

Michigan Golf Journal

SEPTEMBER 2020

**Thunder Bay Golf
and ELK Tour: An
Experience Like
No Other**



**Oakland Hills CC:
Rebuilding for
Future Majors**

**Forest Dunes
Short Course a
Bundle of Fun**

**Top 20 Golf
Courses in
Michigan**

**New Equipment:
Jack Nicklaus Irons**

**Junior Golf Parents:
Take a Chill Pill**

REYNOLDS LAKE OCONEE: RELAXED ATMOSPHERE AND WONDERFUL GOLF

By Fred Altvater



Reynolds Lake Oconee has been a top destination resort for many years – with 117 holes of spectacular golf.

Lake Oconee offers 374 miles of shoreline as well, so fishing, boating and other water recreation is central to the Reynolds experience. The Ritz Carlton provides the finer details in overnight accommodations, plus the resort can offer cottages and condominiums for a group, or family, that wants to maintain closeness but not be enmeshed with other guests.

In these uncertain times Reynolds Lake Oconee has trained every staff member and taken every precaution to keep guests safe yet maintaining the high standards of service that is the norm for Reynolds Lake Oconee.

Golf Galore:

Reynolds Lake Oconee offers courses from multiple great designers, so golfers can be assured a wide variety of options to enjoy the game.

The 27 holes at the **National** were designed by **Tom Fazio**

and opened for play in 2000. The 3 nine-hole layouts – Bluff, Ridge and Cove – feature dramatic elevation changes and Lake Oconee affects play on several holes.

The **Oconee Course** was designed by **Rees Jones** and features gently rolling Georgia topography and tall pines that frame every hole.

The **Great Waters Course** was designed by **Jack Nicklaus** and opened for play in 1992 but was completely renovated and reopened in October last year.

"I think the Great Waters Course, visually, is spectacular," Nicklaus said. "I think strategically, it's spectacular. I think the trees, the views, the beauty, is spectacular. Spectacular is a pretty good word for the golf course," he added with a smile.

Great Waters is a dramatic layout that offers some of the most breathtaking vistas in the Southeast. It has been consistently ranked among the Top 100 courses in the nation, and LINKS Magazine named it one of the, "10 most significant and influential courses of the past two decades."

Bob Cup created the first course built on property, **The Landings**, in 1986, as well as the 6,700-yard par 72, **Preserve**.

The Creek Club is the only private course at Reynolds Lake Oconee and was designed by **Jim Engh**.

In addition, **The Kingdom at Reynolds Lake Oconee** offers the most innovative technology and

personal consultation for game improvement. Demand for lessons and fitting convinced TaylorMade to recently add a second trailer to meet the needs of golfers. It is the ultimate experience for all recreational golfers with a true passion for the game.

Accommodations:

Variety in golf is partnered with variety in accommodations. The Cottages at the National Club have four separate bedrooms that provide ample room for every guest, plus a large comfortable living room for relaxing after your round. The cottages are also a suitable lodging option for a family, or golf group, and

come complete with a large kitchen for preparing meals if you prefer dining in.

The National's Tavern is one of five restaurants located in Reynolds Lake Oconee and is the perfect place to enjoy lunch or dinner. If you like creature comforts, the Ritz Carlton at Reynolds Lake Oconee provides superb accommodations, and three dining options, plus a comfortable bar and lounge. Gaby's by the Lake has one of the best views of Reynolds Lake Oconee.

Make Reynolds Lake Oconee Your Home:

Many visitors from Michigan have found that once they experience Reynolds Lake
Continues on next page >>





Oconee, they don't want to leave. It is a warm, welcoming community with a vibrant yet relaxed atmosphere that will appeal to families, as well as couples looking for that second home. Homes and lots are available with lake or golf course views.

The staff at Reynolds Lake Oconee can arrange a personalized tour of the entire property for guests that want to learn more about real estate opportunities.

Reynolds Lake Oconee is just a short drive east from Atlanta and about an hour west of Augusta. In fact, many patrons that attend The Masters stay each night at Reynolds and are bussed to Augusta National.

As soon as you drive onto the Reynolds property, you can feel the tension slip away and the relaxed lake atmosphere envelope your senses. The excitement of a wonderful vacation awaits at Reynolds Lake Oconee.

Watch a video about Reynolds Lake Oconee and their recent renovation of the Great Waters Course from Back 9 Report TV: <https://youtu.be/bjV8fXVNe1M> **MGI**

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THE RIGHT THING FOR HIGH SCHOOL GOLF

In some ways it is hard to imagine that the massive Big Ten Conference in all its money, glory, power and influence could stand to take a lesson from the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA).

Both organizations are tasked with organizing and running championships for education-based sports teams and athletes. And in the year 2020, the MHSAA leaders appear a lot wiser and more thoughtful than those running the Big Ten.

Both postponed football this fall for obvious Covid reasons. Whether or not we agree with that decision is not the topic here – however the important distinction is that the Big Ten let down the thousands of student-athletes in all the other fall sports by cancelling their seasons outright, and without debate.

The MHSAA on the other hand kept safe sports such as cross country, tennis and GOLF on the schedule. And if I say anything nice about Governor Whitmer it's that she made the right call by placing the *knowledgeable high school sports authority* in the driver's seat for such decision making rather than creating her own un-informed ruling. It's very gratifying that our Michigan high school girls can safely compete this fall in the great sport of golf.

Sincerely,

Tom Lang
Publisher/Editor



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MSU GOLFER VALERY PLATA FINISHES IN FINAL 4 AT U.S. WOMEN'S AMATEUR

By Tom Lang

MSU golfer Valery Plata, a native of Columbia, finished one round away from the national final for the 120th U.S. Women's Amateur in mid-August, potentially changing the course of golf life for the young college player at MSU. For starters, her world rankings will vault, and she should get an invitation to the 2021 Augusta National Women's Amateur.

Plata, still a teenager and yet the **reigning Big Ten Player of the Year** who is heading into her junior year this fall, made it to the U.S. national semifinals by defeating Kennedy Swann of Austin, Texas, 1 up, in the quarterfinals, before bowing out to defending champion Gabriela Ruffels of Australia, 2 and 1.

