

# The Met Golfer

# EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

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June 2014

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*This page: Special Olympic golfers brought home both medals and memories from the 2014 USA Games in New Jersey this month.*

# Going for GOLD

**D**uring June, New Jersey played host to the Special Olympics 2014 USA Games with nearly 3,500 athletes competing in 16 different sports, including golf. The NJ PGA and New Jersey Golf Foundation, led by Chris Hunt, oversaw 178 golfers competing in different events at Mercer Oaks Golf Course in West Windsor Township, N.J. They were accompanied by more than 250 volunteers during each of the three days. The competitors walked and played under the Rules of Golf and showed a special love for the game, participating in different levels of competition including individual skills for 9 and 18-holes and alternate shot team play. “To see the

smiles on the faces of the players when they hit a good shot and to see them share that joy with their coaches and families was inspiring,” said MGA Executive Director Jay Mottola who volunteered as a Rules official.



Above: Team New Jersey, with Executive Director of the NJ Golf Foundation Chris Hunt, celebrated after the official medal ceremony.

Right: Teammates line up a putt during a team competition at Mercer Oaks.

Photos courtesy of New Jersey Golf Foundation



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**Metropolitan Golf Association**  
49 Knollwood Road, Elmsford, NY 10523 • 914-347-4653 [www.mgagolf.org](http://www.mgagolf.org) • [mgagolf@mgagolf.org](mailto:mgagolf@mgagolf.org)

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**CEO & Publisher:** Richard K. Summers

**COO & Art Director:** Peter J. Sansone

**Executive Vice President:** Brian Folino

**General Manager, Operations:** Patrick Cherry

**Production/Pre-Press:** Frederick Yantz

**Design:** Jim Gerhard, Matt Hulnick, Steve Higgins, Marina Kohls

**Advertising Production Manager:** Julie Yuen

**Internet Manager:** Matt Frey, PGA

**Operations:** Tom Mahon, Tom Gauss

**Accounting:** George Kotlyar

**Advertising:** For information, please contact: Zack Long at 914-347-4653, ext. 321, or Brian Folino at 623-337-5802 (office) or 661-312-6412 (cell)

**National Sales Manager:** Jim Kahn

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# FORE

# *the Girls*

FOUNDATION

By Brittany Georgalas

**O**n June 11, The First Tee of Metropolitan New York's Girls Golf and FORE participants had the opportunity to meet, network and share their golf skills with young professionals from Morgan Stanley at Chelsea Piers Golf Club in Manhattan. The all-female cast of volunteers from Morgan Stanley told the Girls Golf and FORE participants about their paths to success and introduced them to the various careers in finance. To return the favor, the Girls Golf & FORE participants shared their knowledge of golf with the young professionals, assisting with the fundamentals of the setup and swing while hitting balls on Chelsea Piers' double-decker driving range. Their skills were then put to the test in closest-to-the-pin and long-drive competitions. "The event hosted by Morgan Stanley was a wonderful experience for our girls to network with young professionals not much older than they are," says Director of Girls Golf and FORE Katie Brenny. "We are excited about building the relationship with Morgan Stanley and always thankful to our long term partner, Chelsea Piers."





# LAST STAND IN THE SAND

By Chris Powers

In 1922 the USGA began an event that gave exposure to many public course players that normally would not have a chance to compete for national championships. The tournament quickly became a success and would be known as the U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship. It wasn't until 1989 that the winner of this event would receive an invitation to the Masters. In 1988, Long Island's own Ralph Howe III won the event and received the invitation of a lifetime in what he thought was an unattainable dream. Instead, he became the first U.S. APL Champion invited to the Masters, as well as the first left-handed USGA Champion. This July will be the final playing of both the Men's and Women's APL due to the USGA deciding that the championships no longer serve their original purpose. The USGA's fourth oldest championship has produced winners like Brandt Snedeker, Trevor Immelman and Ryan Moore. It will certainly be missed and remembered, especially for past champions like Howe, who still shows off his gold medal. The now 49-year-old pastor resides in Orlando, Fla. and oversees a congregation of 2,000 at Discovery Church. Howe played in four APLs and one U.S. Amateur as well as a being selected to a Walker Cup team. The final edition of the championship will be held at Sand Creek Station Golf Course in Newton, Kansas on July 14-19.

