

# carolinasgolf

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of the Carolinas Golf Association

Summer 2011

## BACK TO THE DUNES

MYRTLE BEACH ICON TO HOST  
97TH CAROLINAS AMATEUR

### > PRIVATE ACCESS

McCONNELL GOLF TRAIL  
EXPANDS GUEST POLICY

### > NEED FOR SPEED

DRIVERS SHED WEIGHT TO  
ACCELERATE YOUR SWING



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The Dunes Golf & Beach Club hosts the 97th Carolinas Amateur. Photo courtesy of Michael Slear/The Brandon Agency

# 97th Carolinas Amateur

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Contestants at the **97th Carolinas Amateur** will face a tough and elusive course when the CGA's premier championship visits **The Dunes Golf & Beach Club** in July. The iconic Myrtle Beach club — designed by Robert Trent Jones in 1947 — features oak-lined fairways, elevation changes, marshland, and slick A1 bentgrass greens. Oh, and don't forget the wind off the nearby Atlantic Ocean.



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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

## With Minor Adjustments, Golf Can Thrive Again

/ by WALTER TODD, President, Carolinas Golf Association

› It would be an understatement to say that the growth of golf in the United States has been somewhat less than robust. Over the last 10 years, there have been more golf course closings than openings. There are fewer people playing the game today than in 2000.

There are obviously many contributing factors to the decline. However, those who study these sorts of things have basically narrowed it down to three main problems: the game is too hard, too expensive, and takes too long to play.

As for the game being too hard, I've heard talk of a larger hole than the conventional four and a quarter inches, but I'm too much of a traditionalist to buy into that. However, I would encourage people to play from a set of tees that offers the most enjoyment.

Golf courses have been built longer and harder through the years to accommodate the professionals and top amateurs. For some reason, a hard course is sometimes associated with being a good course. That is not necessarily the case. But move up to the tees where you can make some birdies. The truth of the matter is that the game is hard for everyone, so do your best, enjoy the challenge, and accept your fate. I shall try that as well.

As for golf being too expensive, I believe that the industry will adjust. Market conditions will dictate what we are willing to pay for club dues, green fees, and equipment. I think the "powers that be" will adjust, and the industry will again flourish. Also, it may be unrealistic for golfers to expect perfect playing conditions year-round, and we may have to adapt to playing harder, faster, and even brown surfaces. Who knows? We may like it more.

I would also encourage clubs and facilities to make golf more accessible to junior players, and not just the children of members. It is crucial for the growth of the game to have young golfers.

A major complaint that is often heard is that golf takes too long to play. I again make a plea for faster play. Be ready when it is your turn to play and shorten up your routine if it is time-intensive.

Despite these issues, golf will thrive again soon — for no better reason than it is the greatest game ever played, and one that can be enjoyed for a lifetime. Get out and play, and enjoy your game!

FAST FACTS

**349** Number of CGA members submitting applications to the CGAcers club for holes-in-one in 2010. The longest ace was a 290-yarder by John Fowler. The shortest was a 75-yarder by Angela Bryant. St. James Plantation in Southport, N.C., reported the most holes-in-one with 28. Nine golfers recorded two aces.

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## NEWS & NOTEWORTHY EVENTS AROUND THE CAROLINAS

› **Betsey Mitchell** of Pinehurst, N.C., was honored with the Best Non-Daily Feature award from the Carolinas Golf Reporters Association. The awards recognized the membership's best works of 2010. Mitchell's article, "Local Pride – The Top Munis of the Carolinas" appeared in the Summer 2010 issue of *Carolinas Golf*.

› **UNC-Greensboro golfer Robert Hoadley** was named by the Amateur Athletic Union as one of 12 semifinalists for the Sullivan Award, the citation presented annually to the outstanding amateur athlete in the United States. Predating the Heisman Trophy by five years, it recognizes "strong moral character" and competitive achievements. Olympic figure skater Evan Lysacek took top honors. Hoadley, a sophomore who plans on majoring in marketing, is a Dean's List and Chancellor's List student who has volunteered with the First Tee program in Southern Pines, N.C., since he completed the program as a participant in 2004. Hoadley won the 2007 North Carolina Junior, played on two CGA Junior Teams, and was runner-up in the 2006 North Carolina Junior.

› **The PGA of America announced that Dana Rader Golf School** and the school's senior instructor, **Nancy Harvey**, have been named to the list of Play Golf America's Top 100 Performers in 2010. The PGA of America recognizes PGA and LPGA professionals for their extraordinary efforts in using Play Golf America programs to increase interest in the game. Dana Rader Golf School offers a series of Play Golf America programs throughout the year, such as the Women's Only Three-Day Golf School and Women's Introduction to Golf.

› **Charles Blalock Smith**, age 80, died March 16, 2011. Born in Gastonia, N.C., Smith served in the U.S. Air Force and was a graduate of The Citadel, class of 1952. He was an avid golfer and at one time was the third-ranked amateur in the world. His championships included the 1962 Carolinas Amateur, 1967 Carolinas Four-Ball, 1988 Carolinas Senior Four-Ball, Gaston Country Club, North-South, Southern Amateur, Eastern Amateur, Carolinas Open, and Azalea Amateur. Smith was on the 1961 Americas Cup team, the 1961 and 1963 Walker Cup teams, and played in the Masters four times.

› **Bob Boyd** of Wilmington, N.C., died in February after a five-year battle with leukemia. He was 55. The seven-time Carolinas PGA Player of the Year competed on the European Senior Tour, winning the 2005 Open de España Senior. He had 15 top-10 finishes and for four seasons, was in the top 30 on the Order of Merit on that tour. He played in 10 PGA Championships and five U.S. Opens.

› **Joey Hines**, the 52-year-old head professional from Cape Fear in Wilmington, N.C., was recently featured on the USGA's website. He holds a unique distinction: Although it took 29 years, he played every course to host a U.S. Open. The odyssey began in 1981 at Northwood Club in Dallas, site of the 1952 Open, and ended on Sept. 23, 2010, when he played Worcester (Mass.) Country Club (1925 Open), concluding a run of 49 courses in 17 states.





› Kiawah Island Golf Resort, Ocean Course

### › Tickets vanishing for 2012 PGA

After selling 94 percent of all tickets last winter, PGA officials announced that the last block of tickets for the 2012 PGA Championship — to be held at the Ocean Course on Kiawah Island — will be released following the 2011 PGA Championship in mid-August.

The 94th PGA Championship will mark the first major championship to be played in the Palmetto State. The remaining daily and weekly ticket packages will be re-opened to the general public and are anticipated to sell out within days. PGA officials urge all interested individuals to register online to receive information about ticket sales at [pga2012.com](http://pga2012.com).

### › Greenville CC to Host Robert Trent Jones Society

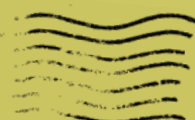
Greenville (S.C.) Country Club will host the Oct. 4-6 annual meeting of the Robert Trent Jones Society. The featured speaker will be Jones' son Rees, who is also a noted architect. Robert Trent Jones Sr. designed or renovated 15 courses in the Carolinas, including GCC's championship course, Chanticleer. The meeting also will feature a two-day golf tournament at Chanticleer, renovated in 2002 by Rees Jones.

The society, started in 2004, is designed to honor the late Robert Trent Jones Sr. as one of the pre-eminent golf course architects, and to foster an understanding and appreciation of his influence on the game as well as his impact on golf architecture.

— Mark Matlock

### › The Way it Was: 1942

Sometimes we need a reference to make us realize that Americans have endured tougher times than we know today.