MSU coach Stacy Slobodnik-Stoll was scanning the list for early National Letters of Intent signed in Nov. of 2017 for the fall 2018 season, and noticed Plata was not listed as signing anywhere. Plata was only age 16 at the time, but Slobodnik-Stoll and her assistant Caroline Powers leapt into action, simply floored that no U.S. college signed the phenom.

"We thought with the caliber of who she was, 'how could she have not signed?' So literally, that minute, we fired off an email to her to confirm if we had missed something (with the NLI's list) or if her signing wasn't put out in the news," Slobodnik-Stoll said.

Plata toured MSU in January 2018 and committed the following day.



That summer, **Plata made the final 8 of match play in the U.S. Girls' Junior in California.** Slobodnik-Stoll went to watch and called Powers to say, 'holy cow, this girl is legit!'

"She's just such a sweet young woman, and I mean young. Her entire college freshman year she was 17, didn't turn 18 until June (2019). We're so happy to have her as a Spartan and she continues to improve and impress."

Continues on page 8 >>

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Player Profile

Plata earned the No. 2 seed for Match Play at the U.S. Women's Amateur by scoring 71-71-142 (2-under par) in stroke play at Woodmont Country Club in Rockville, Maryland, then turned around and defeated MSU teammate Haylin Harris of Carmel, Indiana, 3 and 1 in the first round of match play. Plata collected three more wins to reach the semifinals and secure a Final Four medal.

"It means a lot," Plata said after finishing the semifinal. "I haven't been this far in a USGA championship before, and these are always the events that have the best players in the world. I'm really happy to know that I'm one of those too."

"I think I played really well in the spring, but it got cut short (Covid-19), unfortunately. I just really wanted to pick it back up where I left off and I think I was able to do that. Coach Stacy told me earlier that I can play with anyone in the country and I think I realized that today and this whole week."

Slobodnik-Stoll called Plata afterwards to ask what she liked the most about the U.S. Women's Amateur experience, and the reply was **playing so well after such a long break from competitive golf**. When Covid hit, she went home to her native Columbia and per its rules she was in house lockdown for 3 months, never leaving her residence and

only hitting into a net. Only a loosening of Columbia's travel restrictions this summer allowed her to leave and compete in the U.S.

"She said she was most proud of how she performed after not even playing (since February)," Slobodnik-Stoll added. "And the media following those groups, especially the Final Four, was incredible. I told her, now that she's been around this, when she's in contention to win her first LPGA tournament, she'll know she's already done this. Those are the little one step-up-the-ladder moments when we're all seeing lots of progress."

MSU was extremely well represented in the national tournament. A third MSU player earned her way into match play, Yurika Tanida, but she was bumped out in the first round of match play by Rachel Kuehn of Wake Forest, 2 and 1. **MGJ**





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THUNDER BAY GOLF AND ELK TOUR

A golf weekend experience like no other

By Tom Lang

I have had the humble pleasure of enjoying many different types of golf trips over the years – from Hawaii to historic Williamsburg, to California and South Carolina and many locations in between.

One of the nicest took place just a few weeks ago at Thunder Bay Resort, located in Hillman, due west of Alpena on Michigan's 'sunrise side.'

It was a fun and unique enough experience that my spouse said, 'let's go back in the winter.'

Huh, to golf you ask?

Well, no, not to play golf when the snow flies – rather to participate again in the resort's award-winning Elk viewing carriage ride, complete with gourmet dinner and

wine tasting inside an updated but rustic-looking cabin in the woods. In the winter, the Belgian horse-drawn carriage is changed over from rubber tires to be fitted with sleigh runners and people bundle up under their own blanket for the tour through the 160-acre Elk nature preserve on the way to dinner.

‘Over the River and through the Woods’ is not just a music lyric in this case.

It’s what you literally experience as the Thunder Bay Resort Elk tour meanders through the only wild Elk preserve within range of dozens of states. In non-Covid years, thousands of travelers come in from other regions across the U.S. to participate.

“Some people think the Elk are tame, and we can get quite close to totally wild Elk as well, but most of these animals have never been touched by a human being – we keep them as close to totally wild as we can,” said the original and current property owner at Thunder Bay, Jack Mathias, age 79, who first developed

the front 9 of the now 18-hole course in 1971 – meaning next year is the property’s 50th anniversary.

The ride is an excellent look at, and history lesson for, the Elk habitat in Michigan. On the Saturday evening we went along, up to three dozen Elk were easily seen, with one coming up to within 15 feet of the carriage to graze. It was only the second carriage ride of the season due to

prior Covid restrictions, so a few other Elk that were initially close by were spooked to see humans for the first time in several months and scampered away.

The dinner was very good and – although the spouse and I rarely touch wine – the wine tasting was done well and my wife found an ‘Ice Wine’ from Modern Craft Winery in Au Gres, MI that she fell for.

Continues on next page >>





For Michigan Golf Journal readers, Thunder Bay Resort is running a special Two-Night Couples Golf Getaway/Elk Viewing Dinner Tour. It includes:

- Two nights lodging in a Suite for two guests or a Chalet for four guests
- Breakfast each morning
- 18 holes of golf with cart at each of 3 courses; Thunder Bay Resort, Red Hawk Golf Club and Black Lake Golf Club
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Accommodations at Thunder Bay Resort were built in the early 1990s. They are roomy and comfortable and according to my spouse (she has the sensitive nose) they smelled fresh, without any hint of mustiness. The overnight choices range from condominium style Chalets to Suites in 2-and 3-story buildings along the second hole. There's

a rough equivalent of 70 bedrooms on the property.

There is also an RV Park that on our trip was filled with many high-end motor coaches, from Texas, Florida and Alabama.

"The second most inquiries we get from the website come from Texas," Mathias said. "We're the only people doing something like the Elk Tour that's east of the Rockies."

We get rave reviews, and almost everybody says we exceeded their expectations. Our word of mouth is very good, and when it comes to couples' golf getaways, I am reasonably confident that we can compete with just about anything you can do anywhere."

For two years running, the Elk Tour has been recently awarded the "Best of the Best" in the "Adventure" category by *Destinations Magazine*.

Speaking of Golf:

Three golf experiences are included in the Getaway Package – at Thunder Bay, plus Red Hawk and Black Lake – three courses designed as a loop to hit Red Hawk in Tawas on the way north, two nights at Thunder Bay, then finish at Black Lake to the northwest on day 3. But they can be played in any order golfers desire.

