

GOLF PENNSYLVANIA

GOLF NORTHEAST

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USGA AMATEUR

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GOLF AT THE END OF THE EARTH

By Pete Kowalski

Thanks to my friend Paddy Carmony, who was a volunteer at the World Amateur Team Championships at Carton House near Dublin, the author has had Enniscrone Golf Club on his next Irish trip list since 2018.

In the years since, legendary Sports Illustrated golf writer John Garrity told us about some other great venues in Ireland. We listened to him and employed North and West Golf Links to arrange our trip.

Garrity, a senior writer for the prolific magazine in the heyday of its existence, found his roots in northwest Ireland while researching for a book he eventually titled *Ancestral Links*.

His family ties land at the northwestern town of Belmullet near the Atlantic Ocean and situated on what the locals refer to as the Wild Atlantic Way. Garrity, who I have called the world's tallest, nice guy since my days at the USGA, has selected Carne Golf Links as his favorite links course in the world and he regularly visits the Eddie Hackett designed courses. After several conversations, our group decided to follow a route that my USGA friends took with Garrity a few years back and booked our trip with the quietly efficient Dave Wensley of North and West Coast Links.

In June, our group of four lads, excited by an itinerary of courses suggested by Garrity, landed at Shannon Airport and drove to view the magnificent Cliffs of Mohler before arriving for a two-day stay at the Broadhaven Bay Hotel in Belmullet, which offered the best seafood chowder of our visit (note Carne was out of fish so no chowder was available).

The unique, raw and majestic dunes of Carne kept our attention at every turn. For two semi-calm days, we traversed Carne and marveled at the heights of the dunes, the swales of the fairways and greens and the strength and strategy of the courses. Two of our four caddies were related to Garrity and the four bag toters did yeoman's work in steering us toward a nice smattering of pars and a birdie or two. On almost every hole, it felt like we were isolated because of the looming dunes on both sides of the holes.

Chairman Gerry Maguire and general manager Fiona Togher, welcoming and engaging ambassadors, have guided Carne to unimaginable heights in the past several years by adroitly playing their marketing cards to increase their number of international visitors for "golf at the end of the earth."

Its Wild Atlantic Dunes course was just listed as the No. 63 golf course in the world (not including the USA) by Golf Digest. On ground that

was owned by a consortium of sheep farmer, the gigantic and roiling dunes make it a must-play.

Tiny Belmullet has plenty to offer for hungry and thirsty golfers. We spent a night at McDonnell's (also connected to the family

funeral home) which is called the Lobster Pot by denizens because "once you go in you can never get out." The specials (mostly Smithwick's topped by Guinness) were awesome and so was the craic, live music and conversation. Talbots was a treat for a seafood dinner too.

After a morning round Carne's Hackett Nine, we drove to Ballina for a four-night stay at Mount Falcon, our centrally located base

for our next three rounds. It is a wonderful resort with outstanding food in The Kitchen Restaurant with walking trails, spa, sauna, steam, jacuzzi and pool as well as falconry, clay pigeon shooting (fun) and salmon fishing, since Ballina is the salmon fishing capital of Ireland. For breakfast, get the Arnold Bennett Omelet – fish, potatoes and cheddar cheese.



Mount Falcon

During our stay at Mount Falcon, we were located for relatively short drives (note: we drove ourselves in a roomy van) to Strandhill Golf Club, Enniscrone Golf Club and County Sligo Golf Club (AKA Rosses Point) on three successive days.

Strandhill's lovely setting is not as dramatic in height differences as Carne but is just as linky with its waterside location (both a bay and the ocean) that is popular with many an intrepid surfer.

With smallest greens, Strandhill provided a significant test of the short game. The holes weave along the water and into smaller-than-Carne dunes with Knocknarea, a mountain looming with its purple flowers in the distance. It makes a great backdrop for photos and is home to Queen Mave's Cairn – tomb to us in the USA. Horseback riding on the beaches is also popular, particularly in lower tides.



Cont. from page 3

Again, caddies were extremely helpful – one in particular had to deal with one of Alou brothers, yours truly, who led the league in doubles on the first nine.



County Selingo

Bucket-list Enniscrone, #87 in the world rankings by Golf Digest, was next and there we encountered our only weather troubles. It rained for six holes, but we were prepared as one of our caddies saw the front coming and told us to don our waterproofs.

Regardless of the rain, the course views and challenges were spectacular, and my long-time member friend left me a memorable gift – woolen watch cap - because he couldn't get there to meet us. Sadly, we didn't get many photos because of the wet conditions.

The dunes at Enniscrone are very intimidating and the windy conditions of the day put us on alert for making solid contact. The set of five par-5s were terrific including the dramatic 14th called the Valley of Diamonds. We loved the 15th hole, called the Strand with stroke index 1, that hugs the water and has a nifty green location tucked into a dune.



Enniscrone

Our best dinner of the trip came after the round at Enniscrone. We ate at the Library Restaurant at Belleek Castle in Ballina, famous for its signature steak dish called the Drunken Bullock. A prime Irish fillet is flambeed at your table skewered on an antique sword with a generous dousing of Irish whiskey. And probably the best sticky toffee pudding in six visits to the Emerald Isle.

County Sligo Golf Club, commonly referred to as Rosses Point, was the most classic links course on our list.

The huff-and-buff inducing climbs up from the clubhouse to holes 1 and 2 provided a delicious panorama of the layout and its adjoining

land and sea, best of the trip.

Donal, our forecaddie and a retired teacher, led us around the Harry Colt-design ranked #90 in the Golf Digest world rankings and annually hosts the West of Ireland Amateur. Seven five-pars from the green tees (par 75) but still a brilliant test of links golf. The highlight for this 14 handicapper was a birdie on signature 17th hole.

The par-5 12th hole, called the Lighthouse, is the point of Rosses Point.

The remarkable Ben Bulbin Mountain, fabled in the life of Pulitzer prize winning poet Williams Butler Yeats, overlooks the course. The 7th hole is named Ewing's Profile for long-time member and 10-time West of Ireland Amateur champion Cecil Ewing as his nose and chin are outlined on the far right of the formation as you look at it from the tee.

At Rosses Point, the wind was significant to us but a gentle breeze to locals but this player might consider an international membership as it struck as my favorite of the visit.

With all of our previous rounds employing caddies or forecaddies, it is interesting to note that all of those nice people (men and women, some young, some older) are members at the respective clubs. A nice touch, we thought.



Standhill & Mountain

Checking out of Mount Falcon took us to our only parkland layout, Westport Golf Club en route to our last night of the trip at Oranmore Lodge and Hotel in Galway.

Westport's Paul O'Neil greeted us cheerily at the pro shop and warned we should play the yellow tees "in this wind." It was the windiest day of our trip, but we played in shirt sleeves for most of the day.

Holes seven through 18 were the most challenging, fun and intriguing with a genuinely nice use of the landscape. Croagh Patrick was an obvious background as we made our way around this Fred Hawtree-designed layout that provides some cool views of Clew Bay.

Following the round, we found ourselves at Venice, a restaurant in Galway close to the train station and city green. The spaghetti di mar was wonderfully good and so was the take-away pizza that we ate at the Oranmore Lodge while watching the U.S. Open and World Cup. Undoubtedly this was a landmark trip in all regards as I returned home on Father's Day with indelible photos and memories as well as three new headcovers and in time to watch the final round of Wyndham Clark's U.S. Open win at Shinnecock Hills on TV.

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WE NEED THE MGA A MOVEMENT: MAKE GOLF AFFORDABLE AGAIN

By TONY LEODORA

It is hard to believe that more than six years have passed since the COVID pandemic turned the world upside down and changed our lives forever. It had harsh and long-lasting effects on every part of the American society. Except the golf industry.

Golf was viewed as a safe activity, while the rest of the world was in a forced lockdown. Tee sheets were full and golf courses were bustling with activity on a daily basis. Shortly after the COVID restrictions were lifted, the golf industry shifted into windfall profit status ... and has been there ever since.

The weight of this profit wave has been cast upon the golfing public. Green fees have risen across the board. At the top of the spectrum, there are now 10 courses that charge a green fee of \$550 or more. And that doesn't include the fee for a mandatory caddie or forecaddie. At least another \$100 per golfer.

(See attached chart.)

This phenomenon has been a constant topic of discussion since that time. Many golf industry leaders have weighed in on the topic. Some, with a rational eye and a long memory, warn about the danger of pricing golf out of existence.

"People in the golf industry have short memories," says golf course architect Ron Garl, whose Garl Nix Golf Course Design company has successfully navigated the highs and lows of the golf industry for many years. "They think the windfall profits of the last few years will last forever. If we have learned anything about this business, it is that nothing lasts forever."

An economic disaster or a prolonged devastating weather issue and the golf industry could be back where it was in 2008, when the financial crash led to a 15 year period where the annual rate of course closings was higher than course openings across America.

With all of that in mind, it may be time to put a spin on the well-known MAGA acronym and come up with one for the golf industry. MGAA – Make Golf Affordable Again.

While it might take a while for the MGAA Movement to catch on across the country, there are a few locations that have adopted the mantra already. Many others have fallen off the list quickly, adopting what appears to be a get-rich-quick philosophy.

Mesquite, Nevada is a prime example. The low-end town in the middle of the desert, with no desirable dining or entertainment options, used to be a great value-golf destination. At least the quality of the golf courses was excellent. Up to a few years ago, the average cost for a round of golf was about \$100. Now the top courses are in the \$200 to \$400 range during high season.

Reasonably priced, quality courses are becoming harder and harder to find across America – but, when you find them, they are a breath of fresh air on the over-priced golf scene. Here is a look at a few that are leading the way in the Make Golf Affordable Again movement.

