 663 yards and the par-3 ninth at 247 yards. YIKES!

Not to be outdone, the Robert Trent Jones II course is just over 7,000

yards from the gold markers. Although the opening nine features a few challenging holes, the back nine is as good as it gets, with a plethora of dogleg rights, lefts, carries over water, uphill and downhill holes. The 12th and 13th are two of my favorites. Bending to the left and climbing to the green, number 12 plays every bit of 441 yards, while the par-3 13th is downhill from 210 yards.

"RTJ II is known to be more player friendly, especially on the front nine," continued Warnick. "But beware as the back nine can be tough with elevation changes and a lot of risk/reward opportunities. The back nine of RTJ II is the favorite of the nines. It's such a good layout."

In addition, Norman created a nine-hole layout designed with the family in mind, the Sharkbite course. A wonderful venue in which to practice, Sharkbite is fun to walk and enjoy with the entire clan. From as little as 870 yards, perfect for the juniors to 2,319 yards, the Sharkbite is a blast.

"Sharkbite is such a great addition to the facility and is super valuable to the membership," added Warnick. "It's a great, well condition short course and is normally always available without needing a tee time. It's a par 32 with four par 3's and five par 4's. It's a great course for the family, beginners or even a confidence booster for those better players."



Lansdowne # 12

Let's not forget the double-sided practice facility, fit for all levels of play.

Just 30 miles from our nations capital, Lansdowne Resort, which was just named 2024 Smart Stars Award winner in the Best Golf Resort category from Smart Meetings Magazine, is an oasis of relaxation, golf, fitness and dining.

Piedmont's, overlooking the Potomac River, is "the" spot for dinner. From the classic Caesar salad to a Charcuterie Board and a Bacon-Wrapped BBQ Pork Tenderloin, your meal is almost complete.

Cont. on page 35

Cont. from page 34

If golf is not your thing, how about tennis or the ever-growing Pickleball. Lansdowne also has a 24-hour fitness center for you workout maniacs. Treadmills, stair climbers, bikes, rowing machines, weights, yoga mats, etc. You get the idea. There are also hiking and biking trails throughout the property.

What else is there you say?

Spa Minérale offers all kinds of enhancements and treatments for the soul.

For me, it's the Therapeutic Deep Tissue massage for 80 minutes or the Fire & Ice massage, which can't be beat. Facial's, pedicures, acupuncture, heck, they'll even trim your beard and cut your hair. Now that's full-service.

But if it's total relaxation you want, go no further than the three outdoor pools, one indoor pool and indoor hot tub. The Aquatic Center offers full-day private cabanas, perfect for the family or just sit by the adult-only pool with a refreshing cocktail.

So, you're within a dozen miles from Washington Dulles International Airport, just an hour from Baltimore and three from Philadelphia, what are you waiting for.

Lansdowne is a AAA Four-Diamond Award winner, with over 300 well-appointed rooms and suites that overlook the Potomac River,

not to mention the beautiful views of the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains. Are you kidding me? Make the call!



A wide-angle photograph of a golf course featuring a large lake with a small waterfall, surrounded by dense green trees under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

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PGA CHAMPIONSHIP TO RETURN TO PHILADELPHIA PGA SECTION IN 2026



By Mike Kern

So, what were you doing in 1962?

Well, if you're Gary Player, you were winning your third major golf championship, and first of two PGA Championships (with the other coming a decade later), at Aronimink Golf Club in suburban Philadelphia's Newtown Square.

And, like many things the ageless South African did in his illustrious career, he did so in style. There's a reason he would go down as one of the game's greatest global ambassadors. And that moment 63 years ago in July was a prime example.

He came to the 72nd hole leading Bob Goalby by one shot. Player had used a 4 wood off the tee almost the entire week to avoid the rough. He had missed the cut at the British Open the week before at Royal Troon. Didn't matter. But on the tough par-4 uphill 18th, he drove his ball into the trees to the left. From there, though, he hit a 3 wood that needed to slice about 100 yards around them and made it onto the front of the green. Then he proceeded to leave a wonderful lengthy lag putt about 2 feet from the cup. Game over. More history for his growing all-time resume. He would complete his career grand slam two years later by winning his only U.S. Open.

He still remembers that shot and that week like it just happened. As you would suspect. He's Gary Player for a reason.

"I can see myself on the first tee, pulling out my 4 wood," recalled Player, who will turn 90 years younger in November, during a recent media day zoom call. "Isn't it amazing? It's a truly, truly great golf course. It has a variety of shots, that's what I like. It's so balanced. You have long shots, short shots, you have to hit it low, you have to hit it high, hit 'em straight. It will really test you, all through your bag.

"It's an incredible place. Maybe I'm prejudiced, but it's one of my favorites in the world. The people there, they love their course. And it's infectious. They want to see performance. Enthusiasm is one of the essences of life. If you're around people who are happy, and you associate with that, it's a great joy to play well and become a champion. It's a gift. I'm very thankful (for that experience). I can't wait until 2026, to see the best golfers in the world go back there."

