

# The Met Golfer

# EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

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April 2017

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*This page:* In Westfield, N.J., trees next to Echo Lake Country Club's finishing hole and clubhouse show that spring is in full bloom in the Met Area. Read more about Echo Lake's master plan completion on page 16.



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# A FIRST LOOK for the FIRST TEE

Two days before Tommy's Honour made its debut in U.S. theaters, those in the Met Area had an opportunity to catch the dramatic film and its true story of golf pioneers Old Tom and Young Tommy Morris at a special New York City premiere.

Attendees enjoyed an early look at the film—which has been very well accepted and positively reviewed especially by golf fans—but also enjoyed a cocktail hour, and a Q&A session with main cast members Jack Lowden (Tommy Morris) and Ophelia Lovibond (Meg Drinnen), director Jason Connery and others involved with the making of the film.

The evening also benefitted The First Tee of Metropolitan New York, making it an especially meaningful occasion for executive producer Ken Whitney, who serves as chairman for TFTMNY. “I was overwhelmed with the support for the event, as evidenced by the fact that we raised more than double what we initially projected for The First Tee,” expressed Whitney.

The movie is now playing nationwide and can be seen at many locations throughout the Met Area.

*(Top) Lowden, Lovibond and Connery; (Middle) Ken Whitney (center) and friends at the premiere; (Bottom) Golf Channel's Rich Lerner, Whitney, producers Jim Kreutzer and Keith Bank, Lovibond, Lowden, Connery, and screenplay author Pamela Marin and husband Kevin Cook, author of the book with the same name on which the movie is based.*





# Island Time

## Bald Head Island

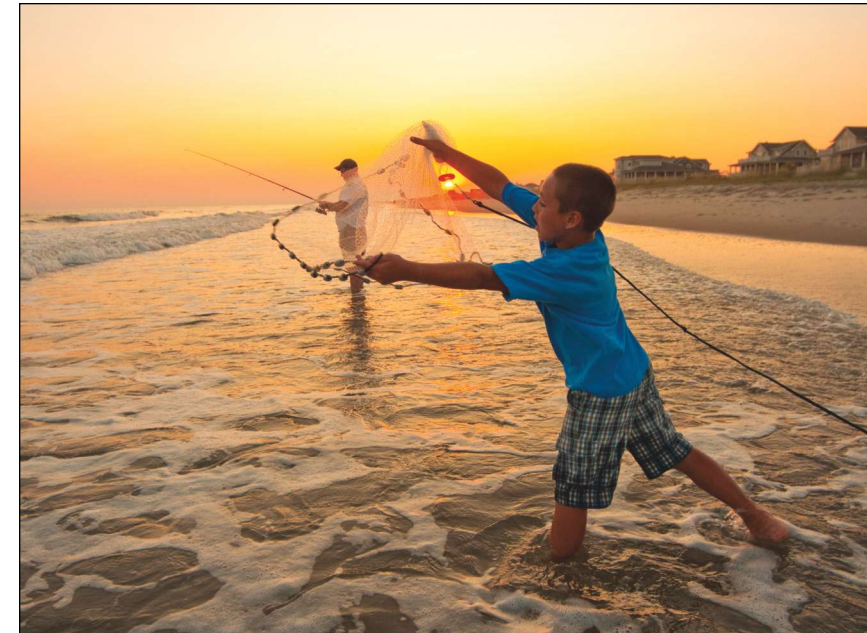
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When planning a getaway, you shouldn't have to choose between great golf and a family-friendly beach resort. Bald Head Island, NC, offers the best of both worlds — world-class golf and miles of uncrowded beaches. You'll arrive here by passenger ferry and travel the island by golf cart, bicycle or on foot, at an easygoing pace locals call "island time."

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Real estate offerings run the gamut in terms of size, setting and price. Located near the golf course, The Hammocks neighborhood offers fractional home ownership that includes four weeks of vacation time each year, along with Club membership. Just a stone's throw from the ocean, the *Southern Living* Inspired Community at Cape Fear Station combines a perfect location with charming low country architecture.

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tour the *Southern Living* Idea House, opening for tours in June. Learn more by visiting [www.bhirealestate.com](http://www.bhirealestate.com). When you're ready to book a tee time, visit [www.bhiclub.net](http://www.bhiclub.net) or call 910-457-7310.



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# MEMORIES UNLIKE ANY OTHER



Hagestad is the first Mid-Amateur champion to capture Low Amateur honors at the Masters since Jay Sigel in 1988.