#### MYERS PARK CLUB, Charlotte, N. C. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1942

Conditions of play: 18 holes medal play A.M. and 18 holes medal play P.M. Silver medals for winner of best low net 36 holes and for winners of first and second best low net 18 holes made during either A.M. or P.M. play. All ties will be decided by lot. Entry fee 50c for each 18 holes; all proceeds from entries will go into the Association's fund for war activities.

It is the Secretary's private opinion that the Carolina Golf Association is through "for the duration." Maybe we are unduly pessimistic but we fail to see wherein the Association can be of service. Championships and one day events will obviously be things of the past and all our glorious efforts to help the war activities by collecting balls and clubs, have fallen flat. It would therefore seem best to gracefully accept the situation, fold the Association's affairs neatly up and place them on a shelf marked, "not to be opened until Hitler and Hirohito are finished." Those with opinions to the contrary will please so express themselves.

The Myers Park Club is putting on this one day event without benefit of assistance from the Association. Much as we should like to be on hand to collect your dollars personally, the gas and tire situation does not make it seem right. Therefore, we wish everybody the best of luck and are looking forward to happier days soon to come.

DICK TUFTS, Secretary  
Carolina Golf Association

### FAST FACTS

**\$80,000+** Amount raised by the Rounds4Research.com auction, administered annually by the Carolinas Golf Course Superintendents Association. Tee times were donated by nearly 500 individual facilities.

**973** Number of CGA members attending CGA-run *Rules of Golf* seminars held at 14 separate locations in early 2011. Among the attendees: 114 PGA and LPGA professionals.





› Dormie Club, Hole No. 4

### › Dormie Club Adds to Pinehurst-Area Courses

Located due north of the Village of Pinehurst, the Dormie Club looks and feels like a timeless golf club of years past, but is actually the first new course to open in the Pinehurst area since 1996.

The most important component of the Dormie Club is complete. The renowned architectural team of Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw has given the Pinehurst area a new golf course on more than 300 rolling acres of land featuring 100-foot elevation changes, two natural lakes, and hardwood and pine forests — and with no housing or roadways within the golf course property.

The original goal of the Dormie Club was to offer an invitation-only, private membership. Instead, Dormie decided to take non-member play through December 2012, after which it will revert to a fully private club. The club has arrangements with several trusted golf packagers and four local hotels to promote play. The non-member, in-season rate, including cart and forecaddie, is \$235. The off-season rate is \$150.

Learn more at (910) 947-3240 or [DormieClub.com](http://DormieClub.com).

### › TGA Premier Junior Golf Impacts the Charlotte Region

Growing the game one student at a time and one school at a time has always been the goal of Charlotte-based PGA professional Champ Detamore.

“The best way to grow the game of golf is to do it through the schools, and that is exactly what TGA Premier Junior Golf is doing across the country,” Detamore says. “The best way to grow the game is not to concentrate on those already involved with the game, but to give those not familiar with the game an opportunity to see how wonderfully fun and rewarding the game can be.”

Detamore has spent four years turning the Charlotte-based TGA Premier Junior Golf program into the largest TGA territory in the country.

TGA Premier Junior Golf is an after-school golf enrichment program offered in 2,200 schools nationwide. It reaches more than 103,000 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Detamore’s popular program in Charlotte is in more than 45 area schools and has had more than 8,000 students participate.

“TGA’s philosophy is to grow the game by making golf accessible and affordable for all youth,” Detamore says. “Our goal is to impact as many youth as we can while providing a program that is

an extension of the classroom, benefiting students and schools in many ways.”

TGA not only teaches the fundamentals of the game, its rules and etiquette, but also incorporates life values, a character development initiative, and education components such as math, English, history, and science. The curriculum was developed by Ph.D.s in child and curriculum development, along with PGA and LPGA golf professionals.

Last year more than 2,400 students got to experience the

after-school program in Charlotte. Detamore now employs 10-15 instructors to teach the unique curriculum at the schools and camps.

Detamore also takes pride in working with some of the area’s under-resourced schools, working with students who otherwise could not afford to participate or learn the game of golf. “We are fortunate to have Tega Cay Golf Club and Paradise Valley open their doors to our program and help us build the future of tomorrow’s golfer,” he says. “We are

constantly looking for facilities to partner with in clinics, summer camps, and tournaments.”

In addition, there are also TGA programs in Greenville, N.C., as well as Columbia and York County in South Carolina. For more information, visit [golftga.com](http://golftga.com).



### ➤ Dataw Island Club Begins \$5.4 Million Renovation

Dataw Island Club announced a \$5.4 million renovation project of the Cotton Dike and Morgan River golf courses within the private, gated community near Beaufort, S.C. "Our golf courses are already outstanding, but these renovations



➤ Dataw Island Club

will simply enhance what we have and improve some of the natural features and playability for our members and guests," says Ted Bartlett, general manager and chief operating officer.

Renovations include irrigation replacement, repairing of cart paths, coring out and re-contouring 17 greens on Cotton Dike and three greens on Morgan River, and re-grassing all greens with miniverde ultradwarf bermudagrass. The club will also improve bunkering, perform lake bank restoration and tree pruning.

The renovations began on the Tom Fazio-designed Cotton Dike course in April, and will proceed to the Arthur Hills-designed Morgan River course. The renovation is expected to take 18 months.

For information about Dataw Island and new membership opportunities, call (866) 933-2829, or visit Dataw.com.

### Carolinas PGA Section To Move To Greensboro

➤ The Carolinas PGA Board of Directors unanimously voted in March to relocate the Carolinas PGA Section office to Greensboro, N.C. The Section will build a new office on nearly 3 acres of land at Bryan Park Golf & Conference Center.

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# CAROLINA DREAMIN'

McCONNELL GOLF TRAIL OFFERS ACCESS TO PRESTIGIOUS PRIVATE CLUBS

/ written by **BRAD KING**

The marketing concept of the “golf trail” is far from new — Alabama’s Robert Trent Jones Trail blazed that path, so to speak, years ago. And others have followed since. Yet the Carolinas-based **McConnell Golf Trail** is quite different — it offers guests a rare opportunity to play some of the most prestigious *private* golf courses in North Carolina and South Carolina.

“Since we have some of the top-rated courses in the state, we thought there may be a market for the discerning golfer looking for that added experience of luxury golf on private courses,” says Trail founder John McConnell. “Our intentions are to offer only a limited number of packages each season and to provide an unforgettable experience.”

“We are very excited to offer this package to nonmembers of McConnell Golf,” adds Ray McDonald, McConnell Golf’s vice president of sales and marketing. “Our outstanding collection of historic Carolina golf courses provides the most serious golfers with the finest the sport has to offer.”

McConnell Golf recently added to its stable when it purchased the venerable Sedge-

field Country Club in Greensboro, N.C. — a Donald Ross design that served as longtime host of the PGA Tour’s Greater Greensboro Open and is now home to the Wyndham Championship.

Sedgefield grew McConnell Golf’s portfolio of private club offerings to seven. The list includes award-winning courses such as Old North State in New London, N.C., a Tom Fazio design consistently rated among the Top 5 in the state by the North Carolina Golf Panel; The Cardinal in Greensboro, N.C., a Pete Dye original and redesign, and longtime site of The Cardinal Amateur; and The Reserve in Pawley’s Island, S.C., a Greg Norman design that’s considered among the state’s Top 50.

