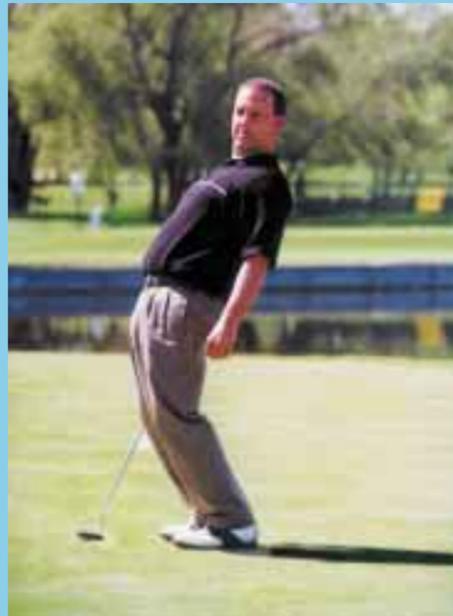


Some Old and New Faces on the Senior Tour in Chicago

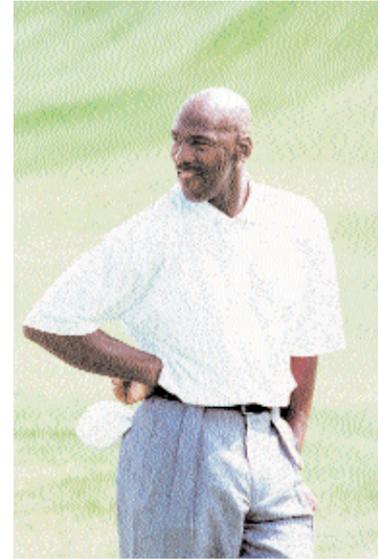
The Ameritech Senior Open had been a fixture on the Chicago professional tournament scene for almost a decade and... poof! It was gone. Well, not exactly, but that's how things seem to be happening in today's telecommunications business. What actually happened is that Texas-based SBC Communications did a buy-out of Ameritech, but wisely decided to keep the tournament. Of course since it's their dime the name was changed to the SBC Senior Open. Other than the name change everything stayed pretty much the same, as in same course and some of the same faces, and oh, yes a few names that do sound familiar even if the tournament title left some people wondering.

So back for another year was Michael Jordan playing in the new/old SBC Pro-Am with his buddy Ray Floyd. And back was last year's rookie sensation and Senior Player of the Year, Bruce Fleisher, trying to grab the brass ring from Hale Irwin who finished as the winner last year, after a late double-bogey by Fleisher. But who are those other guys? Well, new this year to the Senior Tour and the SBC Senior Open were Senior rookies Tom Kite and Lanny Wadkins. And one of them made a big splash in this year's event.



Celebrity Skins Time

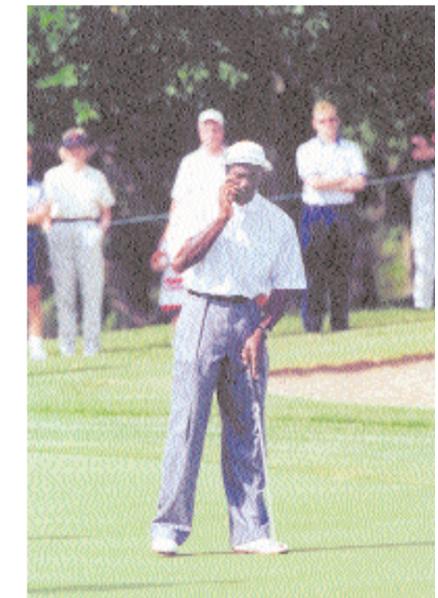
Talk about strange faces: what are radio guys Glen Kozlowski (WSCR) and Dave Kaplan (WGN) doing here? It was a five-hole celebrity skins shoot-out match for charity. Naturally Koz and Kaplan got shots, but it didn't seem to help much. Kaplan did have a legitimate birdie putt on the par-3 17th hole, but let Hubert Green get in his head and ended up three-putting!



MJ

Well, here's an old face, not so much in years, but in familiarity. The Washington Wizards basketball executive still lives in the Chicago and still has game, of which we're not sure. Michael, dump the silly looking hat! And if you're going to use the cell phone, please do it discreetly. But the cigar, that's cool anyplace on the golf course, even the autograph seeking fans don't seem to mind.

Rank sometimes does have its privilege. That's SBC Sr. V.P. for Human Resources, Karen Jennings, that was MJ's playing partner for the day. Nice work for the San Antonio native.



Jim Thorpe and the kids

Sure the Senior Tour is a gravy train with its no-cut format and typical three-day instead of four schedule. But a lot of the players know to give something back to the game. You can count Jim Thorpe among those givers. He spent a good portion of a morning telling these Chicago youngsters the benefits of the game and coached them on the fundamentals. Everyone had a good time.



Howard Twetty has bad feet, bunions and other problems you don't even want to know about. But wearing Bite Golf Sandals allows him to play golf without pain. Nice swing too.



Tom Kite holding the new SBC Senior Open Trophy. It's beautiful, but will someone please tell us just what the heck it's supposed to be?

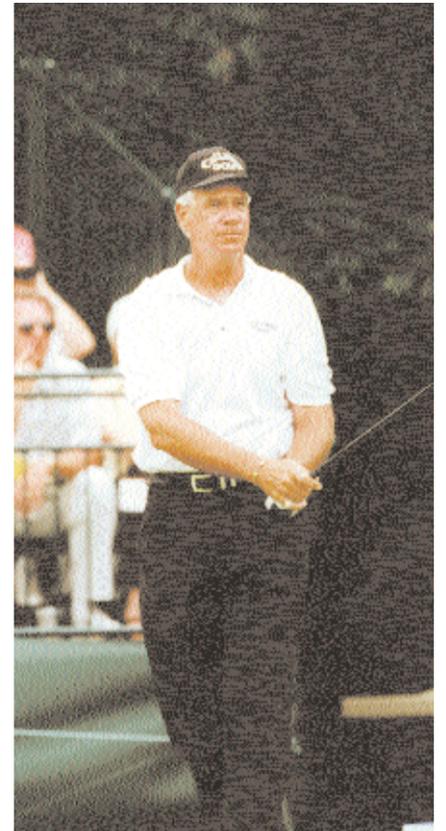
Senior players:

And finally for the main event. Newcomer (we use that word loosely) Kite took over the tournament lead on Saturday on the strength of birdies on the four of the last five holes. On Sunday Fleisher birdied holes 12 and 13 to take a two-shot lead over Kite, who was playing one group behind Fleisher. But Kite matched those birdies with his own at holes 14 and 15.

Feeling one more birdie was need, Fleisher took a gamble with his approach on 18 and found the bunker leading to a bogey. All Kite needed was a par on the final hole to win, but posted a three with a 28-foot putt and that set up a victory dance that really entertained the crowds. Do you think it was all planned?



TV golf commentator Gary McCord actually is more than a disembodied voice, and he actually plays golf rather well. But never on Sunday in Augusta!



THE "UNBEATABLE QUEEN"

With the US Women's Open returning to Chicago shores it only seemed fitting to honor a name that really brought women's professional game to national attention. Mildred (Babe) Didrickson Zaharias changed forever the status of women's golf in America. As the greatest women athlete of the 20th century she was a multi-sport dynamo, but golf was one of her strongest sports.

Aside for being the star at the 1932 Olympics, Zaharias was an All-American basketball player, a tennis champion and accomplished at practically every sport she embraced, especially golf. At golf clinics she would hit 300-yard drives (with equipment that today most golfers wouldn't touch) and then challengingly say that the men wished they could hit it that far. As Patty Berg, a contemporary competitor of hers said, "Until Babe came along women were all swing and no hit. She put power into women's golf."