Photo: Courtesy of the USGA



# Home Stretch

## Soon-to-Be Hall of Famer Joe Torre Loves His Players, Golf, and Keeping Kids Safe

BY JEFF NEUMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW LEVINE

It's been a busy winter for Joe Torre. As Major League Baseball's Executive Vice President of Baseball Operations, he's been involved in every aspect of defining and refining the new instant-replay system put into effect for the 2014 season.

"It's not as perfect as everybody seems to want it to be, but it's been good," he told a visitor to his MLB office. "I try to stress to the managers that they've got an opportunity to overturn a game-changing play. That's never been there before."

He's also been working on the new rule regarding collisions at home plate. As a former catcher, he knows the play well. "I got my bell rung a few times," he said. "Johnny Temple [then a second baseman with Cincinnati] came in one time, I had the ball, I was going to tag him, and he kicked me right in the [groin]. I just went blank for a bit, lost the ball, dropped the ball. So that alerted me to be ready for anything at that point." (Couldn't he get even the old-school way, by sliding hard into Temple on a double play? "Oh, no, not me—I didn't run fast enough to get anybody.")



JOSH SAILOR PHOTOGRAPHY



Clockwise from top left: Joe Torre addresses a school assembly; Torre and former President Bill Clinton enjoy a casual moment; Torre signing a Margaret's Place placard in Union City, N.J.; a Murderer's Row of guests at the 2008 Safe At Home Foundation Celebrity Golf Classic (former Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Donald Trump, Mayor Michael Bloomberg, President Clinton, Torre, and Billy Crystal).

Torre's playing career with the Braves, Cardinals (Most Valuable Player in the National League in 1971), and Mets was good enough to bring him to the cusp of Hall of Fame consideration, and his accomplishments managing the Yankees pushed him over the finish line. He'll be inducted in July, thanks largely to his six American League pennants and four World Series titles from 1996 to 2003, and fourteen consecutive years in the playoffs including two of his last three seasons with the Dodgers.

"I was very fortunate when I came on board here," he said of his joining the Yankees. "Andy Pettitte had just played a year, you had Jeter just coming, Mariano just coming, Posada a year away—plus the people who were already here, like Bernie [Williams] and Paul O'Neill, guys with a lot of substance. A lot of people always talk about talent and ability and whatnot, but every time a team wins it's always about

character. And that's no lie.

"Jeter's probably the best player I ever managed. He was a 21-year-old kid when I met him, and by August or September the veteran players were looking toward him for leadership. And I know, if you looked at me as a 21-year-old—I didn't like myself very much. I just wasn't mature enough. But this kid was really something, and continues to be someone to be admired, there's no question, he's been a great role model for kids. Whether we want it or not we are role models, because people look to us, and we need to be held to a higher standard. And Jeter—especially in this town? Single? There's so many different ways you can get yourself in trouble, and he's stayed the course. Which has been great."

Torre's excited about joining the Hall of Fame as a manager, because it puts the focus on his teams rather than on him as an individual. He's started thinking about his

speech, whom he wants to talk about, whom he wants to thank. There are long odds on his getting through the speech without tearing or choking up.

The Cooperstown ceremony will come a week after the Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation's annual golf and tennis fundraiser. For the second straight year it will be held at Sleepy Hollow; in prior years it was at Trump National Golf Club in Briarcliff Manor. Torre came to golf as an adult, having grown up in the Flatbush-Marine Park section of Brooklyn, at 33-22 Avenue T. "I never really played until I was in my twenties," he said, "which I found out was a real curse. And as much of an athlete as I was, I would get lessons, read every golf magazine there was, and I just could not keep my hands from taking over everything. I was a 'hands' hitter, and couldn't overcome that."

He gave up the game for a while, but enjoys playing now with his wife, Ali, and friends. "I love the game, and I have a number of friends in the game—Jim Furyk used to be a neighbor of mine in Hawaii. I talked with Arnold Palmer shortly before I signed my last contract to manage the Yankees.

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I was thinking about packing it in, and I said to him, 'You know, I'm going to be 65.' And he said, 'What the hell has that got to do with it? I'm 75!' I said, 'Oh, OK.' He sort of attacked me with that one."

Torre did an appearance with Johnny Miller last year; Miller asked him if he plays, and he said, "Yeah, I play. I stink." He described a few things, and Miller told him, "I wish I had you for a little bit. I'd help you." The idea intrigued him, but Torre recognizes that "I have a lot more patience with other people than I have with myself, which I'm sure is a familiar comment." He said he's shot in the mid-80s just a few times; his approach to his game is "it is what it is, and enjoy it while you have it."