All are available to McConnell Golf Trail

guests, along with venerable Raleigh Country Club, which is consistently ranked among the top courses in North Carolina and boasts the region’s largest golf teaching facilities. Raleigh CC — the last course designed by Donald Ross — opened for play in July 1949, with Hall of Fame member Sam Snead playing an exhibition tournament. Ellis Maples became the club’s first director of golf, and Arnold Palmer played numerous rounds there as a collegian.

A half-hour drive from Raleigh CC is Durham’s Treyburn Country Club, another Tom Fazio design. The McConnell Golf Trail’s other South Carolina destination (along with The Reserve) is Musgrove Mill Golf Club. Created by Arnold Palmer Design Co. and opened in 1988, Musgrove Mill has played host to many CGA championships, and has been consistently ranked one of *Golfweek* magazine’s Top 100 Modern Courses and *Golf Digest*’s Top 10 Courses in South Carolina.

Like Old North State Club, Musgrove Mill represents an enviable getaway for any golfer looking to tackle one of golf’s finest tests, and





➤ Musgrove Mill GC



➤ Raleigh CC, Hole No. 13



➤ Old North State Club Lodge

offers a world-class sanctuary for golfers to eat and rest after their rounds.

At Musgrove Mill, Trail guests stay overnight in on-site cottages and also enjoy a first-rate practice facility and full-service clubhouse, all while taking in the historic former Revolutionary War battle site.

Old North State Club also brings a host of amenities to the table. Trail guests stay in the original clubhouse, which has been turned into a spacious, eight-room lodge with a kitchen, bar, dining area, and recreation room. Located on the 5,300-acre Badin Lake, Old North State Club is a secluded, gated community surrounded by the quiet beauty of Uwharrie National Forest.

Lucas Glover, the 2009 U.S. Open champion, appreciates first-hand the quality of the courses on the McConnell Golf Trail. The Greenville, S.C., native and former All-American at Clemson University grew up playing golf around the Carolinas. As a McConnell Golf member, Glover endorses McConnell Golf's weeklong dream tour.

"These are some of the finest private courses in the Carolinas," Glover says. "McConnell Golf understands that combining championship golf with excellent service results in an experience by which all others will be measured."

The McConnell Trail gives guests a structured itinerary of travel to and from courses, lodging specifics, and lunch and dinner provisions. Guests are met at the Charlotte or Raleigh international airports, and their driver also serves as the group's forecaddie for the week, although individual caddies also may be arranged.

Throughout the week, guests are chauffeured to the private clubs, where they experience unlimited golf and first-rate accommodations either on the club property or at a nearby hotel. Participating hotels such as the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley and the Greensboro Marriott Downtown provide guests concierge floors. Amenities include access to a private lounge with complimentary afternoon snacks and a bountiful buffet breakfast.

Along the way, a professional personal chef prepares most meals — usually salads and sandwiches for lunch, and gourmet offerings such as surf and turf for dinner. Each golfer is given a temporary McConnell membership card, allowing signing privileges for drinks and pro shop items. A grand farewell dinner is provided on the last evening.

➤ **Brad King** is the former editor of *Links Magazine*.

## When You Go

➤ **The McConnell Group can arrange** three-, five- or seven-day packages customized to fit guests' choice of courses. Prices vary depending on season — they're lower during the off-peak months (Nov.-March). Packages are per golfer and require a minimum of four participants. For more information, visit [mcconnellgolftrail.com](http://mcconnellgolftrail.com).



# Carolinas Amateur Returns to The Dunes

## CONTESTANTS TO FACE 'TOUGH, ELUSIVE' COURSE

/ written by BOB GILLESPIE

**Call it a love story.** When Thomas C. "Tommy" Brittain joined Myrtle Beach's The Dunes Golf & Beach Club in the mid-1980s, the up-and-coming lawyer was, by his admission, a middling 18-handicapper. Perhaps he believed playing at the second-oldest golf club on the Grand Strand would improve his game, or would be good for business.



A quarter-century later, it has become all that for the 59-year-old ... and much, much more.

If a person can forge a romantic liaison with a piece of ground, can grow to adore a collection of golf holes, ancient oak forests and ocean views ...

well, Brittain says, he and The Dunes have such a relationship.

It's no secret affair. "Brittain plays 160-200 rounds a year here, and walks all of them," says Dennis Nicholl, head professional at The Dunes, which will play host to the Carolinas Amateur July 14-17. "He's traveled the world, played everywhere, but this is his true love."

Brittain, whose sons and law partners, Clay and Preston, also are

members, confirms that — and more. "I've played Cypress Point, which was a great experience, great scenery, and I shot a good score," he says. "Afterward, I said (to his host), 'I hate to tell you, but if you ask me which course I'd get up every morning and play, it would be The Dunes Club.'"

"I love (the club) as much as or more than anyone alive," he says. "I'm devoted to the golf course. I have a long personal relationship with her." Did he say "her"? Yes, he did.

No surprise, then, that when the 1948 Robert Trent Jones course welcomes the Carolinas' top amateurs, spectator Brittain will be as intensely involved as anyone in the 144-man field. After all, this is his girl they're messing with.

"Though I'd rather play than watch, I never miss something like this," he says. "If someone whips her ... well, they do it. But it doesn't happen a lot."

The Dunes Club is playing host to its sixth Carolinas Amateur since 1953 (most recently in 2001) but its first at stroke play (the Amateur switched from match play a year ago). In the past, qualifying medalists have generally scored around par at The Dunes, which can be stretched past 7,100 yards. In 1979, medalist and future PGA Tour





➤ Dunes, Hole No. 16

## Family Affair:

# Alex Chestnut, latest in line of bag/cart men at Dunes Club

/ by BOB GILLESPIE



You might say that Alex Chestnut followed his father to work at The Dunes Beach & Golf Club. Except “followed” isn’t quite accurate — dragged kicking and screaming isn’t, either, but it’s closer.

Chestnut’s first job at the iconic Myrtle Beach course came when he was 12. One day, his father, Harold — aka “Bones,” a 44-year employee — recruited Alex and his brothers, Harold Jr. and Dennis, to sell buckets of range balls to members for 50 cents a bucket.

“We didn’t really ‘follow’ him there; he just told us, ‘You’re going to work,’” Chestnut, now 50, says with a laugh. “We didn’t have a lot of choice. The range-ball machine was broke down and he needed someone to sell balls.”

Thirty-eight years later, Alex Chestnut is — like his father before him, who retired seven years ago and is 70 now — as much a part of The Dunes as its clubhouse and the legendary “Waterloo” par-5 13th hole. He’s been a cart attendant for 12 years; before that, he worked a number of other positions off and on.

“I’m the first one to greet you, load and unload your clubs,” he says. “Afterward I tell them, ‘Thank you, sir, I hope I see you here again.’ And they always say, ‘Of course you will.’ They can’t believe how good this course is.”

Chestnut knows. He also knows where to hit shots and, more important, where not to hit them. An 18 handicap (he was a 12 before rotator-cuff surgery), his best round at The Dunes is a 76.

“The challenge (is that) every shot, every hole is different,” he says. “I’ve played it a lot, and it’s one of the most challenging courses on the Grand Strand.” His favorite hole is No. 13, sort of: “I don’t love it — just the challenge of it,” he says.

In his time, Chestnut has seen two of the previous five Carolinas Amateurs held at The Dunes, plus several PGA Senior Tour (now Champions Tour) championships in the 1990s. The best games he’s seen? Those of Champions Tour giant Hale Irwin and, more recently, PGA Tour rising star Dustin Johnson.