Gull Lake View Golf Resort -- Michigan

Southwest Michigan has taken over the reputation as the Value Golf

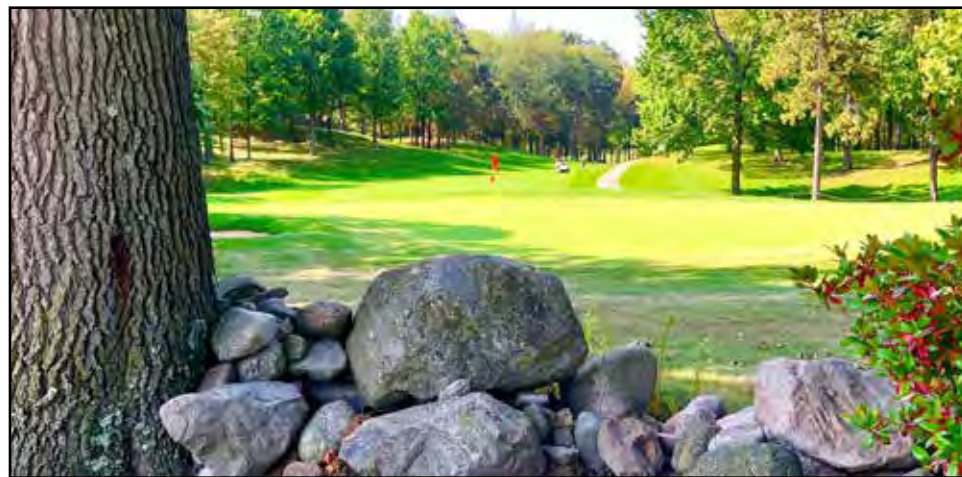
Capital of America, while still providing quality courses.

Myrtle Beach held that title for years but soaring prices have crept into South Carolina's Low Country in recent years. Many of the top courses are in the \$125 to \$175 a round range. And a couple of the top courses are over the \$200 mark.

Gull Lake View Golf Resort is a popular location in Augusta, Michigan – a quaint town but not to be confused with Augusta, Georgia. Recently purchased from the original owners and benefiting from an influx of new cash, there is a choice of six courses – that range in quality from your basic public course, to high quality resort-style courses, and one of the best courses in the state of Michigan.

The East and West courses at Gull Lake View Resort were the original courses in the group. They were built in the 1960s and purchased by the Scott family in 1988. The property was sold to a group of investors recently. The original courses are adjacent to the Villas at Gull Lake, a most popular lodging location for golf groups. The somewhat basic two-bedroom, two-bath villas have been remodeled and are very convenient.

They have a nice clubhouse that includes Charles & Darl's Smokehouse and Grill, featuring some of the best BBQ meals found in SW Michigan. The industrial-sized smoker provides all-day temptation, as the mouth-watering fragrances waft over the adjacent huge putting green and the first tee.



Gull Lake View Resort -- Stonehedge North #9

The two golf courses are short, fun layouts. But don't consider them pushovers. The East course is only 5,884 from the tips but it has a slope of 130. The West course stretches to 6,301 with a slope of 129. The best part about the two original courses is that the fee to play is about \$55 – even in high season.

Here's the Gull Lake View challenge: play 36 holes on the East and West, enjoy dinner and beverages at Charles & Darl's, then enjoy more liquid refreshment during an after-dinner putting contest.

Rinse, Rest and Repeat.

The challenge increases at the two nearby Stonehedge courses – North and South. So does the price ... but not by much. Top prices are in the \$65 range.

Both are hilly and very interesting courses. The South course is too

Cont. on page 7

Cont. from page 6

tight, with too many trees. Clearing trees should be the top priority of the new ownership.

The North Course is more open and has a number of interesting holes. It would be one of the highlights of any golf trip.

A few miles away from the core of the resort is Bedford Valley, designed and built by William Mitchell in 1965. It operated as a private club until it was bought by the Scott family and added to the Gull Lake View collection in 1988. It is known as a “big course” ... with large greens, mammoth bunkers and fairways lined by majestic oak trees.

And the price to play this well-conditioned gem – even in peak season – is an average of \$65.

Then there is Stoatin Brae, the crown jewel of the Gull Lake View collection. Designed by acclaimed architect Tom Doak and opened in 2021, it received immediate acclaim as the 2021 National Course of the Year. It is ranked among the Top 20 courses that the public can play in the golf-rich state of Michigan.

Perched on the highest point in Kalamazoo County, the course provides windswept panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. The name is translated from Gaelic, meaning Grand Hill. And it certainly is.

The course is a well-designed challenge that provides all golfers with an exhilarating experience. And the best part is that the highest fees barely top \$100.



Stoatin Brae

JULIETTE FALLS GC – FLORIDA

A rolling piece of property in the rural area of Dunnellon, Florida – just a few miles outside the city of Ocala – was the personal choice of John Clapper. He envisioned a high-quality, public access golf course that would appeal to a wide variety of golfers. He then chose John Sanford, who had a rising reputation among architects, to design the golf course.

Juliette Falls opened in 2007 and quickly began gathering acclaim as one of the finest public access courses in the state. It proudly stands among the Top 15 courses in that category on all of the “experts” lists. But a more telling ranking may come from the GolfPass ranking, where everyday golfers write reviews of many courses and they are weighted by a panel that creates the Golfers’ Choice list.



Juliette Falls #13

That list reflects architectural quality, playability, enjoyment, service and value. Not surprising, using those standards, Juliette Falls ranks as the No. 1 public access course in the state – standing above acclaimed resort courses such as Streamsong, Cabot Citrus Farms and TPC Stadium, all of which will set the golfer back more than \$500 for the day.

The price at Juliette Falls – in high season – is \$75 to \$99, depending on time of day. The quality of the golf experience far surpasses the price.

The design is a succession of solid golf holes that are both interesting and extremely beautiful. As the name suggests, waterfalls are a major component of the course’s beauty.

Golfers often comment that the round seems to end too quickly, due to being immersed in the beauty of the surroundings. But, when the golf rounds ends, the experience at Juliette Falls continues. The clubhouse features one of the best sports bar/restaurants that can be found at any golf course. It is a common stop for even non-golfers from the area.

Tucked away in a less-traveled, less-glamorous section of Florida, Juliette Falls is a must-stop for golfers cruising the state and looking for a totally enjoyable golf experience.

BLUE RIDGE TRAIL GC – PENNSYLVANIA

Blue Ridge Trail GC in Mountaintop, Pennsylvania was born from very humble beginnings. It began as a 9-hole golf course in the early 90’s. In the late 90’s, as more money became available, it grew to 18 holes. Just past the turn of the century, the final 9 holes were added to complete a premiere 27-hole facility.

The design came from Ault, Clark and Associates, the Maryland-based architecture team that has created a number of acclaimed courses in the Mid-Atlantic region. The management team came from a love-of-the-earth background.

Both the general manager, Duane Schell, and the director of golf, Tony Barletta, came from strong backgrounds as golf course superintendents. As a result, course conditions are always of utmost importance at Blue Ridge Trail. And that is not always an easy task in the rocky, rugged landscape of Pennsylvania’s Western Pocono

Cont. on page 9

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Cont. from page 7
Pocono Mountains.

“Fortunately, Ault and Clark gave us a design that we were able to maintain with a reasonable amount of labor and funds,” explains Barletta. “And, when it comes to modernizing or making changes, our ownership never backs away from what has to be done.”

The course sits in a very rural area, about 20 miles west of Wilkes Barre – but don’t let the surroundings fool you. Everything at Blue Ridge Trail is top-notch. There is a fleet of 105 electric carts with touchscreen GPS on every cart. The course is ribboned artistically through the mountains, minimizing the number of uphill, downhill and sidehill shots. The layout features no parallel fairways and only a few houses, greatly distanced from the holes.



Blue Ridge Trail #9 Ridge

There also is a modern clubhouse that features a grille room with an excellent menu of golf course favorites. An event room was added a few years ago and it is supported well by a surrounding community that respects the effort that has been made by management.

The crowning jewel of that effort is the pricing that has become the trademark of Blue Ridge Trail. The price, including taxes, for 18 holes during the week is \$48. On weekends it goes all the way up to \$58. Seniors can play during the week for \$37. These prices are unheard of – anywhere – in today’s golf economy.



Blue Ridge Trail Clubhouse

“Our owner and our management team firmly believe that golf needs to be reasonably priced,” stresses Barletta. “The prices in our well-stocked pro shop are the best around. Our food is excellent and reasonably priced. And we believe our course is the best golf value in the state.”

The golfers and the golf “experts” agree.

Blue Ridge Trail has been hailed by many over the years:

No. 2 ranked public course in Pennsylvania by Golf Advisor

No. 8 ranked best conditioned public course in Pennsylvania by Golf Advisor

Ranked in Top 10 in the state over the years by Golfweek, GolfStyles and GolfPass

These examples are proof that it is possible to operate an efficient and profitable golf facility without gouging the public. The golf industry must recognize that eventually an aging and increasingly cost-resistant core group will find other, less-expensive recreation outlets.

Pickleball? Fishing? Bicycling? Hiking?

None of those activities can come close to matching the allure of a round of golf on a beautiful course. But, at today’s prices, that allure will wear off. And the golf industry will head into another recession. Let’s hope the golf leaders wise up in time to keep that from happening.

AMERICA’S 10 HIGHEST-PRICED COURSES

(Average from a number of websites -- subject to change)

Shadow Creek (Las Vegas, NV): Often cited as the most expensive public course, with fees reportedly reaching \$1,250 or more for a round, especially when factoring in mandatory caddies/forecaddies.

TPC Sawgrass (Ponte Vedra Beach, FL): The Stadium Course, home to The Players Championship, charges premium rates, sometimes around \$900+ for a tee time.

Pebble Beach Golf Links (Pebble Beach, CA): A famous bucket-list course where green fees have surpassed \$600-\$700, plus cart/caddie fees, pushing total costs close to \$800.

Kiawah Island Resort (Ocean Course) (Kiawah Island, SC): Another major resort destination with high green fees, sometimes reaching \$650+.

Wynn Golf Club (Las Vegas, NV): \$600, plus caddie fees.