His favorite places to play are Riviera ("it's a different course every time you play it because of the conditions"), the Plantation Course at Kapalua, and in the Met Area he likes Sleepy Hollow,

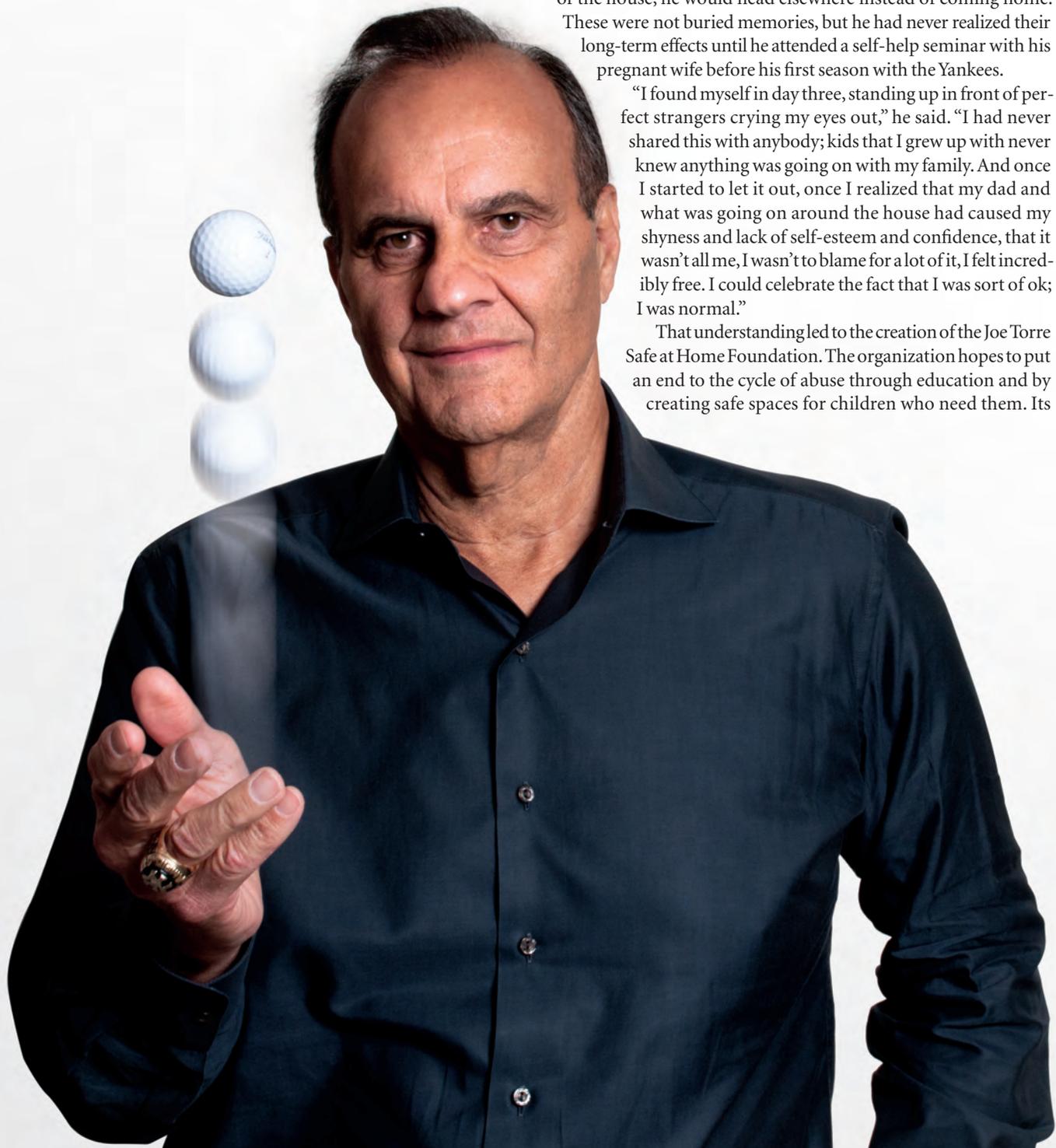
Winged Foot, and Westchester. He sometimes played during the season when he was managing the Yankees, but mostly on the road, early in the morning so he could be at the ballpark by early afternoon for a night game. He always had his phone with him, in case The Boss decided to call.

