

# The Met Golfer

# EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

MGAGOLF.ORG



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Dec 2016

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*This page: Snowflakes fittingly danced across the clubhouse at Scarborough, N.Y.'s Sleepy Hollow Country Club in early December when the club held its Annual Snowflake Ball.*

# It's Been a Sweet '16

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From the spring's informative education series, through the summer's busy championship season, and all the way to the 119th Annual Meeting and Dinner in early December, it's been another productive and exciting golf season for the MGA and its charitable arm, the MGA Foundation. Whether you've missed some of the action along the way, or if you're just wanting to relive some of the year's best moments, there are three ways to look back on 2016:



**Annual Report:** Take a comprehensive look at what the MGA and MGA Foundation have been up to all year long, from a review of our core services and educational seminars to the championship calendar and innovative programs for the Met Area's youth.



**Videos:** The MGA took its video production to new heights this year, utilizing a drone to capture stunning scenery previewing our championship sites. Take a look at highlight videos from individual championships, or a complete year-end recap.



**Photos:** Recount 16 of our favorite photos from 2016 in an entirely visual presentation, plus view our extensive photo galleries from 2016's championships and special events—all at some of the finest clubs in the Met Area.

# DELIVERING THE DATA



We all know that golf can be a game of inches, but when it comes to club fitting, golf can become even more precise—down to hundredths of a millimeter or degree. With the GEARS tracking system—the latest and most advanced club-fitting technology—seemingly endless amounts of data are available as eight ultra-HD cameras shooting at 360 frames per second capture every motion of the swing thanks to more than 30 sensors located on the player's body and club.

“It’s about getting the client exactly what they need, without guessing,” says Michael Manavian, a golf professional and director of performance at CLAY Health Club + Spa in Port Chester, N.Y. While the technology precisely measures body angles (such as hip rotation or shoulder turn) that can aid in instruction, GEARS also measures club data that other club fitting methods estimate or don’t produce at all. Impact location on the clubhead is measured within hundredths of a millimeter, while dynamic loft (loft at impact), shaft deflection, and lie angle at impact are all measured to help find the shaft that best fits your swing.

For Manavian, the technology also serves as a crucial part of CLAY’s complete approach to golf, which includes golf fitness professional Ali Gilbert and medical director Dr. Steven Murphy. A thorough fitness assessment using GEARS focuses on movement patterns and identifies strength and conditioning baselines, while additional dietary assessments and lab diagnostics help lead to a specialized personal training program regimen that also includes nutrition.

Like any field, golf’s integration with technology is ever-changing, but it’s hard to imagine where the two can go from here.



The GEARS system at CLAY is one of approximately 20 in the United States, not all of which are available to consumers, and is the only system in a health club setting.

BY SCOTT KRAMER

# Thoughtful GIFTS

**Y**ou get an “A” for thoughtfulness if you pondered buying your golfer clubs as a gift this holiday season, but the inherent problem is that it’s a present best off custom-fitted. Plus, clubs can be an expensive endeavor. So in this case, you’re safer being practical – setting your sights on golf peripheries. A few brand-new products come to mind. Nikon Sport Optics’ 5.6-ounce COOLSHOT 80i VR laser rangefinder (\$450) touts impressive optical vibration reduction. It compensates for shaking hands and quickly locks in an accurate distance measurement from up to 1,000 yards. The latest rendition of Sun Mountain’s C-130 cart bag (\$230) features two stitched-in Velcro straps that tightly secure to a cart – eliminating the need for those golf cart belts that inadvertently loosen up during a round. This system also prevents twisting, so that all pockets and clubs remain easily accessible. Devereaux’s Preston quarter-zip pullover (\$185) is a luxurious, mid-weight garment made from soft Pima cotton. Offered only in silver, it features an elegant-looking diamond-knit pattern, buttons made from animal horns, and fauxsuede detail. Fresh on store shelves this month, adidas Golf’s Crossknit Boost shoe (\$160) has a full-length, cushioned foam midsole, breathable upper, and an outsole with strategically placed traction for extra stability during a swing.



