

The Met Golfer

EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

MGAGOLF.ORG

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March 2016

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This page: Even after a benign winter, we're anxiously awaiting springtime scenes such as this from an archived photo of The Stanwich Club. The French-American Challenge, which places the MGA/WMGA against the Ligue de Paris, will take place at The Stanwich Club, October 18-19.



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Volume 4, Number 3 • March 2016

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Published for the Metropolitan Golf Association by:

Great Golf Resorts of the World, Inc.
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Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006
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PLATFORM

FLIRRY



More than 600 fans attended the APTA National Championship matches at Country Club of Darien, while thousands more watched online.

When golf comes to a halt during the Met Area's winter months, platform tennis is hitting its prime season. The fast-paced sport recently put Westchester and Fairfield counties at its center with the 81st American Platform Tennis Association National Championships. More than 30 clubs and facilities in the two counties hosted the event which featured 252 teams (platform tennis is predominantly played in doubles), while the semis and championship matches were held at Country Club of Darien in Darien, Conn.

Even though platform tennis originated in Scarsdale, N.Y., in 1928, it's still being introduced to people in the area, especially as play expands beyond country clubs. The sport is played on rough-surfaced, elevated courts—roughly 1/3 the size of a traditional tennis court—which typically use an underneath heating system to melt snow and ice. Chicken-wire fencing encloses the playing area and, like racquetball or squash, the ball may be played off the walls.

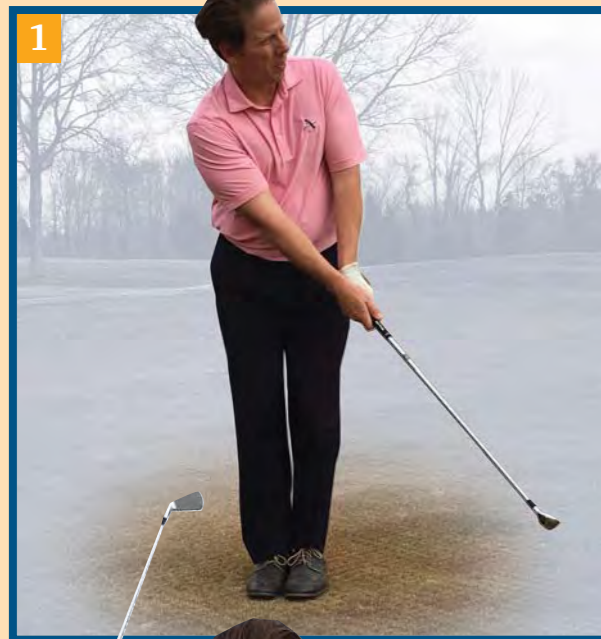
CONSISTENT *Contact*

BY MICHAEL T. BULGER, PGA | Michael T. Bulger is the Director of Player Development at The Patterson Club, host of the 2016 Met Junior Championship sponsored by MetLife.

Every golfer can improve their consistency in ball striking, especially if hitting behind the golf ball is a common miscue. By using these drills to create both an internal and external cue, you'll be able to develop a more consistent low point in your swing, and in turn more consistent contact, by getting pressure off your trail foot and onto your lead foot.

Step-Change of Direction Drill

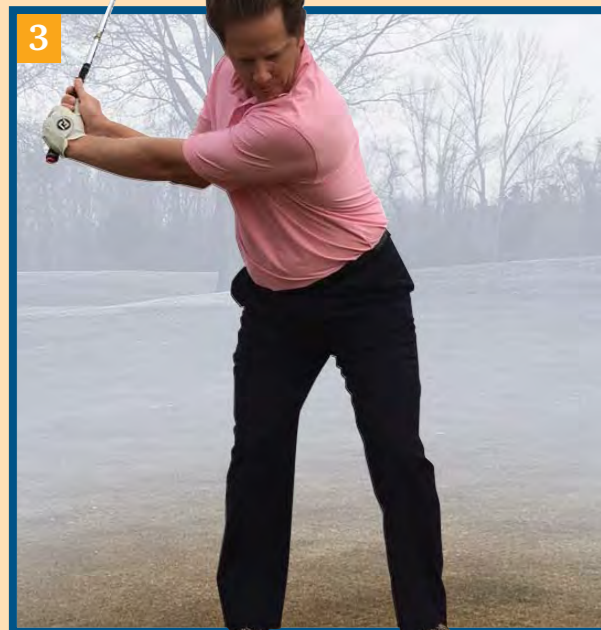
This drill helps you become more self-aware of the pressure shifting between the lead and trail foot and encourage the proper sequencing throughout the swing.