"Contrary to history with George [Steinbrenner] – I think I caught him on the back nine, you might say," he said. "He was still tough, but not to the point of calling me during the game or stuff like that." Of course, it helped that Torre's Yankees won the World Series in his first year, and four of his first five.

His arrival in New York followed a period of introspection and realization. Torre had grown up in a physically scary and abusive home. His father, a cop, would threaten his mother with a gun. Joe was frightened enough as a boy that if he saw his father's car in front of the house, he would head elsewhere instead of coming home. These were not buried memories, but he had never realized their long-term effects until he attended a self-help seminar with his pregnant wife before his first season with the Yankees.

"I found myself in day three, standing up in front of perfect strangers crying my eyes out," he said. "I had never shared this with anybody; kids that I grew up with never knew anything was going on with my family. And once I started to let it out, once I realized that my dad and what was going on around the house had caused my shyness and lack of self-esteem and confidence, that it wasn't all me, I wasn't to blame for a lot of it, I felt incredibly free. I could celebrate the fact that I was sort of ok; I was normal."

That understanding led to the creation of the Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation. The organization hopes to put an end to the cycle of abuse through education and by creating safe spaces for children who need them. Its



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signature initiative is named Margaret's Place, after Torre's mother. Each such place — there are eight in schools and two in Family Justice Centers in the New York area, two more in schools in Los Angeles — is a room staffed with a masters-level counselor, with couches and games and other activities for kids who want or need somewhere to go. There's no expectation that the kids will seek counseling to talk about their home lives; it's about providing them with somewhere safe to be, with someone there to talk to if that's what they want.

abused my mom, and I looked out and there were six or eight heads nodding as I was talking. And at that point I realized we'd struck a nerve in just addressing it.

"I went to one school in Connecticut and spoke in an auditorium, and then I took questions, and there wasn't one baseball question. That was pretty revealing."

He has since served on two different national committees examining domestic violence against women and children; he was co-chair of the Defending Childhood Task Force, which heard testimony around

was a chance to be involved with the game without having the stress of winning. I'd had enough of that. So it's been good."

He can enjoy the passion of the great Yankees-Red Sox rivalry now with considerable amusement. "We were in Boston in the early 2000s, last game of a series. I was coming down in an elevator. This guy gets on with his wife or his girlfriend, and says, 'Joe Torre?' 'Yeah.' 'We're gonna beat you tonight,' he says. I say, 'I hope not, but if you do you do.' And we're going, and I know there's something else coming, because we're quiet. And he says, 'You know, if I had a choice of beating the Yankees or capturing Saddam Hussein, I would pick beating the Yankees.' And with that the door opened and they walked out, and I was just — that's the best. That goes to the top of the list."

When the person to whom he told this story confessed to being a Red Sox fan, Torre laughed. "So am I now," he said. "They're all my teams now."

For information on the Joe Torre Safe at Home Foundation, including its 2014 Celebrity Golf & Tennis Classic at Sleepy Hollow, visit [www.JoeTorre.org](http://www.JoeTorre.org). ■

"A lot of people always talk about talent and ability and whatnot, but **every time a team wins it's always about character.**"

—Joe Torre

"When we were putting together a video for our first [fundraising] dinner," Torre said, "I had a camera crew following me while I visited this middle school in the Bronx. I said we'll talk about baseball in a minute, but I wanted to explain why they were filming. I explained about my dad, that he was a cop, and he was a bully, he

the country and made recommendations to President Obama.

Torre divides his time between New York and Los Angeles now, spending roughly one week a month in the MLB offices on Park Avenue. "The game is very, very special; it's been my whole life," he said. "When the Commissioner offered me this position, it



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# CURTIS CUP

## Annie Park

After an amazing run in 2013, 19-year-old Annie Park of Levittown, N.Y., doesn't seem to be slowing down. The sophomore at the University of Southern California helped propel the United States to a Curtis Cup victory in early June. This was Park's first appearance in the Curtis Cup and she was well prepared for the big stage. After playing in the MGA's French-American Challenge in 2012, she won both the individual NCAA and Pac-12 titles in 2013 and was voted freshman Player of the Year. Park and seven other of our country's best amateur women golfers took on Great Britain and Ireland's best women amateurs. This year the USA dominated, winning 13-7 and regaining the Cup at St. Louis Country Club in St. Louis, Mo. Annie Park had quite the three days herself - going 3-1 overall, including an overpowering 5 and 4 win in her Sunday singles match.