Thunder Bay doesn't have a famous designer's name affiliated with the layout,

but it's a nice parkland style course surrounded by trees, outside of Hillman. The first three holes start out with tree-lined fairways before Holes 4-7 open up on a piece of land across the street with wider fairways and large greens. Once the routing goes back across the same residential road, you'll never encounter a straight fairway again, sans the par 3s. Every hole 8-18 has some amount of turn in them that in all but one case hides the green from view of the tee box.

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Red Hawk, Hole 3 downhill par 3



Ponds dot the course to serve as drainage and hazards. Reaching the 3rd, 8th and 11th greens requires going over the edge of ponds, while 12 and 17 require full-flight approaches over water.

Although it was abundantly clear Thunder Bay is a buddies' trip destination, lots of couples were also out playing together, a refreshing change from most courses.

Red Hawk is an excellent Arthur Hills design north of Tawas situated on a gorgeous track of land. Holes 2-4 might be my favorite run of holes, but that certainly doesn't

mean the fun stops early.

No 2 is a drivable par 4 to an elevated green surrounded by bunkers so if your sand game still needs work it's best to layup off the tee. No. 3 is a stunning par 3 with a huge drop off from the tee. It's tempting to club down for that very reason but it's still a good poke to get your ball there. No. 4 is a beautiful par 4 that turns right to left as it glides downhill – just a picture-perfect setting (which honestly can describe plenty of holes on the course).

Black Lake was designed by Rees Jones at the UAW property near the top of our mitten. Jones might have

created the routing and some green complexes, but God did the land design. A handful of holes have ravines to clear off the tee, which also highlights the several elevation changes on site.

As long as accuracy is maintained in your golf game, the sand bunkers can be viewed as artistry instead of hazards. Several greens have two-tiers offering multiple pin placements, with the 12th hole par 3 the most dramatic in the two different levels to conquer par. All in all, a great place to culminate a fun weekend getaway. **MGJ**

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Photo Courtesy of Palmetto Dunes Oceanfront Resort - Robert Trent Jones Course

COVID-19: ONE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Ryan Moore, Superintendent, Forest Lake Country Club



As we head into the later part of the golf season in the Michigan, I reflect on the challenges we have overcome. A typical season is a grind with its own unique adversities, but 2020 will go down as one to remember for Golf Course Superintendents.

As I look across the property at lush green short mowed

areas against a backdrop of scars of brown through the rough, certainly the environmental impacts of heat stress with inadequate precipitation can be seen. Some detail work could be crisper, and some needed spring projects not accomplished are delayed until 2021. We have been here before and realize that with cooler weather on

the horizon the grass will rebound quickly.

Yet what will define 2020 is the impacts and decisions we had to make due to the uncertainties of Covid-19 way back in March.

Superintendents are built for adversity but are without the experience of managing the variables of not having a golf season; how do we keep our team safe, daily health checks, budget restrictions, and can I even maintain the property as an essential worker.

This last point really impacted me this spring while I was on the Sand Pro raking a bunker and was **pulled over by local law enforcement. "Is what you are doing essential?" I was asked.** Of course, I explained the benefits of raking the trap and was allowed to go on my way, but that moment



it resonated on me that 2020 was going to have a different look and feel.

We managed the property in March and April with three employees and were fortunate enough to have two of our Assistant Golf Professionals volunteer to help us out. As the Executive Orders from the Governor changed and adjusted, golf was initially an industry permitted to continue under specific guidelines. Innovative superintendents adapted by filling cups with foam noodles, inverted cups, lifting devices, and

minimizing course hardware became the new norm.

Things were looking up, golf was happening with less little things to maintain. People were just excited to get out of their houses to use the property. Maintenance staffs were allowed to continue, and life was great. **Then it happened. 25-33% increase in playing rounds**, four individual carts per group and no hardware meant less player care for the course such as divots and wear traffic. Adversity, as the greens maintenance staff we are built for these situations,

put your head down and keep on grinding, results will come.

We are all fortunate to be employed in a profession we love, and the golf industry has found a 2020 balance. We have been able to provide quality playing conditions and hold many of our Club events and one national event for youth (AJGA). Players have been extremely supportive and complimentary of the playing conditions we have provided. I am very thankful to have a great maintenance team around me, and for their dedication to have a safe and successful 2020 season. **MGI**

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FUN, FIRM AND FANTASTIC DESCRIBE FOREST DUNES

By Tom Lang



Many golfers would consider Forest Dunes in Roscommon as a destination property for the more serious of golfers – but there's now a case for it to also be a destination of magical fun.

On August 1, Forest Dunes officially opened the Short Course, a 10-hole bundle of rolling hills and abundant smiles for people of all ages and skill sets.

Grass seed was planted just 12 months prior on the new design from Keith Rhebb and Riley Jones. Now in 2020,

small children with a driver in their hands up to adults playing with just a 7-iron and a putter, are all welcomed at this new joyful gem.

Starting and ending at the pavilion outdoor bar, the short course features holes ranging between 50 and 150 yards laid out over 15 acres of rolling terrain.

“When people talk about what is wrong with golf these days, they talk about how much time it takes to play, how much it costs and how difficult it can be

to play,” said Forest Dunes director of operations Don Helinski. “The intention of this new amenity is to provide an opportunity for a group of players to go out and enjoy themselves with only a few clubs and a couple beverages.”

Our group recently played in well less than an hour and it was the perfect setting for laughs, words of encouragement and genuine fun. Players are allowed to be in groups up to 8 people, play barefoot if they like and
Continues on next page >>

Forest Dunes

simply take in the gorgeous scenery of the great north. Two holes were specifically designed to allow using only a putter from tee to green if you like – but I think every hole allows for such a choice – with a good hard whack off the longer tees.

Forest Dunes and The Loop:

Of course, the flagship Forest Dunes course, designed by Tom Weiskopf, and The Loop – the property's ingenious reversible design by Michigan's Tom Doak – are must plays for anyone who enjoys the challenge of the game. Both are the nationally-ranked draw that brings in the majority of golfers for a few days of golf heaven.