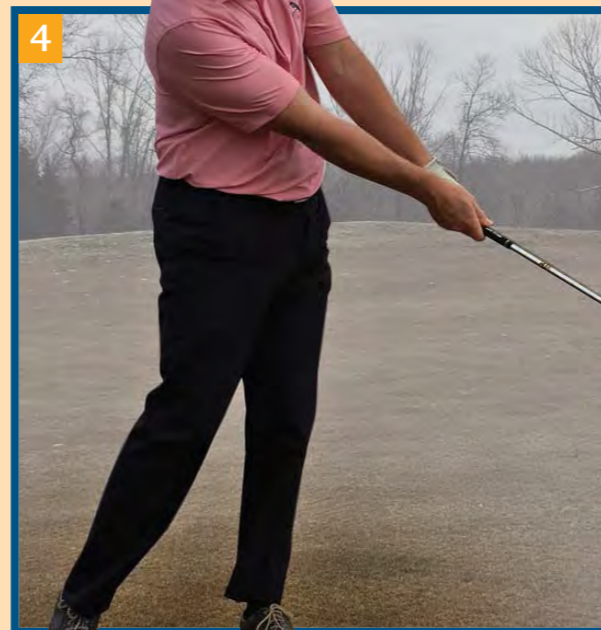
1 *Begin with your feet together and the hands and club in front of the ball, positioned down the target line.*



2 *Next, start your backswing.*



3 *Before the club reaches the top of your backswing, take a step towards the target with your lead foot. This will have the pressure move off the trail foot towards the lead foot as the club reaches the top. From here, the lower body will be encouraged to unwind first instead of the upper body first.*



4 *Finish your swing in balance.*

Hands Forward Bunker Drill

By focusing on your hand position being more forward at impact, you can accomplish more solid contact and develop a more consistent low-point, giving you better overall contact. Pressure moves off the trail foot towards the lead foot which helps facilitate internal rotation of the lead hip, creating space for the club to be delivered into impact.



Train only your lead-hand first by taking quarter swings while maintaining a slight lean in the club shaft at impact.



Train only your trail-hand next, the same as you did with your lead hand. Finally, train both hands together.

Jordan Spieth and Lexi Thompson joined forces on March 14 for an extensive media tour in New York City. While similar circuits for golfers tend to come after a major championship victory, the top two American golfers in the world rankings were instead promoting a major initiative: the Drive, Chip & Putt Championship.

The duo combined for several of the appearances, but also split up to spread the word about the 2016 finals (April 3 at Augusta National Golf Club) and to encourage registration for the 2017 championship, which begins this summer with local qualifying. Thompson wrapped up her tour by lighting the Empire State Building in the championship's green, blue, red and gold, while Spieth stopped at The Golf Club at Chelsea Piers and then The Late Show with Stephen Colbert to finish his day.

Sam O'Hara, a 2016 finalist and native New Yorker, was in disbelief as he met the Spieth and Thompson (pictured below), uttering, "Is this really happening?" Jack St. Ledger (Little Falls, N.J.), Tiya Chowdary (Montgomery, N.J.) and Krya Cox (South Salem, N.Y.) will also represent the Met Area in this year's finals.

Complete details for the Drive, Chip & Putt Championship, which is a combined effort of the USGA, PGA of America and Augusta National, are available at www.DriveChipandPutt.com.

DCP in NYC

Spieth and Thompson's media tour began at dusk as they made stops at several morning shows.



UNCONVENTIONALLY IN STRIDE

BY SCOTT KRAMER

Remember when golf shoes were classic all-leather uppers bearing welted soles? Yeah, they'd be utterly out of place these days on the fairway. And as styles have trended toward cleatless, athletic-looking shoes in recent years, brands are starting to re-think what's chic on the fairways. In fact, when it comes to what most golfers are wearing, these latest two models aren't exactly the on-course standard either. But they could be trend-setters, if early indications endure. Golfers — even PGA Tour pros — have been loving them for comfort thus far. And when shoes pass that initial test, they look even better.

