

Turnesa and McGovern took some time to relax in the off-season.



DYNAMIC Duo

Jim McGovern and Marc Turnesa are at different points in their PGA Tour careers, but each has a supportive family, strong work ethic and sense of humor **INTERVIEW BY TOM IERUBINO**

When we got Jim McGovern and Marc Turnesa together on December 22, 2007 to talk about both of them qualifying for the 2008 PGA Tour, we knew we were bringing together golfers from two prominent Met Area families. Well before Marc was born, the Turnesa clan was honored by the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association as the 1964 Family of the Year. The same award went to the McGoverns of Hackensack Golf Club in 1996.

What we didn't know was that, despite their 13-year age difference, we had two guys who are so comfortable with each other that they banter back and forth like brothers. At times, it was more like they were interviewing each other than we were interviewing them. In fact, McGovern's self-deprecating sense of humor and gift of gab made us think he could have a future as a television commentator. They had a good time, and so did we.

Turnesa, who turns 30 in March, grew up on Long Island and won the 1994 Met Junior before playing college golf at North Carolina State. He finished 16th on the 2007 Nationwide Tour money list to earn a PGA Tour card, the seventh member of his famous family to do so. Turnesa's grandfather, Mike, and five of Mike's brothers all played on Tour, with Jim winning the 1952 PGA Championship. A seventh brother, Willie, won two U.S. Amateurs and a British Amateur.

McGovern, who just turned 43, grew up in North Jersey as one of nine children. He made a splash by winning the 1987 Met Open at Winged Foot as an amateur, then captured the '88 Met Amateur at Plainfield. After turning pro, he won three times on the Ben Hogan Tour in 1990 to earn his way to the PGA Tour, and won the 1993 Shell Houston Open. A PGA Tour regular from 1991-'98, McGovern has been playing on the Nationwide Tour, and earned his way back to the "biggs" with a T-19th finish at Q-School.

Former MGA President
Connie DeLoca presents the
1994 Met Junior trophy to
16-year-old Marc Turnesa.



Jim, you got off to a pretty good start in your professional career and were able to win in your third full season on the PGA Tour. What advice can you give to Marc as he gets ready for his first season on the PGA Tour?

McGovern: We saw a lot of each other this past year [on the Nationwide Tour]. He's a worker. There's no secret to it. I think hard work really pays off out there. You've got to put your time in, get comfortable with what you're doing. [Looking at Marc]: I thought you did a great job of that this year. You've got to work on your game, be confident with what you're doing, trust and believe what you're doing. Trust it and let it go. Marc does a lot of good things. I think a big key for him this year will just be gaining experience and

Turnesa: getting comfortable.

McGovern: You got it. Just [maintain] what you're

"I think hard work really pays off out there. The difference between the two tours, I think, is you multiply everything by 10. Maybe the people, the crowd, by 100 times. But everything else by 10."

doing. I've seen you all year. Every day you're the one out on the putting green. Of course, we talk every time we cross paths. Just keep that work ethic up.

Did you guys know each other much before this past year?

Turnesa: Yeah, a little bit.

McGovern: I knew his name from years ago, and I was happy to see him [out on Tour]. Then we played early in the year somewhere. I think we played a practice round.

Turnesa: Yeah, we did.

McGovern: Right away I'm like "whew, what the hell am I doing with this? This guy's got it all."

Another talented young guy you have to try to beat.

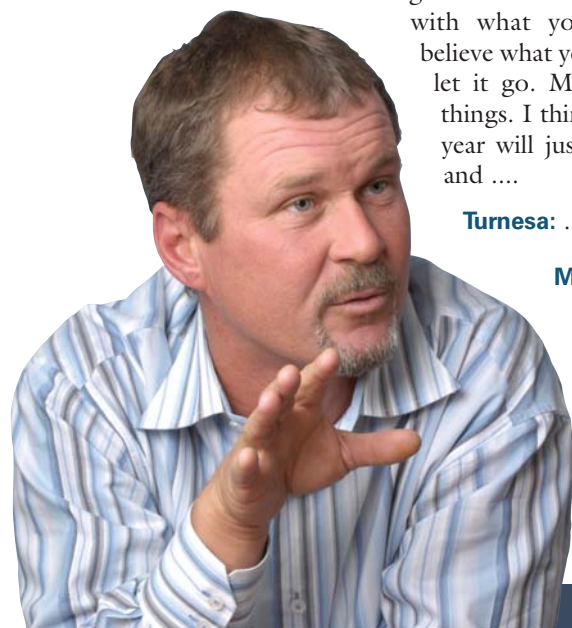
McGovern: Yeah, you know he totally doesn't look it [smiling and drawing laughter from Marc, then laughing himself].