The first step onto The Loop feels like taking a step back in time – when golf was

simpler, pure and one with the natural terrain. It has 18 greens and 36 teeing areas. It plays clockwise (Black Course) one day and counterclockwise (Red Course) the next.

What makes The Loop layout brilliant is that approaching a green one day a golfer could be looking at a deep, skinny green with no bunkering in play, and the next day the approach is from 90 degrees coming into a wide and shallow green surrounded by lots of exposed sand – and most golfers will have no idea it's the same piece of ground.

The Loop appears to work in perfect harmony with the land Doak was dealt. There is no water on the property of sand base and scattered Jack Pines. Doak built about

50 formal bunkers (identified with rakes) and left even more naturally-exposed sand waste areas for golfers to avoid. The land has a rough, raw feel to it with non-manicured bunkers and its firm-and-fast fescue grass for seasonal color and areas to work the ball around.

Forest Dunes is a lush environment – with water hazards in play several times. The front nine meanders through the trees and the back nine a more open layout with lots of natural sand waste areas acting as the hazards. It has 4-times the irrigation lines installed than The Loop to keep the grass green – but don't let that fool you. Many golfers indicated the Forest Dunes greens this year have been firmer and faster than The Loop. **MGI**



Here's The Loop green that plays as the Red 4th hole par 3, and the 15th Hole par 4 on Black, coming at the camera.

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A CAUTIONARY TALE FOR PARENTS OF JUNIOR GOLFERS

By Shawn Allen

Note: This story first appeared in the daily online golf source, Morning Read, on August 12



This has been anything but a typical year in golf in 2020. Not just on the professional Tours. The junior-golf season has been turned inside out, as well.

Around the country, young golfers got a late start on their events and are starting the new school year amid the uncertainty of the global coronavirus pandemic. Golf is a safer sport to play than contact sports, but the question is begged: *What is the goal of pushing juniors into competition so early?* The answer reveals a pernicious side to the junior game.

At an amateur tournament that I covered late last year for another digital publication, I was working on my story after the first round when I heard a junior golfer in a yelling match over the phone, apparently with his father. In what was a nearly vacant locker room, the golfer shrieked, “I don’t know, Dad!” over and over as he undoubtedly was being questioned about play that “Dad” must have viewed as substandard.

It was heart-breaking but – also all too common. At the same event, a parent had to be escorted off the course after having become unruly with a tournament

official. Another parent called the USGA to report the tournament over what the parent believed was an unfair ruling.

It’s natural for parents to want their children to succeed, but there comes a point when ‘helping’ does more harm than good.

Overbearing parents are a trope of youth athletics. If it feels as if such incidents are more common than in the past, that’s because they are. There is more access to organized youth athletics than ever. Instead of local sports such as school-sponsored teams, Little League baseball,

pee-wee football, or junior golf tournaments run by the local club, there is an entire mechanism for children to travel the nation to compete against players of similar age and/or skills. Think Amateur Athletic Union or American Junior Golf Association, which boast memberships of 700,000 and 7,300, respectively.

Increased competition means a rise in the number of golfers, parents, coaches, and tournaments. It also means the increase in businesses that develop coaches. In a *Wall Street Journal* article from 2015, “Work & Family” columnist Sue Shellenbarger cited four national organizations, from California to Florida, that exist to study and improve youth sports. The consensus is that unnecessary competitive pressure on children, specifically by their parents, results in burnout, poor social development, and long-term physical maladies.

This is consistent with the findings by sports-training adviser Denise K. Wood, who states in her

book “Sports Psychology Special Topics” that one-third of children younger than 10 who are placed into adult-structured competitive environments – as opposed to free play and competition chosen by the child – will burn out or dislike the sport by age 17.

Additionally, when children are asked to **specialize in a sport that they didn’t choose, or one that they did choose but is parent-driven**, they will over-train their bodies in a sport-specific way, overusing muscles and joints while failing to develop physical abilities that an array of physical activity would allow.

Any responsible parent would want to put his or her child in the best-case scenario, though it can be difficult to recognize that the ideal situation for the youngster might not be dictated by the adult. The goal shouldn’t always be to win, Shellenbarger cautions, but

rather to form the soft qualities that are essential to being a well-adjusted adult: bonding with teammates, taking coaching well, and stretching physical limits. She cites Jim Thompson, the founder of the nonprofit Positive Coaching Alliance, who said: “[**Parents**] are **confused about what the goal is. The goal is to develop better athletes and better people.**”

There is another goal, however, that is becoming increasingly virulent: admission to college, and the cost of that education. To put a finer point to it, I interviewed former Vanderbilt golfer Jordan Janico two years ago. I asked about the pressure
Continues on next page >>



Junior Golf

of junior golf and his goals in high school. He said it was college, and if a parent could get at least a 50-percent scholarship to a school such as Vanderbilt, that represents a \$100,000 return on investment over four years.

"It's totally worth it," he said.

But for most junior golfers, a scholarship of any type to a college or university is a rarity. So, the goal has to be questioned. And to quote former President John Adams, "Facts are stubborn things." We have scientific evidence about how to train children in athletics.

And we know the negative consequences if we don't abide by them.

It's best to introduce activities to children, let them find a place to play, and encourage their soft skills: be tough, be patient, be kind. The competitive nature in children doesn't have to be stoked by parents.

Otherwise, we will continue to see incidents like the one that an editor friend of mine experienced. He played in a team event with a junior golfer who was ranked at the top of her age group. **He asked her what the goal was. According to him, she said cynically: "Eighteen. Then I can get into college and not have to play golf again." MGJ**

Shawn Allen is a former teacher and track coach who loves the mechanics of golf. He has contributed to *The Golfer's Journal*, *SBNation*, and *Sports Illustrated*. He lives in Nashville, Tenn. You can follow him on Twitter @ShawnerAllen



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OAKLAND HILLS ON TRACK IN ITS REMAKE BY GIL HANSE

By Tom Lang

The game of golf continues to evolve with the times, and Oakland Hills Country Club in metro Detroit is no different.

One of the world's most sought after course designers/renovators, Gil Hanse, was in town August 24 to show media around his newest creation – the return of the famed South Course to the style Donald Ross initially set up.