**A**fter winning last year's U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship, Stewart Hagestad said all along that competing in the 81st Masters Tournament would be a dream come true. The dream continued all week long as the 26-year old fought through challenging winds on both Thursday and Friday to make the cut and maintained his steady play through the weekend to earn Low Amateur honors. "Something happened every day that I can talk about for the rest of my life," says Hagestad.

Here are five things that Stewart Hagestad will remember most about the 81st Masters:

- 1** During a practice round with two-time Masters champion Ben Crenshaw (and noted caddie Carl Jackson), Crenshaw had positive remarks on Hagestad's speed and focus on the greens, saying he thought Hagestad would play well through the week. "When a guy like Ben Crenshaw, arguably one of the best putters of all time, says that to you, you can take a lot of confidence from it."
- 2** On Monday, Hagestad enjoyed the tradition of the Amateur Dinner and later that evening retreated to the famed Crow's Nest, where all five amateur competitors spent the night. "It's one of the few places, especially in the world of golf, where you can very tangibly feel the history from players that have been there before," explains Hagestad.
- 3** Additional practice rounds early in the week provided even more learning experiences for Hagestad. He played alongside rising star Thomas Pieters, veteran Matt Kuchar, and Masters champions Adam Scott and Jordan Spieth (a friend from Hagestad's junior golf days).
- 4** While Hagestad hit plenty of quality shots through the week, two (both from Friday's second round) stand out in his mind: his near hole-out on the 18th, which left him with a tap-in birdie, and a 50-foot putt on the 10th that he made for par. After missing the 10th green long and left, Hagestad says he "was looking double bogey in the face," yet he holed the 50-footer to keep momentum as he sought to make the cut.
- 5** Sunday provided an emotional close to the week as Hagestad claimed Low Amateur honors and had what turned out to be his most memorable moment. "My first memory of the Masters is when Tiger won in 1997," says Hagestad. "I vividly remember him walking off the 18th green and giving his dad a big hug. So, hugging my mom and dad is the thing I'll remember the most."





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# BUNKERS SHINE BRIGHT at Hollywood

**T**hrough the years, the bunkering at Hollywood Golf Club—host of August’s 102nd Met Open Championship Presented by Callaway—had lost some of its character, leading to a 2014 restoration completed by Renaissance Golf Design and architect Tom Doak. There’s no question to whether the project was a success.

“It’s pretty unique,” reflects Brian Schneider, who served as project manager for Doak at Hollywood. “There are some things out there that were a lot of fun to build and put back. I’ve never done things like I saw here. It inspires you as an architect.”

The team looked to the past for direction and inspiration during the project, using an aerial image from 1940 along with many ground-level photos from 1921 to restore positioning and features that had been lost over time. “The golf course was largely well preserved,” says Schneider. “It was more of a restoration of the look and the feel of the golf course and putting back some of the lost features that make it so interesting.” Rough edges, high faces, various shapes and sizes, and brilliant white sand have all helped return appeal and personality to the course’s bunkers.

Isaac Mackie designed Hollywood’s original 18-hole layout in 1913, but just two years later Walter Travis (and the club’s green chairman Frank Barrett) made significant changes, completely reworking the greens and bunkers. Schneider also points to Pine Valley as an influence, since Travis frequently visited the course which was built around the same time as Hollywood.

“When the course was built, there were around 225 bunkers,” says Schneider. “We stopped about 50-55 shy of that [many had been removed through the years], so I think there are about 170 now. That’s what gets your attention when you stand on most of the tees.”

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BY SCOTT KRAMER

# DROPPING PUTTS, RISING PRICES

**D**on't tell putter manufacturers that golfers only like to buy clubs on the cheap. The putter market's top end – where people commonly shell out \$300 and up for the latest models – seems to be thriving. Scotty Cameron, who crafts gorgeous putters for Titleist, has long set the benchmark for flatstick luxury. His latest release includes the midsize Futura 6M (\$410) that uses a rear weight bar to extend mass out and back. Add deep heel-and-toe weighting, and you have a forgiving, stable mallet with an impact-softening vibration dampener. Callaway has succeeded selling Odyssey putters for around \$200, but now appears to be going directly at Cameron's market with its new, upscale Toulon Design putters that are engineered by industry veteran Sean Toulon. The Indianapolis mallet (\$400) sports a unique deep-diamond milled face pattern that sets out to perfect roll in a putt's first three feet. Impact sounds and feels responsively soft. It's also available in counterbalanced versions. And PING just introduced its very distinctive PLD2 Camo Ketsch Realtree Xtra mallet (\$325). The company's anodized sealing process results in a camouflage finish on the milled aluminum head. Contrasting sightlines simplify aiming, while stainless steel sole weights help lower CG to get putts rolling forward faster.





