

The Met Golfer

EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

MGAGOLF.ORG

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February 2015

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This page: Recognize this place? It looked a little different last August, when Grant Sturgeon claimed the **99th Met Open Championship**. While Trump – Bedminster looks beautiful snow covered or in the middle of summer, we prefer the latter. Don't worry golfers; spring is inching closer every day. Photo Courtesy of USGA

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Volume 3, Number 2 • February 2015

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Published for the Metropolitan Golf Association by:

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USGA Dream Team

Earlier this month the United States Golf Association hosted its 120th Annual Meeting at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. The event involved the usual USGA business affairs and committee reports as well as the re-election of Tom O'Toole of St. Louis, MO. The USGA also used the occasion to unveil its new all-star team put together by its new broadcast partner FOX Sports for the 2015 U.S. Open at Chambers Bay. The team that was introduced is as star studded as the Big Apple itself and will include lead anchor Joe Buck, lead analyst Greg Norman, LPGA Hall of Famer Juli Inkster, PGA Tour star Brad Faxon and on-air reporter Holly Sonders. The coordinating producer of the broadcast team is none other than the Met Area's own Mark Loomis, Winged Foot member and former MGA Father and Son champion whose extensive career at both ABC and MLB Network is sure to make this the golf team to watch in 2015.



FOX Sports will cover this year's U.S. Open, and some members of the team were on hand. From right to left: Greg Norman, Juli Inkster, Brad Faxon, Mark Loomis, Joe Buck, and Holly Sonders.

FINDING YOUR STROKE

BY CHRISTOPHER POWERS

As we watch some of the PGA TOUR's best strut down the green fairways baking in the beautiful California sun in this dreary, wintery month they call "February," the same thought runs through everyone's brain: "I need golf." We are all addicts, and since not all of us can fly south for the winter, we've got to find a way to work on our games in some capacity. While indoor carpet putting can help, Bill Smittle, head professional at Scarsdale Golf Club, is taking that to a new level. His indoor putting studio at the club is in its fifth year of existence, and has helped many students looking to save some strokes when they get on the dance floor. To make a long story short, Smittle and his son Will, a participant in MGA events, questioned why the Europeans were always making the big putts in the Ryder Cup, while the U.S.A. wasn't. He found out they worked with a highly successful putting coach, Harold Swash. Smittle reached out to him, and eventually made the trip to meet him at his home base in England.

"He talked about things that guys here in the U.S. weren't really taking about," Smittle said. After going through Swash's certification program and successfully teaching it himself for a year, a renovation of the sports house at Scarsdale provided an opportunity to create a putting studio. The state-of-the-art lab is open year-round and has all the technology and tools to diagnose every nuance of a player's stroke. "Not only in putting, but all of golf instruction, everyone is trying to make a perfect stroke," he said, "What we have found is that there are no two strokes alike. We are all trying to make things look too perfect." Smittle starts with a search for everyone's own thumbprint, and then a tweak here or there can make a world of difference on the greens. "When we get away from trying to make perfect 'looking' strokes and start making perfect 'performing' strokes, we have had a lot more success," he said. Next time that buddy of yours from Scarsdale buries another 20 footer to win the match, now you'll know why.



STEPPING UP

BY SCOTT KRAMER

Four top golf shoe brands have started 2015 on the right foot, so to speak. Their latest products aim to energize, stabilize and comfort your dogs, through an entire round.

PUMA

The technology inside PUMA Golf's TITANTOUR (\$220) regulates temperature, keeping your foot cool—it was originally developed for NASA to keep astronauts comfortable while wearing their spacesuits. An EVA midsole translates to lightweight strength, durability, flexibility and traction.



Footjoy

The web-looking HYPERFLEX (\$210/BOA lacing, \$190/standard lacing) employs an exoskeleton that conforms to the foot and keeps it from rolling laterally during the swing. It's notably flexible and ventilated.



adidas

The midsole on adidas Golf's Boost (\$190) aims to return energy to your feet, along with comfort. Its foam cushioning – made up of thousands of thermoplastic polyurethane capsules that are fused together via a steam molding process – is responsive in all weather conditions.