Zaharias won 31 LPGA tournaments in a six-year career, including 10 professional majors that included three US Opens. Born in 1911 in Port Arthur, Tex., she died at the age of 43 of colon cancer.

In 1947 Zaharias completed the longest streak of major competitive golf victories in history, even longer than Byron Nelson's. This is an excerpt from, "Babe: The Life and Legend of Babe Didrickson Zaharias" by Susan E. Cayleff, detailing that accomplishment. Used with the permission of the University of Illinois Press. (foot notes omitted)



Babe was at the peak of her game in 1946 - 1950, about the time of this photo

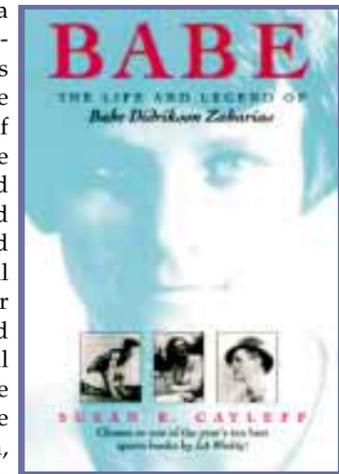
BABE

One of Didrickson's biggest years was 1945. In the fall she won her second Texas Women's Open title, beating Marge Becker by seven on the front nine and six on the back. Babe also won the Western Open, making her the first woman to win it three times. Many of Babe's matches pitted her against Joyce Wethered, the great English golfer. Babe proved her dominance of the sport in these matches. Her other accomplishments that year included defeating Betty Jameson in seventy-two-hole challenge matches at Los Angeles and San Antonio. Babe and Jameson first met at a Red Cross challenge match--the Benefit PGA Veteran's Rehabilitation Program--in Los Angeles. They had shared the sports page in Dallas on occasion, where they had both excelled in earlier years because Betty "was something of a nominal prodigy in golf." Quite alone, they recognized each other in the locker room of the Los Angeles Country Club before their match. Babe said immediately, "My, but you're a big girl!" Her knack for speaking her mind entertained Betty: "She never held back. I mean there was nothing ever. She was just a free spirit of the first order and didn't elaborate on stories. She was always just giving out." Jameson recalled the fun they had with the "marvelous gallery," loaded with film stars such as Gary Cooper. Babe, buddies with many celebrities, wowed Jameson with her acquaintances. Jameson, then earning her living as a reporter for the San Antonio Light newspaper, admitted, "I did not show too well, but it didn't take away from my confidence. I thought I was the best golfer living at that time and Babe no doubt thought she was, or was going to be."

With admirable nonchalance Babe recalled, "And at



the end of 1945 a nice thing happened. I was picked as the 'Woman Athlete of the Year' in the annual Associated Press Poll." She'd won it in 1932 and would win it a total of six times in her life. But the award in 1945 had special meaning because "during all those years in between, what with my troubles over professionalism and everything, I hadn't been able to compete enough to establish whether I was the No. 1 woman athlete." After the 1945 season when the AP honored her, her dominance over women's golf was firm. "She was its unbeatable queen."



In 1946, Babe told Coronet, "I want to establish the longest winning streak in the history of women's golf." Although it was quite a goal, it was not a preposterous one for a woman who had already declared and satisfied her desire to win Olympic gold and be the greatest woman athlete of all time. A second goal for 1946, as she chose to soft-pedal it in This Life I've Led, was to win the national championship.

"It started in August," Lader intoned melodramatically in Coronet. "For 17 straight major tournaments, the Babe ran roughshod over the world's greatest women golfers." After a June loss to Mary McMillin in the Western Women's Amateur about which Babe said, "That was the last losing I was going to do for a long time," the streak began. She won in Denver and Colorado Springs and then captured the All-American Championship held at the Tam O'Shanter Country Club in Niles, Illinois. She shot a four-round total of 310 strokes, an average of 77.5. As Babe correctly surmised, "That Tam O'Shanter competition was a happy hunting ground for me for many years, starting back there in 1947.... I've improved on that score considerably in later tournaments there."

At the U.S. Women's Amateur national competition in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the southern Hills Country Club, Babe was ready. "I was pointing for this tournament, all right. You could say I'd been pointing for it more than thirteen years, from the time I first took up golf seriously." As she told Paxton in the Saturday Evening Post serialized version of her life, she'd been kept from the tournament first by her scrambled amateur status, then the war. She knew that she had a good chance to win her first national



title because "it was a long course, a good two-shot course. I always like that kind." In the thirty-six-hole final she obliterated Clara Callender Sherman ten-and-nine. This was the same opponent she had beaten in her first tournament after her amateur status was reinstated in 1943. What satisfied Babe most, next to winning the tournament, "was that I had not played any bad golf at all." She "didn't have a single narrow squeak." In detail she told Post readers how she yearned to feel in control of her game. Of lucky shots where you don't hit the ball well, but it goes on the green anyhow, Babe said, "I don't like it that way. I'm never really satisfied unless I can feel that I'm hitting the ball just right." And she was. She had found an indestructible groove.

After the national, Babe won her fifth consecutive tournament, the Texas Women's Open. October saw her beat Betty Hicks five-and-three. Babe was ready for a break, but as she matter-of-factly told the Post, "George [Didrikson's husband] had other ideas." He said, "Honey, you've got something going here. You've won five straight tournaments. You want to build that streak up into a record they'll never forget. There are some women's tournaments in Florida at the start of the winter. I think you should go down there."

Discord emerged as George commandeered her athleticism. Babe was already settled into their new home in Denver, the first true home they'd owned. It was a beautiful, old, English-style house and, Babe recalled, "When I came back there at the end of the tournament season in October, I was ready to take a long layoff from golf competition and just enjoy my home for a while." But George pushed relentlessly for her to continue competing. He was, after all, her manager and promoter as well as her husband, and the combined influence of the roles was overwhelming. George agreed to accompany Babe but backed out at the last minute to tend to his Denver-based wrestling and boxing promotions. They traveled to Pueblo together and spent the night with his mother and father. The next day George returned to Denver and Babe set out alone by car for Florida.

Babe really did not want to go. She drove about 150 miles, turned around, and drove straight back home to Denver. George greeted her with, "What are you doing here?" Babe, in a candid moment, admits to saying, "The farther I got down the road, the more lonesome I got. I'm not going to go." In the loneliness and isolation of traveling, Babe had become quite dependent upon George in all of his roles. "Believe me," she said, "it helps to have him

right there pulling for me, and it's nice to be able to talk with him after the day's play is over." Wrangling ensued, but George's will won out. Babe noted, without editorial comment, "But I finally did hit the Florida tournaments late in January." Babe claimed he joined her in Florida "for some of the tour," but she never reintroduced him in her narrative of it.³⁹

As 1947 began Babe tackled her sixth tournament, the Tampa Women's Open. After three rounds of medal play she was up one stroke over Louise Suggs. In the fourth and final round she shot two under women's par to finish on top by five. Victory seven came at the Miami Country Club in the Helen Lee Doherty Women's Amateur. She was only one stroke off the men's record for the course. The following week brought her to Orlando and the Florida Mixed Two-Ball Championship. Partnered with Gerald "Gee" Walker, a big-league ballplayer, they beat their nearest challengers, Polly Riley and Joe Ezar. The match ended on the thirty-first hole for her eighth consecutive win.

"One week's victory partner was the next week's victim."