Trump National Doral (Blue Monster) (Miami, FL): Peak green fees can hit \$495-\$595+ with mandatory forecaddie fees.

Whistling Straits (Straits Course) (Kohler, WI): Reported fees around \$490+ (not including caddie fees).

Harbour Town Golf Links (Hilton Head Island, SC): A Pete Dye design at Sea Pines Resort, rates can range from \$345 to over \$550 depending on the season.

TPC Scottsdale (Scottsdale, AZ): Television coverage of the PGA Tour event from this course inflates prices to \$551.

Greenbrier Old White Course (White Sulphur Springs, WV) – This mountain resort and casino property charges \$550 to play another course that hosts a PGA Tour event.

WYOMING VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB'S WEISCARGER
WINS STATE SUPER SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP



The Super Senior Division finish was a wild one, with Wyoming Valley Country Club’s Joseph Weiscarger shooting a blistering 68 on Tuesday to win. The round (equaling Stimmel’s tally from Monday) was the lowest of the tournament and included birdies on 7, 10, 11, 14, and 16 to finish at +1 (75-68–143).

Chasing him was Brian Rothaus (Five Ponds Golf Club), who put together two solid rounds of +1 (72) to finish as runner-up for the fifth time in the last six years in the Super-Senior

Division. Rothaus’ lone birdie of the day was on the first hole, and the only trouble he ran into were bogeys on 9 and 15 in an otherwise excellent round.

The pair of Byron Whitman (Berkshire Country Club) and Oscar Mestre (Overbrook Golf Club) finished tied for third place at +3 (145), while two-time Super-Senior Amateur champ Duke Delcher (Sandy Run CC) and former 2017 Senior Am champ Glenn Smeraglio (LuLu Country Club) finished in fifth place at +4 (146).

Pos.	Player	Total To Par Gross
1	Weiscarger, Joseph <i>Wyoming Valley Country Club</i>	+1
2	Rothaus, Brian <i>Five Ponds Golf Club</i>	+2
T3	Whitman, Byron <i>Berkshire Country Club</i>	+3
T3	Mestre, Oscar <i>Overbrook Golf Club</i>	+3
T5	Delcher, Duke <i>Sandy Run CC</i>	+4
T5	Smeraglio, Glenn <i>LuLu Country Club</i>	+4
T7	Osborne, Gregory <i>Overlook Golf Course</i>	+6
T7	Martone, Larry <i>Stonewall</i>	+6
T9	Daniels, Gary <i>Applebrook Golf Club</i>	+7
T9	English, J Alan <i>St. Clair Country Club</i>	+7
T11	Gill, Bob <i>Fox Hill Country Club</i>	+8
T11	Steinmetz, George <i>Spring Ford Country Club</i>	+8
T11	Yenser, Jim <i>Philadelphia Publinks Golf Association</i>	+8
14	Erickson, III, Don <i>Indiana Country Club</i>	+10
T15	Christie, Scott <i>West Shore Country Club</i>	+11
T15	Corsi, Joe <i>Ligonier Country Club</i>	+11
T15	Platt, Rod <i>Oakmont Country Club</i>	+11
T15	Chase, Bill <i>Valley Green</i>	+11
T19	Detweiler, Marlin <i>Lancaster Country Club</i>	+12
T19	Lefavor, Joe <i>Sunnehanna Country Club</i>	+12
T21	Farling, Mike <i>Carlisle Country Club</i>	+13
T21	Hinish, Ron <i>Iron Masters Country Club</i>	+13
T21	Bogle, William <i>Chesapeake Bay Golf Club</i>	+13
T21	Hyland, Tom <i>Moselem Springs Golf Club</i>	+13
T21	DuCarme, Rich <i>Valley Brook Country Club</i>	+13
T26	Vassil, Michael <i>The Country Club of Scranton</i>	+14



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DEER ISLAND G.C. - Situated on the secluded 400-acre Deer Island, amidst the Harris Chain of Lakes, Deer Island Country Club is home to Central Florida's only island golf course. Designed by Joe Lee, Deer Island is a semi-private, 18-hole golf course offering breathtaking views of Lake Dora and Lake Beauclair as it carves through the course's scenic wetlands. Measuring 6,885 from the tips, the course rating is 74 with a slope of 144. Six sets of tees give you plenty of options to match your game to the course layout. Enjoy a bite in the 19th Wave restaurant after your round. We also have a state of the art indoor simulator if you're looking to fine tune your game. Deer Island is consistently rated as one of Central Florida's finest. DEERISLANDCC.COM



EAGLE DUNES G.C. - Opened in 2003, Eagle Dunes is uniquely known for its picturesque elevation changes and the truest, well maintained putting surfaces in Central Florida. With gently rolling fairways, four sets of tees, and generous landing areas, this layout challenges the pros and regular joes. Eagles Dunes was designed by golf course architect Mike Dasher, member of the ASGCA, whose portfolio includes several recent award-winning course renovations in Central Florida. The 7024-yard, par-72 design was awarded four stars in Golf Digest's "Best Places to Play." EAGLEDUNES.COM

HIDDEN LAKES G.C. - Don't let this New Smyrna Beach par-69 golf course fool you. Hidden Lakes will surprise and delight you. The course has six par-3s, nine par-4s, and three par-5s to challenge every part of your game. Hidden Lakes winds through large pines and stately oaks along the pristine Turnbull Bay estuary and around beautiful lakes and winding creeks. Expert golfers will enjoy the back tees and have the chance to use every club in the bag. The wildlife loves to play here too including osprey, sandhill cranes, roseate spoonbills and bald eagles. Our practice facility has top quality turf and range balls including our short game area, the "Scoring Zone." We offer lessons and have four PGA and LPGA instructors on staff. HIDDENLAKESGOLFCLUB.COM



KISSIMMEE BAY C.C. - Kissimmee Bay was designed by renowned local architect Lloyd Clifton and opened in 1990. Cut out of a dense majestic forest with oak trees that date back over a century, Kissimmee Bay's true Florida charm are the stands of stunning cypress trees along its fairways. The par-71 gold tees tip out at 6,830 yards with a challenging slope rating of 132. Kissimmee Bay earned national acclaim when Golf Digest nominated it as one of America's "Best New Courses." For the true golfaficionado, the Langley Golf Museum, located inside the clubhouse, showcases a private collection of more than 1000 rare golf artifacts, vintage clubs and memorabilia. In 2024, Kissimmee Bay was honored as "Best Course in Osceola County." GOLFKISSIMMEEBAY.COM

MAYFAIR CC - Opened in 1927, this historic 18-hole municipal course was designed by preeminent golf course architect, Donald Ross. The medium-length par-72 layout stretches to 6,400 yards with a course rating of 68.7 and slope rating of 117. From 1955 to 1958, the Mayfair Country Club was the site of the “Mayfair Inn Open”, a golf tournament on the PGA Tour. Mayfair also hosted the “Sanford Open” on the LPGA Tour in 1959. A new 8,000 sq. Ft contemporary clubhouse opened in 2025. Along with its ‘Wall of Fame’ commemorating much of Mayfair’s history and sports legends who played there in the early days, the clubhouse has a full service restaurant, bar and fully-stocked pro shop. MAYFAIRCC.COM



THE PLANTATION AT LEESBURG GOLF CLUB offers two distinct championship courses - Cranes Roost and Otter Creek - in one premier destination.

CRANES ROOST is an 18-hole par-71 parkland-style golf course that rolls nicely through the community. It has soft elevation changes not typical of a Florida golf course and plenty of room for a wayward shot. The front nine has five holes that have bordering lakes including the signature ninth hole, a double dogleg par five, that challenges the player to cut off as much as possible or to play it safe. The 6,005 course rating is 68.0 with a slope rating of 118 on Bermuda grass.

OTTER CREEK - Tight and tree-lined with Loblolly and Sand Pines, Otter Creek completed a major renovation in late 2023. All 18 greens have been rebuilt and increased to their original size featuring many undulation changes that allow for a fun and challenging golf experience every round. You’ll need your straight shots and a cool head on holes 13, 14, and 15, better known as “Otter’s Revenge.” The 6,264 yard par-72 Otter Creek has a course rating of 70.0 and a slope rating of 127 on Bermuda grass. Arrive early for your tee time and enjoy tuning up your game at our renovated practice area including a new 9000 sq. ft practice putting green and enlarged chipping green. GOLFATPLANTATION.COM

REMINGTON G.C. - Remington GC is a strikingly beautiful golf course with its abundant water features, generous landing areas and scenic landscaping. Graced by meticulously kept hardwood trees and graceful palms, the course combines a mix of classic and tropical flora. The four-star, award-winning par-72 course is home to prestigious tournaments year round. Designed by Clifton, Ezell and Clifton, Remington GC measures an impressive 7,111 yards and offers a classic park-like setting where golfers can unplug and truly enjoy a stress-free day on the links. GOLFREMINGTON.COM



STONEBROOK WEST G.C. - Stoneybrook West, is a beautiful blend of the natural landscape of West Orange County creating one of the top public championship courses in the greater Orlando area. The par-72 7100 yard course has dramatic rolling fairways touched by water on fourteen holes, encased by towering berms and strategic bunkering. Stoneybrook West also offers a complete practice area with two practice greens. After your round, stop in at SB PRIME Bar and Grill for a drink or a meal and enjoy panoramic views of the entire course. STONEBROOKWESTGOLFCLUB.COM





SWEETWATER GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB - Nestled along Wekiva State Park and dotted with timeless elegance, Sweetwater Golf and Country Club provides a truly memorable experience with each visit. Meandering through the natural splendor of mature oaks and grassy terrain, our 18-hole Course is a 6,238-yard, par-72 championship layout with Tiff-Eagle greens designed to challenge every skill level. To that end, our Course boasts one of the longest par fives in the southeast a 611-yard, tree-lined hole that double doglegs around a beautiful lake. Recent capital improvements that include a stunning new clubhouse featuring the Tuscan Lounge and Grill, provide an upscale semi-private club atmosphere for members and non-members playing or dining at Sweetwater. SWEETWATERGOLF.COM

