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*This page: Clutch Carey Cuppers Mike Miller (left) and Max Buckley celebrate on the 18th green. Photo by Pat Cashman.*



# Flashbacks

BY A.J. VOELPEL

**M**y timing couldn't have been any better. While I was always a follower of MGA championships, I like to think that I started working full-time for the Association during the most exciting season in recent memory. It helps that I have no basis for comparison.

With the championship schedule moving full steam ahead this month, allow me to quickly reminisce back to last season. The players I followed, pressure shots I witnessed, low scores I counted – how can they possibly be topped in 2013?

Whatever happens this summer, I can assure you that there are three instances in particular that will not be matched.

The first occurred during the second round of the Ike at Atlantic Golf Club. 2009 Met Am champ Cameron Wilson strolled around with what seemed to be a GPS-activated golf ball to the tune of a bogey-free, competitive course record 65. His round included five birdies and an eagle (on the par-4 12th) on a morning where conditions were ideal for kite surfing, not playing 7-under golf. With consistent 15-25 mph winds wreaking havoc on the open layout, the scoring average rose to 78 among the 39 competitors. Wilson played a different game that day. I still can't believe he didn't make a bogey.

The second happened at the Met Amateur at Hollywood Golf Club, where a heavyweight fight broke out in the semifinals between the 2011 champion Mike Miller and soon-to-be winner Ryan McCormick. Again confronted with gusty conditions, the two were taking turns showing off, like they were playing a game of H-O-R-S-E in the driveway. McCormick birdied three of his first seven holes. Miller didn't record a single bogey, shot 2-under... and McCormick still won 1-up!

The third moment defied physics. Me and about a dozen other fortunate souls witnessed magic on the 16th green at Sebonack during the French-American Challenge in October. It's a massive, three-tiered surface that runs extremely quick back to front. Two-time MGA Player of the Year Joe Saladino's approach found the top level. The hole was cut on the bottom right. A four-putt would've been acceptable. When he made contact, the ball started gliding downhill right to left, then to the right, like it was skiing slalom on the Rockies. Suddenly it broke hard left, caught the very middle of the cup, jumped up and disappeared. I let out a loud squeal (seriously, I never made a noise like that before). Everyone there just lost it and I remember feeling terrible for those who missed it.

I can only hope my timing remains perfect.



Cameron Wilson finishes up his masterful second day performance at the 2012 Ike

JOHN DETEMPLE

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# Hands On

Keep your glove hand working towards the target for a low, running chip shot

**BY JASON BARRY**

Photo by Russell Kirk/GOLFLINKS

**T**o lower your scores, start playing the high percentage shot around the green when chipping. I find that most mid to high handicap golfers choose to hit the more difficult shot and end up making huge numbers because of it. Playing the ball nearer to the ground minimizes your “blow up holes” and will help you save more pars.

Set up with your weight forward, ball in the middle of the stance and handle *slightly* ahead of the ball. Take a club with less loft (8-iron for instance) and make practice swings with only your front arm. Make sure the emblem on your glove continues to work towards the target as your chest turns. If you are doing this correctly, the bounce (bottom) of the club will glide along the ground after impact. If you feel the club dig or not touch the ground at all, it is likely that your weight is back and your lead wrist broke down prior to impact.

After making practice swings with one arm, hit short distance chip shots. When you finally do put your back hand on the club, try to maintain the feeling of the emblem on your glove continuing to work towards the target.

To simulate course play when you practice, pick out a spot five feet in front of you to land the golf ball on. Now that you’re making solid contact, you can start to build your feel with different clubs. Land the ball in the same spot 10 times with your 8-iron (and other clubs) and watch how the ball rolls out differently. The next time you play, you will be chipping the ball next to the hole and not over the green.

Keep it simple, play the percentages and watch your game improve!

---


Jason Barry is the Head Teaching Professional at the Mercer County Golf Academy in Princeton, NJ



# Fire Sale

BY HELEN STOCK

Photo by Peter Oberc



**W**illow Ridge Country Club in Harrison, N.Y., turned back the clocks recently with an old tradition of celebrating the membership's purchase of a club by having a "Lease Burning" party. In 2012, Willow Ridge members purchased the 122-acre property and spent the year modernizing the facilities. Scott Garvin, COO of Willow Ridge, said that the goal of the event, which was attended by more than 400 people, was to "blend an old tradition with a new and young membership and bring part of the past into modern times."

Willow Ridge not only invested in a complete course renovation and clubhouse expansion, but also placed an emphasis on making the club family friendly. The investments have yielded strong returns as the club now has a waiting list for membership and welcomed a record number of 40 new members in the last year.

Club President David Berkey does the honors



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# Life of Ryan

BY A.J. VOELPEL

It takes some players a career to accumulate the hardware Ryan McCormick collected in 2012. Remember? Ryan captured the Met Amateur, NJSGA Am, NYC Am, and then narrowly missed becoming the first amateur since 2005 to win the Met Open (T-2). The St. John's junior shared some thoughts heading into the MGA season.