Why stay in one spot for three-quarters of his life? “Because it’s a good place to work,” he says. “The people are good, we all get along with each other, and the members treat you well, respect you. That means a lot.”

The long-ago words of his father are part of it, too. “He always said, ‘If it’s a good job, stay there, stick in there,’” Chestnut says. That’s a family tradition, too.



➤ Dunes, Hole No. 9

player Scott Hoch shot 1-under-par 71.

“In match play, you can take a big number, lose a hole and move on,” says Nicholl, whose own best Dunes round is a bogey-free 67. “But in stroke play, one (bad) hole and you can shoot yourself out of it.

“Going through ‘Alligator Alley’ (Nos. 11-13, capped by the par-5 13th Waterloo hole, rated one of *Golf* magazine’s America’s Best 100 Holes), if the wind is up, you can take a 6 or 7 in a minute. You’ve got to be on your game.”

Strategic features include oak-lined fairways, surprising elevation changes, slick A-1 bentgrass greens (added during a 2003 renovation), and marshlands — all demanding accuracy, finesse, and creativity.

**Career Paths:****Dennis Nicholl, head professional, The Dunes Golf & Beach Club**/ by **BOB GILLESPIE**

If, 20-25 years ago, you'd told Dennis Nicholl that he and his older brother would one day work in the same business, the head professional at The Dunes Golf & Beach Club probably would've agreed.

Only that business wouldn't have been golf.

From 1986-90, Kevin Nicholl was a place-kicker for the Central Michigan University football team; he still holds



school records for most field goals in a career (56) and a season (20 in 1989), and made All-Mid-American Conference twice. After school, he even had a tryout with the NFL's Arizona Cardinals.

Two years younger, Dennis followed his brother to CMU, focusing on punting his final two seasons and making the All-MAC second team.

"(Kevin) was the better of us two; he just pounded the ball," Nicholl, 40, says. "But my teams beat Michigan State twice and went to the Raisin Bowl. I have great memories."

His golf career, meanwhile, was born of necessity. Nicholl, who didn't take up the game until college, came home that first summer needing a job. "I had bills, gas for the car," he says. "I picked up the newspaper and saw a golf course was hiring."

Pine Valley Golf Club, a 27-hole public facility 30 miles north of Detroit, was a revelation. "I fell in love with the business of golf," he says. He switched majors to hotel/res-restaurant/facilities management, passed his PGA playing test right after college, headed south and wound up in Myrtle Beach. Since 2007, he's been at The Dunes, where "I'm a manager first, a golf pro second," he says.

Kevin? "He kicked versus Al Del Greco, who later got a Super Bowl ring," Nicholl says, laughing. "But he saw the writing on the wall, knew he had to find something else."

"Something else" was — you guessed it — golf. Kevin, 42, became general manager at Cracklewood Golf Club near Detroit and has been there since. "It's a gold mine, a Joe Public course built on a potato farm, packed every day," Nicholl says. "He's public (golf), I'm private, so we've got it covered."

The two remain competitive, although now it's on the golf course. "We only play once every four to five years, though," Nicholl says. "We're both so busy. I miss that [competition]."

It runs in the family, after all.



➤ Dunes, Hole No. 13

"(On a particular hole) maybe Jones wants you to hit away from a bunker — but then you have a bad angle to the green," Nicholl says. "You have to plan your way around, when to use driver, how far back you may want to lay up on some holes. And the wind (off the Atlantic Ocean), especially in summer, can affect scores dramatically."

Brittain, who waxes eloquent about The Dunes' large, elevated greens, isolated corridors, and the ubiquitous feel (and smell) of the ocean, also knows his course's trouble spots. "It's a second-shot golf course, but if we let the rough grow at all, they won't tame her," he says. "You can get in places where you can't make a bogey; downhill lie in the back bunker at 13 with a back pin, you might make 7. There's not a lot of danger, but if you hit it bad, there's a price to pay."

Yet Brittain also has seen The Dunes reward outstanding play. He was on hand each year when the Senior Tour Championship was played there from 1994-97 — the course also hosted the finals of the 1973 PGA Tour Qualifying School and the 1962 U.S. Women's Open — and, in particular, he remembers senior pro Jay Sigel's record 63.

"I was standing behind him in the 15th fairway — there's a marker there now — when he hit a 5-wood that went in the hole for a double-eagle," Brittain says. "We saw the crowd go wild. That same round, he made a (hole-in-one) on No. 5. That's my favorite memory."

"Of course," he adds quickly, as if to defend his lady's honor, "the seniors weren't playing it all the way back."

Which brings us to Brittain's other favorite moment in golf — and, to hear him tell it, maybe ever.

"One of the greatest days of my life — Sept. 1 (2006) — I became a scratch player at The Dunes Club," he says. Earlier, Brittain had received notice that his handicap, courtesy of a round of 65, had dropped to zero.

"I stood on the first tee, looked out and knew she didn't owe me a shot. I had played enough, worked enough, and now she and I were even. That day, I expected to shoot par."

He shot a 74, two-over par, but no matter. "(It was) a gigantic day for me." He had the card from when he shot the 65 — plus a letter from a friend congratulating him on becoming a scratch golfer — framed.

Brittain, now a 3 handicap, sighs. "I took her on hundreds of times, and to finally get to that day ... she's tough, elusive."

Another sigh: "That's where I play my golf."

Of course, The Dunes is his lifelong love. Yes, she is.

➤ **Bob Gillespie** is a Columbia, S.C.-based sportswriter and a frequent contributor to *Carolinas Golf*.



# Grand Strand 'Godfather'

JIMMY D'ANGELO MADE MYRTLE BEACH A GOLF MECCA

/ written by LEE PACE

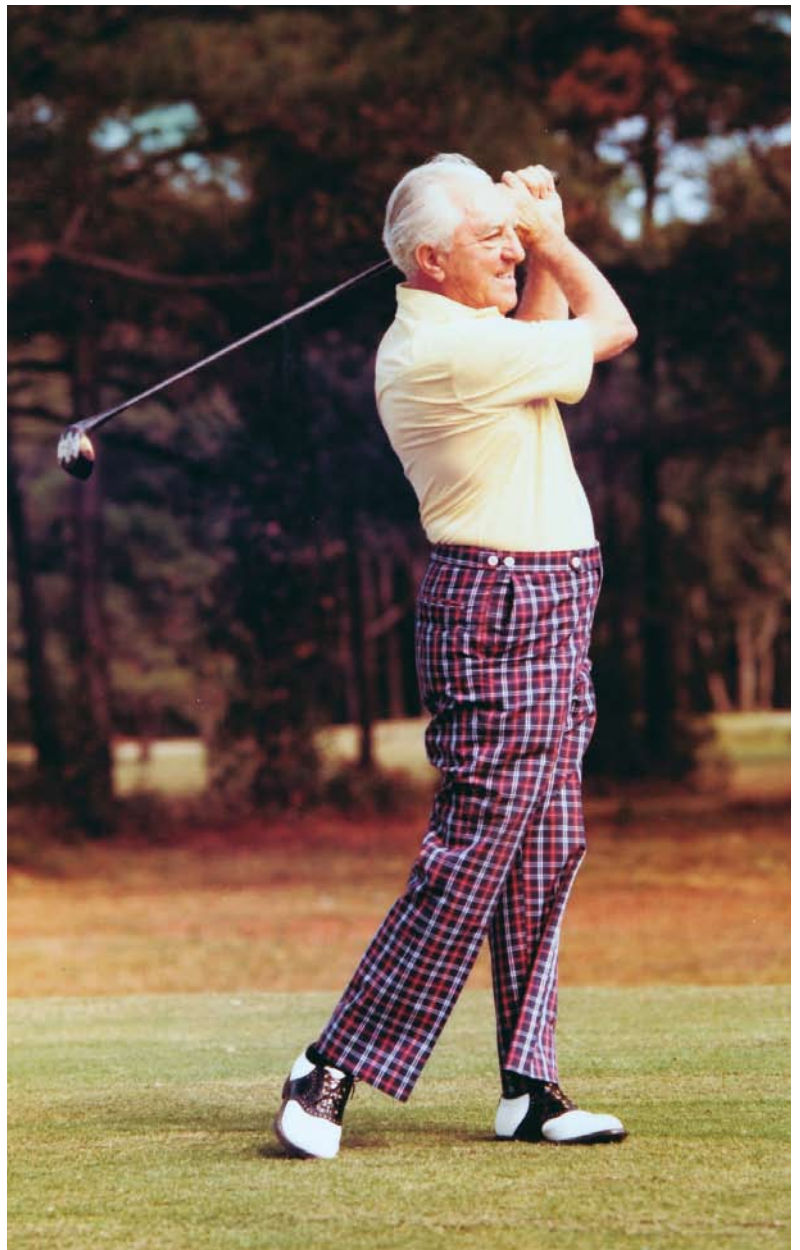
An area along the South Carolina coast was dubbed "New Town" at the turn of the 20th century as employees of a lumber and railroad company in Conway rode the train flatcars to the beach for weekend recreation. The village was later named for the predominant Southern Wax Myrtle shrub.