TWIN RIVERS G.C. - Nestled between the Big and Little Econ rivers, Twin Rivers Golf Club offers a scenic 18-hole par-72 championship golf course. We are proud of the consistently great conditions of our golf course. If you want a golf experience unimpeded by development, then Twin Rivers Golf Club is just for you. We have done our best to preserve our natural environment. Twin Rivers Golf Club has been recognized and awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Environmental Planning certificate by Audubon International. TWINRIVERSGOLF.COM



VICTORIA HILLS G.C. - Located in Deland, this Ron Garl-designed championship course has received numerous accolades and awards since its opening in 2002, including being ranked 41 in the Top 50 Public Courses you can play by Golf World (2010). Five sets of tee boxes create a challenging, yet fair test no matter your handicap. The course plays to 7,149 yards/142 slope from the tips with some formidable carries over waste areas, ravines, and water hazards. Greenside collection areas, swales and deep bunkers serve to protect the many large, sloping and raised putting surfaces. A good short game is key to scoring well. VICTORIAHILLSGOLF.COM

WEKIVA G.C. - Crafted out of a wooded setting and opened in 1972, Wekiva Golf Club features many doglegs bordered by large stands of trees and no parallel fairways. With its Champion Bermuda grass greens and straight-forward layout, Wekiva is an enjoyable experience for the recreational golfer as well as a low-handicapper. A semi-private club that welcomes outside play, this 18-hole, 6,850-yard, par-72 features beautiful oaks, mature pines and palms, rolling fairways, over 80 strategically placed bunkers and gentle mounding that highlights both the fairways and undulating greens. WEKIVAGC.COM



ZELLWOOD STATION G.C. - Zellwood Station offers players a special Florida golf experience - hilly terrain, great greens, and very memorable golf holes. Zellwood Station has two distinctive par-4's that are driveable (264 & 266 yards), offering great hopes for marking an eagle on your scorecard. The ninth, nicknamed "Train Wreck," will definitely get your attention before making the turn. Holes 12 thru 16 dogleg around a cavernous dry lake dubbed "Crater Junction." Hit this hazard and it's all over! The stout par-3, 17th hole, measures 243 yards exceeding any on the PGA TOUR! Fun and wickedly challenging, once you've played Zellwood Station, you'll want to return and conquer it all over again! ZELLWOODGOLF.COM

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BRUNN, GILL CROWNED CHAMPIONS AT HUNTSVILLE

The 27th Junior Tournament of Champions turned into a one-day sprint after storms washed out Round One at Fox Hill Country Club.

With the event shortened to 18 holes at Huntsville Golf Club (par 72, 6,366 yards) Wednesday, Arden Brunn of Wyoming Valley Country Club made the most of her last chance for a victory as a junior golfer. The Towson University freshman played steady golf and captured the Founders Cup, awarded to the Girls' Division winner. She carded a 5-over-par 77.

Winners Arden Brunn (l) and Liam Gill

"It's really special just knowing that it was my last year to do it," Brunn, 18, of Hanover Township, Pa., said. "Last year, I came up three shots short. So just to come back this year and get it done, it feels nice."

Lyla Jones of Pocono Farms Country Club carded a 14-over-par 86 to finish runner-up.

Brunn entered the day with experience at Huntsville from high school matches. That comfort showed early. She birdied No. 1 (par 5, 359 yards), with a bump-and-run from 25 yards to tap-in territory. Brunn added another birdie on No. 17 (par 3, 118 yards) with a chip-in from 20 yards.

"My driver was very good today," Brunn said. "I was in pretty much every fairway, and it set me up for an easy approach shot to the green."

The second nine was much tougher for Brunn, but she stayed patient and avoided the mistakes she made last year, when she carded a 6-over-par 79 to finish runner-up.

The win adds to a strong summer from Brunn, who claimed club championship victories at Elkview Country Club and Wyoming Valley and owns a Class 2A district title.

It was a good day for Holy Redeemer High School as Brunn's former teammate Liam Gill captured the Boys' Division Wednesday.

"If there was anyone I was rooting for on the guys' side, it was definitely Liam," Brunn said. "I'm really happy both of us could get a win."

For Gill, adding the Art Wall, Jr. Trophy, awarded to the winner of the Boys' Division, to his closet meant more than just another piece

of hardware. It meant adding his name alongside past champions he has admired and proving how far his game has come in the last year.

"It felt great to get this win," Gill, 15, of Swoyersville, Pa., said. "There are a lot of good names on this trophy, like Brandon Matthews. I've played with him a couple times, and then Mariano Medico, who went to the same high school as me. There are a lot of good names on there." Sebastian Meyer of the Country Club of Scranton finished runner-up with a 4-over-par 76.



Winners Arden Brunn (l) and Liam Gill

Gill's round was anything but flashy. He recorded one birdie and two bogeys, relying on consistent pars to separate himself from the field.

After bogeys on Nos. 11 (par 4, 404 yards) and 12 (par 5, 503 yards) briefly stalled his momentum, the Fox Hill member settled down over the closing stretch, parring the last six holes.

"I was frustrated after three-putting on 12," Gill said. "Then I got to 13, hit a good drive, calmed down from there and just kept trying to hit greens and two-putt."

His lone birdie came on No. 9 (par 5, 497 yards) after what he thought was a wayward tee shot ended up in the fairway; he hit a 7-iron from 180 yards to 30 feet, where he two-putted for a birdie.

The victory adds to an impressive summer for the Holy Redeemer sophomore. Gill won the 24th GAP/AGA Stroke Play Championship at Huntsville, the Fox Hill junior club championship, reached the Round of 16 in the Junior Boys' Championship and teamed with his grandfather Bob to win the 80th John A. Allan Championship at Fox Hill. He credits his success to playing smart golf.

"I've been hitting the ball a lot better this year," Gill said. "I'm hitting it more consistently and keeping the ball in play, which is big. Around the greens, my short game has gotten a lot better, and I've been able to make a lot more putts this year."

The day became even more memorable when he found out that Brunn won the Girls' Division.

"It was cool to see," Gill said. "Two Redeemer kids were able to get it done today."

The Junior Tournament of Champions is the culmination of the Lawler Junior Tour season.

LAWLER JUNIOR TOUR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Results

Boys Division

Name, club	Score
Liam Gill, Fox Hill Country Club	73
Sebastian Meyer, Country Club of Scranton	76
Ryan Roman, Irem Country Club	77
Michael Pisarcik, Elkview Country Club	78
Phillip Mathews, Wilkes-Barre Golf Club	78
Chase Rosenkrans, Glen Oak Country Club	79
Brady Gerrity, Wyoming Valley Country Club	79
Emmett Galucci, Pocono Manor Golf Club	81
Maxyn Graci, Elmhurst Country Club	81
Archer Long, Honesdale Golf Club	82
Karl Unger, Berwick Golf Club	84
Cole Severs, Country Club of Scranton	85
Brady Johnson, Wyoming Valley Country Club	86
Brady DePhillips, Glenmaura National Golf Club	88
Evan Pabst, Elmhurst Country Club	91
Jayson Rush, Wyoming Valley Country Club	91

Girls Division

Name, club	Score
Arden Brunn, Wyoming Valley Country Club	77
Lyla Jones, Pocono Farms Country Club	86
Brianna Moffatt, Glen Oak Country Club	88



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2026 Pocono Professional Golf Series Event Calendar

PGA of America w Philadelphia Section w Updated April 12, 2026

Date	Event	Host Course	Course Contact	Host Professional
Tuesday, April 21	Pro-Pro	Glen Brook Golf Club (Spring Meeting)	570-421-3680	Dustin McCormick
Tuesday, May 12	Pro-Am	The Shawnee Inn & Golf Resort	570-424-4019	Nick Lussier
Tuesday, May 19	Pro-Am	Buck Hill Falls Golf Club	570-595-7730	Brian Fruehan
Wednesday, May 27	Pro-Am	Great Bear Golf Club	570-223-2000	Howie Van Buskirk
Wednesday, June 3	Pro-Am	Olde Homestead Golf Club	610-298-4653	Kevin Edwards
Tuesday, June 9	Pro-Am	Glen Brook Golf Club	570-421-3680	Dustin McCormick
Tuesday, June 17	Pro-Am	Woodstone Country Club & Lodge	610-760-2777	Gregg Meyer
Wednesday, June 24	Pro-Am	The Country Club at Woodloch Springs	570-685-8102	John Pillar
Tuesday, June 30	Pro-Am	Southmoore Golf Center	610-837-7200	Jim Muschlitz
Thursday, July 9	Pro-Am	Wyoming Valley Country Club	570-825-9489	Pete Korba
Wednesday, July 22	Pro-Am	Elmhurst Golf & Country Club	570-842-7011	Mike Molino
Thursday, August 6	Pro-Am	Pocono Manor	570-839-7110	Greg Wall
Wednesday, August 26	Pro-Am	Green Pond Country Club	610-691-9453	John Kulhamer
Wednesday, September 2	Pro-Am	Pocono Farms Country Club	570-894-8441	Kyle Monahan
Wednesday, September 9	Pro-Am	Skytop Lodge	570-257-2114	Justin Alunni
Wednesday, September 16	Pro-Am	Lord's Valley Country Club	570-775-6013	Dave Yanovitch
Tuesday, September 22	Pro-Am	Scranton Canoe Club	570-378-9982	Spencer Lunger
Thursday, October 1	Pro-Am	Elkview Country Club	570-222-4555	Jared Cottell
Wednesday, October 14	Pro-Am	Country Club of Scranton	570-587-3514	John Rogers
To Be Determined	Stroke Play*	To Be Determined	---	---
To Be Determined	Pocono Cup*	To Be Determined (Pocono Mtn.)	---	---
To Be Determined	Fall Pro-Pro*	To Be Determined	---	---

