

50 Things I Love About Golf



Robert Trent Jones has a legacy of four courses in Michigan: Point O' Woods, The Heather, a major renovation of Oakland Hills and the great Treetops course, which is featured here with Hole No. 11.

By Art McCafferty

My dad was not into sports. As a kid who emigrated from Canada at 15, he was always working and trying to make his way in this new country. One of his kid jobs was at Oakland Hills in the late 30's searching for golf balls to resell. He picked up an appreciation of the sport during that time that manifested itself 20 years

later when he brought home a somewhat non-descript driver and gave it to me. That club whetted my appetite for the game and it became a sports connector between dad and me.

Frankly, I might have hit only one or two golf balls with that club during the thousands of swings that I took. My main projectiles were small rocks found on the gravel road we lived by or dandelions and other flowers and

weeds that grew in our lawn and garden.

As I enter my 50th year of participating in the game, I thought I would identify 50 things that I love about the game. Actually, 49 things, as the first thing about the game was that battle-scarred club that never broke, bent, tasted a bogie or had the satisfaction of making a par. These are the remaining 49 things I love about golf.

Golf Courses

Duck Lake GC– Duck Lake GC in Highland was my home course. It was also the only course on which I got a par round. I still can remember each hole and my best shot on each one of them.

Treetops (Jones Course)– I fell in love with that course the minute I played it with Rich Smith and his assistant, Jimmy “Wags” Wagner. I also met Robert Trent Jones when the course opened. I had the forethought to hire Tom Durant, a videographer, to capture that moment. You can see that 1987 interview on our website at <http://michigangolfer.tv>.

Oakland Hills CC– This is our most storied course in Michigan. I’ve enjoyed watching the U.S. Open, the PGA Championship, the Champions Tour, the U.S. Amateur and the Ryder Cup played there.

The Heather Golf GC at Boyne Highlands– The Heather was my first exposure to great golf architecture. It was a major departure from Duck Lake and the “dollar a day” Bogie Lake GC that I grew up playing.

Banff Springs Golf Course– This Stanley Thompson gem is nestled in one of the most beautiful areas in North America. What’s not to like.



Hole No. 18 at Whistling Straits.

Pebble Beach– Jack Nicklaus says Pebble Beach is his all-time favorite course. Who am I to second-guess him? It is spectacular.

Augusta National– I have never seen such perfect conditions on a golf course. Unbelievable.

Castle Pines– I hit a drive from an elevated tee on this mountain course with a mighty wind at my back. I thought the ball would never come down. Sweet.

Eagle Crest Golf Club– This was my home course during my tenure at Eastern Michigan University. It was great day for our university when we got our own course.

Shanty Creek Resort– Arnold Palmer and his design team, put together one of Michigan

truly great golf courses, The Legend. It was an exciting time to have him in our state with his first project. He found Michigan to his liking with other work at The Preserve, King’s Challenge, The Ravines and Northville Hills,

Grand Hotel’s Jewel Course– One of the great views in golf is looking back from the 6th tee at the Jewel GC to see the magnificent Grand Hotel looming at the top of the hill. And where else do you take a horse drawn carriage to your second nine?

Whistling Straits– This is the greatest course I have ever played. Whistling Straits is the Pebble Beach of the Midwest. In fact, the four-course complex at Kohler is possibly the greatest assembly of golf courses in one area that exists today.



Hole No. 18 at High Pointe.



Tom Doak got his start at High Pointe and has become one of the world's most sought-after architects.

Wawashkamo GC— One of our century old courses in Michigan, Wawashkamo GC has a book written about it, and rightfully so. One of its bunkers was dug by some of British troops who held the fort on one occasion.

Threetops— This is the course on which Rick Smith cut his architectural teeth and is the course that all par-threes in the future will be measured against. The Par 3 Shootouts

played on the course, have brought the likes of; Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Phil Mickelson, Raymond Floyd, Fuzzy Zoeller, Lee Trevino, Fred Couples and Lee Janzen— up close and personal— to Gaylord. This year, Andy North and Gary McCord will join the group.

The Bear— If The Heather GC started designer golf in Northern Michigan, The Bear helped launch one of the greatest golf course building booms ever experienced in our state. Nicklaus still shakes his head when reminded about his battles with former Grand Traverse Resort CEO Paul Nine. Nine, who did not want a resort course at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, wanted a tough course that would create enough buzz to bring people to the resort. He got it. While The Bear is not the bear it used to be, it still lives up to its name.

High Pointe— Golf course architect phenomenon, Tom Doak, got his start at High Pointe. The grand-opening of the course occurred during a torrential rain, but the course was so unusual, that our foursome kept playing.

Other courses I love include Sultan's Run in Jasper, Indiana; Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio, The Links at Spanish Bay in California, Blackwolf Run River Course in Kohler, Wisconsin, Arcadia Bluff, Point O' Woods, Timberstone, and The Gailes.