Number nine came at the Palm Beach Women's Amateur, one up, at the expense of Jean Hopkins. In the tenth tournament, the Women's International Four-Ball at Hollywood, Florida, Babe and her partner, Peggy Kirk Bell, beat Louise Suggs and Hopkins. This competition was remembered for a fluky finish. On the thirty-sixth and final hole, despite descending nightfall, the tournament officials had them tee off anyway. Then the match was called due to darkness. So a dramatic tie-breaker was replayed in total the next day. Bell and Didrikson won, four-and-two.

One week's victory partner was the next week's victim. In the South Atlantic Championship at Ormond Beach, Babe beat Bell five-and-four. More than one writer noted how "Babe is at her best with her back to the wall." In another tournament Babe took the aggressive tactic that secured her the win. After her drive and approach on the eighteenth hole, Margaret Gunther "came within an inch of the cup." Babe's drive lay at the edge of the green. Eschewing the safe strategy of two-putting, which would have left them tied, Babe lined up her ball with the cup, 50 feet away, and knocked it in to take the hole and, ultimately, the tournament. Climaxes like this made her a heart-breaking opponent. Number eleven was in the record books. The last Florida tournament, and twelfth win, came at the Florida East Coast Women's Championship at St.

Augustine, where she triumphed over Mary Agnes Wall in the finals, two-and-one.

Leaving the Sunshine State and traveling north to Georgia, Babe posted a spectacular comeback at the Women's Titleholder's Tournament in Augusta, then the women's equivalent of the Masters Tournament. After two rounds of medal play Dorothy Kirby was up by ten strokes. But, Babe happily recalled, "at the end, I was on top by five strokes with 304. I pulled the tournament out with seventy-one the third day and a seventy-four the last day."

At this point Didrikson and other sources claim her streak went on to seventeen consecutive wins. Betty Hicks, however, contends Babe "buried her fourteenth tournament, which she lost, to keep the string alive. According to Hicks, "an amateur named Grace Lenczyk of Connecticut knocked Babe out of the National Open's first round at the Spokane Country Club, 1946. Babe sorta repressed that match as she counted to 17." In fact research reveals that Babe did lose at Spokane in the tournament, played August 26-September 1, 1946. She was eliminated in the first round, and Patty Berg won. The tale of seventeen consecutive wins became so entrenched that otherwise reliable sources mistakenly claimed she intentionally missed the National Open.

Babe, the hustler, originated the myth and kept it alive. As Hicks wrote, "Contrary to an expansive legend, Babe did not win every tournament she played in. Two of every three of our championships were won by players named Rawls, Suggs, Berg,



Zaharias with Louise Suggs, Jackie Pung and Betty Dodd



Jameson, Bauer, Hagge, and Hanson.” That Hicks should deconstruct this particular myth of Babe’s is fitting; Babe was her lifelong nemesis. By challenging the seventeen consecutive wins, Hicks was attempting to rewrite other women golfers back into the sport’s history of that era. Babe was so good on the links and so personally powerful with the press that she dwarfed or obliterated everyone else. Her peers became disgusted with headlines that read “Babe Loses by One” instead of “Suggs Wins.”

Didrikson’s next win came at the North and South Women’s Amateur at Pinehurst, North Carolina, where she beat Louise Suggs, but not without considerable drama. Jammed up against a tree trunk, Babe tried a pool-type angle shot off the trunk that went awry. She moved her ball trying to clear pine needles out of the ball’s lie, which cost another stroke. This disastrous hole allowed Louise to square the match. “Well,” Babe recalled, “that almost killed me, and George, who was there watching, was just going crazy. He told me after, ‘I thought for sure you were going to lose one and break that string.’” But she knocked in a good putt on the first extra hole, “and then on the second hole I knocked a real good putt for a birdie to win.”

She had a month off before the next tournament, and her yearning for home returned. “I was really ready to go home and see my flowers and work around the house and garden,” she said. She went on to win the women’s division of the Celebrities Tournament in Washington and longed to take a break. But according to Babe, George was determined for her to continue: “ ‘Honey,’ he said, ‘you want to go over to Scotland and play in the British Women’s Amateur in June. You need something like that to top off your streak, the way Bobby Jones went over and played those British tournaments the year he made his grand slam.’” Winning the British

Women’s Amateur would be the ultimate feather in Babe’s cap. No American had done it, and it would give her international exposure.

A friendly argument ensued. Babe said she wouldn’t go without George; he promised he’d accompany her if he possibly could. Babe knew this line. She challenged him with: “I know you. You’re giving me some more of that old con. You won’t go. You’ll never be able to get away for it.” George again prevailed with the help of Tommy Armour, a golf pro who’d tutored Babe in Medinah, Illinois, a decade before. Armour, a Scotsman, added his urgent voice, “Mildred, you go!” Her admiration for him persuaded her to go. As anticipated, “George wasn’t able to make the trip with me, but I went anyhow.”

“There was never any event that was more important for me in sports than the British Women’s Amateur golf championship in 1947....”

In retrospect, she acknowledged, “There was never any event that was more important for me in sports than the British Women’s Amateur golf championship in 1947.... That British tournament was to land me on more front pages than the other fifteen put together.” Babe was aware that her famous golfing peers Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones, Gene Sarazen, Sam Snead, and Ben Hogan had all nailed down their reputations by adding British championships. “I was trying to do the same thing—to show that I could beat the best on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.” And she wanted to be the first American woman to seize the brass ring since the tournament’s inception in 1893. But most of all she wanted “to see the expressions on the faces of the Scotch when I connect with a tee shot.” Her glee at orchestrating a new audience was palpable.

The sea passage to Southampton, England, was smooth, but the second portion of her trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, on the boat train was hellish.

Continued on Page 40



The Golf Chicago Project

Progress Report: July 2000

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For previous installments go to www.egolfchicago.com

It was three weeks between lessons for Ellen and myself and I was amazed at what I saw. The last time we worked together my main task was keeping Ellen from swinging the club-head too far behind her body on the backswing. When that happens to any golfer it's very difficult to hit the ball with any consistency and accuracy. In Ellen's case it meant low ball flight and loss of power.

But what a difference had occurred in three weeks. She has done a wonderful job of keeping the club-head in front of her body. Working together we came up with a swing thought and feel that she

could use as a guide and reminder whenever she practiced by herself and for playing the course. This swing thought incorporated what I wanted her to do, but in a way that made sense and was workable for her. The sports analogy that we used was racquetball, since Ellen has played that game and is familiar with it. She readily understood that when preparing to return the ball on a volley the racquetball player swings the racquet out in front of her body; there is no twisting of the forearms behind the body in the racquetball swing. The same is true for Ellen's golf swing mechanics. During practice I encouraged her to think of swinging the golf back in just the same way as she would the racquet.

This swing feel and thought has showed results in three weeks of no lessons. Ellen got on the tee and with no warm up (I don't recommend this, but Ellen is a gung ho golfer who doesn't like to wait!) immediately cranked out five strong eight-irons, each about 115-120 yards. An excellent improvement from her self-described 'worm-burner' flights.

Another way to reinforce the proper arm and club-head position on the backswing is to be aware that the butt end of the grip should always be in place between both forearms (see photo 1). If the butt end of the club is pointed outside either forearm the proper positioning is lost and poor shots will be the result (see photo 2).

I liked what I saw from Ellen after our three week break, but also saw some parts of her swing that still needed work. While her arm positioning was good she had fallen back on one bad habit which was to pull her arms in on the backswing creating a slightly flattened arc. This will usually cause a pulled shot and indeed some of strongest shots did end up left of the intended target. I demonstrated with Ellen and showed her where I would like to see her arms positioned on the backswing and think that progress on this front will be made in due time.