Nike

Golf's TW'15 (\$200) is Tiger Woods' latest signature shoe. Combined with a low-profile outsole, the lightweight "Flyweave" technology in the one-piece upper lends stability, fit and flexibility. Woods says that donning the shoes helps him push off the ground better and finish his swing with power.



TRIPLE THREAT

BY CHRISTOPHER POWERS



Ever wonder what it would be like to be good at everything? James Nicholas doesn't have to wonder, he is just really good at life in general. The Scarsdale, N.Y. native is a three-sport athlete, and a soon-to-be Ivy Leaguer, so I guess he does pretty well in the classroom too. Nicholas is an amateur golfer on the rise, a star wide receiver/defensive back/kick returner at Scarsdale High, and in hockey he finished last season as the leading high school scorer in the state. This fall he is headed to Yale, a school he chose because he will be able to play both football and golf at the Division I level. The kid does it all.

"I heard from Penn State, Northeastern," he pauses, trying to remember all the schools that contacted him, "Boston University, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, and..." he pauses again. I interrupt and ask which sports they were contacting him for. "These were just hockey," he said.

He has been playing football and hockey at a high level his whole life, while he began taking golf seriously just two or three years ago, when he realized he was good at it, as he puts it. Shocker, right? This commenced a very time-crunched lifestyle, one that saw a lot of homework done on car rides to his various sporting events. While Nicholas enjoys it, it was a challenge at times, because school always comes first. "My parents made me work really hard," he said. "If I wanted to play all three sports, I had to do well in school. That was the big motivation for me."

Many kids play a sport all three seasons growing up, and if you are good at them, why not? But when you are really good at them, a time will come to make a tough decision. No one knows that better than Nicholas. Like he said, school comes first, and he loved Yale, his future coaches and the opportunity they are giving him to play both sports. "I really wanted to play hockey in college, but football and golf are two passions of mine, and I'm looking forward to playing them at Yale," he said. "I'll miss hockey, but in the long run I think it will all work out."

While James has to leave July 1 for football, he plans to come back and forth for MGA events, so we'll be sure to follow him all summer. He is headed for big things, kind of like his father Stephen, a two-sport athlete at Harvard and founder of NY Orthopedics, which is recognized as the authority in the field of Sports Medicine. James' dad has served as the orthopedic team physician for the New York Jets and New York Islanders in the past. If James can't go pro in football or golf, he plans to follow in his father's footsteps. "I'm really interested in pre-med. My dad is a doctor, so I may be doing that at Yale," he said.

Brains, athleticism, work ethic - save some for the rest of us, man.

54 Holes in Southern California

By Maddi Vetrano

Would you rather be driving in the freezing rain and snow, or driving the ball along the ocean with the warm Cali sun hugging your back? Me too. I think it's time to hang up our shovels, evict the clubs from their winter home, and take a trip to where golf season never ends.

COURSES

- 1 **Pelican Hill Golf Club** – Don't even try to decide between Pelican Hill's two courses. For one, the North Ocean course features cliff elevated greens surrounded by the musing sounds of the ocean. On the other hand, the South Ocean course (Ranked 93rd on Golf Magazine's 2014 "Best Courses You Can Play list") is a floral masterpiece, providing the course with beauty as well as its own natural hazards. You might as well make it easy on yourself and just play both.
- 2 **Rustic Canyon** – Rustic Canyon was shaped to the contours of its natural landscape, making the greens and fairways as unpredictable as Mother Nature intended. Along the way, you'll find cactus, fescue, and intimidating pine trees that not only prove its number 4 spot on Golf Weekly Magazine's "Best Courses You Can Play" list, but make you wonder how it could possibly get better than this.
- 3 **Maderas Golf Club** – Consistently rated as the top golf course in San Diego county, Maderas Golf Club is a public club that gives golfers a private getaway. Challenges grow naturally at Maderas, as golfers meet cliffs, rocks, creeks, forests, and rolling hills that force you to step up your game.