Myrtle Beach remained a sleepy tourist town — with just one golf course — through the end of World War II.

A group of businessmen, led by attorney Buster Bryan, believed the town needed a second course and began plans in October 1947 to create The Dunes Club. It would be built along Singleton's Swash, a narrow channel of tide-water six miles north of the town's central boardwalk. Robert Trent Jones, the pre-eminent golf architect of the day, was retained to design the course, but the club needed an energetic salesman to hawk its stock.

Bryan remembered a bright young professional from Philadelphia who had spent the winters at the beach during the late 1930s teaching golf for Robert White, the first president of the PGA, at Myrtle Beach's lone golf course, Ocean Forest Golf Club (later to become Pine Lakes International).

Jimmy D'Angelo was born in 1910. The son of an Italian immigrant laborer, he learned golf as a 9-year-old caddie at Huntingdon Valley Country Club in the Philadelphia suburbs. He became a head pro at the young age of 21 and found a particular niche in promoting the game through the Philadelphia Section of the PGA. He was short and trim, had a neat mustache, dark eyes, and a hearty laugh. He made friends easily, was constantly on the move, and loved to talk about golf and to dissect swing nuances.



Bryan called D'Angelo and asked him to visit Myrtle Beach to take a close look at the club's plans and vision.

D'Angelo was sold on the idea and soon became the club's membership salesman, traveling throughout the Carolinas and the Mid-Atlantic in a Plymouth automobile and then a DeSoto. A share of Dunes Club stock cost \$525.

"When I came down here, everybody thought I was out of my mind," D'Angelo said years later. "Most people wouldn't be crazy enough to do what I did. There were no guarantees at all. Nobody had ever heard of Myrtle Beach."

D'Angelo had quite a bit to do with changing that. In addition to helping The Dunes Club get established and serving as its head pro from the club's opening in 1948 through 1968, he had a key role in another landmark public relations move.

In his Philadelphia days, D'Angelo had become friendly with a number of Northeast sportswriters, and in the fall of 1953 he was hosting Larry Robinson of the *New York World Telegram* at The Dunes Club. He and Bryan took Robinson to a fish fry and, over dinner, they asked for ideas to promote The Dunes Club and the beach itself.

Robinson suggested they stage a testimonial dinner for Robert Trent Jones and schedule it the Monday before the Masters. They could invite newspapermen to swing through Myrtle Beach on their way to Augusta.

It sounded like a pretty good idea, D'Angelo and Bryan agreed. So why not? Eight members of the Golf Writers Association of America showed up in April 1954, including Herbert Warren Wind of *The New Yorker*, Bob Drum of the *Pittsburgh Press* and Bob Harlow of *Golf World*.

D'Angelo and Bryan decided to make it an annual gathering, and the attendance exploded to 64 writers in 1957.

"They all had a great time and wrote wonderful stories about The Dunes Club and Myrtle Beach when they got back home,"



D'Angelo — shown above right with writer Herb Graffis at The Dunes Club during a golf writers' tournament in 1957 — acquired the unofficial title of 'Myrtle Beach Golf Ambassador' and the 'Godfather of Myrtle Beach.'

D'Angelo said, adding: "The publicity was incredible. The writers put us on the map. I tell everyone that."

It took several more years before Myrtle Beach had its third course. That's when George Cobb designed the Surf Club at the behest of a group of investors that included Charles Tilghman, a developer working to create a residential community just south of Cherry Grove Beach.

"When we built the Surf Club in 1960, everyone said we'd built one golf course too many," D'Angelo said.

Everyone was wrong, as the rest of the decade would prove. Nine courses were built in the 1960s, and Bryan and several other Myrtle Beach hoteliers and golf course owners had the cutting-edge idea that instead of promoting themselves individually, they should pool their marketing dollars and sell Myrtle Beach as a single entity. Thus Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday was formed, and D'Angelo moved from The Dunes Club to Golf Holiday in 1968 as its publicity director.

Between his conviviality with the golf press each April and his boundless energy on behalf of Golf Holiday, D'Angelo acquired the unofficial title of "Myrtle Beach Golf Ambassador" and "Godfather of Myrtle Beach" over the ensuing decades.

It was quite a ride. The Grand Strand exploded over the 1980s and 1990s, and more than 120 golf courses stretching 60 miles from the Brunswick County corner of North Carolina down to the Pawley's Island nook at the height of the late 1990s golf boom.

D'Angelo died in 2000 at the age of 90, and he certainly went out at the top. The golf course inventory at the beach and beyond has shrunk in the wake of the global economic crisis, and the GWAA's 52nd spring conclave in 2005 was its last at Myrtle Beach.

D'Angelo was one of six individuals named in 2009 to the inaugural class of the Myrtle Beach Golf Hall of Fame; the others were W. Cecil Brandon, Caroline Cudone, Clay Brittain Jr., Gen. James Hackler Jr., and Robert White.

"Jimmy was a pioneer," says Brandon, a Myrtle Beach advertising executive who was also a key figure in driving the beach golf industry. "He established the foundation that made us what we are. He was a class act. He was a great PR man and he was great for the beach. He got the Golf Writers started coming here, and that was a boon for Myrtle Beach golf over many years."

➤ Lee Pace is a frequent contributor to *Carolinas Golf*.



# NEED FOR SPEED

## DRIVER WEIGHT LOSS OFFERS GAINS IN DISTANCE

*Many of us occasionally want more speed in our lives. We want to get to destinations faster, with a sense of exhilaration. For golfers, increased clubhead speed is the latest thrill.*

Speed — as in faster swing speeds — is the golden chalice. By making drivers longer and lighter, manufacturers are adding more speed with the aim of increasing distance off the tee. Less weight equals more swing speed. More swing speed equals more distance. And isn't that an exhilarating thought!

"With our XCG-4 driver, we have a super-light and a super-ultra-light model," says Jay Hubbard, director of marketing and public relations for Tour Edge Golf. The super-ultra-light is only 276 grams, which makes it one of the lightest on the market.