The South Course, home to six U.S. Opens over the years (the last in 1996), plus the PGA Championship and 2004 Ryder Cup – was closed in the fall of 2019. Much speculation was made that Oakland Hills was only doing it to try wooing the USGA into bringing a 7th U.S. Open back to Michigan.

Not true said Steve Brady, head pro at Oakland Hills.

He made it clear that even if the USGA or PGA of America never return, the renovations and infrastructure improvements were also made for improved daily play by the membership and guests. Everyday members will appreciate the removal of trees, the forward movement of front tees, fewer bunkers but the ones that remain are larger, with more open areas to escape.

At first, that sounds like it will make things much easier for pros. But because most of the trees never came into play for the world's best players, the larger bunkers and tighter landing areas they hit to off the tee with thick rough will make it harder. The original Donald Ross greens are historically difficult, and the contours

have been replicated, but expanded around the edges for members.

“They love predictable outcomes,” Hanse said of pro golfers. But coming out of the rough to Ross greens “are outcomes they can’t predict. That’s how you make golf courses difficult.”

NBC and Golf Channel sportscaster Mike Tirico was on hand the same day to lend his insight to what Oakland Hills is trying to create while making a case for golf majors to return to the Midwest.

“There’s an energy in the golf world ... to come back to the classics,” he said. “It’s like a bear in the jar of honey. It’s a comfort food for the fans. This is one tremendous place to identify a champion.” **MGI**



FAMILY PHENOMS

Anika and Anci Dy take golf to the next level

By Craig Manning

If you've followed Michigan high school girls golf at all over the past several years, you've probably read or heard the last name "Dy."

For five years straight, a member from this Traverse City family has been on the Division 1 state championship podium. It's a mini dynasty that has made sisters Anika and Anci Dy (pronounced Dee) two of the most promising young golfers in the state.

Anika is one of the best female high school golfers in state history. Now heading into her sophomore year on the women's golf team at the University of Michigan, Anika won three Division 1 individual state titles in a row from 2016 to 2018. In 2015, her freshman year, she came in second, missing a 4th title by a single stroke.

She twice led her Traverse City West High School team to state titles. All three years Anika claimed a state championship, she was also named 'Miss Golf.' Only five other



L-to-R, Anci and Anika Dy

female athletes in state history have won that award twice; Anika was the first to win it three times.

Anci is building an impressive legacy, too. Heading into her senior year of high school, the younger Dy sister was the runner-up at the Division 1 state championship in the fall of 2019, missing the title by three strokes. It's her second top-5 state finish (she placed fifth in 2018) and her third time in the top 10 (as a freshman in 2017, she came in 6th).

While this could be an easy recipe for sibling rivalry, both Dy sisters emphasize that having one another to learn, practice and play with all the years has been instrumental to their successes. The two started golfing when they were young — Anika was 6, Anci was 4 — and gradually built up their considerable skills.

With Anika at U-M, it's the first time they have lived apart after years of sharing everything — from a high school team to a bedroom.

"I do miss having her home to talk to and to unwind with, and I especially miss my practice buddy," Anci said.

"It was so fun to have somebody I knew so well on the team with me, and to be able to play together and support one another," Anika added. "I miss it."

Together or apart, it's clear that both Dy sisters are headed toward big things when it comes to golf. In June 2019, **Anika won the Michigan PGA Women's Open Championship**, becoming just the second amateur ever to win the professional tournament — and at then age 17, the youngest winner in history. (As an amateur, she couldn't accept any prize money.) Just recently, she was runner up in the 2020 GAM Women's Championship.

And while Anika admits that playing at the Division 1 college level has been "a

struggle" and "quite the adjustment," she still finished as U-M's top golfer during her first career start at the University of Carolina Ruth's Chris Tar Heel Invitational last October, before the spring season was cancelled.

Anci, meanwhile, has two priorities: one more year of high school golf this fall (and one more shot at the Division 1 state title) and following in her sister's footsteps to play collegiately.

"I want to play D1 golf in college, hopefully on a scholarship," she says. "I really just want to get a feel for that higher-up level of competitive golf, to see if I eventually want to try professional golf." **MGJ**

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NICKLAUS COMMEMORATIVE IRONS BY MIURA

By Ed Travis

Jack Nicklaus and Katsuhiro Miura have collaborated to design a limited-edition update of the classic Nicklaus blade irons.

Fast Facts:

- Miura and Nicklaus design modern version of Nicklaus blade
- Limited edition
- Forged S20C carbon steel
- Uniform offset throughout set
- Satin chrome finish
- Available now for preorder
- To ship first quarter 2021
- 3-iron through pitching wedge \$2,750



What you need to know:

This collaboration idea was to create a modern version of the classic Nicklaus blade while at the same giving a little help to today's players by improving the iron's forgiveness.

Nicklaus' preference is for each iron, regardless of loft, to have the same amount of head offset, saying that helped his control

and consistency. Miura improved on this by doing some "subtle grinding" of the neck leaving the look at address unchanged but effectively increasing the offset while maintaining the loft Nicklaus desired. The subsequent weight reduction in the hosel moved the center of gravity towards the toe making the design easier to hit, i.e., more forgiving.

"I've spent decades designing golf equipment, and I cherish the painstaking craftsmanship that goes into enhancing the tools of my trade," Nicklaus said. "The Miura family and I share this passion for doing everything the right way and leaving no detail overlooked, and we have worked closely in this collaboration to highlight the superior subtleties of Miura forged steel." **MGJ**

GR's Sarah White Wins LPGA Symetra Tournament in First Try

Playing Boys Hockey had a Large Role in Her Development

By Tom Lang

Most golfers are simply thrilled to *qualify* for their first-ever pro Tour event.

Sarah White – a 2014 high school state champion from East Kentwood – went more-than-one better, taking full advantage by **winning** in her first-ever shot on Tour, earning the trophy for the LPGA's Symetra Tour Founders Tribute, August 14-16 in Mesa, AZ.

White shot 65-68-65 for 15-under par, including a final-hole birdie, to edge out Sophia Popov by one stroke. White qualified per the results in an earlier Women's All Pro Tour (WAPT), a mini tour event in Texarkana that provided the exemption.

