

South Carolina

Amateur GOLF Magazine

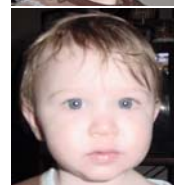


*R. M. Stiglbauer, Bill Ashe, Rick Pidgeon, Blue Meyers
Winners 17th Annual Well Diggers Tournament*

The Voice of Amateur Golfers

Vol 8 issue 3

FROM THE EDITOR



www.scagmag.com

Best Intentions!!! The world is full of them. After 5 years of producing this publication we have finally achieved our own Web Site: We intend to let this web site continue to make the publications free to one and all along with having many other items of interest. i.e..... Archives Pages, Photo Pages, Discount Golf Packages, Discount Golf, and even more as we can add it. We have always wanted our own Web Site and have struggled with the right person or group to do the web design and graphics. In choosing this group we will now offer to you our reader the ability to go to any of our advertisers web sites direct from the magazine, just point and right click. It is our intention to continue to try and bring you all of the local information about amateur golf in the State. We will continue to support the SCGA and the CGA. by publishing their tournaments and their news. Our continued goal is to give you more info of the local tournament play. We will push even harder this year to gather more info from the Pros at each club through out the State.

We look forward to moving onward and outward in the future of this publication and expect your feedback. Hit it long and Straight and may all your putts fall, R&B



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Carolinas Golf Association (CGA) Kicks Off 2008 Interclub Season

West End, NC - The Carolinas Golf Association (CGA) has opened entries for the 2008 Carolinas Interclub season. The Carolinas Interclub features clubs from the Carolinas competing amongst neighboring clubs in individual and four-ball net competition. Over 700 Carolinas Golf Association clubs are eligible to enter. Four clubs are paired in a group and compete in home-and-away matches during the regular season. The regular season begins in late spring and concludes in late August. The Interclub playoffs begin in September with the two-team championship match scheduled for late October. Most matches are scheduled on Saturdays and/or Sundays and do not interfere with regular club events. These weekend events provide clubs the opportunity to play in a Ryder Cup style team competition. Twelve players from each club compete against each other in the matches. Points are awarded to the winners of the two individual matches and the four-ball match which is played concurrently in each group. Points are accumulated to determine the team winner of the home-and-away series. Teams with the most wins/points after regular season competition advance to the regional and sectional playoff bracket until a Carolinas Interclub Champion is determined. Last year, Montgomery Country Club of Troy, NC, claimed the title with a win over Willow Springs Country Club of Wilson, NC, at Pinewild Country Club's Magnolia course in Pinehurst. Registration deadline for year-round clubs is March 28. Deadline for mountain clubs closed for the winter is April 25. Regional meetings, which are scheduled for mid-April, will announce club pairings and the rules of play. All participating clubs are required to have a representative at one of the regional meetings. For more information, click on <http://www.carolinasgolf.org/interclub/2008/registrationform.pdf> or contact the CGA at 910-673-1000 or interclub@carolinasgolf.org.

TOUR OPENS IN CHARLESTON

The Charleston division of The E-Golf Amateur Tour held its first event of 2008 Feb. 2 at the Wild Dunes Golf & Tennis Resort on the Isle of Palms, and among the top finishers was Lenin Lezcano of Hilton Head Island, who was third in Flight A after shooting an 81. The Hilton Head-Savannah E-Golf tour held an event Feb. 9 at Palmetto Hall Plantation's Arthur Hills Course, where Adam Dozier of Rincon, Ga., won the championship flight by shooting a 74, one shot better than Kevin Arnold of Hilton Head Island and three better than USC Beaufort golfer Reed Howard, who shot a 77. Among local competitors in other flights, Mark Harrison shot a 77 to win the A Flight by a stroke over Pete Snow, and Lezcano was third with an 80. Thomas Hellman of Bluffton captured the A Flight senior division with an 89. In the C Flight, John Donat of Beaufort was first, winning a playoff over Bluffton's Mike Tucker. Both shot 94s. In the D Flight, Steven Stafford shot a 94 to top Jeff Hall of Hilton Head Island by five shots. The Charleston tour's next stop will be on Kiawah Island's Turtle Point Course on Feb. 23. The Hilton Head-Savannah Tour resumes action March 1 at Port Royal's Barony Course. For information on the tour, visit www.amateurgolftour.net or contact Larry Lee at ldlee@amateurgolftour.net or call him at 866-361-4653 or 864-490-6698.