#### Summer Aspirations...

Obviously my goal is to have a Johnson Wagner-esque season. But if I could at least be right there in all three majors (Ike, Amateur, Open) and have a chance to win one coming down the stretch, I'd be happy with that.

#### Just missing at the 2012 Met Open...

I actually think about the final round all the time. Although I didn't win, I think I played really well under the circumstances. Playing with Cameron [Young] in the final group, in front of all those people...it was the most fun I had all year.

#### How the college season is going...

It's been little frustrating playing out of New York, especially since this winter has been brutal. You have these expectations that you're in summer form and then you play against all these guys that have been playing in the south. But the last month or so has been nice. We've been travelling a lot and playing in warmer weather.

#### Making another run at MGA Player of the Year Award...

I was so close last year and I would love to win that award. I'm going to try to play in as many events as I can. Especially with Mike [Miller] and all the great players, it'd be cool to win POY over those guys while they're still amateurs.



# Golf Grows Here

BY JEFF DAY

Photos by Joe Valentine

Sixteen-year-old Julie Hung stole the show at the 19th MGA Foundation Day of Golf held at famed Quaker Ridge Golf Club, as she addressed more than 130 people who came out to support GOLFWORKS - the Foundation's flagship youth program.

Over \$130,000 was raised to support the student intern program that employs 250 students at 80 MGA clubs each year.

"Quaker Ridge was a wonderful and generous host and this was one of our most successful GOLFWORKS fundraisers in the 19 year history of the event," said MGA Foundation Chairman Jeff Holzschuh.

Along with a round of golf on one of the world's best layouts, guests got to meet Julie, who spoke about her valuable experiences working at Metropolis, and

three other outstanding GOLFWORKS interns (pictured left to right), including **Freddy Figueroa** (Scarsdale, 2010-'13), **Skye McCaine** (Winged Foot 2009-'13), and **David Hodges** (Golf Club of Purchase, 2011-'13).





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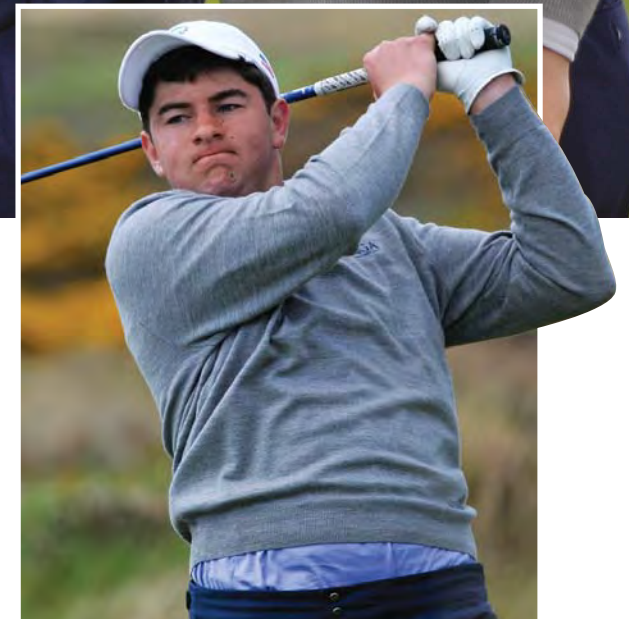
# Walk-Off!

Photos by Pat Cashman

**W**inner, winner, corned beef dinner! On a thrilling final day of singles action, the coveted Carey Cup came down to the final two matches. Max Buckley completed a remarkable comeback, winning three of his last four holes (including 18) to close out his match and secure at least a tie. Minutes later, Mike Miller drained a dramatic 18-footer on his final hole to halve his match and give the MGA its first victory ever on Irish soil.

It was the second consecutive victory for the team from the states and only the third time the MGA has beaten the Golfing Union of Ireland in 11 total matches.

The two sides will meet again in 2015 at Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson, N.J.





# What Happens Next?

BY BRIAN R. MAHONEY

Photo by John Mummert, USGA

**E**ver come across a large Green Iguana (or Common Iguana) on a golf course? In this edition of Rules Extra, we contemplate what to do if you're ever faced with a "dangerous situation" (e.g. an encounter with a rattlesnake, alligator or some other hazardous reptile species) that may interfere with play of a ball that lay *through the green*.

Now that our green friend has our ball - what do we do? A golfer may, without penalty, drop **another** ball (the iguana, snake, alligator, etc. gets to keep the original) within one club-length no nearer to the hole and at the nearest spot that is not dangerous (and is not in a hazard and not on a putting green).

**IF** the player's ball was in a position where they had no shot (regardless of the "dangerous situation"), the player may not take free relief, but they could proceed under the unplayable ball rule (Rule 28) if applicable.

Personally, if it was me, I'd probably just run!





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# Surf & Turf

BY A.J. VOELPEL

Photos by Matt Ceplo

Grass, staff, and budgets aren't the only balancing acts of a superintendent these days. Not if you're among the plethora that have combined knowledge of mulch and sand with computers and broadband.