"It's a dream come true," White told Symetra Tour staff. "I have dreamt about being a professional golfer

since I was five. I was competing today with Sophia Popov and next week she is competing at a LPGA major. Being able to keep up with some of the girls who have more experience than me is humbling because I know I can do it.

"It's an amazing opportunity I gave myself and my whole world (turned around)," she later told *MGJ* by phone from California. "Within a few days I won my first pro event, and within the hour I had to accept membership (in the Symetra Tour) if I was to play in the next event (in California). So, I just dove right into full blown on-Tour traveling, and I'll be in every event now with Category B status, sort of like their winner's circle. So, the rest of the year I'll be all Symetra," the rookie pro added.



White grew up playing Michigan golf and *boys* ice hockey – both experiences she believes helped toughen her up and ready herself for a professional golf career. She said playing 14 years of hockey competing alongside the boys (eventually on the East Kentwood High team) was a catalyst.

"When I'm not playing golf well, I grind really well, I think because of playing boys hockey and getting looks like 'who is this girl in the net?' So, just having that mentality of the competitiveness and the grind of hockey and giving of 100 percent I think that really helped me."

Heading into high school was pivotal for her eventual

golf career. She tried out for an made a girl's hockey team in the Little Caesars League, but turned it down because practice started in August and would wipe out the high school golf season. White played forward

earlier in her career but switched to goalie as the guys keep growing bigger than her in the early teen years.

"My dad asked me if I wanted to keep playing forward because he

thought I'd get thrown around like a rag doll on the boards," she said. "I made that decision because I still loved hockey and I could play golf too."

Turned out to be a wise choice.

Ben Cook Wins 99th Michigan PGA Professional Championship, Breaking Two Records

By Greg Johnson

FLINT – Caledonia's Ben Cook, whose wife/caddie of five days, Miah, said prefers to be called Benny, made a 12-foot eagle-putt on the par 5 No. 18 hole to set a tournament scoring record and win by a record scoring-margin in the 99th Michigan PGA Professional Championship at Flint Golf Club.

The Yankee Springs Golf Course professional got married a few days prior and then honeymoon-blitzed the field in the state championship for Michigan Section PGA professionals. Less than two weeks prior,

Cook, and Boyne Resort professional (and defending Michigan PGA champ) Jeff Roth were both playing in the PGA Championship at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco.

"I was playing solid, so I was seeing how many birdies I could make, and once I got to 18-under I was trying to get to 20," Cook said. "I didn't know it was a record, but when that last putt went in, I was really happy."

John Seltzer of Grand Rapids (2017 champion) shot a sizzling final-round 63 for 12-under 204 and took second place.



The previous scoring record of 18-under was accomplished twice: In 2001 by winner Jeff Roth at Shanty Creek Resort, and in 2014 by winner Scott Hebert at Oakland University's two courses.

"I don't think anybody was going to beat Ben this week, 20-under that's just unbelievable," Seltzer said after his 63 that was also two shots short of the Flint GC course record 61 set years ago by legend Sam Snead. **MGI**



GAM WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP: JULIA STEVENSON

By Greg Johnson

Highland's Julia Stevenson, the 22-year-old Eastern Michigan University golfer shot 71-71 win the 29th GAM Women's Championship at Muskegon Country Club by three shots.

Anika Dy, a University of Michigan golfer from Traverse City and the 2019 Michigan Women's Open Champion, was runner up at 145.

It was Stevenson's first win since starting to play golf as a freshman at Milford High School. She eventually earned a golf scholarship from EMU and played four years for the Eagles. She led in scoring average as a senior and had a career-best second-place finish.

"I've been playing these tournaments for years now and just to finally win one – it means a lot. The competition is so good out here and this is such a great environment to play in, and to finally get one feel's amazing."



GAM JUNIOR STROKE PLAY: LAUREN TIMPF AND IEAUN JONES

Lauren Timpf of Macomb won an unprecedented 5th consecutive Golf Association of Michigan tournament in her age group – and **leaun Jones of Ann Arbor won his third junior title** in the 12th GAM Junior Stroke Play Championship at Forest Akers East Golf Course.

Timpf is a soon to be 14-year-old who has taken the summer by storm. She won the overall title (ages 13-15) by three shots over first-round leader Samantha Coleman of Northville.

Timpf's 15-and-under category wins include the 2019 GAM Invitational, the 2020 GAM Junior Kickoff, the '20 Michigan Junior Girls State Amateur, the GAM 14-and-under Match Play and the recent Junior Stroke Play. She also reached the quarterfinals of the Michigan Women's Amateur Championship and pushed eventual champion Anna Kramer to the final hole.

Jones followed up a sizzling 65 in the first round with a final 69 and a two-shot win over Jeffrey Andrus of Bloomfield Hills, who closed with 65, the low round of the day. The 14-year-old Jones previously won the 2019 GAM Junior Invitational in his age group and the 2019 GAM 14-and-under Match Play.



JUNIOR STATE AMATEUR: PJ MAYBANK III

PJ Maybank III of Cheboygan has some impressive golf credentials – winning the celebrated Drive, Chip and Putt at Augusta National at age 13, and previously winning Golf Association of Michigan junior tournaments and others on the traveling golf circuit.

He called winning the 42nd Michigan Junior State Amateur Championship at TPC Michigan, the biggest win so far.

“To be the number one junior in Michigan, that means a lot to me,” said the smiling 15-year-old who topped Evan McDermott of Spring Lake 5 and 4 in the championship match. This feels amazing. This was one of my big goals coming into the summer – to do well in this event and hopefully win it. I’m very happy I won.”

Robert Burns of Grand Blanc was the other big winner on the day. He won the **15-and-under Division Championship** with a 6-and-5 triumph over Vibhav Alokam of Ypsilanti in the final match.



GAM CHAMPIONSHIP: JIMMY CHESTNUT

Jimmy Chestnut of Royal Oak fought off final-round nerves he had not confronted for a long time and won his second GAM Championship in August, 12 years after his first.

With a 7-under tournament total the 38-year-old attorney rallied to catch and pass Ann Arbor’s Tyler Copp (winner of the Michigan Amateur in late June), who shot 6-under in the 99th edition of the GAM Championship

“I’ve won the Michigan Amateur and the GAM, and now the GAM again and to win three of the big GAM events is a big deal for me,” Chestnut said. “It kicks me up a notch, I guess to another level in my mind, and to do it 12 years later is special.”