Photos courtesy of USGA/Steven Gibbons



Annie Park, with her teammates and captain Ellen Port, holds the Curtis Cup during Sunday's celebrations.



# The Other “Open Doctor”

By Christopher Powers

For the past ten U.S. Open Championships, players have been walking off the range prior to and after their rounds in the hopes of relieving tension, finding balance in their body, and becoming more flexible and powerful. So where exactly are they walking to? That would be one of the many Wellness Trailers that they can receive treatment from - like chiropractic doctors, massage therapists, physical therapists, athletic trainers and even hyperbaric chambers. The chairperson of the U.S. Open Wellness Team (Pinehurst was his 10th Open) is Dr. Jeffery Poplarski from Amityville, N.Y., and his trailers are one of the most popular destinations on the grounds during the Open week.

Here are five things to know about Dr. Poplarski and his operation:

- 1 Dr. Poplarski doesn't just work during U.S. Open week. His Family Wellness Care office located in Amityville, N.Y., offers chiropractic, acupuncture, massage therapy, podiatry and nutritional counseling. He is also a Titleist Performance Institute certified medical fitness junior coach as well as a golf coach.
- 2 He has worked with over 5,000 golfers ranging from the #1 player in the world to high handicappers in the Metropolitan Area. The Wellness staff is made up of 130 assorted health care providers and they have multiple trailers for players, caddies, volunteers, and now even media people, players' family members and golf manufacturers.
- 3 During the 18-hour days at Pinehurst Dr. Poplarski doesn't see much live golf. What he does see is several thousand people seeking treatment and it isn't always the players who need it most. He says it is the caddies, carrying 70-pound bags on very elevated courses, that need the most treatment and pain modulation.
- 4 The chiropractic doctor has treated several players in the mix in the final round, but none that have gone on to win. But he and the players that see him are confident that if they do pull off a win one Sunday, the whole world will quickly learn about Dr. Poplarski.
- 5 His objective: “We are trying to balance the body – and if your body is balanced, you are going to feel like a million bucks. If you have tension in your fingers, shoulders or your lower back you aren't going to swing the club optimally,” Dr. Poplarski said.



Dr. Poplarski stands outside one of the many Wellness Trailers at Pinehurst during his tenth U.S. Open Championship.

# Wagner's Wins



Flashback to twelve years ago when 22-year-old Johnson Wagner, then still an amateur, broke MGA records when he won the 2002 Ike Championship at Montclair Golf Club by eight strokes with a 54-hole score of 72-66-65 for a total of 203, breaking the records for lowest 54-hole total and lowest final round score. Although two-time winner Cameron Wilson tied his record for lowest total score last year at Wykagyl, there is one other record that only Wagner holds. The eight-year PGA TOUR player, and winner of 3 TOUR events, is the only player in history to have won the Ike, Met Amateur, and Met Open in the same year. After dominating the Ike, the Virginia Tech grad won the Met Am at Piping Rock, and then the Met Open in his professional debut at Winged Foot (West). Not to mention, the year before he had won the Met Am at Hudson National and the Met Open as an amateur at Bethpage Black, making his MGA trophy count five consecutive major wins in two seasons. As the Ike returns to Montclair, Wagner's historic scores are the numbers everyone will be chasing.

# Fit for a Captain

New York Yankees Captain Derek Jeter will soon find himself with some extra time on his hands once he finishes his 20th and final season as the Yankees shortstop. Perhaps he'll head to the golf course after retirement now that he has a brand new set of golf clubs and a custom bag, thanks to the PGA of America. PGA President Ted Bishop and CEO Pete Bevacqua presented the Yankees legend with the going away gift at the Yankees home game against Oakland on June 4 during a special pre-game ceremony on the field. Jeter's new customized bag features the iconic player's number 2. "I hope that when his career is over, the Captain becomes an avid golfer. We need guys like that on the course," Bishop said after the presentation. The time may be right for the legendary Yankee to transition from baseball swing to golf swing.