Junior Heritage winner commits to Georgia

Hilton Head SC - Just more than a week after becoming the first International Junior Golf Academy student to win the Verizon Junior Heritage, Marta Silva Zamora has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Georgia on a full scholarship, according to an IJGA press release.

Silva, an 18-year-old Spaniard playing in her first Junior Heritage, shot 67 on Sea Pines Ocean Course in the first round and closed with a 75 on Harbour Town Golf Links to win by two shots in the tournament conducted Feb. 2-3. The 67 tied the girls tournament record set by two-time winner and current LPGA star Paula Creamer.

A native of Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain, the 18-year old joined the IJGA in September and resides on Daufuskie Island. In fall, 2007, she won the International Junior Golf Tour's event at Saddlebrook, firing rounds of 68 and 63. In international competition, Silva placed third at the Thunderbird Invitational last year, won the International Portugal Championship in 2006, captured top honors at the Doral Publix Junior Classic and won the Lacoste Tournament, both in 2004. As a 15-year old, Silva won the National Spanish Championship for girls under 16.



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Experienced Golfer Clinic	2:00 – 3:00 pm

HOLE - IN- ONE

South Carolina Hole In One Club

DATE	NAME	COURSE	HOLE	YARDAGE
02-Dec-07	Collin Kent Witiak	Oak Hills Golf Club	3rd	160
11-Dec-07	Dickie Shannon	River Falls	11th	176
14-Dec-07	Rick Bates	Moss Creek - North	10th	162
07-Jan-08	Richard H. Wilkins	Links @ Stono Ferry	6th	165
15-Jan-08	Ted Hansen	Tara Golf Club	11th	140
28-Jan-08	Jim Hooker	Colleton River - Dye Course	6th	175
31-Jan-08	Doug Raubenheimer	Shadowmoss Golf Club	16th	175
06-Feb-08	Chuck Neilson	Savannah Lakes - Monticello	4th	140
06-Feb-08	Wayne McCall	The Links @ Stoney Point	4th	116
12-Feb-08	Kurt Swigart	Tara @ Savannah Lakes	15th	206
13-Feb-08	Bryer Bagwell	Fort Jackson	3rd	185
17-Feb-08	Rusty Odom	Beaver Creek	17th	140

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6/8 The Traces GC \$75 12:00 Floence
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6/22 Wilde Wood CC \$85 2:00 Elgin
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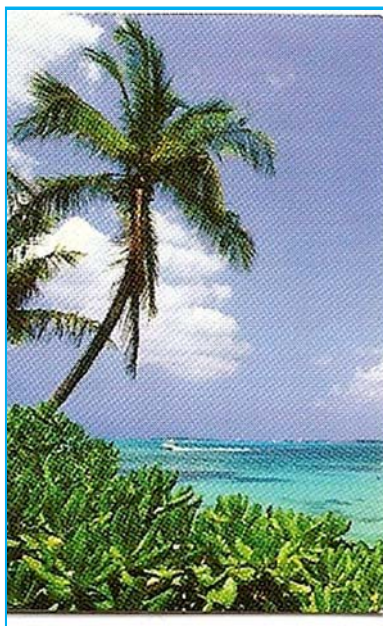
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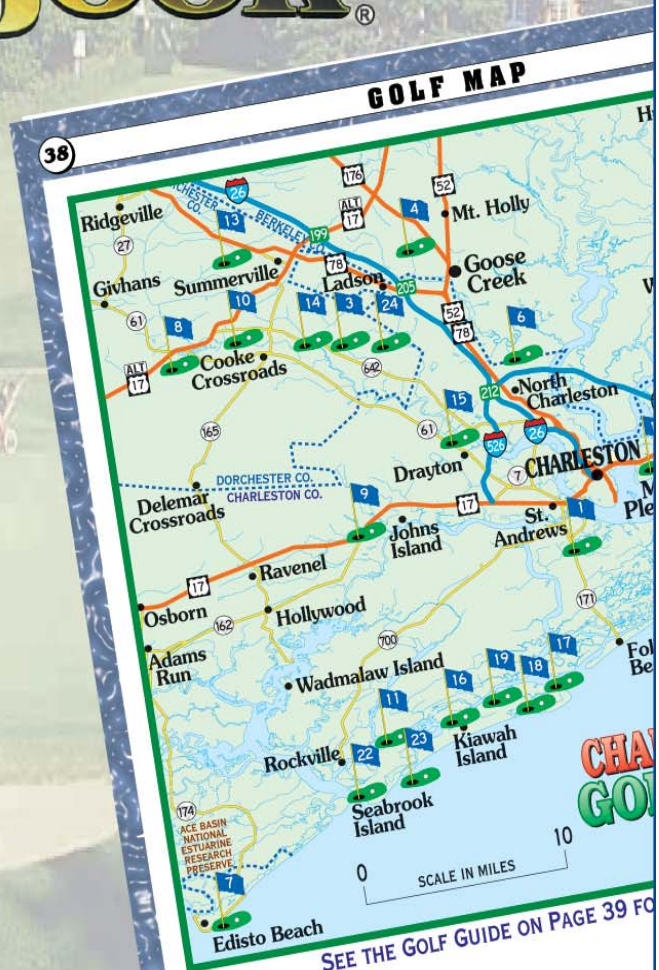
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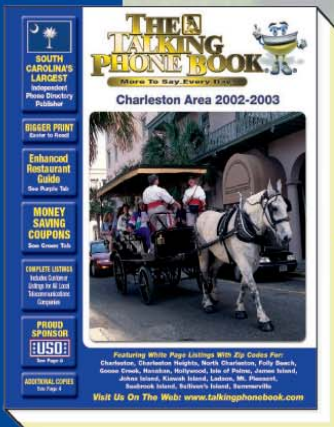
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Keith Hess