Chestnut’s first GAM Championship makes the last golfer to win the GAM Championship and the Michigan Amateur in the same year (2008).

James Piot of Canton, the current MSU standout, checked in third at 5-under – just before heading to Bandon Dunes to play in the U.S. Amateur, where he was runner up medalist in stroke play qualifying. He was knocked out in the second round of match play. (see story next page) **MGI**

CANTON'S JAMES PIOT SHINED ON NATIONAL STAGE

Was No. 2 seed at Bandon Dunes in the U.S. Amateur

Michigan State golfer and Canton resident James Piot has had a very productive summer. And while competitive golf is not over in 2020, he has had an incredible and successful run during this Covid-condensed season.

The senior-to-be Spartan – who should have at least two years of eligibility remaining due to new NCAA rules – recorded the second lowest score in stroke play at the U.S. Amateur in mid-August, shooting a sizzling 69-65-134 at Bandon Dunes in Oregon. **His 65 was the lowest round of the day; a 7-under par performance that included eagles on the 9th and 13th holes, plus back-to-back birdies on 17 and 18.**

“At the beginning of the week I was sending off texts to all my buddies at home, saying, ‘You know what, the cut is going to be 6, 7 over’ (par),” Piot told USGA media officials. “With this



wind and how it was looking during practice rounds, (I told myself) I’m going to try to score the best I can this week, and I got a fortunate draw with the weather situation.

“It’s one of the top-five toughest courses I’ve ever played,” Piot added. “After the 2-under par in the first round, the goal was to be at even-par in round two because I knew the course was going to play a lot tougher. Then I struck it really well and gave myself a chance and wound up being just two shots off the lead.”

In his first-ever U.S. Amateur, Piot won his first match play round but was bumped out in round two.

Piot won his first two college tournaments last fall and was voted second team All-Big Ten.

In late June Piot was co-medalist in stroke play for the Michigan Amateur – then finished runner up in 6-rounds of match

play, going up against Ann Arbor’s Tyler Copp. Piot then ventured to the prestigious Western Amateur and missed the 16-player match play qualifying cut by just one stroke.

“This summer has made me feel like every week I can compete and win,” Piot said. “Winning two college tournaments last year gave me a boost, as well. After this summer, I feel like I’m starting to go to the next level.” **MGI**

Jeff Barnes of MSU contributed to this report.

JUST FOR FUN

A friend shared these proposed titles for Chapters of a potential book for golfers:

Chapter 1

- How to properly line up your 4th putt

Chapter 2

- How to hit a Nike ball from the rough when you hit a Titleist off the tee

Chapter 3

- How to avoid the water when you lie 8 in a bunker

Chapter 4

- How to get more distance off the shank

Chapter 5

- When to give the ranger the finger

Chapter 6

- Using your shadow on the greens to confuse your opponent

Chapter 7

- When to implement Handicap Management

Chapter 8

- Proper excuses for drinking beer before 9 a.m.

Chapter 9

- Why male golfers will pay \$5.00 a beer from the Cart Girl and give her a \$3.00 tip but will balk at a \$3.00 Beer at the 19th Hole and stiff the Bartender