"Our super-ultra-light has a 46.5-inch shaft,"

Hubbard says. The norm used to be 45 or even 43 inches. "As we get better at developing higher MOI (moment of inertia) clubs and with the new materials we're getting, we're able to make the clubhead more stable. We can make it lighter but still allow it to react so that on off-center hits, you hit it down the fairway instead of off to the right or left. The same goes for the shaft — we're able to add a longer shaft and not have the golfer spray it."

In addition to the weight, the stability factor is a huge issue. About 10-15 years ago, companies made shafts in high 30s to low 40s gram weights but, in some cases, they shattered.

"The one in our super-ultra-light XCG-4 is 45 grams," says Hubbard. "The ultra-light version is at 60 grams. We'll see it keep getting lighter, but you're going to reach a point of diminishing returns."

Here's a sampling of how some manufacturers are addressing the need for speed, whether through lightweight materials, improved aerodynamics, or both.

**Cleveland Golf** has four models in its Launcher Ultralite driver series, ranging from the 270-gram XL270 and XL270 Draw to the 290-gram SL290 and 310-gram TL310. Both 270 XL drivers have a 43-gram Miyazaki shaft, one of the lightest around. The different weighted drivers provide golfers with a combination of feel, workability, and head speed.

"Cleveland's story is Right Weight Technology," says Keith Patterson, media and public relations manager for Cleveland Golf. "There are four different drivers, all with completely different weights. As you go up in weight, the head is designed for a little better player. Better



Cleveland  
Golf Launcher  
Ultralite



Tour Edge's  
Exotics XCG-4



TaylorMade  
Burner  
SuperFast 2.0

players tend to want a little heavier, stable club, so as you go up in weight the head design changes slightly. We're giving players an option to get fit and decide which weight works best for them. We recommend that everyone gets fit if they want to maximize the performance from their equipment." [clevelandgolf.com](http://clevelandgolf.com)

**Tour Edge's** Exotics XCG-4 drivers are also offered in multiple models, with the 276-gram super ultra-light and 310-gram ultra-light editions. A sleek design and heavily radiused sole helped Tour Edge create a more streamlined, fluid head shape that minimizes drag as the driver cuts through the air. The head design features a titanium face and sole, a carbon crown, two carbon sole inserts, and two tungsten sole weights. This helps free up 27 grams of weight that are strategically positioned in the lower rear of the clubhead to improve the MOI. A Boomerang face has multiple levels of variable face thickness that maximize rebound effect from more points on the face, for a better launch. [touredge.com](http://touredge.com)

**TaylorMade** is also taking the "less-is-more" approach with its Burner SuperFast 2.0 and Burner SuperFast 2.0 TP drivers. At 279 grams, the company says it's the lightest TaylorMade driver ever. The driver combines SuperFast technology, an ultra-large face, and a lower spin rate for added distance. It also creates a high MOI for stability. The sum: an extra 5 yards over the original Burner SuperFast, according to the company. The drivers' distinctive white crowns are also gaining attention.

There are differences between the two

models. The Burner SuperFast 2.0 TP has a more compact address footprint; a single, non-moveable weight port on the toe; a slightly open clubface angle; and a standard 65-gram shaft and 43-gram grip.

"This is a speed guy with distance," says Todd Fraser, senior director, brand and product marketing for TaylorMade-adidas Golf. "We've eliminated the dual crown you've seen on Burner. ... We've gone with more of an aerodynamic head to help with the speed to hit it longer." [taylormadegolf.com](http://taylormadegolf.com)

**Nike Golf's** SQ Machspeed Black driver has a sleek profile that lets air move quickly and cleanly over both its 460cc round- and square-head models, while helping to reduce drag. A deeper face also creates more ball speed, as does a Mitsubishi lightweight shaft.

The SQ Machspeed driver is further strengthened by Nike Golf's STR8-FIT technology, which provides eight face angle options from open to closed. The square version promotes forgiveness and stability. The round version offers more workability and shot-shaping.

Tom Stites, director of product creation for Nike Golf, says the Machspeed Black is "a very forgiving, highly improved Machspeed aerodynamic driver. It has a large distance from top to sole so you have more spring in the area," he says. "It has a deep center of gravity. It can close real easy." [nikegolf.com](http://nikegolf.com)

**Callaway Golf's** quest for speed in its RAZR Hawk and Diablo Octane drivers comes from forged composite, an ultra-light-weight material that was co-developed through a

partnership with Italian automaker Automobili Lamborghini. Its ability to be precisely forged allows clubheads to be designed within tolerances of one thousandth of an inch. That enhances aerodynamic efficiency and lets weight be strategically located.

"It's the most precise material we've ever used," says Tim Buckman, director of public relations for Callaway Golf. "Over 95 percent of drivers in the market are all titanium. We've led the world in all-titanium. (But) we're so impressed with this material that we're not introducing an all-titanium driver. It allows us to strategically locate every last gram inside the clubhead and put it into an area where it's advantageous for the golfer — forgiveness and performance."

The RAZR drivers have forged composite in the sole and crown, while Diablo drivers have it in the crown. [callwaygolf.com](http://callwaygolf.com)

At **Adams Golf**, speed is the name of the game, as exemplified by the Speedline F11 driver with its Velocity Slot Technology. Lisa Weistart, manager of marketing and public relations for Adams, says the aerodynamics create more clubhead speed and more distance. Three visible channels located on the sole and crown of the driver keep airflow attached to the clubhead longer and significantly reduce drag for more clubhead speed. A lower, deeper center of gravity leads to a higher launch angle with a lower spin rate. [adamsgolf.com](http://adamsgolf.com)

➤ **Bob Seligman** is a frequent contributor to *Carolinas Golf*.