17th Annual Welldiggers

North Myrtle Beach SC- The annual Welldiggers tournament was played at the Palmetto Course @ Myrtle Wood and the Fazio Course @ Bearfoot. This is one of the older tournaments in the area with participants as far away as Vegas.

*Randy Mobley,
Jack Lee (Tournament Director) &
George Pearre*



*Dwight Scoggins & Kendal
Hardee*



*Gary Catterton,
Ken Roof, Randy
Frazier*



Women's Carolinas Golf Association

The 2008 Women's Carolinas Championship will be held at Sunset Country Club in Sumter, SC on May 20-22, 2008.





Left- Tyler Macolly

Right Tom Fentress & Glen Schmolze

**Below Winners of the 17th Annual Welldiggers
R.M. Stiglbauer, Bill Ashe,
Rick Pidgeon, and Blue Meyers**



Jay Tillman



Winning Team shot 11 under @ the Fazion Course at Bearfoot

Gary Conway, Mark Mitchell, & Bill Ashe



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Erin Wells



Terrier women's golf preparing for spring season

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — The Wofford women's golf team, despite not playing since October, has been working towards a strong showing this spring in their five scheduled tournaments. The Terriers will officially begin practice February 4. Wofford will kick off the slate when it looks to defend the team title it captured at the Diet Coke Wofford Invitational, March 3-4, at The Carolina Country Club in Spartanburg, S.C. The Terriers won the event last year behind the strength of Erin Wells' individual crown, the first in school history.

Other trips in March include playing in the Gainesville Shootout March 14-15 in Gainesville, Fla., and participation in the March 30-April 1 Larry Nelson Collegiate Invitational in Chateau Elan, Ga.

A trip to New York, N.Y., for the Roar-EE Women's Invitational concludes the regular-season portion of the schedule April 11-12.

Wofford will then compete in the Southern Conference Championship, April 20-22, in Hollywood, S.C., at The Links at Stono Ferry.

Wells completed the fall with a team-best 77.67 stroke average with freshmen Meredith Few (79.08) and Alex Rankin (79.67) within two shots of her.

Little Legends Golf

The Little Legends Series is a youth development program of the SCJGA. The series is designed as an introductory golf program for boys and girls ages 6-12. The Little Legends program offers something for everyone. True beginners can participate in our Clinic Series* which is a six week program designed to teach brand new players etiquette, rules, and basic fundamentals of the game. The Players Series is designed for those who have completed the Clinic Series and/or those who want to play the game but are not ready to play with the pressure of finishing every hole on their own. The Players Series is a fun, recreational, six week program where players participate in groups while adhering to a captain's choice format.

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The Little Legends Series has also added a Tournament Series for 2008. The Tournament Series is for those players who are ready to go out and compete on their own before joining the SCJGA, Hootie and The Blowfish Junior Golf Series or Major Tournament Series. The Tournament Series will offer one day, nine hole, stroke play events spread out over the state with limited field sizes based on availability.*This program will only be available in limited areas in 2008 with plans to expand in 2009!