Indeed, it's been a long wait. Aronimink — which ironically wasn't the original choice to host the '62 event but did so after Brentwood in Los Angeles pulled out when California's Attorney General protested the PGA Tour's "Caucasian only" clause in place at the time — was scheduled to host again in 1993. But it had to withdraw because it did not have any minority members at the time, something which also kept Merion from being the site for the 1994 U.S. Women's Open. But Aronimink was given the 2003 Senior PGA, the 2010 and '11 AT&T National (Tiger Woods' event), the 2018 BMW Championship (the next-to-last tournament in the FedEx Cup playoffs, and the Women's PGA in 2020.

Cont. from page 36

And next May, it will finally get another men's major. In a year where World Cup games and the Major League Baseball All Star game will also be here to help America celebrate it's 250th birthday.

The last time a major was held here was 2013, when Justin Rose beat Phil Mickelson at Merion in the U.S. Open. Merion, which gets the U.S. Amateur next year, also hosted in 1971 and '81 and will get another in 1930 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Bobby Jones completing his grand slam there by winning the U.S. Am for the fifth time. Now that's history.

"It's a rare opportunity, for Aronimink, Newtown Square and Delaware County," said Mike Lewers, the General Chairman for the championship. "We feel very blessed. We can't host a Masters or the British Open. So there's only two openings a year. It solidifies us as a championship course, that's withstood the test of time.

"We will be the capital of the sports world. We want to show off our championship course, on even a much bigger scale."

You want context? In 1962, they needed 400 volunteers. Now they're looking at 3,000. Back then, the Donald Ross layout, which has undergone a restoration by Gil Hanse, played at about 7,000 yards. It will be 7,500 next year, with a par of 70. The greens will be a lot faster, obviously. Hey, a lot of things have changed/evolved. But worthy remains worthy. And nobody doubts that Aronimink is up to whatever the players are going to bring with them. And then some. It's that good.

"We're going to have to up our game even more," said Jeff Kiddie, the longtime head professional there. "I think it's going to play very much like Donald Ross intended it to. All 18 of the green sites are original, and that's not going to happen on a course that's 100 years old. And I'm sure the PGA of America is going to have fun with setting pin locations."

That's why they call them majors. They're not supposed to be easy. Those are the four weeks a year that define careers. This promises to be a world-class endeavor, on every level.

"To have an event of this magnitude, with the backdrop of Philadelphia sports, well the response has (already) been incredible," said Ryan Ogle, the PGA Championship Director. "The impact will be incredible. It will bring \$140 million, and that's a conservative number, to this region. The exposure, since it's being broadcast around the globe, will spotlight Delco and promote this entire area. The pride that comes with all that is great for us. And the surrounding area as well.

"To have this in your backyard, it only happens twice a year (in our country). So there's an added expectation level. It's a marquee event, on an iconic course that's a little more of an intimate property. Which should make it even more special I think we're all just excited to see how it unfolds.

"To be part of everything that's going on here next year is really something that people will remember. We're honored to be part of that celebration, part of the show. We want to do it the right way. Maybe the Eagles can win another Super Bowl (by then)."

It's a thought. Several of the Eagles coaches did show up for the kickoff of the countdown, including defensive coordinator Vic Fangio and offensive line guru Jeff Stoutland. And they brought the Super Bowl trophy with them. So there was that. Not a bad touch.

"It's been a journey (to get here), but this is the pinnacle," Kiddie acknowledged, quite accurately. "We've had a great relationship with the PGA of America, going back a long time. It's remained strong. Until this year we were the only course to host all three of its spectator championships. So that's pretty unique. And all of what's come before has been building to this.

"It definitely feels like a crescendo. A lot of casual golf fans might not watch all the events. But being a major, there will be a lot more eyes on it. We know that. It's hard to put a measure on what that means for our brand, but it will be impactful. The PGA last year came down to the last putt, and it was tremendous. We hope we can have a compelling event, and the players are telling the story.

"We're just trying to make this the best PGA Championship possible. That's the goal of the PGA of America, and the goal of Aronimink. We want to have the best yet. And what plays out after that, we'll have to see."

That's a story for another day. But if all goes as planned, it would be hard to see the PGA waiting another 64 years to bring its flagship tournament back here again. Philly and Aronimink both deserve more. But first things first. Hope to see you a lot of you out there next May.





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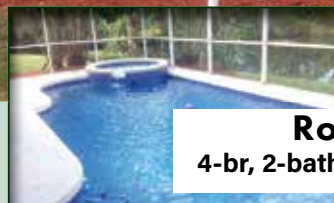
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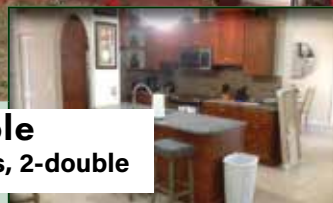
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