Photo 2

And this brings us to an essential point of lesson taking and golf improvement. It may be a cliché, but real and lasting change does not occur over night. Bad swing habits are the result of years and years of repetition of the wrong movements so it only seems logical that reversing those faults will take some time as well. But the time frame for meaningful swing changes will be much shorter than the time that it took to ingrain the bad swing habits. A lot will depend on how much time you have for practice and play and your own commitment for change. In Ellen's case she has shown remarkable change in a short amount of time, especially when considered against the relatively little lesson time that we have had.

Ellen has also learned that improvement is not always a straight line curve. She saw almost immediate change and continued that way for some weeks. But she recounted to me that the week before our current lesson she was at Eagle Ridge Resort for a series of business meetings and golf. Playing a morning practice round before the more serious 18 holes Ellen found herself in a situation where she wondered if it were true that had take lessons at all- she couldn't hit the ball outside her shadow! After so much success Ellen had come to expect every round to be better than the last. Well, wouldn't that be nice, but that just isn't the way golf works, as we all know. So what did she do? She went to the range between rounds and pounded out balls until she found a swing feel that got her back on track.

Another nuance of lessons should also be noted.

It's rare that you'll ever hit the ball as well on the course as you have on the practice tee with your teacher. On the practice tee you have the security of instant feed back and the advantage of developing a strong rhythm. On the course it's different and much more difficult to maintain the steady rhythm built up over 30 or more minutes of nothing but hitting balls. And of course the mind/body combination is not nearly as comfortable under real playing conditions. But the goal is to take more and more of your good and perfected swings from the range to the golf course. And it will happen.

Ellen's more short range goal is to break 100 before the end of the summer and I think that is a realistic goal. In fact it's probably most reachable now through her short game since she can reach many short par-4 holes in two shots now. And admittedly we have neglected her short game in favor of the full swing largely due to her limited schedule for receiving teaching. But at the end of lesson I did start her short game instruction.

I explained to Ellen that for most pitch shots the same swing fundamentals are unchanged from the full swing, but that the back swing can be shorter and the stance narrows and opens as the distance to the target decreases. I gave her a mimeographed chart that I have used in my classes to help her understand these short game fundamentals, and have reproduced them here also. These three basic set-ups are all most players need to know to get up and down from most situations found on the golf course. The final variable is the length of the backswing, which is simply dictated by the overall distance that needs to be covered.



Photo 1



Loaded with gear (two cameras, a knitting bag, a fur coat, and several pieces of luggage), unfamiliar with local customs, and unable to get a seat on a suffocatingly hot, ten-hour trip, Babe recalled, "I stood in the aisle with all my gear. It was hotter than ever. The windows were open--we'd have suffocated otherwise--and soot from the engine was blowing in. There was black specks all over my face and hair. I was dripping all over. My curls had come down."

Luckily, she was soon able to get beyond this inauspicious beginning. A private car awaited her in Edinburgh that shuttled her to Gullane and the North Berwick Inn where she lodged. The desk clerk, a great fan of hers, greeted her warmly, and the inn's manager, despite wartime rationing, had laid in a supply of hard-to-get familiar foods for Babe.

Ninety-nine women entered the tournament and were issued partners at random. The luck of the draw did much to determine one's fate in a sudden death tournament such as this. Beginning on Monday, competitors would play two eighteen-hole head-to-head matches a day. By Thursday the field would consist of two survivors for a thirty-six-hole final.

"reserved British Press exploded with such adjectives as 'spectacular' and 'phenomenal.'"

After Didrikson began playing, the "reserved British Press exploded with such adjectives as 'spectacular' and 'phenomenal.'" What caught the imagination of Britain was "Babe's flamboyance and ungirdled power." As she started her first match against Helen Nimmo, Babe was disconcerted by the gallery's silence. "I was saying to myself, 'Gee, you have to knock the ball in the hole off the tee to get a hand around here.'" After her handy victory, they did applaud, albeit sedately.

Babe spoke to Helen Holm, past British Women's Amateur champion, who was acting as marshal, about the

crowd's silence. "I wish these people would just holler and enjoy themselves the way the crowds do back home," Babe lamented. Holm described the Scottish tradition that assured players would not be disturbed. But Babe, not a fan of decorum on either side of the Atlantic, decided, "I was going to loosen up those galleries if I could. In my match that afternoon I began kidding them a little, and telling them they could make all the noise they wanted and it wouldn't bother me." After that, she began to consciously egg the crowd on.

Her afternoon opponent, Enid Sheppard, played well but fell back by six strokes on the sixteenth hole. American tradition had golfers play out the rest of the match although the winner was decided, to please the gallery. Scottish tradition dictated that play stopped once a winner was determined. Babe overrode national etiquette and asked Sheppard and Holm if they could finish the course. Both agreed to play the by-holes, albeit reluctantly. She was, after all, Babe Didrikson.

Babe grandstanded unabashedly. She wowed them with the dazzling array of trick shots she had used during exhibitions in the States. She placed a kitchen match behind her ball on the seventeenth hole so when she teed off "it sound[ed] like a small cannon being fired, because the match goes off with a loud pop." Out of the trap on the same hole she placed one ball on top of another. Her shot launched one into

her pocket and the other toward the green. It went right into the hole. Babe was in heaven. As she told the *Saturday Evening Post* upon her triumphant return: "By this time the gallery was in an uproar. When I finished out on the eighteenth green by turning around backwards and putting the ball between my legs into the cup, they didn't quiet down for along time."



Put off by her grandstanding, the tournament officials posted a sign on the bulletin board in the clubhouse the next morning: "Please do not play the by-holes." "So I didn't do that any more," Babe said. But she'd prevailed. Her galleries got bigger and friendlier on each successive day. They were boisterous

and rowdy at her behest. She felt at home.

After her first day's competition, a British golf writer gasped, "Mrs. Zaharias took practically all the spectators and crashed her way over the hills and dales of this testing, undulating course. She tore holes in the rough with tremendous recovery shots, and simply bettered her opponents in both her matches with the most tremendous exhibition of long driving ever seen in women's golf." Clearly, "the British had never seen anything quite like Texas' wise-cracking Mildred ('Babe') Didrikson Zaharias." As *Life* reported in "What a Babe!": "A disconsolate Scot, bug-eyed over the Babe's long drive," said, "It seems a shame to send our girls out against a game like that." "She must be Superman's sister," one spectator whispered after the Babe whacked a whistling drive down the fairway."

The British had certainly never seen the likes of her behavior either. A *Time* article noted, "A few tweedy old ladies in the gallery were horrified" as Babe

was "altogether lacking in refinement." Marshal Helen Holm supported Babe with, "You're speaking of the finest woman golfer that has ever been seen here." "And what if she does clown a bit?" asked the father of golf pro Jimmy Thompson. "That's just her way, and only an old tabby would object to it." The British press loved her. They called her "Tough Babe" and willingly complied with her directive that they drop the "Mrs. Zaharias."

They called her "Tough Babe" and willingly complied with her directive that they drop the "Mrs. Zaharias."

Her next opponents, Mrs. Val Reddan, Mrs. Cosmo Falcone, and Frances Stephens all fell prey to Didrikson. Her closest match was against Stephens, whom she beat three-and-two. After Babe got by Stephens on Wednesday morning, she faced Jean Donald, the Scottish champion, in the semifinals. This confrontation had been hyped in the press all week. Babe was well aware that Donald had the best chance of beating her and keeping the championship at home. But Babe thrived on the publicity: "Well, that kind of talk sort of builds me up. The bigger they make the match, the more I get fired up to go out there and show them." Babe soared and Donald plummeted. Babe shot one under men's par and roundly trounced her, seven-and-five, "a runaway score in an eighteen-hole match," as she characterized it. Ever the hustler, Babe convinced Donald to pose doing the "Highland Fling and everything with me after it was over."