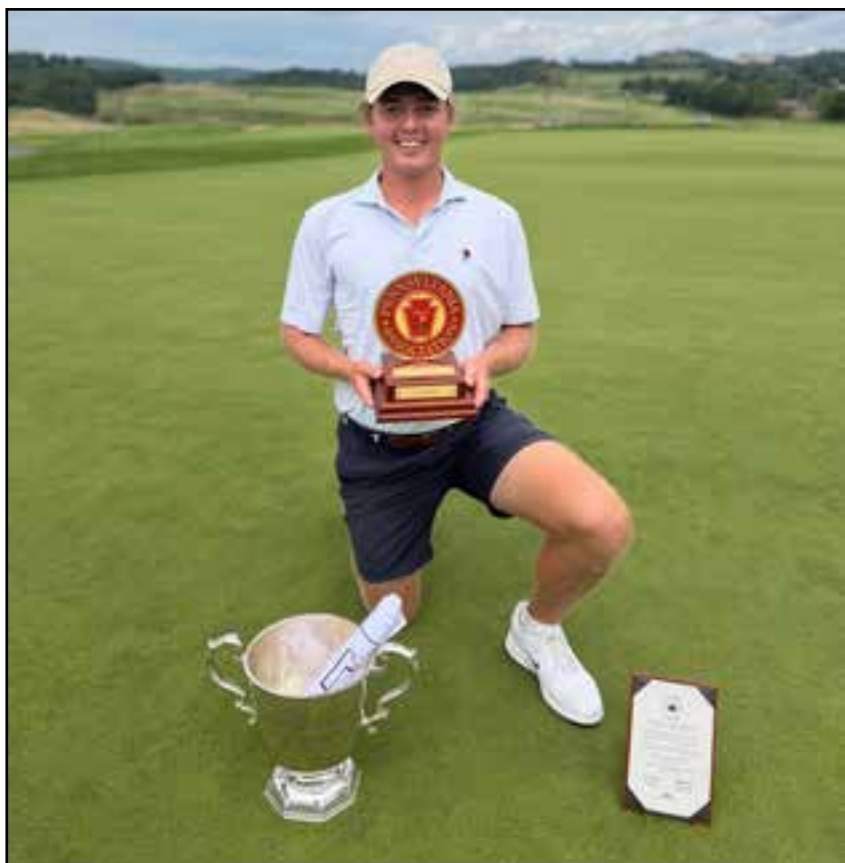
* Season-ending events will be announced at a later date.

For updates and results, visit the PPGS web site (www.golfppgs.com) or view the PPGS Facebook page (@golfPPGS).

ALTERNATE TWO YEARS
AGO BUT GOT INJURED

JOSH RYAN CLAIMS 113TH AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP AT OAKMONT

OAKMONT, Pa. – After three rounds at Oakmont Country Club in the Pennsylvania Golf Association's (PAGA) 113th Amateur Championship, only one player finished under par: The 1912 Club's Josh Ryan, who finished at -1 (69-74-69—212) to win his third PAGA title.



Ryan, who previously won the 2022 George Dressler Memorial and 2020 R. Jay Sigel Match Play Championship (and was runner-up at the 2026 Sigel), was tied for the lead at this year's Amateur after a first round -2 (69) and equaled that score today on a windy Wednesday at Oakmont. He put together a strong start that saw him -3 after seven holes. He birdied holes No. 3, 4, and 7, along with 11 and 12, but rallied and parred the final two holes to clinch the championship.



"It feels pretty good," said Ryan. "It's been a minute since I've hoisted a trophy so it's definitely nice to be back in the mix. It's been nice to be home for the summer and playing PA stuff again. This place was special. It got harder throughout the week as the pins and the weather got more challenging. I didn't look at the leaderboard all day so I had no idea until on the last hole my caddy said "Well done, champ." and that was the first time I knew."

"Today we had some really difficult conditions," said Dave Sims, who caddied for Ryan in all three rounds this week. "I'd say Oakmont really showed its teeth but it was the best tournament round I've ever been a part of. I've been fortunate enough to be an Oakmont caddy for 27 years and caddy in US Amateurs and US Opens for the world's greatest, and this was hands-down the best round of golf I've ever caddied for. Josh played great, it was a gutsy performance, and I'll remember this one forever."



"The first two rounds I kind of hit it everywhere and just had to manage," said Ryan. "Dave and I had a very good plan of just hitting center greens. I got in trouble a lot the first two days and made pars where I could but today was different. My ball striking was really good and I hit it to an inch on 7 and a 3-wood to eight feet on 12. I just hit it in the right spots and maybe had one bad swing all day. It was really nice."

Today's win also comes with an exemption into the 126th US Amateur, taking place August 10-16 at Merion Golf Club – which would have been more impressive had Ryan not already secured his spot last week at US Amateur Final Qualifying at Llanerch Country Club.

"I've never officially qualified," said Ryan. "I got in as a second

Cont. on page 22

alternate two years ago but got injured the week of the Amateur, so I'm excited to play it and hopefully not be injured. Qualifiers are hard and not really my specialty so it's really nice when you can get in. The USGA is really special and they treat you well. I'm looking forward to it and it's funny that I qualified twice in two weeks."

Ryan's cheering section today also included his mother, who has been there supporting him throughout the years.

"Golf's a journey," said Ryan. "During Junior golf she was there all the time, then college golf we traveled a lot more and she couldn't get out as much. This was her first event she's come out to all summer so I was joking with her that she can't leave me now. But it's just special. It's always the best feeling coming off the last hole, knowing you played well, and you can just hug your mom."



The 2026 PAGA Amateur runner-up was Kahkwa Club's Breckin Taylor, who finished at +2 (73-70-72—215) for the week. He was +2 after seven holes and bogeys on 1 and 7 but brought it back with birdies on 9 and 15.

In third place was Oakmont Country Club's Carson Kittsley at +3 (69-72-75—216), who held at least a share of the lead after rounds 1 and 2 and started well in the final round with a -2 (34) at the turn after birdies on 5 and 8, but four bogeys and a double on the back nine ended his medalist hopes.

Rounding out the top five finishers were Andrew Friend (Oakmont Country Club) with a +4 (74-69-74—217) in fourth place and Austin Lemieux (Allegheny Country Club)'s +5 (75-70-73—218) in fifth place.

Pos.	Player		Total
1	Ryan, Joshua	The 1912 Club	-1
2	Taylor, Breckin	Kahkwa Club	+2
3	Kittsley, Carson	Oakmont Country Club	+3
4	Friend, Andrew	Oakmont Country Club	+4
5	Lemieux, Austin	Allegheny Country Club	+5
6	Mattioli, Matthew	Pittsburgh Field Club	+6
T7	Piatt, Nathan	Oakmont Country Club	+7
T7	BUTLER, ANDY	HUNTINGDON VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB	+7
T7	NETTLES, TOM	OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB	+7
T10	ABBRACCIAMENTO, AMBROSE	USGA/GAP GC	+8
T10	YENSER, CHASE	RIVERCREST	+8
T12	BANGOR, IAN	MONTOUR HEIGHTS COUNTRY CLUB	+9
T12	JACK IRONS	UNION LEAGUE LIBERTY HILL	+9
T12	FRISK, KARL	HANOVER COUNTRY CLUB	+9
T12	FUHRER, DAVE	OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB	+9
T16	PETERS, TIMOTHY	TOFTREES GOLF RESORT	+10
T16	EICHENLAUB, EVAN	SAUCON VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB	+10
18	BROWNING, GARRETT	CHARTIERS COUNTRY CLUB	+11
T19	MILLER, MARK	PHILADELPHIA CRICKET CLUB	+12
T19	TRAGESSER, CHUCK	WILLOWBROOK COUNTRY CLUB	+12
T19	KEBA, JOHN	STEEL CLUB	+12
T19	MECCA, DAVID	COUNTRY CLUB OF SCRANTON	+12
T19	DONAHUE, DANIEL	OAKMONT COUNTRY CLUB	+12



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U.S. JUNIOR AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP WRAP-UP

by Pete Kowalski

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – Noah Maclauchlan, the first player to claim the newly named Tiger Woods Trophy as the winner of the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship, earned his title by displaying all the grit and tenacity of the nine-time USGA champion in his time of dominance.

"I don't really have words right now. It's pretty surreal," said Maclauchlan, 18 of Moseley, Va. "It's pretty unbelievable to call myself a U.S. Junior champion. To have my name next to all the legends that have won this including Tiger's and so many more is so special."

He faced co-medalist and the top-ranked junior player in the world in the final, the first-ever championship match between lefties. With the win, Maclauchlan joined Brian Harman (2003) and Cory Whitsett (2007) as the third southpaw to win the Junior Amateur.

Facing long odds in the final match of this national championship against Russell, who is a member of the 2026 USA Walker Cup team and a two-time AJGA Player of the Year, Maclauchlan threw a full assault of precision golf at his opponent en route to a convincing 6-and-5 victory at prestigious Saucon Valley Country Club's Old Course.

The Liberty University incoming freshman started strong in the morning 18 and was 3 up through 10 holes before Russell, 17, of Jacksonville Beach, Fla., stormed back with four wins in the next five holes to take a 1-up lead through 15. Maclauchlan promptly won the 16th and 17th to take a 1-up lead at the lunch break.

Maclauchlan, who entered the week as the World Amateur Golf Rankings No. 2,047 player, was a first alternate and gained a spot in the field when Rawlin Sutter win Alabama Junior in early July.

Russell, who drew sizeable crowds for his matches, buzzed through the first five matches en route to facing Maclaughlan. His driving, sharp iron play and deft touch around the greens were evident most particularly in his semifinal round win over Tyler Mawhinney, 18, of Fleming Island, Fla., with two eagles (one a pitch-in from off the green on the 13th hole) and five birdies for a 2-and-1 win over his U.S. National Development teammate.

