



***Jerry Matthews –  
One More Time***

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**M**ost of the time, many of us do not know when we have done the last of something we used to like to do all the time. We always think we will do it again.

However, years and times move on and suddenly we realize that we can no longer run the marathon, throw a fastball past a waiting batter, hit a career golf shot or in the case of Jerry Matthews design another golf course. It is not that his considerable skills have diminished, it is just the economic reality of today's marketplace. In the past five years, more Matthews courses have gone off line than have come online. The 36 hole Wolverine, the nine hole Mitchell Creek, the Hawk at Partridge Creek and English Hills are gone.

Certainly Jerry Matthews has no complaints. Here is a person that ranks in the top 10 of America's most prolific golf architects. The list would include the likes of Tom Bendelow, Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Jerry Matthews. In Michigan, he has no peer, there is no one close to him.

However, at the age of 73, Matthews would like to design one more and hopes that it will happen. Currently, his curtain call is

A-Ga-Ming's Sundance Golf Course. Finished two years ago, Sundance is getting rave reviews from golf writers and more importantly, plenty of play from Michigan golfers. Prior to that he did Buck's Run, Hawk's Hollow, St. Ives, Elk Ridge and The Woods course on Mackinaw Island.

Matthews' success and also that of his father, W. Bruce Matthews, was due to the great service they provided their clients.

They established their successful business by being affordable, talented, hard working and honest.

While waiting for that phone to ring, Matthews continues his teaching for his and his father's beloved Michigan State University. Now the business is the occasional renovation project that comes along. This lull has given him some time to revisit some of his early work. Our company has been working on an online video



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Antrim Dells owner, Mike Morrical (left), Jerry Matthews (center) and family member Dick Finn (right).**

project featuring Matthews' courses. Thus far, we have done four of his courses, Timberstone GC in Iron Mountain, The Natural in Gaylord, The Majestic at Lake Walden and Buck's Run in Mt. Pleasant. Next year, we will complete four more of his courses: Cutter's Ridge at Manistee National Resort, Antrim Dells, A-Ga-Ming in Atwood and The Emerald at Maple Creek in St. John's.

When he is on property during these videos, everybody wants to see him. At Manistee, G.M Doug

Bell and Superintendent Joel Swanson were waiting to chat. At Antrim Dells, Mike Morrill and Dennis Finn waited until we got there just to tell him how much they enjoyed the course he had designed over 30 years ago. At A-Ga-Ming, owners Larry Lavelly and Mike Brown as well as superintendent Jim St. James waited to see him. We arrived very late at The Emerald and Kurt McDowell, new golf professional, was putting away the carts. He gave us one for a quick glimpse of the course and when we came back, I introduced Matthews to the pro and told him

this was the person who not designed the second nine holes on the course, but his father had done work on what is now the 17th hole in the late 1950's. McDowell indicated that he knew all about Matthews as he played his high school golf on Sugar Springs, a course Matthews designed and built in 1972.

Hopefully, Jerry Matthews will get another shot a golf course, but if he did, he would most likely want to do another after that one was done. It's in the family genes. **MG**



**Antrim Dells**

Photo by Art McCafferty