Bob Russell, far right, with fellow MGA Committee members during the 2016 Tournament Officials Seminar at Blind Brook Country Club in Purchase, N.Y.

# THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

**T**he MGA is fortunate to have a large group of dedicated volunteers that are passionate about golf and gracious enough to give back to the game. For Bob Russell—recipient of the Jerry Mahoney Award as the 2016 MGA Rules and Competitions Volunteer of the Year—the opportunity to serve the game he’s loved for so long has been an even greater experience than expected.

Sixty-nine years old and a retired ExxonMobil project manager residing in Whippany, N.J., Russell was seeking a volunteer opportunity and naturally golf was of interest. “I’ve had a love affair with golf going back to the sixties,” he says, pointing to television memories of Shell’s Wonderful World of Golf and Arnold Palmer at the Masters, plus a shared passion with his father, as some of his earliest attractions to golf. A conversation led to a brief volunteer stint at the USGA Library, before the MGA was recommended to Russell as an option to further feed his golf fix. He joined the MGA’s Rules and Competitions Committee in 2014 and, as someone eager to learn all aspects of the role, has quickly become a respected and reliable part of the corps. Russell worked more than 20 events in 2016, displaying a quality of

service that embodies recipients of the Jerry Mahoney Award—which is named for former MGA Distinguished Service Award winner Gerald T. Mahoney.

“Being involved with the MGA has really enriched my life,” explains Russell. “I’m able to have new golf experiences and meet other people that have this deep interest and love for golf.” In addition to connecting with fellow golf enthusiasts, Russell has been thrilled to see the spectacular courses of the Met Area up close. Russell takes pride in being part of the MGA’s championships and has particularly enjoyed serving as a referee or an observer during international matches—the Governor Hugh L. Carey Challenge Cup and the French-American Challenge Matches.

Russell says the honor of receiving the Jerry Mahoney Award is still sinking in and he’s already looking forward to the 2017 season. After all, he’s just doing what he loves.



The Jerry Mahoney Award recognizes a volunteer’s spirit of generosity and good will.



Russell also enjoys spending time with his family—especially his grandkids—and travelling to thoroughbred horse racing events and National Parks with his wife, Antoinette.

# ELIMINATING A PENALTY: A New Local Rule

**O**n December 8, the golfing community gained a look at what may result from the USGA and R&A's joint Rules Modernization project—an initiative aiming to make the Rules of Golf easier to read, understand and apply for players at all levels—as golf's governing bodies announced a new Local Rule that eliminates the penalty when a ball is accidentally moved on the putting green.

If a committee wishes to introduce this Local Rule, the following wording is recommended:

*“Rules 18-2, 18-3 and 20-1 are modified as follows:*

*When a player's ball lies on the putting green, there is no penalty if the ball or ball-marker is accidentally moved by the player, his partner, his opponent, or any of their caddies or equipment.*

*The moved ball or ball-marker must be replaced as provided in Rules 18-2, 18-3 and 20-1.*

*This Local Rule applies only when the player's ball or ball-marker lies on the putting green and any movement is accidental.*

*Note: If it is determined that a player's ball on the putting green was moved as a result of wind, water or some other natural cause such as the effects of gravity, the ball must be played as it lies from its new location. A ball-marker moved in such circumstances is replaced.”*

The quick action, which makes the Rule available on January 1, 2017, shows how seriously golf's governing bodies are taking the task of simplifying and clarifying the Rules. Especially in wake of the related occurrence with Dustin Johnson at this year's U.S. Open, both Rules Committees agreed that this particular case was important to act upon now, instead of waiting for the next revision for the Rules of Golf.

The Local Rule has been welcomed by all of the major tours worldwide and—along with the PGA TOUR, European Tour, LPGA, PGA of America and the Masters Tournament—the MGA will implement the Local Rule for all future events.

Additional announcements stemming from the Rules Modernization project are expected to be made in 2017. For more on the Rules of Golf, including additional information on the new Local Rule, visit [www.mgagolf.org/rules](http://www.mgagolf.org/rules).