Maclauchlan, meanwhile, maintained a steadiness and confidence that only grew the more he played the Old Course. En route to the final, he defeated Cooper Moore of New Zealand and the No. 1 seed from match play Brayden Jones of Seal Beach, Calif., in the Round of 16.

"After every match, I was like, 'we're getting closer. I'm starting to figure out this golf course now'," he said. "I played it for a week straight. So it sounds silly to say, but I knew the ins and outs. As the matches went on, I felt confidence that no matter what situation, we can go out there and win. In match play, anything can happen at any time. It doesn't matter how much you're up. It doesn't matter how much you're down. Anything can happen. So I just kind of had

that mindset and I would let nothing bother me, and that was my key to success this week."

Playing in his second U.S. Junior Amateur – he did not make the cut for match play in 2026 – Maclauchlan has earned a spot in the 2027 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links as well as the U.S. Amateur at Merion Golf Club this month.

In the final match, Russell, who made cut at the U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills and is a Florida State commit, did not find fairways as easily as he had in the previous rounds.

"It was a good match there the first 18, and kind of got my teeth kicked in there early and just kind of came back out swinging," he said. "I kind of gave it my all there towards the end, and in the second 18 I just really couldn't get anything going. I was thinking that I was going to be able to hit my driver a little better than I did in the morning and that just wasn't the case. I just didn't give myself that many chances."

Playing the best of his peers did not ruffle Maclauchlan, who depended on his younger brother, Liam, who caddied for him after missing the cut for match play. The younger Maclauchlan is a 2027 University of Virginia verbal commit. Their close relationship helped when the lead was lost in the final against Russell.

"My brother just told me to remain calm, take deep breaths, slow down the walk a little bit, and go back into your process" he said. The new holder of the Tiger Woods Trophy also had a mature perspective of what he faced in the last match.



“I knew what I was going up against,” Maclauchlan said. “I knew he wasn't just going to give it to me. I was going to go out to earn it and stuff. I told my brother that if I played really well and I felt confident, we can win if we got off to a fast start. The other matches I had won got off to fast starts on the front nine, and I did the same thing versus Miles.

“So, I had the same positive vibes going into the match, and then I said the same thing, pedal down going into the second 18. Then we had a great start again. So, I think getting the momentum started early, made me have confidence in my game and have confidence that I can win.”

The two players from Pennsylvania who advanced to match play, Nico Ward, of Coraopolis and Chase Yenser, of Douglassville, both won their first-round matches. Ward lost to Mawhinney and Yenser

lost to co-medalist Sohan Patel of Weston, Fla, in the ensuing Round of 32.

Charlie Woods, the son of 9-time USGA champion Tiger Woods, was in the 19 players for 17 spots playoff for match play but did not advance.



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ENHANCING ITS LEGACY, MERION TO HOST RECORD 20TH USGA CHAMPIONSHIP

By Pete Kowalski



Merion Hole #16

ARDMORE, Pa. – Since 1904, Merion Golf Club has been hosting USGA Championships and number 20 arrives in August.

Its tapestry of events, winners and special moments will be enriched again when the 126th U.S. Amateur begins on August 10 and 11 with stroke play at Merion's East Course and Philadelphia Country Club's Spring Mill Course. The low 64 scorers, sometimes a playoff is needed, advance to match play. Six rounds of match play commence at Merion on August 12 and conclude with a 36-hole final match on August 16 for the hardware – the Havemeyer Trophy and the newly established Tiger Woods medal.

No other club or facility in the nation has served the role of USGA host site more than Merion, but Oakmont Country Club is close with 18.

To put the 19 past championships at Merion in perspective the club's general chair for the Amateur Bill Lynch said: "This will be our 13th consecutive decade hosting a USGA championship."

Scott Nye, who began his tenure at Merion as the head golf professional in 2000 and is now the club's director of championships explained the 130-plus year relationship with the nation's governing body. The club just wants to give back to the game.

"It's in our DNA," Nye said. "It's one of the things that we talk about when you are being proposed for membership. But this rich pedigree that we have with the USGA has taken a long time to build and it's taken a mindset that this is what we do and this is who we ride with – the USGA."

19 USGA Championships at Merion Golf Club (Winner)

1904 U.S. Women's Amateur (Georgianna Bishop)
1909 U.S. Women's Amateur (Dorothy Campbell)
1916 U.S. Amateur (Chick Evans)
1924 U.S. Amateur (Bob Jones)
1926 U.S. Women's Amateur (Helen Stetson)
1930 U.S. Amateur (Bob Jones)
1934 U.S. Open (Olin Dutra)
1949 U.S. Women's Amateur (Dorothy Porter)
1950 U.S. Open (Ben Hogan)
1954 Curtis Cup (USA)
1960 World Amateur Team Championship (USA)
1966 U.S. Amateur (Gary Cowan)
1971 U.S. Open (Lee Trevino)
1981 U.S. Open (David Graham)
1989 U.S. Amateur (Chris Patton)
1998 U.S. Girls' Junior (Leigh Anne Hardin)
2005 U.S. Amateur (Edoardo Molinari)
2009 Walker Cup (USA)
2013 U.S. Open (Justin Rose)
2022 Curtis Cup (USA)

5 Future USGA Championships at Merion Golf Club

2030 U.S. Open
2034 U.S. Women's Open
2040 U.S. Open
2046 U.S. Women's Open
2050 U.S. Open

4 USGA Championships at Philadelphia Country Club (Winner)

1899 U.S. Women's Amateur (Ruth Underhill)
1939 U.S. Open (Byron Nelson)
1949 U.S. Girls' Junior (Marlene Bauer)
2003 U.S. Women's Amateur (Virada Nirapathpongporn)

The announcement of five future USGA championships further solidifies the connection between Merion and the USGA, with appropriate nods to the 1930 U.S. Amateur when Bob Jones completed the Grand Slam and the 1950 U.S. Open when Ben Hogan's immortalized 1-iron to the 18th hole advanced him to a playoff that would bring victory with U.S. Opens in 2030, 2040 and 2050.

"It shows the legacy of the USGA and Merion working together to do this but 100 years from

now it's going to be that much more meaningful that history was made here in 1930 and 2030 and in 1950 and 2050," Nye said.

The seventh U.S. Amateur at Merion will again highlight the sublime architecture of Hugh Wilson on the East Course that opened in 1912. Gil Hanse and Jim Wagner did renovations and restorations in 2014. The Spring Mill Course at Philadelphia Country Club was designed by William Flynn and opened in 1927.

At the last U.S. Amateur at Merion in 2005, Italy's Edoardo Molinari defeated Dillon Dougherty, 4 and 3, to win the Havemeyer Trophy needing only 18 putts through the matches final 15 holes.

Molinari required a miraculous hole-out from a green side bunker in this final hole of stroke play to advance to a 19 players-for-17 spots playoff. He made two pars and advanced to match play.

According to the USGA's Ben Kimball, the Senior Director of Championships, both courses will be par 70s with the East Course at 6,921 yards and Spring Mill Course at 7,201 yards.

"On paper that's a shorter golf course by today's standards and every year somebody looks at the yardage on paper and says that doesn't seem very long," Kimball said of Merion. "I've yet to hear anybody say that walking off their 18th green after their Rd 1 of stroke play. Merion will give its very best to all 312 players."

With rough at four inches and green speeds in the high 12s on the Stimpmeter, the USGA intends to identify the best player but also strives to assure that playing conditions are consistent throughout the day.

"These golf courses don't beat people up with brute force," Kimball said. "They beat people up one decision at a time."

By Sunday of championship week, the two best survivor/shot makers will vie for the title because they've been prudent about where not to hit the ball, Kimball said.

"The two players who are still standing on Sunday won't necessarily have hit the most spectacular shots, they will simply hit the fewest poor ones," he said. "I've always said that patience is just as valuable as power."

Hunter Stetson, 20, of Newtown Square, who qualified for the championship by winning the Delaware Amateur, advanced to the round of 16 at the 2023 U.S. Junior Amateur and as a North Carolina State junior, he's learned to play smart golf.

"You look at the scorecard, and you think it's short and people are going to go low," Stetson said of Merion. "But you get out here and realize that this rough is tough, these greens are hard and at the end of the day whoever hits the most fairways and the most greens is going to give themselves the best opportunity."

Merion member and GAP 2025 Player of the Year Dru Nicholas,

23, of Egg Harbor Township, N.J. is a former player at Drexel and offered an insider perspective on Merion.

Nicholas, who won the 2025 and 206 Philadelphia Open and the 2025 Philadelphia Amateur, broke the course down into six-hole segments – 1 through 6, 7 through 13 and 14 through 18, saying that 7-13 is the easiest stretch for scoring and that "everyone knows about" 14-18.

"I felt the pressure to get into the tournament but now that I'm in I feel a huge sigh of relief," said Nicholas, who has chosen to remain an amateur. "It is a very big event, way bigger than anything we see in the region. It is the number one amateur golf tournament in the world. I had a lot of pressure to get in but now that I am here I just look forward to being able to play in a U.S. Am at my home club."

After winning at Merion, the champions earns exemptions into next year's U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, the Open Championship, conducted by The R&A, at the Old Course at St Andrews and a likely invitation to the Masters.

Kimball noted that some players will win Majors, some will play in Walker Cup, Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup Matches and some might just become "household names."

"The fun part for us is that we just don't which one it is yet. That's what makes the U.S. Amateur so special."

Another special element at the U.S. Amateur is that spectators can walk the fairways with the players with greens and tees usually roped off and tickets are on sale now.



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AARON RAI WINS PGA CHAMPIONSHIP AT ARONIMINK

By Pete Kowalski

NEWTOWN SQUARE – As he sat next to the Wanamaker Trophy, emblematic of his victory at the 108th PGA Championship at Aronimink Golf Club, Aaron Rai told his story.

Known for using two golf gloves and club covers to protect his irons, a habit that began as he grew up in the game, Rai earned his title through diligence to make himself better. Two-time Major winner Xander Schauffele noted that in his comments to the media.