Donald went along with the gag, and the photo was printed worldwide.

Despite her shenanigans, Didrikson was momentarily rattled before her final round. One Scottish competitor clearly resented Babe's attempt to win "their" championship and probably hated Babe's boisterous Yankee ways. "She'd buttonhole me in the club-house and start telling me how there was a jinx against American women in this tournament that had stopped... Glenna Collett and Virginia Van Wie." This psychological sparring came to a halt when "some of the other women found out what she was doing and got her to pipe down." Babe was unusually shaken by this encounter, and her thoughts kept returning to the jinx as she lay in bed struggling to sleep before the finals.

Her last opponent was Jacqueline Gordon, the big surprise of the tournament. Although not considered a top British player nor on Britain's Curtis Cup Team, she'd been beating everybody all week regardless. Babe awoke feeling magnificent and recounted her choice of outfit with obvious pride and much self-satisfaction. She left her siren suit and lucky blue corduroys at the clubhouse. "I put on a light chartreuse

skirt with a light sweater, and white golf shoes and white visor—oh, I was a doll that morning, I'm telling you!" But later she remarked, "I should have kept my lucky pants on."



A former professional wrestler, George Zaharias was a constant supporter of Babe.

The British press estimated the crowd for the championship round at five to eight thousand, which "was the largest of the season—far larger than the crowd which gathered to watch the British men's amateur at Carnoustie" just two weeks before. Babe began the afternoon with a much anticipated bit of clowning. When she saw the British flag, she stood at attention and saluted. The crowd applauded. Babe, realizing she was onto

something here, spotted the American flag floating atop the clubhouse. As she delighted in recalling, "I turned around and got right down on the ground and salaamed three times. Everybody roared," and no doubt Babe's competitive heart felt an adrenaline rush.

The morning round found them even at 75, four over men's par, Didrikson's measure of success. Babe had mounted a modest comeback by evening the score on the fifteenth hole after being down by two on the twelfth. She'd already quieted her eighty-year-old caddy who, in keeping with local tradition, insisted on advising her on club selection, wind velocity, and shot strategies. Legend has it that she asked for a younger caddy and was given a silent seventy-five-year-old who left the decision-making to her. Babe adamantly denied this breach of etiquette.

As they broke for lunch, fifty members of the gallery called out, "Babe, go git your socks on. Go git your socks on." Babe also needed a quick shoe repair; the wet grass had split the leather. When she located the cobbler shop, a

see they were thinking, 'She can do whatever she wants to with the ball!'" This fun distraction completed, Babe resumed the match. She was up five going into the back nine and finished up ahead by four strokes. The by-holes went unplayed.

Babe spruced up her lipstick and rouge coming off the final green. This ladylike display was juxtaposed against her removing the bandage on her damaged left thumb and brandishing it to the press. "It caused something of a sensation," Babe noted dryly in her autobiography. But she wasn't done yet. The photographers asked her to pose in front of the clubhouse and on the way there, she "hurdled the brown brick wall that ran around it. There was another uproar over that." Everyone there was left to sort out this spectrum of femininity for themselves.

The crowd gave Babe a wonderful ovation. Babe elicited accolades and high emotions from her fans. "It seemed like they stood for fifteen minutes and applauded," she recalled. More Highland Flings, flashbulbs, and clowning. She'd won her six matches with ease. The *Manchester Guardian* could not praise her enough: "Surely no woman golfer has accomplished in a championship what Mrs. Zaharias has achieved in this one.... She has combined in a remarkable way immense length with accuracy, reaching with a number-five iron holes at which others are content to be short with a wood. She is a crushing and heart-breaking opponent."

Another London newspaper crowed, "We have not seen a fairway phantom like her--not in 47 years. What a babe!" Time chronicled the jubilant scene: "As she went into a victory jog, a bystander asked her the inevitable question about the secret of her success and got a far-from-inevitable answer. Cracked the Babe: 'I just loosen my girdle and let the ball have it.'" Britain was shocked. It crossed the line between charming and uncouth. Babe swore to the Saturday Evening Post's Pete Martin that the comment wasn't made in Scotland, but in Washington, D.C., at the Celebrities Tournament. Despite her denials, so many press releases and personal testimonies credit her with the reutterance of this wisecrack that it has become fact.

In *This Life I've Led* is a photo of Babe flanked by three other women with trophies on a table. Seated, in a skirt, ankles crossed, hair styled, smiling sweetly with a



purse sitting on her lap, Babe looks the epitome of femininity and decorum. The caption reads, "The British liked me, I hope, almost as much as I loved them. Here, I'm receiving the big cup, the first American-born girl to bring it home." Babe had captured the British Women's Amateur title and the hearts of the United Kingdom. During the presentation of the championship trophy, Babe recalled, "I sang a little Highland song I'd learned from some of the Scottish golf pros in the United States--hoping I'd have this occasion to use it. And everybody seemed to like that touch."

Before leaving Scotland, Babe spent three or four days playing other legendary Scottish golf courses. One day, she went to play Tommy Armour's old club, Lothianburn, where several thousand fans showed up to watch her. She was hosted by high society on this mini-tour, and was even allowed into the inner sanctums of an until-then all-male clubhouse at Muirfield for tea. She also played St. Andrews' hallowed holes. Originally, no spectators were to be allowed so Babe could play the historic course in peace and relaxation. But when she saw one thousand people crammed behind a railing some distance off peering at her, she said to herself, "Oh Well! I looked back and waved to them, 'Come on!' So those people followed me around the entire eighteen holes." She bypassed a few other legendary courses because she was eager to get home. "I'd already been away from George longer than I ever had been since we got married. I wanted to get back home."

Feted and toasted as she left Europe, Babe returned a conquering hero. Her last night was spent as a guest at the Ladies' Golf Union Building in Edinburgh. As her train pulled out from the platform, hundreds of admirers sang "Auld Lang Syne." Two railroad officials saw her aboard and pampered her with a private compartment loaded with flowers.

In London, the royal treatment continued. The Ladies' Golf Union housed her, and she enjoyed special accommodations on the boat train to Southampton. She did not have to stand this time. Transported home in royal style aboard the Queen Elizabeth, Babe was met two hours and forty minutes outside of New York by a tugboat filled with seventy-one reporters, pho-

Gallant. Charismatic. Transatlantic celebrity. Unprecedented champion. Babe was on top of the world.

tographers, and newsreel camera operators plus one fleshy, beaming, white-shirted, easy-to-spot promoter-husband, George Zaharias. Babe hollered and waved to him and let loose with a two-fingered mouth whistle that coin-

cided with a blast from the liner. George, handy with the gag lines, quipped, "Honey, I could hear your whistle above the Queen Elizabeth's." When George was the first to climb the rope ladder to board the ship, the liner gave a little lurch. Called Babe, "Hey honey, watch out! You're going to turn the Queen Elizabeth over!" Babe later remarked, "Seeing George again gave me a greater thrill than when I won the tournament."

Ever eager to please, Babe catered to the press for two hours "for the interviewing and picture-taking and what not." When the "cameramen said they wished I was wearing kilts, I told them, 'Be right with you,' and went and changed. I got a Tartan cap and a pair of kilts for George to pose in, too, and got him to try the Highland Fling."