Nike Golf's SQ Machspeed Black



Callaway Golf's RAZR Hawk



Adams Golf Speedline F11



# 2011 CGA Championship Schedule\*

/ CHAMPIONSHIP	/ SITE	/ DATES	/ WINNERS
3rd Carolinas Young Amateur	Pinewild CC (Magnolia), Pinehurst, N.C.	1/4-5	Jackson Taylor/ Courtney Boe
17th Tar Heel Cup Matches	Dormie Club, West End, N.C.	3/28-29	CPGA Professionals
North Carolina High School Invitational	Treyburn CC, Durham, N.C.	4/4	Leesville Road HS, Raleigh
34th Carolinas Pro-Am Club Championship	The Reserve GC, Pawley's Island, S.C.	4/11	Raleigh CC: B. Smith/B. Kittler
31st Carolinas Mid-Amateur	Carolina GC, Charlotte, N.C.	4/15-17	Paul Tucker
43rd Carolinas Senior Four-Ball	CC of Spartanburg, Spartanburg, S.C.	4/19-21	Frank Ford III/Bill Smunk
8th NC Women's Senior	Pinewood CC, Asheboro, N.C.	4/20-21	Angela Stewart
60th Carolinas Four-Ball	Camden CC, Camden, S.C.	5/4-8	Scott Harvey/Patrick Brady
6th Vicki DiSantis Junior Girls'	Pine Island CC, Charlotte, N.C.	5/7-8	Chelsey Couch
26th NC Senior Amateur	North Ridge CC (Lake), Raleigh, N.C.	5/17-19	
39th SC Amateur Match Play	Carolina CC, Spartanburg, S.C.	6/15-19	
51st NC Amateur	Greensboro CC (Farm), Greensboro, N.C.	6/16-19	
NC Junior (44th Boys/15th Girls)	Pine Island CC, Charlotte, N.C.	6/21-24	
2nd Carolinas Senior-Junior Championship	Devils Ridge GC, Holly Springs, N.C.	6/27	
55th Carolinas Junior Girls' Championship	Members Club at Woodcreek Farms, Elgin, S.C.	6/28-30	
14th Carolinas Women's Match Play	Cowans Ford CC, Stanley, N.C.	7/12-14	
34th SC Junior Match Play (34th Boys/12th Girls)	Sunset CC, Sumter, S.C.	7/12-15	
97th Carolinas Amateur	The Dunes Golf & Beach Club, Myrtle Beach, S.C.	7/14-17	
3rd Carolinas Super Senior	The Reserve GC, Pawley's Island, S.C.	7/18-19	
5th NC Boys 13 & Under Championship	Asheboro Municipal GC, Asheboro, N.C.	7/18-19	
45th Twin States Junior Girls' Championship	Governors Club, Chapel Hill, N.C.	7/26-27	
62nd Carolinas Junior Boys' Championship	Gaston CC, Gastonia, N.C.	7/26-28	
45th Carolinas Father-Son	Pinehurst area courses	7/29	
14th Carolinas Parent-Child	Longleaf CC, Southern Pines, N.C.	7/29	
10th Mid-Atlantic Challenge/Junior Girls' Team	Mid Pines Inn and Golf Club, Southern Pines, N.C.	7/30-31	
6th Carolinas Pro-Junior	Rock Barn Golf & Spa (Jones), Conover, N.C.	8/1	
34th Carolinas Women's Four-Ball	Porters Neck CC, Wilmington, N.C.	8/2-3	
11th NC Senior Four-Ball	High Point CC (Willow Creek), High Point, N.C.	8/2-4	
2nd NC Amateur Match Play Championship	Bermuda Run CC, Bermuda Run, N.C.	8/3-7	
7th Dogwood State Junior (Boys/Girls)	Cutter Creek GC, Snow Hill, N.C.	8/9-11	
29th Carolinas-Virginias Junior Matches	Boonsboro CC, Lynchburg, Va.	8/13-14	
6th Carolinas Mixed Team	Ocean Ridge Plantation (Panther's Run), Sunset Beach, N.C.	9/3-4	
50th Carolinas Senior Amateur	Columbia CC, Blythewood, S.C.	9/6-8	
18th NC Mid-Amateur Championship	River Run CC, Davidson, N.C.	9/9-11	
4th NC Super Senior Championship	Cross Creek CC, Mt. Airy, N.C.	9/27-28	
16th NC Four-Ball	River Landing (River), Wallace, N.C.	10/7-9	
13th Carolinas Women's Senior	Callawassie Island Club, Callawassie Island, S.C.	10/11-12	
66th Captain's Putter (Carolinas-Virginias)	Forest Creek GC, Southern Pines, N.C.	10/14-15	
1st Carolinas Net Amateur	Myrtle Beach area courses	11/19-20	

## NOTE

\* Visit [www.carolinasgolf.org](http://www.carolinasgolf.org) for updates and more, including a listing of qualifying sites, plus schedules for CGA one-day and senior four-ball events, CGA Interclub, Tarheel Youth Golf Association tournaments, USGA Championship qualifying sites, and updated player and team rankings. **Reminder:** MyCGA users can register for tournaments online at [carolinasgolf.org](http://carolinasgolf.org).



➤ There are few details that get past Jim Duncan, above, tournament director of the PGA's Nationwide Tour.

# Nationwide Mentor

DUNCAN GUIDES NEW GOLF PROS THROUGH THE NUANCES OF TOUR LIFE / written by MARK MATLOCK

**As tournament director** of the PGA's Nationwide Tour, Jim Duncan logs thousands of miles each year, traveling a circuit that covers 15 states and four countries.

But he wouldn't have any other job. The atmosphere on the Nationwide is more laid-back than "The Big Show," which gives Duncan and his staff the opportunity to help the players grow as professional golfers as well as people.

"I have a really, really good staff who know how to work with these kids, teach them what's right and what's wrong," Duncan says. "It's pretty amazing watching some of them grow up and (realizing) the part you play in that."

The North Carolina native says he enjoys the Nationwide Tour's camaraderie. "It's not very hard to get to know the players who've come through here," he says.

Many players on the Nationwide are young and, sometimes, not wise to the tour's subtleties. "We have pro-ams every week and people (amateurs) pay a lot of money to play," Duncan says, adding that the pros "have to understand that and understand who pays the bills."

According to Duncan, much of golf's popularity stems from the fact that fans think tour players are "good guys and they want their kids to model after them." So when one of the pros gets perturbed — by an amateur or a volunteer — Duncan pulls him aside and says, "I want you to figure out what he did to

get in the position to make you mad. He (the fan) took a week off from work. He's out here because he loves golf and he loves you."

Duncan admits that the extended periods of time he spends away from his wife, Sara, and daughters Ali, 18, and Lauren, 15, and their home in Wilmington is the toughest part of his job. But his life, which began more than 50 years ago in Boone, N.C., has been filled with travel and change — and the influence of a father who was a professional in two sports.



Jim Duncan Sr. played pro football for the New York Giants in the early 1950s. One of his teammates was Tom Landry, and one of the assistant coaches was Vince Lombardi.

After his on-field career, he coached from 1960 to 1974 — as head coach at Appalachian State; an assistant coach with the Saskatchewan Roughriders of the Canadian Football League (CFL); and as the head coach of the Calgary Stampeders in 1971, when the team won the CFL championship, the Grey Cup.

Meanwhile, Jim Jr. was participating in all sorts of sports: golf, football, basketball, and

hockey. Oddly, a broken leg in the fifth grade gave him ample opportunity to play golf.

"I actually got interested in playing golf with a cast on my leg," Duncan says. A top-flight youth program at a city course in Calgary, Alberta (Shaganappi Point), sharpened his skills. "I don't know that I've run across too many programs that were as good as that one," he says. "It was affordable and we got a lot of opportunity to play."

The senior Duncan (who died this past January) moved back to North Carolina after his coaching career was over, and eventually became head golf professional at Morehead City Country Club.

Jim Jr. graduated from Guilford College in Greensboro with degrees in business and sports management. Knowing that he wanted to forge a career in sports, he took an assistant golf pro job outside Washington, D.C. Six months later, in 1984, the Carolinas PGA called with a job offer. He was a tournament official, then their director of tournament operations. The PGA Tour took notice and hired Duncan in 1994 as a rules official. In 1997, he became tournament director of the Nike Tour (later the Buy.com Tour and then, starting in 2003, the Nationwide Tour).

The challenge facing the Nationwide Tour is lining up a new title sponsor, says Duncan. But even that doesn't deter him. "We've had inquiries the whole time Nationwide has been the sponsor," he says. "The product will not go away."

➤ **Mark Matlock** is a freelance writer in Greenville, S.C.



# **Attack the Pin!**

## LANDING THE HIGH AND SOFT SHOT

/ written by DENNIS NICHOLL / illustration by KEVIN FALES

**In 1948, Robert Trent Jones Sr.** was commissioned to design an oceanfront golf course in the growing seaside town of Myrtle Beach, S.C. Little did anyone know that The Dunes Golf & Beach Club would not only put *him* on the map as a masterful course designer, it would also spur Myrtle Beach to become recognized as a premier golfing destination.