If your club info is not in this Publication it is your fault for not letting us know what you want the public to know about your Club



2007-08 Clemson Golf Schedule

Clemson has another challenging golf schedule that includes two new tournaments and the return of two others that have not been on the schedule for many years. The Tigers will play 10 regular season tournaments prior to what would be a 27th consecutive NCAA tournament bid. All 10 events are three-day, 54-hole tournaments, meaning Clemson will only play 36 holes in one day of the weather dictates a change in schedule.

The Tigers open play in Japan at the Topy Cup, an event Clemson last played in 2003 the year it won the NCAA Championship. Clemson won the Topy Cup that season to get the national championship campaign off to a great start. Overall it will be Clemson's fourth trip to Japan for the Topy Cup.

Clemson will return to the mainland for its next tournament when the Tigers head to The Farm in Dalton, GA for the Carpet Capital Classic. Clemson is a fourth-time champion of the event since it first appeared in 1988-89. The Tigers finished second at this tournament last year in its top performance of the fall. A new tournament appears on the Clemson schedule in October as Clemson will travel to Macon, GA for The Brickyard Invitational. Many of the top teams in the area, will compete. Clemson then closes the fall schedule at Windermere, FL at the Isleworth Collegiate. This is one of the top college tournaments of the year, as 12 of the top 25 teams in the nation are expected to compete. It will be a home tournament for Clemson sophomore Sam Saunders, a Windermere, FL native who finished 10th at this event last year. Clemson will return to action at the Puerto Rico Classic on the final day of February, the latest start to the spring season since 1992. This will be the 16th straight year Clemson has competed in Puerto Rico. The Tigers won the tournament in 1999 and have finished second five other years, including last season. Clemson will play in the first Linger Longer Invitational at Reynolds Plantation March 14-16. It is the start of four tournaments in 24 days for the Tigers. Georgia and Georgia Tech are expected to be among the teams in the field. Senior Tanner Ervin will play on his home course when the Tigers tee it up at The Hootie at Bulls Bay in Mount Pleasant, SC on March 23-25. It will be Clemson's third appearance in the event, the first since March of 2006. Clemson returns to the Furman Invitational for the first time since 1996-97 on March 28-30. The last time Clemson played at Furman, Jonathan Byrd was a freshman on the Clemson team and Byrd's brother, current Tiger assistant coach Jordan Byrd was a player for Furman. They finished that event with the exact same score. Clemson has won the Furman Invitational four times previously. Clemson will play the Augusta State Invitational April 4-6, the weekend prior to the Masters. It will be Clemson's seventh straight appearance at that event. The regular season ends at the ACC Tournament at The Old North State Course in Uwharrie Point, NC. It will be the seventh straight year the tournament has been held at The Old North State Club.

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Hope you enjoy the Magazine!!!

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INSTRUCTIONS



This golf tip article marks the first in a series of tips which will appear in this magazine every month, I know you'll find the information noteworthy and helpful whether you're a Conventional Golfer or a Natural Golfer, it's all golf.



So many of the questions I get during golf lessons and schools are about ball contact issues, i.e., hooking, slicing, shanking, topping, fat shots, pulling the ball, etc. It is a common philosophy among golfers to

look into their swing mechanics to find a fix to the ball flight fault, i.e., keep left arm extended on the backswing, shift weight to lead foot, stay behind ball, cock wrists, follow through, stay down, etc. It is this type of thought process that keeps most golfers stuck in a game of "golf swing" as opposed to the game of "golf shots". In other words, many golfers try to do something in their swing and hope it will positively affect the shot outcome.

While there are many swing tips that prove useful, it is not the tip itself that creates the change in ball flight. The swing tip affects the swing motion and eventually the direction the clubface is moving through impact. It is the direction the clubface is moving through impact that has the final effect on where the ball goes. The bottom line is that you must control the clubface to control the ball flight. If your attention is on a particular swing mechanic, you may lose awareness of the direction the clubface is swinging and good shots will only happen by chance. So I am going to suggest a game of opposites for you to try on your next visit to the practice range if you are not getting the ball flight you desire. I suggest using a 6 iron for the practice that follows.

Let's say you are having a problem with hooking the ball. We know the ball hooks because the clubface is closed (looking left for right-handers) relative to the swing path at impact. First, I want you to hit 3 balls intentionally closing the clubface through impact. Intentionally hook the ball to the left, how much the ball hooks is not of concern, just be certain you manipulate the clubface enough to get the ball to curve to the left. Next, I want you to do just the opposite; hit 3 balls with the clubface open (looking right of the target line for right-handers). When the clubface is open to the swing path during impact the ball will have left to right spin and will fade or slice to the right as a result. Be sure to keep your attention on what you are doing with the clubface through impact.