Marc, is there anything you feel might be different on the PGA Tour? Anything you've asked Jim about?

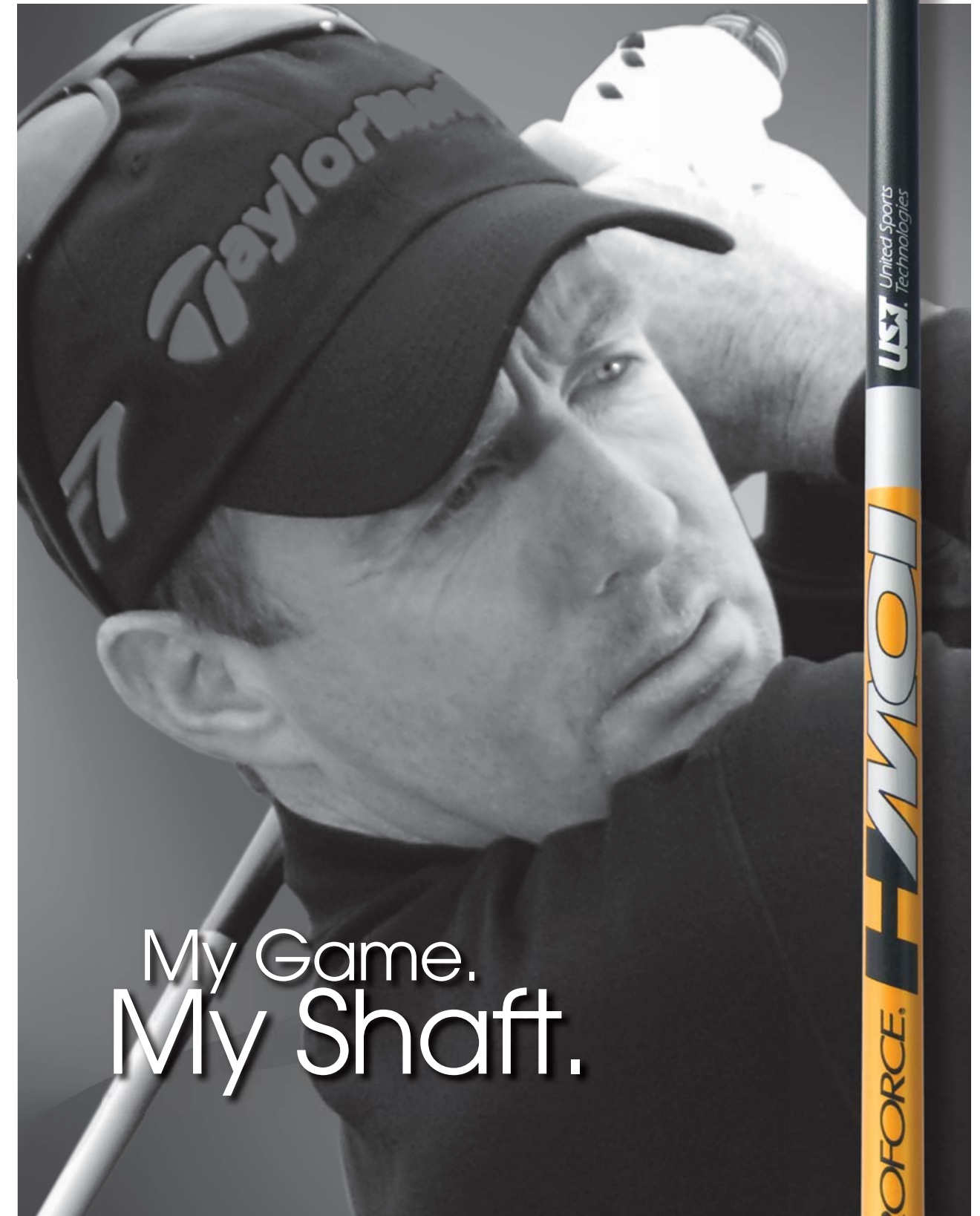
Turnesa: I don't think I've asked him, but I think it's going to be ... golf is golf. Obviously, it's a bigger stage, there's bigger money, more distractions. But like he was saying, if I can just get comfortable, I'm going to play good golf. I think that's going to be the biggest thing for me, just going out and doing my thing and not getting caught up in all the other things that are going on around me.

McGovern: I'm sure we'll play a lot this year, practice rounds and all, you know that. The difference between the two tours, I think, is you multiply everything by 10 — maybe the people, the crowd by 100 times. But everything else is by 10.