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# Isle Bound

Stewart Hagestad, 26  
Deepdale GC

Tyler Cline, 23  
The Tuxedo Club

Brian Komline, 43  
Black Oak GC

Darin Goldstein, 35  
Noyac GC

Ethan Ng, 17  
Fiddler's Elbow CC

Trevor Randolph, 44  
Arcola CC

**T**eam MGA is set and the Emerald Isle awaits. On May 17-18, six accomplished MGA amateurs will square off against representatives from the Golfing Union of Ireland in the 14th Governor Hugh L. Carey Challenge Cup, hosted by Galway Bay Golf Resort in Oranmore, Ireland. While Tyler Cline and Ethan Ng will gain their first experience against the Irish, the other four competitors were part of the 2015 matches—in which the Irish halted the MGA's bid for a third consecutive victory—and are eager to flip the script.

*Find out more about the Carey Cup, this year's venue and the MGA's competitors and captains.*



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Beck presenting Davis Love III with the Gold Tee Award at 2016's MGWA National Awards Dinner.

# The Host with the Most: **BRUCE BECK** A Q&A WITH

**T**hough Bruce Beck, lead sports anchor for NBC 4 New York, has always been a lover of sports, he didn't pick up the game of golf until his early 30s. However, it quickly developed into a great passion for the multiple-time Emmy Award winner, and led to his longstanding involvement with the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association.

*Extra:* How were you introduced to golf?

**Bruce Beck:** I was awful when I first started playing golf in 1989. The next year, I was invited to play as a celebrity golfer in the JAL Big Apple Classic at Wykagyl, where the late David Earl told me that if I really wanted to improve and get serious about my game, I needed to seek out Jim McLean at Sleepy Hollow. I was able to book a lesson – and my life changed forever.

*E:* What drove your passion to become a sports broadcaster?

**BB:** I started listening to the Knicks on the radio as a seven year old. I actually kept the transistor radio under my pillow. In 1967, Marv Albert started calling the games and I became hooked. Before long, I started turning down the sound of games and started announcing them myself. I used cooking utensils from the kitchen as makeshift microphones. I even called the play-by-play of my mother baking for big events. Little did we all know, those experiences would help shape my broadcasting career.

*E:* What has been your most memorable golf-related experience during your career?

**BB:** I was the International Broadcasting host of the 1993 Masters at Augusta National. It was an amazing experience covering Bernhard Langer winning his second green jacket. I also won a media lottery spot and was invited to play the course. Despite being so nervous my knees were shaking, I still lit it up and fired a 105. For WNBC-TV, I covered the 2002 U.S. Open at Bethpage Black. It was a spectacular and raucous setting for a major championship.

*E:* What do you always look forward to about the MGWA National Awards Dinner?

**BB:** Hosting the Met Golf Writers Dinner is always a highlight of the year for me. It is one of the hardest events I host, but also one of the most gratifying. The hours of preparation are crucial to try to get it right. I really enjoy the camaraderie of the dinner and meeting the award recipients. I love hearing from the honorees. The stories they tell are fascinating, especially ones sharing how the game has impacted who they have become as individuals.

*E:* What does the longtime support of area caddie scholarship programs mean to the MGWA?

**BB:** I am very proud of the contributions we make each year to our four important charities – the caddie scholarship programs of Long Island, New Jersey and Westchester, plus the MGA Foundation. I always say to my fellow board members – you can't change the world, but you can impact lives. Far more important than watching a youngster excel on the golf course, is seeing them succeed in school and business – and make meaningful contributions to society. That's a real "ace" as far as I am concerned.

This will be Beck's 12th year hosting the MGWA National Awards Dinner ([purchase tickets](#)) and 16th year hosting the Bruce Beck Sports Broadcasting Camp ([more information](#)).



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# LAYOVER ST. LOUIS

BY MIKE KENDRICK

With its prime location along the Mississippi River, The Gateway City boasts quality golf in every direction. The play is characterized by a variety of styles, ensuring that there's a course fit to anyone's liking.

## COURSES:

**1 The Missouri Bluffs Golf Club** – Set in the dense, lush foliage that flanks the mighty Missouri River, the Missouri Bluffs Golf Club (*pictured*) offers golfers a welcome escape. The natural beauty of the Missouri River Valley captivates those traversing the towering trees, natural golden fescue, and steep elevation changes of Tom Fazio's 1995 design. As one of the finest maintained golf courses in the area, the championship-caliber track challenges all players to keep the ball in position.