They stayed in New York for a couple of days while their phone rang off the hook. Offers poured in, "but we turned them all down." Fred Corcoran, pro-

Continued on Page 48

“Hook A Kid” Snares 10,000 Young Golfers for the Chicago Park District

By Robert White

Chicago Youth Golf Classic

The University Golf Association (UGA) recently the inaugural Chicago Youth Golf Classic, Aug. 12-13 at the South Shore Cultural Center. The UGA is partnering with the Mayors Office of Special Events, the Chicago Park District and Kemper Golf Management in the two-day event for Chicago boys and girls ages 9 to 18. There is no charge to participate. Tournament co-chairman Ty Harvey also announced that that Mayor Richard M. Daley and Senator Emil Jones Jr. will serve as the honorary Chairmen of the Classic in this inaugural year. Harvey said, “Both Mayor Daley and Senator Jones, have a strong commitment towards the growth of UGA’s junior golf program in the city and we are pleased to have their support.”

Entries are limited to 150 players which will be cut to the top 75 after the first round. Besides the tournament, each junior golfer will also have the opportunity to participate in a “Longest Drive” and “Closest to the Pin” competition. Awards and prizes will be given to all participants.

Harvey also said, “By having our youth involved in activities that promote hard work, discipline and fair play, we feel that the Chicago Youth Golf Classic will be a memorable event for years to come.”

To register a youth or for more information, please contact the University Golf Association at (312) 957-0988.

In 1992, less than 200 Chicago area juniors participated in Chicago Park District golf programs. That all changed when, in 1993, Kemper Golf Management Chicago took over operation of the eight Chicago Park District golf facilities that consists of six golf courses and two free standing driving ranges.

Kemper Golf Management Chicago is an affiliate of KemperSports Management, the Northbrook based company with over 20 years of experience in owning, operating and managing golf courses.

Kemper Golf Management Chicago proceeded to renovate and revamp all of the facilities, and, recognizing that the trend of skyrocketing growth in junior golf was not going to slow down in the near future, it beefed up the Chicago Park District junior programs and offered them free of charge.

To say that the changes were well received, is an understatement.

Last year, over 700 hours of instruction was given to a record 10,000-plus

juniors who participated in one or more of the many programs now offered by Chicago Park District throughout the summer.

The programs range from one-day introductions to golf clinics, weekly clinics at the driving ranges, weeklong camps, weekly nine-hole events and even programs that teach the business side of golf. In 1999, one camp, “Hook A Kid On Golf” introduced to the Park District and held at four Chicago Park District parks and was another in a long line of instant successes.

“Hook A Kid On Golf” is a program that began nationally in 1990 by the National Alliance for Youth Sports. Its goal is to provide children, who normally wouldn’t have the opportunity, a complete introduction to the sport of golf. Over 140 inner-city children attended this program. As part of the program, each child received over 30 hours of golf instruction and the opportunity to play golf once a week on a park district course throughout the entire summer. In addition, each young golfer received a starter set of Taylor Made Bubble golf clubs, golf bag, shirt,

hat, golf balls and an instructional video.

“This program was a perfect fit for us and the Park District,” said Tom Grey, of Kemper Golf Management. “We were looking for a way to get inner city kids to the golf course on a regular basis. But in most instances, even if they had a great time and wanted to continue playing the game after they left the camp, they didn’t have the financial means to do that. Through this program we were able to give them the needed equipment and the ability to continue playing the sport after the camp was completed.”

But the program didn’t stop at giving away equipment. There was more. On behalf of the Illinois PGA, each Hook-A-Kid participant spent a day at Medinah Country Club, enjoying the 1999 PGA Championship and champion Tiger Woods. The program then wound up the year with the Chicago Park District Park’s Golf Championship, held at Marquette Park Golf Course and won by Kilborn Park.

The program’s success guaranteed that it will return again this year, this time at eight of the Chicago Park District parks, and with 240 inner city youths on tap and ready to be introduced to the game of golf.

To sponsor a Hook A Kid On Golf program the cost is \$100 per participant. Through grants from The United States Golf Association, “Hook A Kid On Golf” of Illinois and money raised at the annual Chicago Park District golf outing, those participants will continue to pay nothing to be enrolled in the camp. Last year, the Chicago Park District golf outing raised over \$19,000 for Chicago Park District junior golf programming. Inspired by all the positives, the Chicago Park District decided that all money raised will go to “Hook A Kid On Golf” programs.

Kids and coach at the CPD/ Kemper Sports’ Hook a Kid on Golf program.



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motional director of the Men's Professional Golf Association, made a personal visit, offering to represent her if she chose to turn pro. She signed with Corcoran in July 1947. He also represented Ted Williams, Stan Musial, and others.

Amidst the glorious fanfare, Babe and George made time for an old friend, Grannie Rice. Rice had been laid up with a severe bout of pneumonia and had been unable to greet her immediately upon her return. She agreed to give him an interview, and Rice nostalgically recalled, "I spent a short half hour at their hotel quietly celebrating with Babe and George Zaharias--two wonderful kids, who I feel constitute an unusually warm and wonderful American love story."

Then they headed for Denver--home--and she was feted again, lavishly. The celebrations capped off in early July with a city-wide parade, replete with floats commemorating her excellence at other sports. Babe rode atop the flower-filled last float and threw roses to the crowd. Mayor Quigg Newton and Governor Lee Knous attended, and at city hall Newton presented her with a giant key to the city. Babe remembered "there was a mob of people watching, about 50,000, according to the newspapers, and they just roared." The 250-pound key, towering 12-15 feet high, presented no problem for George Zaharias, the ex-wrestler, who, Babe announced to the crowd, would carry it home. She had bragged about George's muscularity in the past but in 1955 she admitted, "He didn't have to do that, but he did show that he was able to lift it off the ground."

Despite her huge victory, Babe was committed to play yet again in the Broadmoor Match Play Tournament at Colorado Springs in mid-July. She beat Dot Kielty in the finals, ten-and-nine, to complete her streak. The victory entitled her to "permanent possession of the Broadmoor trophy, which was a big silver cup with a lot of beautiful hand-work on it. I had cost them a lot of money." Generously, Babe sensed their lack of enthusiasm to relinquish the trophy, so she told them to make a plaque for her and keep the cup in competition.

Gallant. Charismatic. Transatlantic celebrity. Unprecedented champion. Babe was on top of the world.



medium-long (#4, 413). Then after a straight forward par-3 of 152 yards, it's time to begin tackling Whisper Creek's front nine testy section: each of the front-nine's four finishers has water trouble. The two par-5's are both split-fairway holes, split by menacing ponds. The ninth, a par-5 is a "text-book risk-reward" hole, where you must cross water; the absolute minimum "safest" flight measures 64 yards to reach the dry second fairway; the capricious, daring shot entirely over water measures 210 yards, but best to judge it at 230 yards cautions Jim Karras. In a similar fashion, the back nine starts with three mild holes all without water hazards. Ditto the reasoning for the inward half's mild start -- this rationale was planned for the occasions when double-teeing is used, as golfers beginning their rounds on the tenth have the same need for shifting through their game's low golf gears. Be certain to save some of your best and longest shots for hole 17, the course's longest, a par-5 measuring 560 yards (616 from the tips); the first half of the hole (fairway number one) plays to the left of Whisper Creek; then fairway number two, which only starts where fairway number one ends, plays on the right side of Whisper Creek.

Reaching any hole in regulation is no guarantee of scoring a par, as the greens are large and undulating. It is a fact that there are no school busses or Volkswagens buried beneath Whisper Creek's greens, but golfers whose approach shots miss

the target area near the pin placements will probably end up putting as if there were.