WHERE TO STAY

- **The Resort at Pelican Hill** – The Resort at Pelican Hill is a consecutive Forbes Five-Star Rated resort that exudes luxury. Designed with an Italian theme, its architecture, including its gorgeous Coliseum-inspired pool, will give you the chance to live as the Romans would.

OFF-COURSE

- If you're looking for further relaxation off the greens, Orange County Winery Tours is the perfect option for groups and couples to explore the secret vineyards that define Orange County. It offers a variety of package deals that'll make it easy for you to lose any stress you might have about that double bogey.



5 Things About...

By Christopher Powers

Jets fans have heard his voice since 2002, but Bob Wischusen is much more than just the NFL team's play-by-play radio broadcaster. Whether it is college football or basketball, the Boston College alum is all over ESPN and at some point during your week if you flip on a game, chances are pretty good he will be on the call. When his crazy schedule warrants a day off, he is almost always spending it on the golf course. Wischusen is a member at Shackamaxon Country Club in Scotch Plains, N.J. and plays to what he calls a "fraudulent 5 handicap."

Here are 5 Things to Know About the Radio Voice of the New York Jets:

- 1 Wischusen grew up in Westfield, N.J. and currently resides just a town over in Cranford. At the age of 11, he tried the pitch and putt with his father and was immediately hooked. He ended up playing competitively in high school at Union Catholic and even has recently teed it up in MGA qualifying events. It is 'his sport' and he goes as far to say that it has become his life.
- 2 Upon arrival at Boston College, Wischusen went straight to the student radio station. There he met not only two new friends, but future roommates and colleagues. Joe Tessitore and Jon Sciambi both work for ESPN today as well, Tessitore mainly in college football and basketball, and Sciambi in MLB, as well as college basketball broadcasting.
- 3 He has called great games, but Wischusen praises the places he gets to call them, rather than the games themselves. This month he was at Cameron Indoor Stadium calling a Duke game; he has been to Assembly Hall in Indiana for Hoosier basketball and Penn State, Ohio State, the Big House at Michigan, and the Rose Bowl for college football and the list goes on and on. "Getting to call games at these places I grew up watching on television, it's been tremendous," he said. One of his favorites though, came in Foxborough, Mass. in 2011, when the underdog Jets claimed a huge playoff victory over the hometown Patriots.
- 4 Dream Foursome? Arnie, Jack, and Hogan in their prime. "I'm sure everyone says their dad and God," he says, "but as a golf junkie I'd want to play with golfers. I'd want to pick their brain, and see how they visualize shots and approach the golf course."
- 5 Aside from broadcasting and golf, one of his true passions is hockey and the New York Rangers. Wherever the work week takes him, he makes sure to catch the game however he can. "I still watch the Rangers like I am 13 years old," Wischusen said.