Last year was Marc's first playing on the Nationwide Tour, but Jim you've played on both the Nationwide and PGA Tours over the years. Is there much difference in how



Jim McGovern

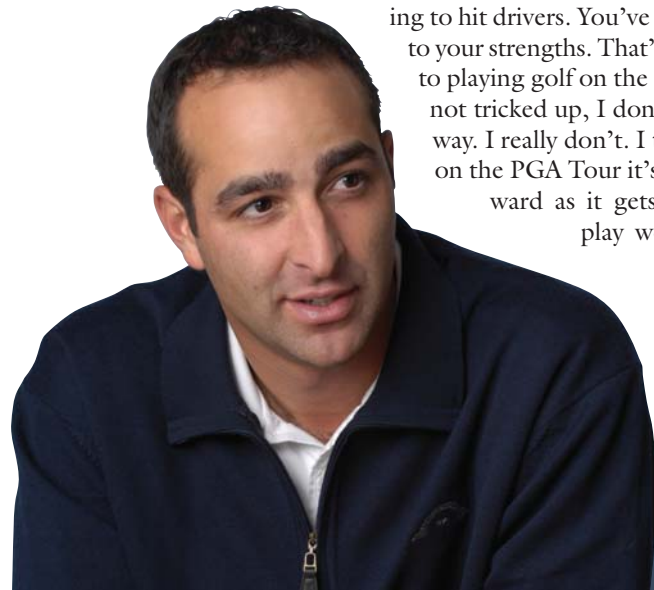


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the courses are set up?

McGovern: I've always felt the Nationwide had about five or six courses that were true PGA Tour tests, Scranton and a couple places like that, that have the deep rough. I've always felt the good courses are the short and tight ones, the ones where you don't have to just hit it 350 yards.

Turnesa: I agree with that.

McGovern: Yeah, [Marc] knows how to work a golf ball. He knows how to reign it in. There are guys who just step up and cold cock it every hole. Marc's played where I've seen him hit irons off tees where a lot of guys are trying to hit drivers. You've just got to play to your strengths. That's the whole key to playing golf on the PGA Tour. It's not tricked up, I don't think, in any way. I really don't. I think out there on the PGA Tour it's as straightforward as it gets. You have to play well to get paid

Bermuda now than I am on this.

McGovern: I believe you. Personally, I'm more of a Northern golfer, living here all my life. I love it. This kind of golf up here prepares you for any golf tournament in the world, no question about it. You can play so many good golf courses up here, from Winged Foot to Quaker Ridge to Westchester.

Turnesa: There's no question that if you ask me where the best golf courses in the world are

McGovern: right here.

Turnesa: There's no question about it.

What are some of your favorite Met Area courses?

McGovern: Hackensack, Ridgewood ... I love playing Arcola. I always have a lot of fun playing over there. You know, Winged Foot, going out on the island — and I haven't gone

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Marc Turnesa

well. And if you play the Nationwide, you can just about hit it anywhere and get away with it sometimes. It's not set up for me.

Turnesa: Me neither.

With that in mind, do you feel your experience growing up and playing the classic courses here in the Met Area has been a good preparation for you?

Turnesa: Definitely. But I will say it's been so long since I've lived here that when I first moved down to Florida [where he has lived since 2001] it took me a long time to adjust to the Bermuda grass. And at first, I didn't like it at all. And now I've gotten to where when I get on Bermuda and it's windy, I feel that's right up my alley. Then I come to courses up here in the Northeast and I get in this rough around the greens, and it's like, I'm not bad, but I'm not as good as I was when I was 17. I'm better on the

that far out there either — but Shinnecock, Garden City Golf. But I love Winged Foot East and West. If you wanted to bury me there you could. I've actually felt like I've been buried there a couple times.

You have at least one pretty good memory at Winged Foot, winning the 1987 Met Open.

McGovern: I've had fun times out there. Playing with Mr. [Tom] Nieporte one day and Paul Azinger and another buddy of mine, I started off at Winged Foot West 3-3-3-3-3 — which is a par, three birdies, and an eagle — and Mr. Nieporte says to me, “That's never been done before.” And then we go to six, the short par four, and I make 6. And I said, “But you've seen that done before, haven't you?” That's a true story.

Turnesa: Shinnecock and Winged Foot are two of my favorites. Baltusrol is phenomenal.



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Quaker Ridge I love. Garden City Golf I love. I mean, there are so many good ones around here.