Golfers visiting Whisper Creek should come away with three major "first impressions": First, congeniality, from top-to-bottom from start-to-finish (even the recorded Voice Mail was pleasant) every staff member will treat you with the utmost courtesy -- as if you were the winner of a major golf tournament; Second, challenge -- there's enough length at Whisper Creek to test the women, the seniors, the men, and the professionals, but be sure to bring along a solid short game to accompany your long shots; third, conditioning, Whisper Creek has wall-to-wall irrigation, so that every square inch right up to the lot lines is watered; all greens, tees, and approach areas are "walk mowed"; the course has had a grow-in period of more than 13 months (seeding began in May, 1999) - it's definitely ready to be played! After your round at Whisper Creek, you will have to decide: 'should I keep this great golf secret to myself?' or 'shout about it to my friends'?



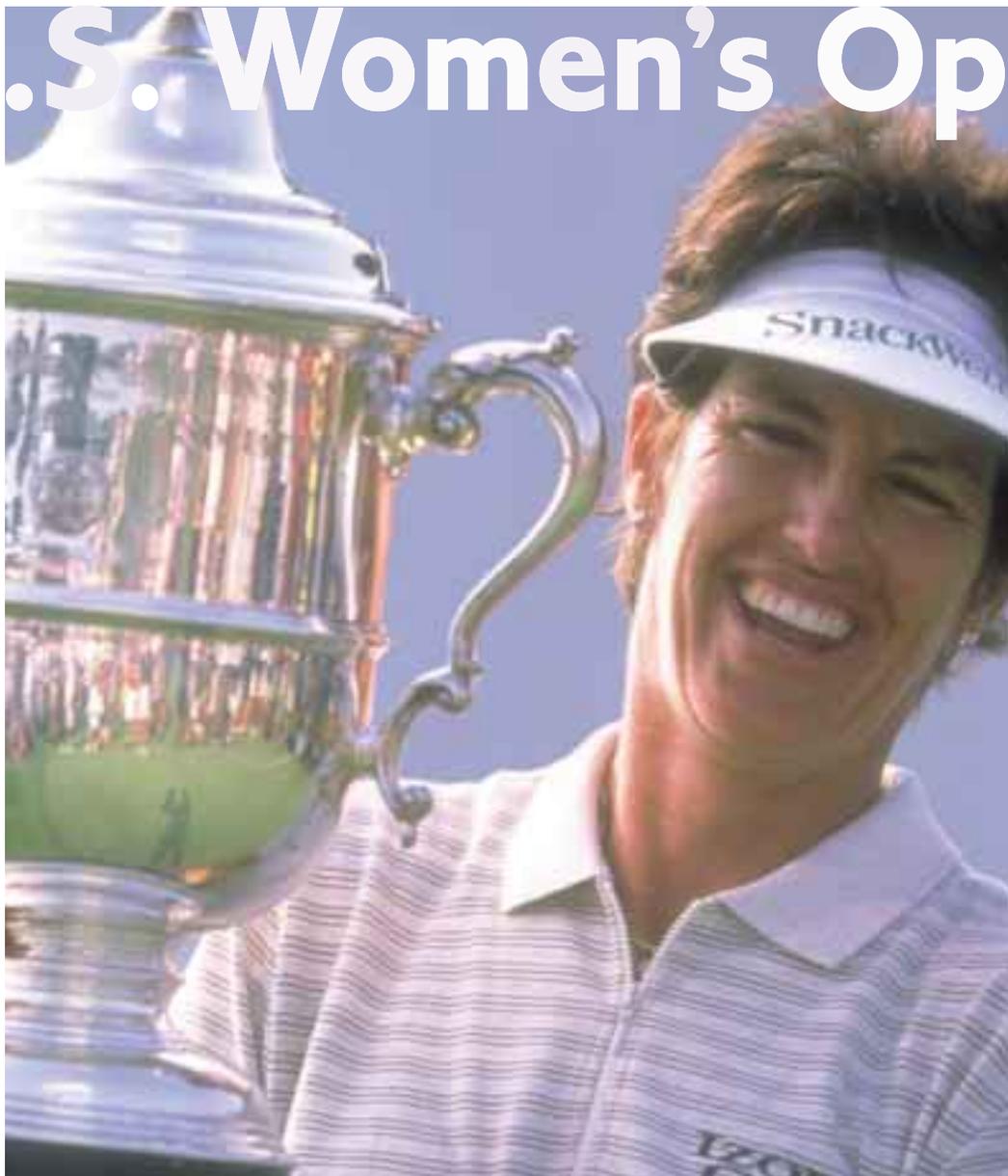
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U.S. Women's Open



By Rory Spears

"The course sets up great for my game." - 1999 U.S. Open winner and defending champion Juli Inkster

The U.S. Women's Open will be played for the 56th time this summer, and the 2000 Championship will mark the 49th time it has been run by the USGA. The Women's Open last visited the Chicago area in 1981 when Pat Bradley finished at nine under par to hold off Beth Daniel by one shot. Seven years earlier, Sandra Haynie's score of seven over par was good enough to win by one shot over Carol Mann and Beth Stone. Both championships were held at the LaGrange Country Club, the only course in the state of Illinois to host the Women's Open.

That all changes this summer during the week of July 17-23, when the Merit Club in Gurnee gets the honor. A field of 150 professionals and amateurs will compete for the title and the first place check of \$500,000 from a record purse of \$2.7 million.

While the money will be the best ever for the players, Merit Club President and course co-designer Ed Oldfield (with architect Bob Lohmann) hopes to make

"The course sets up great for my game." - 1999 U.S. Open winner and defending champion Juli Inkster



there. Rounds were five and a half hours. That's not golf, that's survival. You could tell by the scores everyone was drained by the time they got done, and you want the best golfer that week to win so you get a true U.S. Open champion. You have to let them play golf and not trick it up so the best players can hit some golf shots."

So, heading into the Open, who are the players that can hit the golf shots that Inkster described and come away as this year's champion? First of all, Inkster. She likes the layout and is playing well, plus the disappointment of not winning an Open after being close on two occasions is a burden she no longer carries. Also, last fall she qualified for the LPGA Hall of Fame, so that no longer hangs over her. She should be right in the thick of battle as she tries to become the seventh champion to defend her crown.

Oldfield feels, because of the fairness of the Merit Club and the talent level that runs much deeper than it did years ago,

that maybe 50-75 players have a chance to win. But he adds that, "Karrie Webb is so fundamentally sound and has the best golf swing out there. She is also an aggressive putter, and the greens here are the key. I'd have to say that, no matter what conditions are, she comes in as the one to beat."

Besides the other competitors, there are several key holes the players will have to beat if they expect to win. The first is the 499-yard, par-five third hole. It may not be a long par five, but a creek splits the fairway on the golfer's second shot. The creek also runs along the left side of the green, so a pin placement near the water leaves a tough approach shot. Par is a good score here. The par-3, 151-yard seventh hole requires a well-placed tee shot, with a water carry to a green surrounded by three bunkers. Some wind and a back left pin placement will test the best player's nerves. The par-4 ninth hole is listed at 412 yards, but plays longer because it is uphill. A large and deep fairway bunker on the left side will keep all but the longest hitters

from shortening this hole. If it plays into the wind, there will be a lot of bogeys.

The first real test on the back nine will be the 406-yard, par-four 14th hole, which has much of its fairway that doglegs right protected by a large pond just off the tee. How much of the water will a player try to cut off is the question - if they play it too safe, the second shot is long and uphill. The par-3 16th hole, at 167 yards, also has a water carry, and an upfront pin placement could leave some shots spinning back down a shaved bank into the pond.