FootJoy used a tree frog — both for its coloring and gripping ability — as inspiration for the new waterproof FJ FreeStyle (\$160 standard lacing/\$180 BOA closure system) that's designed to deliver exceptional traction, mobility and comfort. A flexible, translucent outsole extends a soft feel and firm footing, while a soft midsole compound is billed as the brand's most comfortable ever.

It may be a high top, but Nike Golf's Flyknit Chukka (\$190) works just fine on the course. The shoe features a featherweight, form-fitting, one-piece upper with Flywire technology for support, plus a thin TPU layer for breathable water resistance. The sole offers excellent traction and allows for natural movement.



RED CARPET REFLECTIONS



Tom Yellin and his wife Shari Finkelstein at the 88th Academy Awards.

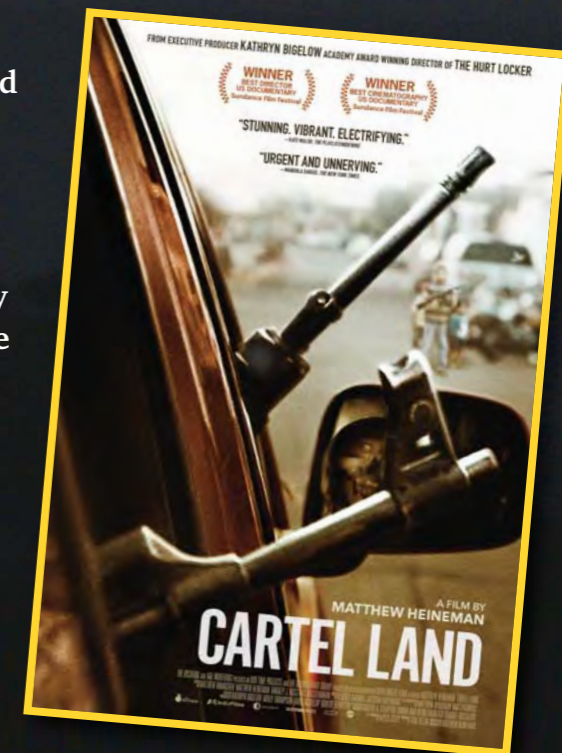
“It was pretty obvious to me early on that we had something special,” recalls Tom Yellin about his work on the Matthew Heineman-directed film *Cartel Land*, a documentary that follows two vigilante groups and their fight against Mexican drug cartels. Yellin, a member of The Stanwich Club who has played high-level amateur golf for more than 40 years and won numerous Met Area titles, was certainly right. Heineman and Yellin received an Academy Award nomination for the film as Best Documentary Feature and attended the Oscars in Los Angeles on February 28.

As producer of the project, Yellin helped guide the film’s development over two years. He was a voice in the editorial process, a manager in organizing the film’s production and a marketer in planning its distribution to audiences. “I thought it was really interesting and an important story to tell,” reflects Yellin in reference to the devastation brought on by the Mexican drug cartels depicted in the film.


Cartel Land was well received by audiences and built further acclaim upon winning multiple Sundance awards and earning BAFTA and Academy Award nominations, among others. So what’s it like to attend an event such as the Oscars? For Yellin, he compares it to a familiar experience in his golf career: qualifying for a USGA national championship. He’s qualified for 13 such events, including the 1988 U.S. Amateur in which he reached the quarterfinals.

“It really feels great just to be there. It really does,” remarks Yellin, who is also co-founder and president of The Documentary Group. “The feeling of being present at something that’s important and really affirming about an accomplishment is very familiar,” he says, comparing the two achievements. “It’s very similar, except you don’t have to play. There’s less pressure. You just have to sit there and hope they call your name.”

The film follows vigilante groups on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. Here, a member of the Autodefensas stands guard in Michoacán, Mexico.



Baltusrol Battles: The Lower's First Major



George Von Elm receives the Havemeyer Cup from USGA President William C. Fownes, with Bobby Jones looking on from the background.

Baltusrol Golf Club's major championship history stands among the richest in golf, with yet another page to be written following July's PGA Championship. But long before the deciding of modern majors on the Lower Course, it all began with the 1926 U.S. Amateur.