McGovern: Met golf makes you think a lot about where you play your golf ball from. Once you hit your shot off the tee you really have to set it up for the next one. The greens are really where you get bit out here. That's where you've really got to think. That's what I think golf is all about. I don't think I've ever overpowered a golf course in my life. He [*points at Marc*] might have a few times.

Turnesa: I could be wrong, but I think your game and I think my game too, just from strictly a golf course standpoint, are better suited for the [PGA] Tour than Nationwide for the exact reasons you just said.

McGovern: No question about it.

Marc, you were 43rd on the Nationwide Tour money list going into the second-to-last event of the season and you won it, the

Miccousukee Championship in Miami, to move into the top 25 to clinch your PGA Tour card. What was that like?

Turnesa: It was such an awesome feeling to sink that last putt. But I didn't make it easy on myself. I was on the 18th tee and, I'll say it, I was a little nervous. I hit a 2-iron off the tee because there's water on the left and I obviously wanted to stay out of it. I hit an awful shot. In fact, I thought I hit it bad enough that it would be okay, so I was shocked to see it go into the water. I had a two-stroke lead, which was good, because then I missed the green with my third shot and had to get up and down from a greenside bunker for bogey to win by one.

Who was the first person you called?

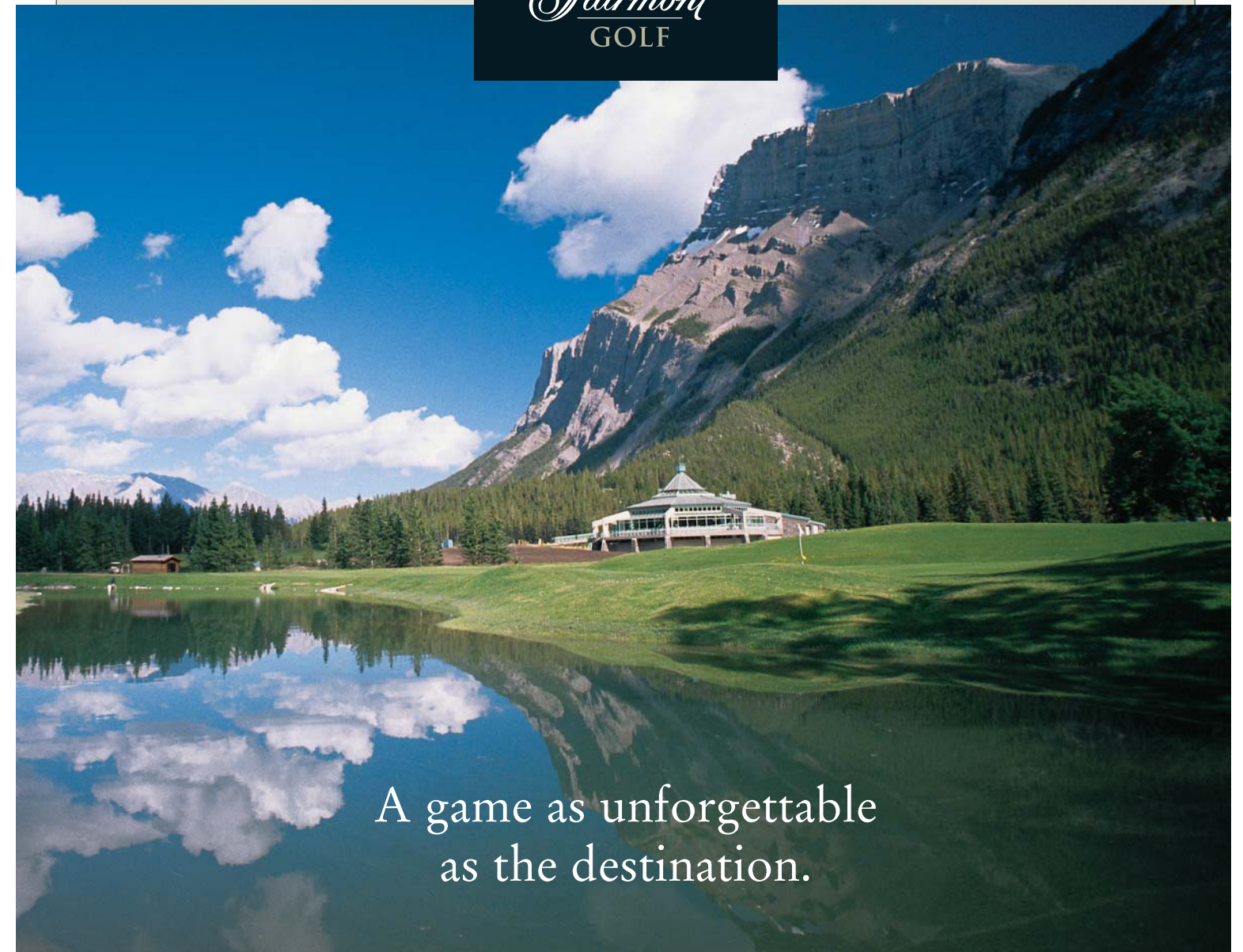
Turnesa: My mom, actually. It's funny, my dad [Rockville Links head pro Mike Turnesa] was actually down in south Florida with some members, and once he saw that I was going to be leading going into the final