Derek Jeter poses with his new golf clubs and bags with the PGA of America's leaders, from left to right, President Ted Bishop, CEO Pete Bevacqua, COO Darrell Crall and Chief Championships Officer Kerry Haigh



**A**verage Joes like mimicking their favorite pros on course. How else can you justify high-handicappers lining up simple gimmes? This summer, Callaway and Titleist are offering a more constructive way to emulate Tour players – by trying their brand-new wedges.

Ten PGA TOUR pros are using Callaway's Mack Daddy 2 Tour Grind wedge (\$130), which is forged and sports a straight leading edge for clean hits and shot versatility from any lie, plus a high toe. Its "T" sole grind helps get the leading edge cleanly under the ball, while its grooves are large, to maximize spin and control.

Titleist's two Vokey TVD wedges, TVD-K and TVD-M (\$160 each plus personalization), rank as the most-requested sole grinds by Titleist's Tour staffers. Deep and large milled grooves – plus a machined face texture – generate plenty of spin for precise, consistent trajectory and distance. Each model can be customized to your preferred length, lie, loft and weight porting, toe engraving, stamping, grip, shaft, shaftband and ferrule. Adam Scott and Jason Dufner prefer the TVD-K, which has a wide, cambered sole to ease bunker and greenside shots. The TVD-M has a rounded teardrop profile for playability in all conditions, which is why it's played by a plethora of Tour pros.

BY SCOTT KRAMER

WINNER

# Pinehurst Trip No. 1

BY JEFF DAY

New York's own Ed Eisenberg had VIP status at Pinehurst- the Farmingdale resident won the Lexus Perfect Drive to the U.S. Open, a contest that earned him airfare, transportation and tickets to the 114th U.S. Open at Pinehurst thanks to Lexus, the Official Vehicle of the MGA. Eisenberg, 67, was introduced to golf when he started caddying at Bethpage State Park at the age of 14. "We used to get up at 3:00 a.m. and hitchhike to the course," he recalls. "The rate was \$4 after tip. Times have sure changed since then!" The recently retired vocational auto body and technology teacher plays out of Bergen Point Golf Course in West Babylon, where he carries a 13.6 Handicap Index and serves as the club's Tournament Chairman. A father of three, he brought his wife of 39 years, Barbara, to North Carolina for their first trip to Donald Ross's masterpiece, Pinehurst No. 2. At Pinehurst, the Eisenbergs had access to Lexus Hospitality in their Performance Drive pavilion. While it was Ed's first trip to Pinehurst, he is no stranger to the U.S. Open – he volunteered at the event when it was hosted by Shinnecock in 1995 and 2004 as well as at Bethpage Black in both 2002 and 2009.



# 54 Holes in... The Adirondacks

By Christopher Powers



Courtesy of Saratoga National Golf Club

Saratoga National Golf Club

People love New York for a multitude of reasons, including the fact that it isn't just the bright lights and hustle and bustle of the Big Apple. Some visitors who come for tranquility and to see the natural beauty of the state need to look no further than the breathtaking and peaceful six million acre Adirondack Park of northern New York. Yes, six million acres! There has to be a few golf courses somewhere in the area, right?

## GOLF

- **The Sagamore Resort** – This beauty was designed by Donald Ross in 1928 and the course and entire resort underwent a \$75 million restoration in 1985. The restoration and Ross' original blueprints have made for a stunning course that challenges even the most skilled golfers. The rolling hills and lake views alone were enough to receive the distinction of 5th best public course in New York State by Golf Digest.
- **Tupper Lake Golf Club** – A scenic mountain course, also designed by Donald Ross, is located in the heart of Adirondack Park. While not overly long, Tupper Lake is still a test, but you will walk away remembering the colorful tree-lined fairways and picturesque mountain sights rather than that bogey train you just conducted.
- **Saratoga National Golf Club** – By now you get the point that things are pretty scenic in this part of New York. Saratoga National is no different. Go for a challenge from the back tees at 7,265 yards or keep it simple on the preferred tees from 6,225 yards. Make sure to have a few extra balls for the back nine, unless you plan on going swimming.

## LODGING & DINING

- **The Sagamore Resort** – If you plan to stay over after your round at Sagamore, you don't have to go too far. Stay at this beautiful island playground and make sure to dine and watch the sunset on the lake at the Pavilion.

## OFF-COURSE

- **Lake George Village** – Quiet beaches, hiking trails, museums, shopping and a lot more. With something new and exciting happening every day, the Lake George Village can make just about everybody happy.