“It’s extremely affirming, and that’s very kind of Xander to say,” Rai said in reaction to the comments. “There are a lot of guys who work extremely hard. The level on the PGA TOUR is so strong, let alone in a major championship. So I think that’s a prerequisite of what is just required to try and compete out here.

“But it’s very,, very reaffirming to know the things that we’re doing are working and leading to continued development within the game. So, hopefully I can just continue to move along a pretty similar path moving forward.”

Rai’s daily scores dropped each day – 70, 69, 67 and 65 – for a 9-under-par total of 271, three strokes better than Jon Rahm and Alex Smalley. Justin Thomas, Ludvig Aberg and Matti Schmidt tied for fourth at -5.

A trio of Major winners Cam Smith, Rory McIlroy and Xander Schauffele tied for seventh at 4 under, while Kurt Kitayama, Chris Gotterup, Justin Rose and Patrick Reed rounded out the top 10 at 3 under.

Using a family-instilled work ethic that came from his parents and his sister, Rai follows that mantra of hard work that would likely have made Ben “The Secret Is In The Dirt” Hogan proud “I think a lot of that is -- was from my upbringing,” Rai said. “My dad was with me, as I said, everyday practice-wise, and he really instilled the importance of work and dedication and trying to consistently build just good, strong habits around the game.

“My mom worked extremely hard away from golf. Her jobs, she worked a couple of jobs at one time, at a point in time, and she did a lot of work around the house. My sister took a massive role as well at a young age. She had a job from the age of 14, 15. So there was a lot of consistent messaging of hard work, and that was generally

the environment that was there at the house. And that was at the golf course as well. So I think it’s been something I’ve just grown up with, and I guess as I’ve got older, something that I’ve really valued and tried to continue to move forward with.”

One of the PGA Tour’s most liked and humble players, Rai played the last 10 holes in 6-under par, joining Cameron Smith (6 under at the 2022 Open Championship) and Jack Nicklaus (7 under at the 1986

Masters) as the last three to notch that feat.

The biggest shot was a long, curling putt for birdie on the 17th that seemed improbable to make.

His reaction to the putt and to his play down the stretch was typical of his demeanor, calm and collected.

“I think firstly the golf course really demands it,” he said. “It was a true major championship setup in terms of how difficult it was, how penalizing it was, but it also rewarded you for good play.

“So I think the nature of the course and the nature of the shots that are required over the last few holes just require a lot of attention and a lot of focus. Yeah, that putt on 17 was incredible. I was just trying to focus on speed and get it close. It started to look really good line-wise with probably about 15 feet to go. Slowed up really nicely as well. So it just kind of conspired all together for that ball to go in the hole. But an incredible putt and a real bonus to see that one go in.”

In Sunday’s final round, Rai was 1-over though eight holes on Sunday. His round kickstarted with a 40-foot putt for eagle on the par-5 ninth to complete nine holes in 1-under 34. Prior to PGA win, he had three wins on the DP World Tour, and his lone PGA Tour win was at the 2024 Wyndham Championship.



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Heritage Golf Group Is Transforming The Golf World One Step at a Time

by Tony Leodora

Despite the sport's squeaky-clean image, there are a few dirty words in the golf world ... very dirty words.

And we are not talking about the ones uttered by a golfer after missing a two-foot putt that results in the loss of a match to a heated rival.

We are referring to a larger, more universal framework. Dirty words, dirty terms, dirty phrases that affect the entire golf community.

Some examples:

1. Crabgrass – the mere mention of it makes a superintendent's face turn into a scowl.
2. Shank – most golfers resist from even mentioning the term for fear of the immediate destruction of their chipping game.
3. Slipped disc – is there a golfer alive who hasn't gone through some sort of back ailment? The bad back is as much a part of the avid golfer's makeup as loud shirts.
4. Cart Path Only – a necessary evil whenever rainy weather makes the fairways too wet for cart traffic. But, let's face it, nobody enjoys playing under those conditions.
5. Sandbagger – the handicap system was invented to help level the playing field, so that golfers of all skill levels could enjoy competition. But working that system to the advantage of a less-than-honest player is worse than cheating on your income tax return ... far worse.

There is one more dastardly term that plagues the golf world – Management Company.

Over the years there are a number of golf management companies that have earned a terrible reputation throughout the industry. They have drained money from the courses they represented. They allowed the conditions at many courses to deteriorate badly. They have left a trail of debt and litigation. No need to mention some of the names. If they were involved at your club, you know them.

Almost every avid golfer is aware of the sad tale of a golf course or private club that was decimated by bad management companies. Especially, in the private sector, a lot of resentment toward management companies was born out of the mere fact that the members had to turn over the running of their beloved club to a group of outsiders.

Sour grapes.

Thankfully, that is not the case with all management companies. There are some that have managed to keep ailing clubs afloat ... and even improved everything about them.

A prime example in this bustling post-Covid era of golf is the Heritage Golf Group. This management company is different from many of the others.

For one thing, Heritage will not take over the management of a club unless it also takes over ownership. An invested owner always has proven to be a win-win situation for company and club.

By strict definition, Heritage Golf Group is not really a management company. They are owner/operators. But there can be no mistake that the relatively new company has been very busy "transforming the golf industry" ... as their website claims.

The company was born during the depths of the Covid pandemic, when a group from the former Club Corp golf management company (now Invited Clubs) banded together and purchased Heritage Golf Group, a small existing company that owned and managed six properties.

Fast forward to August of 2026 and the Heritage Golf Group now has exploded to an impressive 48 properties ... and continues to grow.

"Our success is based on the fact that we own every one of our properties," explains Luke Beardmore, the Senior Vice President of Agronomy for Heritage. "We have skin in the game. We are thoroughly invested in improving each property we acquire, not just making money from them."

Beardmore ought to know. He is the one who oversees the transformation of each new acquisition – from minor improvements to total renovations. He works with the superintendent, golf professional and general manager, deciding whether the course needs a bit of fine-tuning or is in need of a total renovation. The Heritage track record over the last five years is that they do whatever is necessary to improve each property.

And, in some cases, the amount of work necessary has been a monumental task.



Heritage Cheval Clubhouse

While each of the new Heritage acquisitions has its own story of transformation, three particular examples are prime illustrations of how greatly the landscape can change at a property.

Venetian Golf Club

Venice, Florida

This private club, near Florida's Gulf Coast had a checkered history ever since it opened in 2004. Designed by little-known architect Chip Powell, it was part of a large housing development and recreation community.

After years of mis-management and neglect, plus the economic downturn of 2008-2010, membership numbers had declined to the point where it could barely claim semi-private status. And the condition of the course had declined to deplorable levels. Weeds everywhere. Goose Grass on the greens and fringe areas. Bare spots on the fairways and tees.

Finally, the homeowners association gave in to the frustration of owning the course and dealing with a less than reputable management company. Venetian GC was sold to Heritage Golf Group in February of 2022. It was one of the first additions to the original group of six courses owned by the company.

Along with new ownership came a lot of promises.

The wary membership soon discovered that the promises were becoming reality.

On the day of settlement, it looked like an invasion was taking place in the parking lot – between the impressive amount of manpower and equipment that was poised for action.

Under the direction of then-superintendent Kelby Langston, a major bunker renovation immediately was in the works. Using a popular reconstruction technique known as the "Better Billy Bunker System", every bunker on the course was re-built.

For the next two years, a patchwork effort at resurrecting the golf course took place under Langston and a new superintendent. Finally, in 2025, Keith Welter arrived on the scene. He had been the golf course superintendent at nearby Boca Royale GC in Englewood, FL and oversaw a renovation at that course. Before that he was the superintendent at Hartefeld National GC, a premier private club about 30 miles west of Philadelphia, PA.

Welter immediately undertook the massive project of completing the renovation of Venetian. Improving the irrigation system, leveling and re-sodding many tees and fighting the weed problem at every level were big tasks.

But the major initiative involved re-sodding much of the golf course. The first phase included installation of 145,000 square feet of sod. A second phase, adding 25,000 square feet of additional sod followed.

More important, to ensure the health and successful rooting of the new sod, Welter put down a layer of "Command" a new product developed by the agronomy experts in Tifton, GA. It is a combination of mulch and fertilizer that improves the soil underneath and encourages permanent growth of the sod.

The end result is the best overall conditions that have been seen at Venetian in more than 10 years.

"We appreciate the patience and understanding of the members over the summer months as we complete these significant course improvements," said Welter. "We are confident the work being done now will provide lasting benefits and create better playing conditions in the future."

And that is all that most members ask.

The Club at Cheval

Lutz, Florida

When talking about old golf courses in Florida, there are very few to mention, when compared to other states around the country. A course built in 1986 easily lands in the category of "older" Florida courses.

That is the story behind The Club at Cheval, in the town of Lutz, about 20 miles north and east of Tampa.

It was built by Steve Smyers, who gained recognition for his designs at Old Memorial in Tampa and Southern Dunes in Haines City, about 25 miles west of Orlando.

Cheval opened as an elite private club and housing community. It operated for many years with that status but time and a couple of recessions took its toll. The club slid into semi-private status and was in bad need of a facelift when the Heritage Golf Group bought the property in April of 2025.

Almost immediately the course was closed for a major renovation project. At the end of 2025 it reopened to rave reviews.

"We looked at every aspect of the golf course and clubhouse and did a multi-million dollar renovation," explained Beardmore, once again overseeing the work.



Heritage Cheval Hole

- A total restoration and re-grassing of the greens, including bringing them back to their original size.
 - Re-building all of the bunkers and improving drainage.
- Tee Box Expansion, allowing for more options and enhanced playability.
- The Practice Facility was re-designed and the driving range was laser-leveled, offering an improved practice experience.
 - The fairways were aerified, top-dressed, fertilized and treated with herbicides and pesticides. The result is an excellent playing surface.

Most grateful for all the improvements at Cheval is Chris Jones, the Director of Golf. He persevered through the shut down but has hosted many happy members ever since.