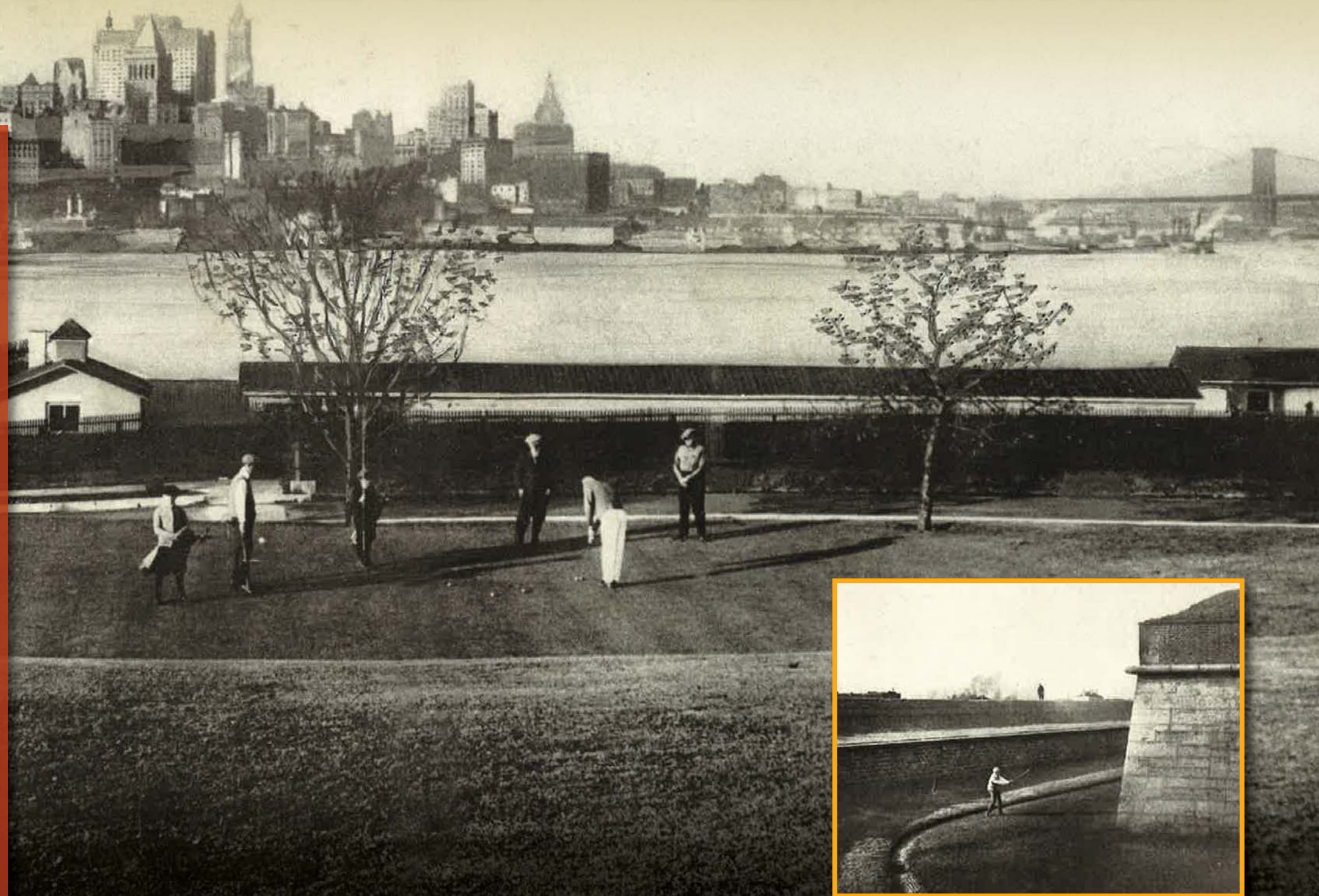
# Vintage Views: Golf on Governors Island

Long before several present-day golf clubs came to provide spectacular sights of the Manhattan skyline, a nine-hole course on Governors Island placed golf practically in the city's shadows.

Lying some 800 yards off lower Manhattan, Governors Island and its golf course stood closed to the public for almost two centuries while operating as a military base—first for the Army and later the Coast Guard. The island was vacated in 1996, leading the uniquely set golf course to fall by the wayside.