The Dunes Club has changed very little over 62 years, and has hosted a number of major events, including the 1962 Women's U.S. Open, the PGA Tour Qualifying School in 1973, six PGA Senior Tour championships, Southern Amateur championships, Carolinas Amateur championships, and more.

The next prestigious event is the 97th Carolinas Amateur in July (see page 14). With Jones' signature raised greens and deep greenside bunkering, the edge will go to those who can control their ball flight. The "high and soft" shot may prove to be the difference in being able to attack many of the tucked hole locations.

### + Get On the Attack

Sure, a player can aim conservatively for the center of The Dunes' large greens, but trying to convert 15-20 foot birdie putts won't win this championship. Players will have to trust the yardage, judge the wind properly, and then have the confidence to shape an approach shot to navigate the difficult greens surrounds.

High-handicap amateurs often have trouble mastering The Dunes Club because the greens complexes are not designed to receive a long iron or hybrid hit on a "hot" low trajectory (see **Figure 1**). Many players end up chipping from behind the green or fail to run the ball on the front because of the elevated greens.

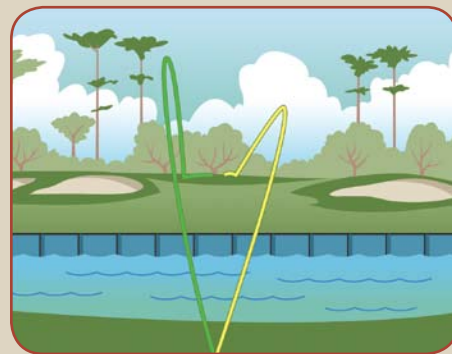
The "high and soft" shot is actually a safe, consistent choice — if players can trust their swings and commit to the idea. You need to make a few subtle changes to both ball position and swing path. And any time adjustments are made to a player's swing, the comfort level starts to drop and confidence disappears.

When this shot is struck with confidence, the ball flight of a "high and soft" shot is a thing of beauty. Most players in the Carolinas Amateur field know how to play this type of shot, and will likely use a mid- to high-iron approach to most greens.

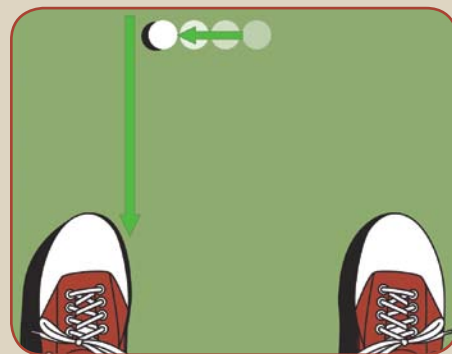
### + Hit it High and Soft

Most amateurs believe they need to try and "scoop" the ball to promote a higher ball flight ... which never works. Instead, you should move the ball forward in your stance (see **Figure 2**), take a slightly steeper swing path or attack angle, and be sure to hold on to the follow-through — making sure the right hand doesn't take over and hook the ball.

The steeper descending blow on the ball actually uses the loft of the club to launch the ball on a higher trajectory. The expert players in the Carolinas Amateur field will compress the ball with a great amount of force, sending it up the clubface with massive spin rates to achieve the "high and soft" ball flight.



➤ **Fig. 1:** A "draw" (in yellow) may come in too hot and low. Instead, shape a high and soft "fade."



➤ **Fig. 2:** To promote a high and soft shot, move the ball slightly forward in your stance.



➤ **Fig. 3:** To promote a fade, finish with your clubface pointing to the sky.

### + Fade it

One way to ensure the ball either flies straight or just falls off to the right (a fade for a right-handed golfer) is to hold that finish with the clubface open slightly toward the sky (see **Figure 3**). Don't let the clubhead roll over through the follow-through, and the ball will land soft and likely spin slightly to the right.

➤ **Dennis Nicholl** is the PGA head professional at The Dunes Golf & Beach Club. Contact him at (843) 449-5914.

# AERIFICATION OF GREENS

## A HOT TOPIC FOR GOLFERS

/ written by LEON T. LUCAS, CGA AGRONOMIST / illustration by KEVIN FALES

Golfers often ask **why a superintendent tears up greens with aerification holes when the grass was already perfect.** Golfers resist not only the holes, but also the topdressing that eventually fills those holes.

These are necessary maintenance programs to ensure later health of the turf during stress periods, even over several years. Holes relieve compaction, increase air in the soil, improve drainage, and remove excessive thatch — common problems that cause putting surfaces to eventually become soft.

If aerification and topdressing are not done regularly, turf quality declines, potentially leading to renovation and replanting.

You might relate this to auto maintenance. You change oil to maintain the long-term “health” of an engine, and you install new tires for smooth and safe handling. These activities don’t take as long as that required for holes to heal, but the idea is the same.

The best program for bentgrass greens requires maintenance staff to pull cores three times a year — early spring, summer, and fall.

Removing large cores (1/2 to 5/8 inch) in March allows more air in the soil and improves root growth. It is a good time because bentgrass grows so well and can fill those holes in fewer days. More air and better drainage helps improve root growth — the most important part of a plant.

Aerification with smaller tines (3/8 inch) in late May has been an important step to ensure quality bentgrass throughout the summer. Clubs that aerified at this time last year had good bentgrass survival during the long, hot, stressful summer. It also kept green surfaces drier.

New roots were observed on bentgrass in the aerification holes that remained open, even in the worst heat. New roots do

not grow when soil temperatures exceed 80 degrees, and I measured temperatures of more than 95 degrees last summer. In addition, less disease developed on bentgrass greens that had aerification holes.

A third aerification in September (1/2-inch tines) improves root growth and removes



accumulated organic matter. Grass will be healthier going into the fall, and will grow well into the next spring.

Bermudagrass aerification occurs at different times. Clubs aerify in May, when grass is growing well in warm weather, and again later in the summer.

Years ago, bermudagrass greens were overseeded then aerified in early spring. Today, most bermudagrass greens are not overseeded with a cool-season winter

grass, or the overseeded grass is killed with herbicide in the spring.

The reasons for aerifying bermudagrass are the same as for bentgrass — with a stronger emphasis on removing excessive organic matter (thatch) that can make putting surfaces soft and uneven. More summer verticutting (grooming with light verticutting) and light topdressing with sand is needed on new ultradwarf bermudagrass varieties.

An aerification process called “ventilation” is used on bentgrass and bermudagrass greens throughout the summer. Using small coring or solid tines (every two to three weeks) keeps the turf surface open. Another method is high-pressure water injection. This allows more air and better drainage through the turf layer, which improves root growth and maintains a firm putting surface. I have heard complaints about these small holes, but that could be more of a problem “between the golfer’s ears” than anything that actually affects the roll of a ball.

Golfers always complain about aerification. You have a right to be concerned if the holes were made days before a big club event, but most private courses try to schedule around events. It is more difficult to schedule aerification on public courses (especially those with many tourists).

Aerification done at a “better political time” might not be the best time for turf. I understand the “business of golf.” A club has to make decisions about balancing greens aerification and big play times.

However, there needs to be an understanding as to why turf might not be top quality for months — or even years — if there is inadequate aerification. This is a hot topic discussed by golfers, superintendents, managers, and turfgrass advisers. I do not know all the answers for your course, but I will provide any information about what will be best for the turfgrass.

➤ CGA staff agronomist **Leon Lucas** is available to help CGA member clubs with their turfgrass dilemmas. Contact him at [leon.lucas@carolinascgolf.org](mailto:leon.lucas@carolinascgolf.org) or call (919) 779-3241.