"The bones of the golf course were really good. You could see it had potential," explains Jones. "It just needed a facelift."

The renovation was fantastic. The result is night and day."

Of course, the most important review always comes from the members. Numbers were way down when the course was acquired by Heritage.

"The community, as a whole is thrilled," reports Jones. "Members who had been here for years but dropped out have come back. A lot of new members from the community have joined. There's a whole new, vibrant energy at Cheval."

Stone Harbor Golf Club

Cape May Court House, NJ



Stone Harbor #7

When Stone Harbor Golf Club opened in 1988, the project was greeted with a huge amount of fanfare. Owner Gordon Shaffner had launched an effort to create one of the most elite and challenging golf courses in the golf-rich state of New Jersey.

To do this, he hired Desmond Muirhead, one of the most controversial golf architects ever in America. Armed with his mandate, Muirhead proceeded to create layout that certainly was ultimately challenging, but also so bizarre that it was never accepted by the golf community.

Muirhead created a number of quirky greens, including two that were shaped like the state of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He added a series of bunkers, based on Greek mythology, that were shaped like an axe or sharks' mouths.

Wood had to be used to edge the greens and bunkers in order to maintain the designed shapes. Balls often would ricochet off the wood and find water hazards, which are plentiful throughout the golf course.

To Shaffner's credit, he began a piecemeal process of trying to soften

the course in the years after it opened. The effort was minimal, compared to the mammoth process begun by the Heritage Group, after buying the property in 2023.

First the front nine was closed and work began on the irrigation system and leveling and lowering many of the tee boxes. A large number of trees were removed. The condition of the fairways and greens was improved.

At this point, new general manager Dan Hamil was brought onboard to oversee the project.

"I came on board halfway through the renovation," explains Hamil. "I only heard the many stories of Stone Harbor's problems in the past. Now I am seeing the results of all the improvements."

After many years of struggles with membership numbers, the club has now increased to 950 golf members and 250-300 social members, according to Hamil. Turning it around has been a monumental task.

"The first obstacle was the operational challenge of keeping the club going during the renovations," says Hamil. "Members could only play one of the nines and they had to play it twice if they wanted to play 18 holes."

"Then, on the day before our Member-Guest Tournament in 2024, our cart barn burned to the ground. We had to rebuild it but it now stands as an enhancement to the entire property."

As of the summer of 2026, Stone Harbor now is approaching its coveted elite private club status.

"The condition of the golf course has improved significantly," concludes Hamil. "The course was softened significantly, although there is a lot of water, so it still presents quite a challenge. I would say that the overall experience, from holes 1 through 18 is outstanding. It is now a much more playable course."

Now, when talking about the ultimate private courses in South Jersey, Stone Harbor Golf Club must be mentioned alongside the likes of Galloway National, Atlantic City Country Club and Union League National.

The Heritage Golf Group Portfolio

Part of the success of the Heritage Golf Group is the company mantra that allows members of one course to enjoy playing privileges at all of the other courses, using the Heritage Plus membership status.

That concept was borrowed from the old Club Corp model – not surprising since the founders of the new group came from that background.

The other part of the success has been the rapid growth, now incorporating 48 different courses in 14 states. It is a network of quality golf, built on a platform of consistent improvement.

No, the Heritage Golf Group is not the typical management company. Ownership of each property makes the difference. But the company has restored the faith of members, when it comes time to hand



Sunset

MARY GRACE DUNIGAN CAPTURES 90TH PA WOMEN'S AMATEUR

KING OF PRUSSIA, Pa. – Sometimes, it all just clicks. Mary Grace Dunigan (Kennett Square Golf & Country Club) put together three rounds of excellent play to win the Pennsylvania Golf Association's (PAGA) 90th Women's Amateur Championship at Gulph Mills Golf Club. She maintained and improved upon her five-stroke lead heading into the final round, carding six birdies and ending the tournament with a three-day total of -6 (71-72-73-216), five strokes ahead of second place.

Dunigan was three-under after seven holes but ran into some trouble with back-to-back bogeys on 9 and 10 and a triple on 14. She was able to reset, lock in, and birdie 11 and 15, immediately after struggling with the previous holes, and earning a pair of "3's" after two "6's".

"I was just trying to stay positive and roll with the punches," recalled Dunigan, a senior on the University of Delaware women's golf team. "I think the only thing you can do is try to play better on the next hole. It's always better to get over it and move on than to keep it in your head."

Dunigan was being chased by multiple competitors, including Michelle Cox (PAGA Individual Member), who got as low as -4 after eagles on holes 1 and 3 and birdies on 7, 8, and 12 before bogeys on the last five holes—including the toughest stretch of the course on 16, 17, and 18—dropped her to a sixth-place finish at +2 (76-74-74-224).

Tied for second place in the tournament were Megan Meng (Lulu Country Club) and Marissa Malosh (PAGA Individual Member), the only other players under par at -1 (221) for the week. Meng (73-78-70-221) birdied six holes (3, 5, 7, 12, 13, and 18) on Wednesday to shoot 70, the lowest round of the

tournament. Malosh (75-73-73-221), a teammate of Dunigan's at the University of Delaware, put together an incredibly solid final round, with birdies on 1 and 10 and just a single bogey on 13.



"I was not watching the leaderboard, but I had Michelle (Cox) tell me that she was coming for me after we finished," said Dunigan. "So she got close, but I managed to pull through. The finish was really awesome. I was worried about the last putt on 18, a long downhill, so even though I putted off the green I felt pretty confident over the next one. I was glad I was able to make that birdie."

Dunigan and Malosh were not the only members of UD's golf team competing in the event this week, as Rhianna Gooneratne (The 1912 Club, T-19th), Kayley Roberts (PAGA Indiv. Member, 7th) and Kate Roberts (PAGA, Turtle Creek, 4th) celebrated with Dunigan after her victory on the 18th green.

"It was so nice to have so many people that I just really love to be here at this tournament," said Dunigan. "I think that's why I'm here and why I love golf. It's because I really enjoy the people that I get to spend time with."

Dunigan has now claimed her third PAGA title after also winning the Junior Girls' Championship in 2022 and the Women's Four-Ball Championship in 2024. The win also earns her an exemption for the upcoming 126th U.S. Women's Amateur Championship, scheduled for August 4-9 at The Honors Course in Ooltewah, Tennessee.

Also included in the week's top five finishers were the aforementioned Kate Roberts at even par (72-77-73-222) in fourth and defending champion Hannah Rabb (Eagles Mere Country Club) in fifth at +1 (74-77-72-223).






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In a ranking by The Sun News, golf experts voted two holes, #2 and #13, as part of the "Dream 18," a compilation of the best 18 holes on the beach



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AGA 2026 PLAYER OF YEAR STANDINGS



MENS		
RANK	PLAYER	POINTS
1	MECCA, DAVID	580.0
2	WILLIAMS, ERIC	362.5
3	ANDERSON, ALEX	352.5
4	JACKSON, BRANDON	310.0
5	EVANS, EAMON	275.0
6	GILL, LIAM	260.0
7	WILSON, JONATHAN	240.0
8	STEIGER, GUS	225.0
9	KACVINSKY, FRANK	217.5
T10	KEHRES, JACOB	215.0
T10	MCGARRY, TYLER	215.0

SENIOR		
RANK	PLAYER	TOTAL
1	IANIERI, BILL	670.0
2	OSBORNE, FRANK	410.0
3	BARTKOWSKI, MARK1	
4	BLICHAR, DAVID	370.0
5	OLSZEWSKI, JOHN	345.0
6	MECCA, BILL	335.0
7	DURKIN, WILLIAM	332.5
8	BOLCAVAGE, KEN	322.5
9	HUDSON, JEFF	285.0
T10	BARKLEY, JASON	255.0
T10	MCCLOSKEY, BOB	255.0

SUPER SENIOR		
RANK	PLAYER	TOTAL
1	WEISCARGER, JOSEPH	735
2	ANDREJKO, BOB	410
3	GILL, BOB	405
4	VASSIL, MICHAEL	290
5	CORBETT, BRIAN	280
6	STROHL, DAVID	260
7	BERRY, RICHARD	250
T8	CARNEY, SCOTT	225
T8	HOLLAND, TIM	225
10	WESTINGTON, BARRY	220
T11	HECK, MICHAEL	185



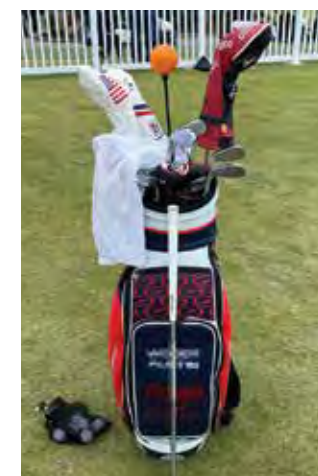
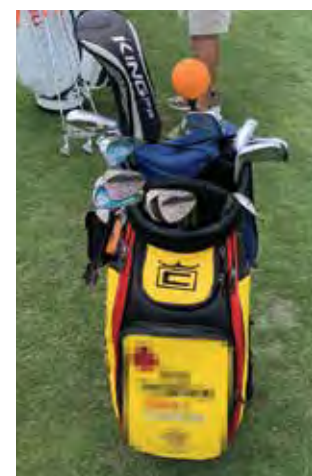
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The bright Orange Ball you see sticking out of golfers bags on driving ranges and golf courses across the world was developed by PGA Golf Professional, Jim Hackenberg, over 15 years ago. The Orange Whip Swing Trainer was designed to encourage better rhythm, balance, sequence, and power by improving a golfer's tempo and swing plane. The initial model was designed as a training tool for amateur golfers, but the Tour Pros and Top Teachers quickly began to see and feel the benefits of swinging the Orange Whip. The simple, patented design has made it the most popular training aid for golfers of all abilities, and it's why you see it in the bags of the best golfer and coaches in the world.



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