Dating back to the early 1900s, the course was squeezed into former parade grounds, with a number of fairways crisscrossing one another. Adding to the city views and unique experience was the route around the island's iconic star-shaped Fort Jay. A shot falling into the grass moat was still played as it lie, sometimes leading to a carom shot off the wall of the fort (*inset*).

Today, Governors Island is open to the public every day from May 28-September 25, allowing visitors to take in history and iconic New York sights, enjoy open space, or grab food from a selection of vendors. Golf made a temporary return to the island in 2006 as Annika Sorenstam, Natalie Gulbis, Tom Watson and now President-elect Donald Trump took part in a charity skins game; however, the only traces of the former course are several old teeing grounds and indentions from once-filled bunkers.



# LAYOVER ► HOUSTON

BY TIM HARTIN

Convenience adds to the attraction of Golf Club of Houston's Tournament Course, as it's located less than 10 miles from George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

**H**ouston, the fourth most populated city in the U.S., has developed a diverse economy beyond its energy industry, serving as home to more than 20 Fortune 500 companies. Those in the Met Area certainly know that business means golf, and Houston is true to that. With more than 165 courses in the area, there are plenty of opportunities to tee it up.

#### COURSES:

**1 Golf Club of Houston** – The Golf Club of Houston's Tournament Course—carved through woodlands northeast of the city—has tested the world's best as host of the PGA TOUR's Shell Houston Open since 2006. The Rees Jones/David Toms design stretches to over 7,400 yards for the pros, but remains as a more than welcoming option for the everyday player. A number of forced carries and water flanking several fairways can prove challenging, while superb conditions and a memorable stretch of finishing holes are sure to stand out.

**2 Wildcat Golf Club** – Less than 30 minutes from downtown, Wildcat Golf Club features outstanding panoramic views of Houston's skyline. Its Highlands Course offers a special “links experience with Texas flair,” as bunkers, ravines, elevation changes and blind shots provide a stern test. The Lakes Course is a strategic layout filled with character, highlighted by several split fairways and a considerable amount of water.

**3 BlackHorse Golf Club** – Even while meandering across similar terrain, the two courses at BlackHorse—some 30 miles northwest of downtown—present contrasting styles. Water is in play throughout the challenging opening nine of the North Course, while the inward nine is more forgiving off the tee. The South Course features one tree-lined hole after the next, with its final six holes being highlighted by wetlands that once stood as an old sand quarry.



# A Career of **SERVICE**

**A**s a 40-year member of The PGA of America, Westchester Country Club's John Kennedy has long been one of the most respected golf professionals in the Met Area; however, it's more than just his expertise in golf that makes him one of the best, it's his passion for selflessly serving others.

Kennedy, who has been at Westchester since 1991 and is retiring at year's end, has been an invaluable resource for area pros—something he feels is an important responsibility. With upwards of 20 of his own assistants having gone on to become head professionals or directors of golf and countless more area professionals having sought his advice, Kennedy has welcomed and excelled in the mentor role. He has a passion for education and through his crafting of the Met PGA Head Professional Handbook, his knowledge on golf operations will continue to lead area professionals for decades to come.

A great respect for the military has also led Kennedy to commit time and resources to service men and women, veterans, and their families. Kennedy established The Golfers in Support of the Troops Foundation in 2008, raising money to distribute clothing to U.S. troops and their families—with Kennedy even contributing clothing from his own golf shop. Westchester Country Club has repeatedly been a top supporter of Patriot Golf Day since its inception in 2007, while Kennedy has also partnered with VA hospitals to introduce golf to disabled veterans. His involvement with this type of program has continued with PGA HOPE, serving as a valuable asset in sharing instruction methods with area professionals.

While Kennedy has collected an assortment of awards through the years—including Met PGA Professional of the Year in 1997, and the PGA of America's Horton Smith Award in 2010 and the Patriot Award in 2012 (*inset top right*)—it's likely that he's most satisfied with simply lending a helping hand.



Whether hosting professional tour events, assisting area professionals or serving veterans, Kennedy has provided exemplary leadership for Westchester Country Club.