Finally, the par-five, 485-yard eighteenth is a great closing hole. With a pond to carry off the tee on this dogleg left, and tall, thick prairie grass protecting the left side, players will have to choose their route home carefully. How they play the hole, especially Sunday, will depend on whether they are trying to catch the leader, tied for the lead, have a one shot lead, or have a few shot advantage. Regardless, it should be great drama.

To see it all unfold, Oldfield recommends these areas for the best viewing: "Behind the par-three seventh, where you can also see the eighth tee, and behind the par-three 16th, where you can also see seventeen." To watch the 18th, the best spot, if you are not by the green, will be down the right side of the fairway. But there are great viewing areas up and down most of the holes because of the course design.

In the field because of special exemptions are Nancy Lopez, still looking for her first Open title, and Bradley, the last to win the Open in the Chicago area. So come and be part of the U.S. Women's Open, which will be the last major championship held in the Chicago area until the Men's Open comes to Olympia Fields in June of 2003. Inkster has this message for the fans: "Come out and support us you'll be glad you did." The Merit Club is located off Milwaukee Avenue between Routes 137 and 120. The number for tickets is (877) 879-6736.



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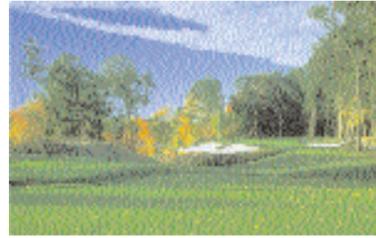
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areas, golf courses, museums and hundreds of events and attractions throughout the Quad Cities. Another great central location for lodging is the Radisson in downtown Moline. That's where most of the tour players are staying, and near "The District" nightlife.

If you're ready for a great steak after your round with a fantastic view of the Mississippi at night, look no further than the 15th floor "High Notes" Steakhouse. For after hours nightclubbing check out "The District" in downtown Rock Island, with riverboat gambling, dinner theater, brew pubs, outdoor festivals and more. They even have a golf bar that shows "Caddy Shack" continuously all day and night. "So you got that going for ya."

If you're in John Deere country you've got to stop by the John Deere Pavilion in downtown Moline. It's a glass-encased architectural delight and home to the largest agricultural exhibit in the world. In fact, in the Quad Cities there are festivals or events going on every week of the year, so the after golf entertainment is non-stop.

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land areas bordering Mystic Lake, to the back nine built along a ridge giving players a different challenge. On the inward nine some holes weave through dense hardwood forests of oak and birch, while others have open, gently rolling fairways which seem to flow in a sea of gentle rolling fairways giving the course a Scottish flair. Finally you'll play back down into the canyons where the familiar Wisconsin Dells rock formations can be seen.

From the Dells I examined my map and saw of all places, Platteville, summer home of "Da Bears". I couldn't resist just driving through this town. And to my surprise it has what appears to be a nice little golf course called, what else, but Platteville Country Club, a semi-private course. I didn't get time to play it but the kid in the pro shop told the course was built in 1920. With that kind of information I certainly would like to return, especially if I can keep my hands on the wheel of an Audi TT. But probably not when the Bears are there, except for a few quarterbacks I've never heard that football players were straight shooters.

Stay tuned to Great Drives in August and beyond as we are planning a big trip to Scotland and maybe in yet another TT with daily reports of our progress on www.eGolfChicago.com

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Jeff Rude

Welcome Back Hogan

Just like that, a new Hogan Junior alert. For several months he couldn't find an answer, and then the next two weeks he transformed into a U.S. Open threat. We speak, of course, of Justin Leonard, who wears the cap and often the steely face of Hogan.

Late-May Bulletin: Leonard is in the worst slump of his six-year professional career. He hadn't bettered 15th for the year, seemingly hadn't smiled in months. He had sunk to 78th on the PGA Tour money list. He had managed only one top-10 finish since almost win-

Weird game. One never knows when jumper cables might fall out of the sky.

ning his second British Open title last July. And he had to chip in on the 36th hole at the MasterCard Colonial to avoid missing three consecutive cuts in his comfy confines of Texas.

"The state of my game?" Leonard, a glossy 11th, 5th, 8th and 8th in Tour earnings the past four years, said then. "I'm trying to get my game in the same state I am. I've analyzed this to death and it's something different every week. It's touched every part of my game. It's been frustrating. When you have to dust yourself off every day, it's not much fun."

Early-June Bulletin: What a difference a fortnight makes. Leonard ties for second at the Memorial and then ties for second again the next week at the Kemper Open. T-2, T-2, and suddenly the frowns are gone and the anxiety is lifted.

Weird game. One never knows when jumper cables might fall out of the sky.

Leonard was in such a funk, you could read problems all over his grim game face. He is to intensity what

Fuzzy Zoeller is to levity. Zoeller whistles, Leonard internalizes. He wasn't much for talking about the drought. To one hometown writer at Colonial, he snipped, "I don't talk about frustration."

Slumps on the PGA Tour can lead to mind games. For sure Leonard was frazzled.

To that point, he had tried everything. He tried working harder on the range. He tried getting away from golf. He tried tinkering with his swing. He tried changing putters. He tried yelling at his teacher. He tried watching tape of the 1999 Ryder Cup, when he holed a 50-foot putt and became a U.S. hero. And he tried forgetting.

Out of that came less than desired results.

"If there's one thing I learned," Leonard says, "it's that you've got to bounce back. I've got to forget about the bad stuff and remember the good."

Everyone in his support group offered two cents during the dry spell. His instructor, Randy Smith, said Leonard's distance control was off, that most of his misses have been long, maybe because of transition to a stronger body through a four-year fitness program. Tom Kite said Leonard's posture was more upright than when he scared pins with his "usual radar-like irons." Davis Love III said his buddy was pressing too hard and getting too caught up in swing mechanics. Mike Hulbert said Leonard wasn't making as many 15- to 25-footers, and statistics backed him up: Entering Colonial, Leonard ranked 135th in putting average, compared with 17th last year.

"It was as down as I've ever seen him," Smith said.

So then Leonard goes T-2, T-2. What happened? How did he suddenly soar out of the doldrums and onto the short list of Open favorites? Why did the

frowns leave?

Several things are involved.

First, Leonard didn't panic. He banked on the fact he has played well in past summers, from May through August. "I'm not in a padded room," he said in mid-May. "I don't need a white coat with long sleeves and all those buckles."

Second, he forged on as a highly disciplined fighter. He is hard on himself. On Tour, he's known as a Monday Night Guy, someone who shows up on Monday nights to get ready for work early Tuesday.

Third, and maybe most important, he made some address adjustments at the suggestion of Smith. He moved closer to the ball, lowered his hands and bent more at the waist, thus putting his upper body more over the ball. He had been reaching out too far with his arms and his hands got too high.

Fourth, at Memorial he switched back to the Ping putter with which he won the 1992 U.S. Amateur, also there at Muirfield Village. "It felt good," Leonard said. Putting cures ills on the scorecard and in the mind.

Fifth, he saw some putts go in the first round of the Memorial, saw tee shots hit the fairway, and his confidence and enthusiasm rose. "It took something like that to perk him up," Smith said.

Sixth, he got fed up.

"It was just time to start playing better," Leonard said. "I guess the hard work finally started to pay off."

Funny how that work thing works.



Jeff Rude, a native of Waukegan and resident of Flossmoor, covered six tournaments on the 2000 PGA Tour's West Coast swing as a senior writer for Golfweek. An Evans Scholar alumnus, he has written about professional golf for 15 years and caddied on the Tour briefly while at the University of Missouri.