Bobby Jones arrived at Baltusrol seeking a three-peat, having won the U.S. Amateur at Merion and Oakmont the previous two years. Jones delivered early in his billing as the favorite, carding rounds of 70-73 to capture the stroke-play medal by four shots. In match play, he continued his stellar play by defeating Chick Evans in the quarterfinals, 3 and 2, and Francis Ouimet, 4 and 3, in the semifinals—with both matches, like the finals, contested over 36-holes.

Meanwhile, George Von Elm—considered Jones' top challenger entering the event—had a rocky start to the championship. The Utah native needed a playoff to advance to match play, at which

point the Committee held his pre-tournament number two seeding, before needing 19 holes to win his opening match. His play continued to improve and he advanced to the finals behind an 11 and 10 victory, which set up the highly anticipated showdown with Jones—the very man Von Elm had lost to each of the last two years.

Von Elm took a one-up lead into the afternoon round, but Jones squared the match by winning the first hole for the second time. However, Von Elm regained his advantage with a birdie on the fifth and extended the lead to two on the 10th when Jones found a greenside bunker and carded a bogey. The margin grew to three when Jones' drive on the 13th found a ditch and led to another bogey. Jones then won the 14th, but two halves and a missed birdie chance by Jones on the 17th earned Von Elm the title, 2 and 1. Upon defeat Jones quickly remarked to Von Elm, "It was great golf, George, I'm mighty glad you won."

LAYOVER Atlanta

BY TIM HARTIN

Atlanta's golf scene ranges as wide as its economy, which is identified as one of the most diverse in the United States since no one industry is truly overpowering. While the city is well known for its private clubs, there are plenty of great public offerings to try the next time you swing through Atlanta.

COURSES:

1 Cobblestone Golf Course – Nestled in a serene setting northwest of the city, Cobblestone's impressive layout is highlighted by eight holes along Lake Acworth. Its back tees play from 6800 yards, but the course demands accuracy from tee to green. Its 2010 renovation helped revitalize the course with new Bermuda greens and brilliant white bunkers.

Nearby: Acworth is on the outskirts of the Atlanta metro area, but nearby Kennesaw provides all the retail and dining one would need.

2 Mystery Valley Golf Club – Mystery Valley winds through acres of Georgia pines, though its rolling fairways are generous and welcoming. The 6700-yard course about 20 miles east of the city features an assortment of doglegs in both directions, which can call for use of every shot and club in your bag.

Nearby: Located in Lithonia, Mystery Valley is less than 10 miles from Stone Mountain Park—an area which is home to a variety of shopping centers and a large conference center.

3 Charlie Yates Golf Course – As a nine-hole, par 30, this Rees Jones layout is a must play, especially if time is precious. A challenging mix of par 3s and 4s put your short game to the test and remind you of the fun that golf is all about. The course and its greens are known for being well maintained, even with its high traffic.

Nearby: The course is located in the East Lake community (and is right next door to East Lake Golf Club), just four miles from downtown and less than 15 miles from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, making this a more than convenient stop.

Cobblestone's front nine offers a unique layout with three par 3s, three par 4s and three par 5s. The lakeside par-3 third shown here is 197 yards from the back tees.

Back to Canoe Brook

Spectators, players and caddies gather around the scoreboard at the 2010 U.S. Open SQR at Canoe Brook.

Scoreboards have a way of attracting a buzz and excitement at the end of events. One of the most highly anticipated scoreboards of the season? That of the U.S. Open Sectional Qualifying Round conducted annually by the MGA, where fans and players look to see who survives a grueling 36-hole day of golf to advance to our national open.

With the MGA rotating host sites every three years, the SQR returns to Canoe Brook Country Club in Summit, N.J., this season. Familiar Met Area names rose to the top and secured qualifying positions when the club last hosted the event in 2012, as then amateur Cameron Wilson, local club professionals Mark McCormick and Brian Gaffney and former Trump National-Bedminster assistant Jim Herman all advanced to compete at The Olympic Club. One of the most memorable moments at Canoe Brook came in 2006, when more than 5,000 spectators came to watch Michelle Wie's attempt to qualify for the U.S. Open.

In the Met Area, the road to Oakmont Country Club and the 116th U.S. Open Championship begins on May 10, with the first of five Local Qualifying Rounds. The SQR then takes place on June 6.

