

These Guys are Good?!

By Jeff Bairley

Last Sunday I went to the 90th PGA Championship at Oakland Hills. It had been awhile since I'd attended a professional golf tournament. It's hard to say whether I was more excited to be a spectator at the PGA or a concert goer at the heavy metal festival I attended the night before. In many ways, the anticipation was exactly the same, aside from the obvious aesthetic and sonic differences.

Despite the lack of the traditional big "rock star" names in the field and the less-than-ideal weather at Oakland Hills, people showed up in huge numbers to watch the action. Crowds mobbed nearly every tee box and green to get a glimpse of their favorite golfers. When Ernie Els flips his ball to a fan on the way to the 13th tee, the lucky catch makes the recipient go absolutely ballistic. A lot like catching a Ringo Starr drumstick.

And who wouldn't love it? When I found myself just a few feet away from Phil Mickelson's ball on the sixth, I felt like I had won the lottery. I would soon be witnessing a signature shot from one of my favorite golfers – the Phil Mickelson flop shot. He had put it in the left rough about 10 yards from the green, and was looking at a short pitch over a bunker to treacherous pin. He walked up, checked the lie, paced it off, grabbed a wedge, took a few practice swings, opened the face up and.....chunked it into the



Phil Mickelson with Rick Smith at the Arnold Palmer Turning Point Invitational, Country Club of Detroit, 2004

Photo by Art McCafferty

greenside bunker. While I was picking my jaw up off the ground, Phil cleaned up the mess and moved on to the next hole.

This is exactly why I love golf so much. Even the best golfers in the world screw up once in awhile. Sometimes they even make complete fools of themselves. Sure, the shot Lefty had just messed up was very difficult. His ball was also sitting down in the deepest rough I had ever seen. It was also Sunday at a major championship.

But in that moment, I realized that I could do the same thing Phil just did. I too could have chunked it in the bunker just like he did. I do it all the time.

On any given swing, even the most mediocre golfer can hit a great shot. Likewise, the greatest golfer can miss hit. But greatness can happen to anyone at anytime, just ask Padraig Harrington. Unfortunately, so can mediocrity. Just ask Sergio Garcia. And that is the beauty of golf. *MG*

Michigan Golf Hall of Fame Welcomes Janke, Leeke, Morgan and Salutes the Buick Open

By Michigan Golf Foundation

A full spectrum of golf in Michigan was honored May 18 at Indianwood Golf & Country Club in Lake Orion when Ken Janke, Meriam Bailey Leeke and John Morgan will be inducted into the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame and the Buick Open was given a special award as it celebrates its 50th anniversary as the state's long-running PGA Tour event.

Janke and Leeke have had multi-faceted careers and the self-taught Morgan compiled a strong playing record which led to his being named Golf Association of Michigan's Player of the Decade for the 1980s, a period in which he won the Michigan Amateur, won three GAM Championships and two of his three Michigan Mid-Amateur Championships. Morgan qualified and played in three United States Amateur Championships and four Mid-Amateurs. Playing first as a member of the Michigan Publinx Golf Association and making its Honor Roll in 1981 and 1982, Morgan made the GAM Honor Roll 11 times in a span of 1983-95 during which he was an Oakland Hills member and now at Detroit Golf Club.

"I joke that I got my competitive nature from my Dad but not his golf swing," said the 6-foot-1 Morgan whose golf swing has the easy grace of Tom Weiskopf.



Photo courtesy of the Michigan Golf Foundation

Ken Janke

Morgan thought he was headed for a Division II school in Pennsylvania after two years at Oakland Community College on a team that went to the national finals but five hours at the Michigan Amateur changed that. "I was on the range and hitting next to Jim Lipe who was the Assistant Coach at the University of Michigan. I'd lost to Bud Stevens in 19 holes and Lipe said, 'We want you at Michigan.'"

Meriam Bailey Leeke also is a Big Ten product but when she played at Northwestern University, women's golf wasn't recognized as

a varsity sport. Leeke was inducted into the Northwestern Athletic Hall of Fame in 1992 although the school didn't hand out varsity letters to all the past women athletes until a special ceremony at half-time of a football game in 2002.

Leeke's father, who played football at Illinois with Red Grange, introduced her to golf and she broke 80 by the time she was 12. She began playing national events at 13,



Photo courtesy of the Michigan Golf Foundation

Meriam Bailey Leeke



John Morgan

played high school golf in Evanston and in 1956 won the Chicago District Golf Association Match and Stroke Play titles and the Illinois Women's Amateur. In 1957 she won the National Intercollegiate and the Women's Western Amateur and in 1958 was named to the U.S. Curtis Cup team.

Although she played in a number of women's professional tournaments, the purses averaged only \$2,000 and Leeke decided against turning pro. She and her husband, Lyle, took over the family course, Old Channel Trail in Montague (MI) in 1966. It was a nine hole course by Robert Bruce Harris on 90 acres and in the years since nine holes designed by W. Bruce Matthews and nine more by his son, Jerry were added. Meriam has been on boards of banks, charities, two colleges and currently is director and treasurer of the National Golf Course Owners Association.

Ken Janke got an early start in golf, caddying at Plum Hollow Golf Club when he was nine years old. While always a strong player – he captained his

Dearborn High School team for two years of unbeaten match play events and won the 1957 U.S. Army Military Championship in Chantilly, France — Janke is better known for his contributions to the game.

Establishing the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame was Janke's idea in 1982. Janke also was the father of major charity golf events beginning in 1967 when he and former Detroit Lions All-Pro Ron Kramer founded the Walter Hagen Invitational to benefit the American Cancer Society. That led to similar tournaments around the country and Janke was awarded the Cancer Society's Founder's Award.

Janke also has organized the Babe Zaharias Invitational, March of Dimes, Tournament, St. Jude Invitational tournaments and B'nai Brith Championship. In 1979 he was instrumental in founding the Detroit Lions Alumni Golf Outing to benefit the NFL Alumni Dire Need Fund and the format has spread to 28 cities. Janke also found time to build a comprehensive collection of golf memorabilia and to write four books on the game's quirks, laughs and facts.

Since its inception in 1958 with the then-unheard of purse of \$52,000 with \$9,000 of it going to the winner, Billy Casper, the Buick Open has brought big-time golf to Michigan. The game's greatest players have played in the Buick Open including Casper, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Julius Boros, Ben Crenshaw, Hale Irwin, Tom Weiskopf, Fred Couples, Vijay Singh, Jim Furyk, and Tiger Woods.



Photo by Carter Sherline / Frog Prince Studios

Fan Favorite John Daly at the 2007 Buick Open.

Warwick Hills Golf & Country Club in Grand Blanc, its members and the thousands of volunteers have made "Buick Open Week" one of summer's major events in Michigan and the tournament has raised \$8.8 million dollars for southeast Michigan charities.

When Buick introduced the tournament it was the first major corporate sponsor of the PGA Tour and while sponsors have come and gone in other tournaments, Buick and Michigan golf have enjoyed a long, fruitful relationship. In recognition of the Buick Open's great influence on the game in Michigan, the Michigan Golf Foundation will honor the tournament during the Hall of Fame induction ceremony at Indianwood. **MG**



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