You will definitely feel a difference in your swing motion to accomplish this task. The "feeling" represents the swing mechanics for the shot shape you are producing. This is a very important point to understand. **Swing mechanics exist only after you have determined what you want the clubface to do to the ball through impact.** And, the swing mechanics for a hook will feel different than the swing mechanics for a slice.

After you've sliced the ball 3 times, return to the hook for 3 shots and then once again to the slice for 3 shots. Then, for the next 3 balls, I want you to image a square clubface on a swing path that will hit the ball straight and strike the balls with that intent, a straight shot.



INSTRUCTIONS

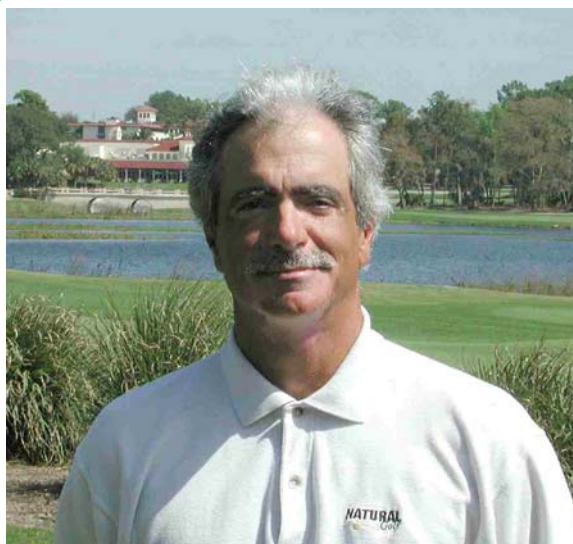
You will sense that the swing mechanics for this shot shape are different again from those for the hook or slice. A good practice session will be 5 sets of 3 balls in all three directions, hook, slice and straight.

You can practice this game of opposites to help eliminate any undesirable ball flight you may have. If you top the ball all the time, first practice topping 3 balls on purpose. Then hit 3 balls fat (contacting the ground before the ball) on purpose and then 3 balls striking the ball first followed by a divot. If your issue is a shank, practice 3 shanks then 3 toe shots and then 3 center shots. If fat shots ail you, hit 3 fat on purpose then 3 topped then 3 striking ball first then divot.

By practicing the opposite of what ails you, you will refine the feelings for moving the clubface through impact in the way that will produce the shot you desire.

Next time we'll talk about getting ready and into high gear for the upcoming golf season. For those of you already keeping track of stats you should go to the Moe Norman Golf Academy site www.moenormangolfacademy.org, join, it's free, then check out the "game tracker" section. Here you can sign up, enter your stats. after each round you play and have the "tracker" compute the stats then you'll know what needs improvement. If there's doubt about what or how to begin the improvement just contact me, I'll be there to help.

Steve Conrad www.carolinasmartswing.com (h)843.556.0217 (c)843.708.2837



Steve Conrad Natural Golf Instructor



PANAMA CITY, Fla. - Newberry College golfer Daniel Stanley (Inman, S.C.) was named to the All-Tournament team at the Outback Invitational in Panama City, Fla. by virtue of his top five individual score when rounds were completed this past Tuesday. Stanley shot dual rounds of 70 on Monday and Tuesday to finish 2-under par for the tournament and in second place.

Stanley's All-Tournament honors continue a string of four tournaments in which Newberry College has placed and individual golfer in the top five. In addition to Stanley's accomplishments at the Outback Invitational, Daniel has also etched himself into the Newberry College record books with his two-day score of 140.

Stanley's 140 bested teammate and fellow freshman Ben Lown's (North Augusta, S.C.) record of 141 that was set in October of 2007 at the University of North Alabama's Fall Classic.

Furman Men's Golf Inks Three In November Signing Period

Greenville, S.C. - Furman men's golf coach Todd Satterfield has announced the signing of Anthony Aloï, J.B. Murphy and John David Hunter to national letters-of-intent to join the Paladin program next fall.

Aloï is a native of Plainsboro, N.J., and attends West Windsor High School which produced former Paladin standouts Matt Davidson and Nick Cifelli. Aloï was a 2006 and 2007 New Jersey All-State pick and 2005-06 IJGT Co-Player-of-the-Year. He has twice participated in the USGA Junior Amateur and finished 10th at the 2007 New Jersey Golf Association Junior Amateur Championship.