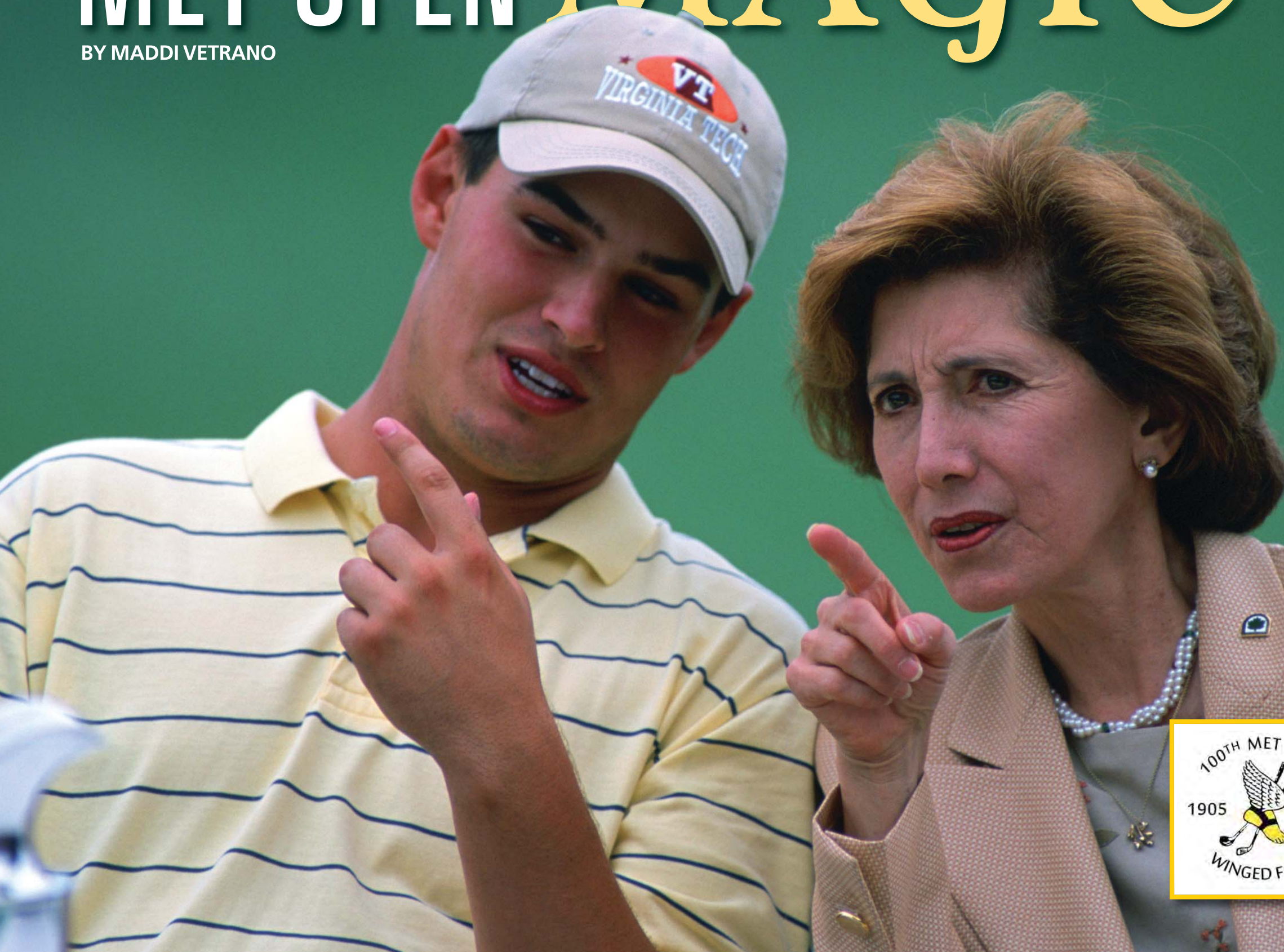


Wischusen (middle) and his ESPN College Football broadcast team, four-time Super Bowl Champion Matt Millen (left), and ESPN reporter Quint Kessenich (right).

Bob Wischusen

MET OPEN MAGIC

BY MADDI VETRANO



As we continue our series, sharing some of our favorite moments from past Met Opens, it's no surprise we would feature one of the greatest players in MGA history, Johnson Wagner. Wagner, the only player to complete the "Met Slam" - winning the MGA's "Majors", the Ike, Amateur and Open Championships in the same year (2002) - not only was he the first player to take the "big three" but actually had a string of five consecutive MGA majors beginning with the Met Amateur in 2001 at Hudson National. Here, Wagner is seen chatting it up with New York State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro, just minutes after winning his first Met Open at Bethpage Black, where he finished with the lowest 54-hole score by an amateur in Met Open history (206), and became the youngest winner (and only the seventh amateur) in the championship's history. Little did he know at the time how many more records he would go on to break the following year, winning all three majors and earning a place in MGA record books that may never be duplicated.

Ms. Castro, who served as Commissioner of the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation from 1995-2006 (and took pride in the fact that she had visited every single one of them), had a particular interest in Bethpage. After seeing how the Black Course tested the met area's finest players and being encouraged by MGA officials, she became one of a group of advocates who worked diligently to bring the U.S. Open to Bethpage for its first playing on a truly public facility. The event was one of the most successful U.S. Opens in history, capped by a spectacular Tiger Woods win at the top of his career.

It is no wonder that these two trailblazers had plenty talk about.