Blogging has become an important initiative for many supers in the Met Area (and country) for a number of reasons.

"I wanted to communicate better with the membership and that's what really got me started," says Frank Tichenor, superintendent of Forest Hill Field Club in Bloomfield, N.J., and frequent blogger since 2010. "It's their golf course, and you could kind of educate them on what goes into maintaining certain things."

In addition to connecting with Forest Hill members, Tichenor says blogging has been an invaluable way of sharing ideas and best practices with maintenance crews throughout the country.

Over at Rockland Country Club, Superintendent Matt Ceplo rarely steps on the course without his camera. His team is finalizing a number of projects, including a new irrigation system and major cart path renovations. And he's documenting every bit of it with captivating photos.

"I also use it to develop partnerships with the outside community regarding environmental issues, particularly bird watch groups," he says.

In 2011, his team counted 43 different bird species. Don't believe me? Check his blog for photographic evidence.



A Cedar Waxwing sighting at Rockland CC.





# 54 Holes in...Dallas/Fort Worth

BY ROBERT RODRIGUEZ

Photo courtesy of Four Seasons

The PGA Tour dances the Texas Two-Step this month, as it stops in the Dallas suburb of Irving at the TPC Four Seasons Las Colinas and then promenades to Fort Worth's legendary Colonial Country Club. Make it a point to grab a golf partner and discover what Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex has to offer.

## GOLF

- **TPC Four Seasons Las Colinas, Irving.** A recent major redesign added some allure and toughness to this course. Adding to its charm is the statue of Mr. Nelson near the first tee.
- **Cowboys Golf Club, Grapevine.** Even a beloved Giants fan has to visit the world's only NFL-themed golf club. This Jeff Brauer design amazes with its striking elevation changes.
- **Old American Golf Club, The Colony.** 1997 British Open champion and Dallasite Justin Leonard teamed up with Tripp Davis to create a memorable layout that features "Golden Age" nuances such as an old railroad bridge and hickory flagsticks.

## LODGING

- **Four Seasons Resort and Club Dallas at Las Colinas, Irving.** It's hard to top the Four Seasons when it comes to amenities, service, and proximity to restaurants and entertainment venues.
- **Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine.** Closeness to Cowboys GC and the D/FW Airport makes it a popular spot for conventions and golf groups. It doesn't hurt that there's exceptional dining, including a sports bar with 50 flatscreens and a 52-foot HDTV. Everything is bigger in Texas.

## OFF-COURSE

- **Cowboys Stadium Tours, Arlington.** Throw the football around on the field, take a picture on the star at the 50-yard line and even get a glimpse of the Cowboys cheerleaders' locker room.
- **The Sixth Floor Museum, Dallas.** Located at Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas, this chronicles the assassination and legacy of President John F. Kennedy.

The par-3 5th hole at TPC Four Seasons





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# Handle With Flair

BY SCOTT KRAMER

Grips have rapidly become fashion trendsetters. For instance, a year after white grips came to market in late 2009, white clubheads emerged. Then came an array of colorful handles last year. And like clockwork in 2013, clubheads from the most popular brands arrived at pro shops in seemingly every hue of the rainbow. Coincidence? Perhaps.

But surely you've noticed all of the bright-colored grips – some even fluorescent – at golf courses this year. The reason? Experts claim it's all part of the latest trend of golfers wanting to personalize their gear.

“Color is in right now,” says Brandon Sowell, Golf Pride’s global sales and marketing manager. “Walk into any sporting goods retailer and you’ll see it permeating every product category. Whether golfers decide to sport a specific grip color out of personal preference or to show their allegiance to a particular sports team or cause, we’re certainly seeing more of them gravitating to colorful grips.”

One grip company, Pure, allows you to take customization a step further by etching your name and any non-licensed logo into your grips. Which brings a whole new meaning to the term “palm reading”.

Pictured: **a**) Golf Pride’s Niion (\$8), **b**) IOMIC’s Sticky Evolution 2.3 (\$21), **c**) Lamkin’s i-LINE (\$10), PURE’s DTX (\$9), **d**) UST Mamiya’s Soft Touch (\$7–\$9), and **e**) Winn’s DuraTech hybrid (\$9).





# Road to Merion

Photo by John Mummert, USGA

It seems every competitive player in the country is vying for a spot at Merion Golf Club. And by everyone, we mean the 9,860 golfers who entered; the most in U.S. Open history (broke 2009's mark of 9,086).

The road goes through the Met Area beginning May 9, where the MGA will conduct the first of four local qualifiers at Morris County Golf Club. Those will funnel directly into the sectional qualifier (commonly referred to as the "Longest Day in Golf") on June 3 at Century Country Club and Old Oaks Country Club, both in Purchase, N.Y.

"Didn't qualify? Don't sweat it. The MGA has partnered with Lexus to offer an incredible U.S. Open Sweepstakes that could have you and a guest catching weekend action inside the Lexus V.I.P. hospitality tent at Merion. [Enter for free here.](#)