Murphy, a student at A.C. Flora High School in Columbia, S.C., is a two-time all-state, all-region and all-area selection. He claimed medalist honors at the 2007 Junior Rice Planters Championship and placed in the top 10 at the 2006 South Carolina Golf Association Junior Championship. His sister, Melissa Murphy, is a current Furman student and member of the varsity cheerleading squad.

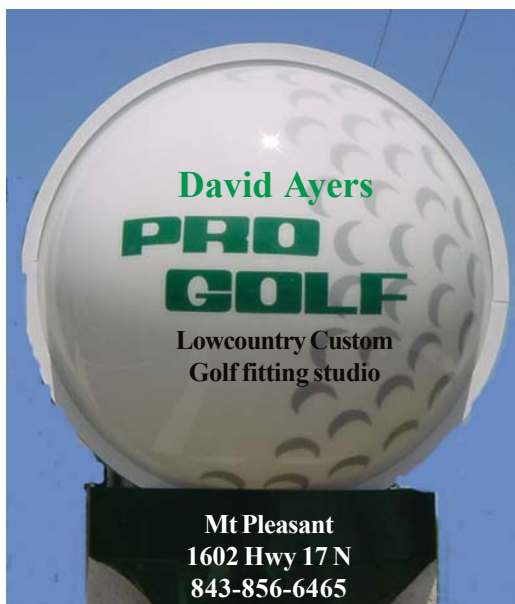
Hunter, a product of Bluefield, Va., and Graham High School, was named 2007 Virginia Southwest District Player-of-the-Year. He was a semifinalist at the Bobby Bowers Junior and finished in the top 25 at the Scottish Boys Open. Hunter grew up playing the same course as Satterfield, Fincastle Country Club.



Coach Todd Satterfield

Lady Indians finish in 11th at Kiawah Intercollegiate

KIAWAH ISLAND, S.C. - Newberry College women's golf finished in 11th place after the completion of the Kiawah Invitational hosted by Tusculum College in Kiawah Island, S.C. The Lady Indians improved by six strokes as a team from Saturday's first round. After a 344 combined score on day one, Newberry ended Sunday's second round with a 338 team total; a two-day total of 682. Newberry began play on Sunday in 13th and gained two spots in the final standings after the completion of the tournament. The tournament champion was Florida Southern College with a two-day combined shot total of 599. Individually, Franziska Blum (Schweinfurt, Germany) finished tied for 13th with a two-day total of 153. After a day one 78, Blum cut three strokes in the second round to finish with a 75 on Sunday. Senior Ashley Ratcliff (Myrtle Beach, S.C.) finished in the top 40 individually with a stroke total of 166 and completing her day tied for 35th. The tournament's individual champion was Maria Garcia Ausst of Nova Southeastern University. Ausst's 147 was just enough to edge out day one leader Marianne Andersson of Florida Southern. The Lady Indians' next action is this coming weekend in Sunset Beach, N.C. as Newberry competes in the Mars Hill College Invite.



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Champions of Champions Prevail

Pawleys Island SC - The 12th Annual Tournament of Champions competed at the Tradition Golf Club in Pawleys Island.

In the Men's Club Championship Division, Kevin Roberts of Boiling Springs shot a two day total of three under par 141 for a one shot victory over Brent Roof. Bluffton's Joe Vignati successfully defended his Senior Club Championship with a final score of 144. Steve Liebler from Irmo shot the low score of the event after posting a final round of 69 and a total of 139. Rick Cobb of Taylors won the One Day Senior Division by three shots with a score of 145. Gaston's Cathy Hill took a five shot victory in the Women's Division over Cecelia Barksdale and Richard Loy from Irmo won the Net Division with a total net score of 137.

The 2007 Tournament of Champions was played over the Tradition Golf Club layout in Pawleys Island, S.C. The field consisted 123 men & women Club and One Day tournament Champions throughout South Carolina. The Tournament of Champions is one of 19 Major Championships that the South Carolina Golf Association conducts through the year.