Chapter 10

- How to rationalize a 6 hour round

Chapter 11

- How to find that ball that everyone else saw go in the water

Chapter 12

- Why your spouse doesn't care that you birdied the 5th hole

Chapter 13

- How to let a Foursome play through your Twosome

Chapter 14

- How to relax when you are hitting 3 off the tee

Chapter 15

- When to suggest major swing corrections to your opponent

Chapter 16

- God and the meaning of The Birdie-To-Bogey Putt

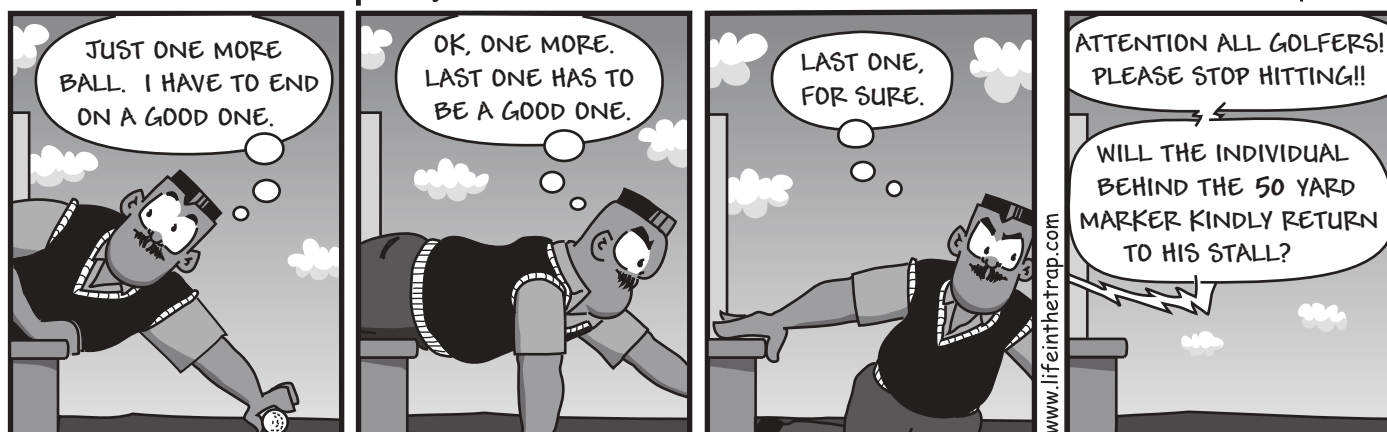
Chapter 17

- When to regrip your ball retriever

Chapter 18

- Use a strong grip on the Hand Wedge and Weak Slip on the Foot Wedge **MGI**

Life in the Trap by Rick Newell



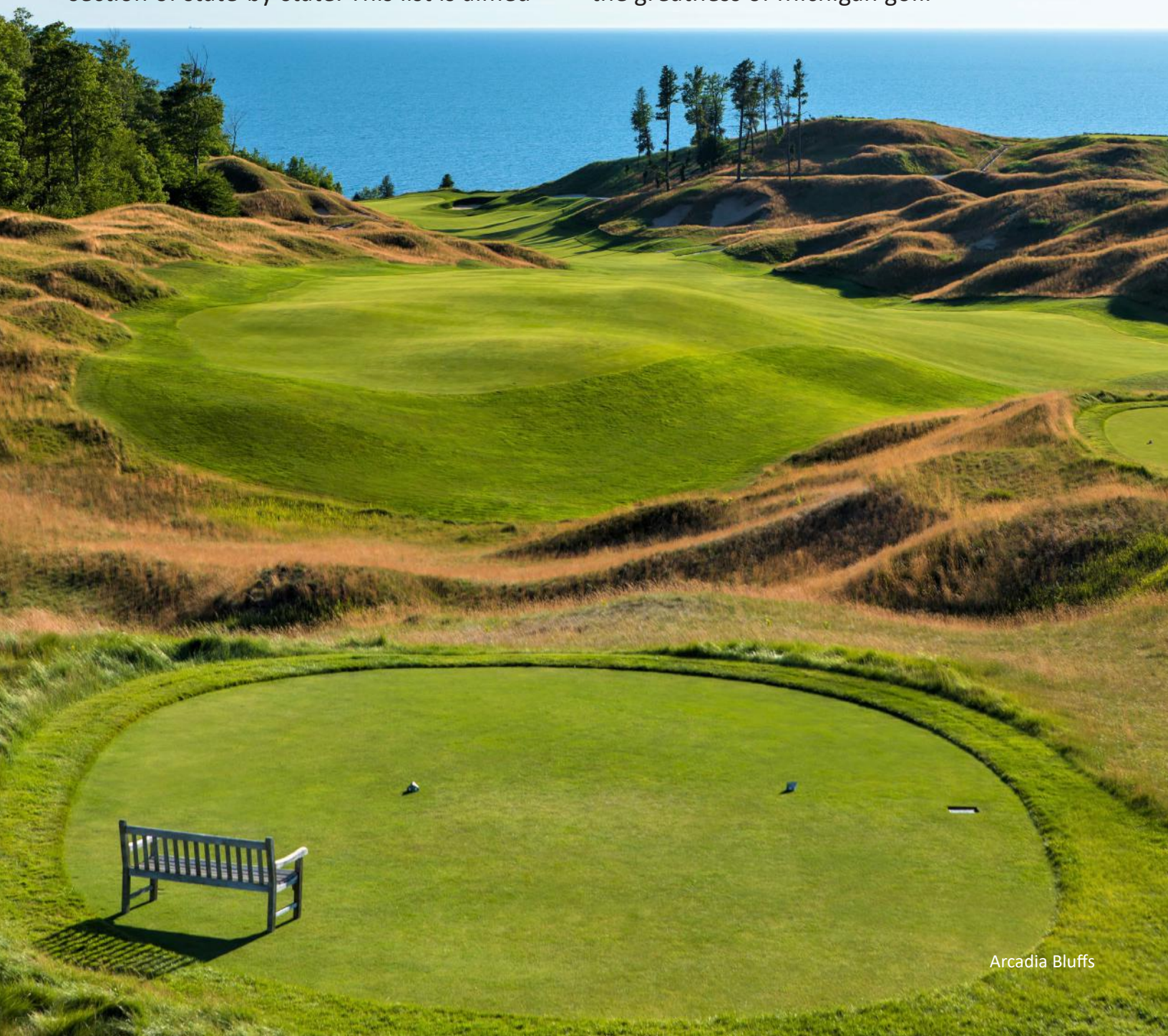
TOP 20 PUBLIC GOLF COURSES IN MICHIGAN?

By Tom Lang

GolfWeek magazine recently announced its **Top Courses You Can Play** list nationwide, and 20 Michigan courses are listed in the section of state-by-state. This list is aimed

solely at golf courses the general public can access to play.

What jumped out at me is GolfWeek's nod to the greatness of Michigan golf.



Arcadia Bluffs

Their overall list included courses from each state, but the majority of states only had 5 or 10 top courses listed – while Michigan had 20 courses named. **It was GolfWeek’s way of saying, ‘we know Michigan is an incredible golf state with so many wonderful choices compared to the rest of America,’ or something to that effect.**

Texas, which is what, 100 times the size of Michigan, also listed 20. The only states that had more top courses listed were year-round-play Florida, California and Arizona, at 30 each.



Bay Harbor – Links

Even huge golfing states like South Carolina, North Carolina, New York and Nevada came in at 15. And yes, Michigan fans, we beat out Ohio and Indiana, each having just 10 on the list – but Wisconsin is

creeping closer at 15, with the addition of what are described by many golfers as spectacular new courses the past decade or so.

Here is GolfWeek’s 2020 list, which has added a couple

Continues on next page >>



Boyne Highlands – Arthur Hills

courses that never appeared before, and pushed out a few others that were Top 20 regulars (the rank in parenthesis are where those courses land nationally, and the 'm' stands for Modern Design list):

1. Arcadia Bluffs (No. 53 m)
2. Greywalls (No. 83 m)
3. Forest Dunes (The Loop Red & Black) (No. 105 m)
4. Forest Dunes (Weiskopf) (No. 154 m)
5. Gull Lake View Resort (Stoatin Brae)
6. Eagle Eye
7. Arcadia Bluffs – South
8. Bay Harbor – Links/Quarry (Boyne)
9. Belvedere
10. Pilgrim's Run
11. LochenHeath
12. University of Michigan GC
13. Sweetgrass at Island Resort and Casino
14. TimberStone
15. The Orchards
16. Hidden River Golf & Casting Club
17. Treetops – Signature
18. Black Lake (related story on page 14)
19. Hawk Hollow
20. Boyne Highlands – Arthur Hills



In a related **GolfWeek**

note: A thanks of gratitude goes out to *Michigan Golf Journal* readers. In a recent survey conducted by West Michigan Golf Show attendees, the *Michigan Golf Journal* earned the most votes for “golf media you enjoy” out of all golf media outlets in Michigan. That included MI’s other golf publications, plus TV and radio shows, a golf podcast and write-in votes **and additionally the MGJ received more than double the number of votes cast for GolfWeek. MGJ**



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Photo: No. 5 back tee at Oceana Golf Club; JBowman Photography

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