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Jim McGovern

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round, he was able to come up to the course and be there. That was really special, and it was just cool that it worked out that way.

Did you have a feeling you were going to do well that week?

Turnesa: I was feeling good, but you never know. We had a long rain delay, and I had to come back to the course on Saturday morn-

ing to finish my second round [*in which he shot 63 to take the lead*]. Then we played 36 holes on Sunday, which was a real test.

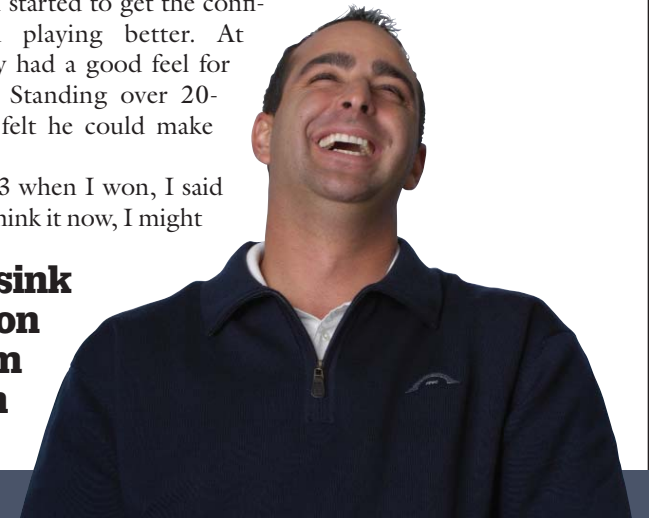
effort. But my wife Lauren kept telling me I could do it. It was just a matter of confidence, and once I started to get the confidence I started playing better. At Q-School, I really had a good feel for distance control. Standing over 20-foot putts I just felt he could make them.

“It was such an awesome feeling to sink that last putt. But I didn’t make it easy on myself. I had to get up and down from a greenside bunker for bogey to win by one.”

Marc Turnesa

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ing to finish my second round [*in which he shot 63 to take the lead*]. Then we played 36 holes on Sunday, which was a real test.

McGovern: The re-start of that second round is when we had our little “run-in.” [*laughs*]

Turnesa: Yeah, really. They had just resumed play, and I was playing behind Jim and Greg Chalmers. They were on the green of a par five, and I was waiting in the fairway about 250 yards out, with a little breeze into me. I asked my caddie if I should just go, because I didn't think I could get to the green at all. I hit it hard and flew it into the greenside bunker.

McGovern: Chalmers was pissed!

Turnesa: Yeah, I went up and apologized and he had some words for me.

McGovern: I vouched for you and told him I knew you and that I was sure it was an accident. Then, remember? I figured you'd be a little on edge about it, so I smiled and said “what a jerk!” at you from the other fairway.

Turnesa: [*laughs*] Yeah, that helped me relax.

Jim, you finished 45th on the Nationwide money list, so that meant it was off to Q-School for you to try to get on the PGA Tour for 2008. You had made it through Q-School three previous times, but the last was in 1997. Is making it this time more special?

McGovern: No question it is. It was always my goal to get back out there, but when you're struggling and you've got four kids at home you wonder if it's worth the time and

have been a little too young. [*He was 28.*] I had been playing golf maybe 10 years tops in my life. After that point, I started to change a little bit, tried to be the perfect golfer, when I'm definitely not. I'm not perfect at anything I've ever done.

Are there courses and tournaments on the PGA Tour you're looking forward to going back to that you haven't been to in while?

McGovern: I always look forward to going to Houston. I know it's a whole new course [from the one he won on in 1993]. It's very difficult I hear, very long. But I've made a lot of friends down there over the years, great people. I'm really looking forward to seeing a lot of old friends out there on Tour. ■

Tom Ierubino is a frequent contributor to *The Met Golfer*. He writes from Somerset, New Jersey.

Jim McGovern won the 1988 Met Amateur at Plainfield and turned pro later that year.