Men's Golf to Host General Jim Hackler College-Am

Myrtle Beach SC - On Saturday, March 8, Coastal Carolina University will host the General Jim Hackler College-Am. This event is your opportunity to play with some of the nation's best collegiate golfers at the TPC of Myrtle Beach. Sign up now for this limited field event! Entry Fee - \$800 per team for \$200 per player (other sponsorship opportunities available) Entry Fee Includes - tournament lunch and dinner, tee package, range balls and round of golf College Shamble Format - Your team is paired with a collegiate player. The best tee ball is selected from the group of amateurs and then everyone plays their own ball in from that point. The collegiate player plays his own ball the entire whole. The best score from the team is selected. Sign up by contacting Allen, Todd or Chris in the men's golf office at 843-349-2902.



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TOURNAMENTS

The Shamrock Women's Intercollegiate Golf Tournament Comes to Tega Cay

Tega Cay, S.C. – The sixth annual Shamrock Women's Intercollegiate Golf Tournament returns to Tega Cay Golf Club in Tega Cay, SC on March 21-23. The tournament started in 2002 and has quickly become one of the Women's Intercollegiate Golf's top tournaments. Fourteen colleges will field their top players from the US and other countries. Represented this year will be players from the US, Finland, Sweden, Mexico, Canada, England, and Germany. The six-year old Shamrock Invitational Tournament draws participants from schools across the southeast and beyond. Local colleges from South Carolina include Winthrop, The Citadel, University of SC Upstate, Presbyterian College, and Charleston Southern. Other participating colleges include Saint Francis, PA, Murray State University, KY, South Dakota State University, Xavier University, OH, University of Iowa, Princeton University, NJ, Gardner-Webb, NC, Tennessee State University, TN, and Siena College, NY. The challenging Tega Cay Country Club has long been a fixture for the St. Patrick Day themed Shamrock Tournament. This 54-hole three-day event is played on the Pines and the Grande View nines of Tega Cay's 27 hole layout. Although bleachers are provided on the ninth hole of the Pines, the best vantage point is from above the green of the last hole of the Grande View. This long par four requires an approach shot over water to a bulkhead-protected green. Last year's team win was captured by the Lady Eagles of Winthrop. Led by Jutta Degerman, they came from behind to beat East Tennessee State by two strokes for Winthrop's first Shamrock win. Winthrop's Lady Eagles golf coach Jodi Wendt said, "We have a great chance against the contenders in this year's field for a repeat win." The player that most golf fans will be eyeing during the tournament is Winthrop's Jutta Degerman from Kaunianen, Finland. Jutta won last year's single player medal honors. The first round will begin at 8 A.M. on Friday morning, March 21, 2008. The tournament is open to the public and is free of charge.



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TOURNAMENTS



CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT
Overall Winner and Medalist (L) Lizzy
Bundy, Clayton, NC.

Taylor Alison, Elizabeth City, NC and
Mallory Warrick, Wilson, NC

Tied for 2nd Place



Sub-Juniors

Overall Winner and Medalist, Nicolette
Donovan, Cary, NC with Trophy,

Caroline Rea Pinehurst, NC, 4th place.
Nicole Chin Bluffton, SC, 2nd

Isabella Rusher Salisbury, NC, 3rd

Inaugural Women's Carolinas
Junior Girls' Championship



JUNIOR GIRLS' FLIGHT

OVERALL WINNER and Medalist Tara Simmons,
Canton, NC with Trophy

. L to R Lauren Steele of Charlotte, N.C., Rachel
Wyatt, Bluffton, SC and Samantha O'Donnell of
Hilton Head, SC. Steele and O'Donnell Tied for 2nd
Rachel Wyatt, 4th.



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The Law of Physics States it's easier to get up at 6:00 AM to play golf than at 10:00 to mow the yard.

A good drive on the 18th hole has stopped many a golfer from giving up the game.

A good golf partner is one who's always slightly worse than you are. That's why I get so many calls to play with friends.

A pro-shop gets its name from the fact that you have to have the income of a professional golfer to buy anything in there.

If your opponent has trouble remembering whether he shot asix or a seven, he probably shot an eight (or worse).