**2 Gateway National Golf Links** – If there is a St. Louis version of the Black Course at Bethpage, it is this extremely challenging links experience on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, especially if the wind is up. With stunning views of the Gateway Arch set against the St. Louis skyline, this long, relatively flat layout navigates across rolling dunes of natural grasses, marshy wetlands, and strategically placed bunkers, as course architect Keith Foster draws on the game's oldest inspirations and challenges.

**3 Aberdeen Golf Club** – Lain upon a vast prairie, mostly unprotected from the elements, Aberdeen Golf Club is another classic links layout that taps into golf's ancient traditions to challenge golfers. Plenty of fescue grass and strategically subtle tributaries help provide a solid test of golf. Aberdeen is yet another venue where players of all skill levels can enjoy true championship conditions.

*Nearby:* While these three courses circle the city, a convenient option just minutes from the airport is Normandie Golf Course, which leans on its history as the oldest public course west of the Mississippi. It features an old style of tree-lined fairways, rolling hills, blind shots, sharp doglegs and sloped greens—all defining elements of classic St. Louis golf.



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# Polishing off the Plan



Echo Lake members were eager to hear Jones' comments on the completion of the master plan's final stage.



Superintendent Chris Carson, Rich LaBar of LaBar Golf Renovations, Rees Jones Inc. design associate Steve Weisser, architect Rees Jones, club president Jim Gallagher, and head golf professional Pat Fillian.



Echo Lake's new par-three third hole.

**A**fter embarking upon an ambitious golf course master plan in 2010, Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield, N.J., and its members will soon enjoy the finished project. Architect Rees Jones has overseen the master plan's completion, which has included substantial tree removal, rebuilding of greens, and the creation of new tee complexes.

The most aggressive work was saved for the final phase and involved significant changes to the opening four holes. The first and second holes experienced extensive regrading to the fairway. The first hole's blind tee shot was eliminated, while the second hole was combined with the former third to create a new par five. The third hole is now

a 140-yard par three with a new green. Tree removal had made the fourth hole an easier par-five, leading to the decision to move the tees forward and change its par to four. It plays 455 yards from the championship tees and is downhill and often downwind.

On April 22, Jones was one of several special guests on hand at Echo Lake to celebrate the master plan's completion—the first four holes are set to open on May 19. Jones commented on his affinity for the club and the work that has gone into the classic golf course. He commended the membership for their willingness to take on such a project, while staff and club members applauded Jones' dedication and presence throughout the process.





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The Trump Organization commissioned one of the world's top golf architects, Gil Hanse, to completely restore Doral's four historic courses, including the famed Blue Monster – a massive 300-plus acre, 18-hole golf course and host of the PGA TOUR. Each of the courses was reimagined, expanded and upgraded as part of the transformation to exceed expectations of amateur and professional golfers alike. The driving range is enhanced with LED lighting systems – the first of its kind – new short-game practice area and 40 practice stations. The Jim McLean Golf School, renowned as the number one golf school in America, offers an on-site state-of-the-art teaching facility. The True Spec Golf club fitting center provides the

ultimate custom-fitting experience in golf equipment – an experience that was once exclusive to tour players.

As an added bonus, guests can enjoy a modern locker room and an expansive pro-shop that provides the latest in golf equipment, accessories and apparel for men, ladies and juniors. One of the largest in the country, the pro-shop is regarded as an authority in golf products, as they continuously carry exclusive and limited-edition items. Guests who become club members can enjoy exclusive golf tournaments and events.

For guests looking to lounge, the Royal Palm Pool complex offers an exciting and relaxing oasis, while the new 48,000-square-foot Trump Spa welcomes those who seek rejuvenation and tranquility. The resort's versatile dining options, including signature restaurants BLT Prime Steakhouse and Champions Bar & Grill, can be considered destinations in their own right and are sure to satisfy every palate.

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# MAJOR RELIEF

**M**asters champion Sergio Garcia transitioned from the tranquil, bird-chirping grounds of Augusta National Golf Club to the boisterous, fast-paced streets and studios of New York City just a day after his thrilling playoff win. Sporting his newly acquired green jacket from his first major victory, Garcia stopped at the Empire State Building as one of nearly 20 appearances and interviews in less than a 24-hour span. It was an entertaining media blitz all the way around, as he also snapped selfies with fans outside of the New York Stock Exchange, and showed off he and fiancée Angela Akins' dog during an appearance on Bloomberg.