Golf Personalities

Dave Richards

Dave Richards and his team have helped to put Michigan golf on the map. They have brought in the best golf writers and photographers in the country to capture the essence of our courses.

Randy Erskine

One of Michigan's greatest golf professionals, Randy Erskine was also our neighbor. Randy is great talent, great person, great family man and a great neighbor. Who can forget his mad dash to the PGA Championship, when a no-show created an open slot. He had to be on an Oakland Hills tee from his Ypsilanti home in 50 minutes and made it.

J.P. McCarthy

Our own Marconi legend, J.P. was the voice of Michigan golf for many years. He started the famous

Pals Golf Tournament that attracted some of the greatest golfers in the world to Wabeek year after year. J.P interviewed me on his Focus show and it was all that I thought it would be. I walked in to the interview room along with fitness guru, Dr. Joe Arends and he interviewed the two of us— sans notes— for 45 minutes.

Pete Dye

I have been with Pete on four golf course openings; Blackwolf Run, Whistling Straits, Walt Disney's Eagle Pines and Eagle Eye in East Lansing. Former U of M President Harlan Hatcher gave him his start at the Radrick Farms course. He is one of the great ones.

Arnold Palmer

Like a million other golfers, I have an autograph from The King. I also had the opportunity to tape his Turning Point Invitational Tournament last year. However, my biggest thrill was to track down Arnold during the opening of The Legend at Shanty Creek. My dad, who was a pilot, chatted with Arnold about flying (at the time Arnold held a couple of records with his corporate jet).

Jack Nicklaus

I attended two-course openings by Jack: The Bear at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, and The Bull at Sheboygan, Wisconsin. His recall on how the courses were designed was astounding.

Bob Walters

Bob was the son of the owner of Duck Lake Golf Course and an excellent golfer. I remember going there to set up a tournament for the Milford Jaycees. He invit-



Ben Davis – a true pioneer of golf in Michigan.

ed me for a quick round one morning, while setting up the watering system. I was amazed by how good he was. It was my first exposure to a golf professional's talent.

Rick Smith

My partner, Mike Duff, and I stopped by Treetops before its grand opening to try out the course. We met Rick and his assistant, Jimmy "Wags" Wagner, at the temporary clubhouse and they invited us to play. Two things— the awesome game that each player had and Rick Smith's assuming a teaching role, struck me at the time. Mike had started hitting some snap hooks in the round and Rick immediately gave him a lesson during play.

Ben Davis

I recently met Ben, after having heard and read about his life for a number of years. He was a real pioneer in creating space for black

golf professionals in the sport. He is mentioned in Calvin Sinnette's book, "Forbidden Fairways." When asked to discuss his early days as a pioneering golf professional, Ben said, "I could say a few words, but when I start talking about that and things of that nature, I start crying. So rather than cry, I would just say, that I had some tough times along the way."

The interview can be found at <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/davis/index.html>.

Terry Moore

I worked with Terry in Grand Rapids and was first introduced to his game and to his mind there. Terry is a fine amateur player whose finest moment was, most likely, his hole-in-one with a one-iron. Obviously, an excellent golf writer, Terry has provided writing for the MG for two decades.



The Michigan Golfer Television Show debuted in March 2001. Our crew included host, Bill Shelton, Thad Gutowski, Jennie McCafferty, Art McCafferty, Catherine Jones, Chris Lahiri and Joe Yunkman.

Jack Saylor

Jack's best friend was Harold Horn. Harold Horn was also one of my father's best friends. When I proposed starting the Michigan Golfer magazine, Jack was very supportive.

Jack Berry

Jack constantly made me aware of the standards of golf journalism. On a number of occasions, Jack pointed out mistakes in stories I had written. They were all tough lessons, but ones I appreciated.

Mike Husby

Mike has been a client, a subject of many stories, and an example of somebody who has accomplished much in golf through hard work and talent.

Walter Hagen

This great golfer adopted Michigan and it has been my pleasure to resurrect his life with a video series on the Ryder Cup. The series featured my friend and former President of Eastern Michigan University, William Shelton, and my son, Michael, who played "The Haig."

Bill Shelton

Bill, former President of Eastern Michigan University, was the host of the groundbreaking Michigan Golfer Television Show for four years. He is a knowledgeable golfer who also was a natural in front of the camera.

Events

The most memorable events are The Masters, The Ryder Cup, Jeff Daniels Comedy Golf Jam, PGA Merchandise Show, U.S. Open, PGA Championship, the World Golf Village and the first Novi Golf Show.

Two other memorable moments for me were the Michigan Golfer's launch of the first online golf magazine in 1995 and the world's first online golf television show in 2001.

Well there you have it. For those who are interested in some of my thoughts over the past 50 years, you now have them. **MG**