It takes longer to learn good golf than it does to become a brain surgeon On the other hand, you don't get to ride around on a cart, drink beer, eat hot dogs, if you are performing brain surgery

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Old Men and The Game

Old men play golf differently than the rest of us. Some play it well and some play it poorly but, as a class, their journey from the first tee to the last is worth studying. You can both improve your score and deepen the game's pleasures by paying attention when the elders lace up their spikes. My own education began in a foursome that included three artificial joints: two hips and a knee. The orthopedic hardware was bolted to the bones of three men in their eighties, all residents of a gated community in South Carolina. I joined them for a round during an annual holiday visit. They eyed me warily as I walked toward them with the starter. I learned later that my own age was almost a deal breaker. As a reasonably fit "kid" of fifty, they feared I might disrupt the octogenarian rhythms of their round. We exchanged greetings, handicaps, picked teams and teed off. What followed was a post-graduate education in good manners, good fellowship and, in the end, what's so good about the game. Like many retirees, they drove flamboyant golf carts: custom paint jobs, sound systems, flashy hood ornaments. There was the unmistakable echo of the Chryslers and Cadillacs they drove fifty years ago. One, apparently the group's quarter-master, had a year's supply of pencils and scorecards at the ready, wrapped in rubber bands and meticulously arranged in what, otherwise, appeared to be a medicine cabinet: Advil, prescription meds, band-aids, tubes of mentholated muscle cream, disinfectant and multiple grades of sun block. Sir Edmund Hillary conquered Everest with fewer provisions. Clearly, this would be no ordinary round of golf. This was a pilgrimage and the lessons unfolded on every fairway. Golf Cartography - Old guys frequently have an encyclopedic knowledge of the natural world. After all, they've spent seven or eight decades walking around in it. If you're lucky, they'll map out the golf course for you, its landmarks, landscape and wildlife. Learning that your ball has come to rest under a "bougainvillea" and not a generic "bush" may be small consolation but it will better connect you to the golf course and, as the details accumulate, sharpen your appreciation of its architecture. Knowing that the bird cartwheeling overhead is an American kestrel can turn an out-of-bounds tee shot into an occasion of wonder. Stop counting strokes and give more thought to the canvas you're playing on. There's No Swing Like An Old Swing - Their swings are miraculously constructed. In the best of them, there's a hint of the 50's Ben Hogan; in the worst, an homage to the same decade's Bob Hope. In all of them, you'll see ingenious compensations for body parts that don't work quite as well as they used to. Their swings aren't uniformly pretty but they're predictably consistent and give new meaning to the term "muscle memory". Remember, they've been tutoring their neuromuscular junctions since Ike was in the White House. Because their testosterone is taking flight, they worship at the altar of timing and tempo more than young Turks do. During your next round, genuflect with them and watch your score improve. Splendor in the Grass: Because they grew up during America's first mass exodus to the suburbs, these guys love to landscape. They repair divots and rake bunkers unfailingly. They minister to ball marks on the green as if they were bruises on a granddaughter's arm. They know, from the hard-won experience of guarding their own health, that living things need looking after. Whether you play at a private club or a pockmarked muni, leave every golf hole in better shape than you found it. Take a Lesson - Remember, you're in the presence of men who have stopped punching the clock and can still afford a tee time. They have more or less successfully retired. They may not be able to lead you to the next Google, but any elder foursome can be full of sage advice on money, marriage and generally managing your life. Ask them about their lives and careers, turning points and blunders. Take notes. The Wonders of the Wager: With their business careers behind them, a golf wager awakens a slumbering will to win. It is a kind of business deal, isn't it? Strokes are ferociously negotiated and the stakes, typically small, are agreed upon. They started playing golf when Byron Nelson ruled the sport and a buck was still a buck. It's not about the cash, it's about the contest and the unspeakable pleasure of extracting another ten spot from the flinty, New Englander they've been playing with since 1975. Bet smart, bet small, and play fiercely down the stretch. The Killer Short Game - Every golfer has had a \$5 Nassau slip from his grasp as some old guy gets up and down on a crucial hole. This is their wheelhouse, where they swallow the indignity of being out-driven by seventy yards, offer a sly wink and go one-up on the match. Because they're on life's final lap, they know that how you start matters less than how you finish. Inside 20 yards, this wisdom is decisive. It doesn't hurt, of course, to have memorized every subtle swale on the golf course and they have. If you're lucky enough to meet one of these masters of the short game, share a beer with him after the round and pick up a tip or two. Enjoy the Journey - When you tee it up with a man in his eighties, you might well be witness to his final round. As fit a fellow as he seems, the basic laws of probability insist that next week's foursome may be a man short and he knows it. I thought more than once when one of my foursome made his way to the bottom of a bunker that he may never come out. And that he might not mind that at all. This must explain, in some measure, the simple joy they take in the journey. They generally play without anger or angst and, in an age of ball caps worn backwards and brawling basketball teams, they'll connect you to a gentler time. They are the game's true historians and the keepers of its enduring civility. That golf remains such a grand, old game is largely thanks to the grand, old men who continue to play it