

The Met Golfer

EXTRA



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This page: Kevin Foley earned his first career victory on the Web.com Tour at the season-opening event in Panama in February. Photo by Isaac Perez.



CULTURE

Art of the Game

BY A.J. VOEPEL

The world's finest golfers are often considered artists. With the course as their canvas, they visualize shots in ways an ordinary player couldn't dare conceive. This has always been the way of Charles McGill, too. Only off the course.

The 49-year-old Peekskill, N.Y., resident has been creating golf-related art for more than 15 years. It started when McGill took old point-of-purchase displays home from the Richard Metz Golf Studio in Manhattan, where he once worked. "Then I collaged a golf bag one day," he says. "And one thing just led to another."

McGill, who teaches painting and drawing as an adjunct professor at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, N.Y., says it's no coincidence that his style of incorporating race, class, and politics into his work began around the same time Tiger Woods burst onto the Tour.

Some of his pieces are found in high-end galleries along the East Coast, and have sold for as much as \$60,000. But it's not the money McGill is after. His projects revolve around the profound passion he has for the game.

His defining creation, "Arthur Negro I," is a life-size, alter-ego sculpture of himself (*below*). That particular piece is on display at The Bridge in Sag Harbor, N.Y. McGill's most recent work can be seen at the [Pavel Zoubok Gallery](#) in Manhattan from March 28 through April 27.





Cut Your Motors

Dial back your setup to hit partial wedge shots closer to the hole **BY BRIAN DOBBIE**

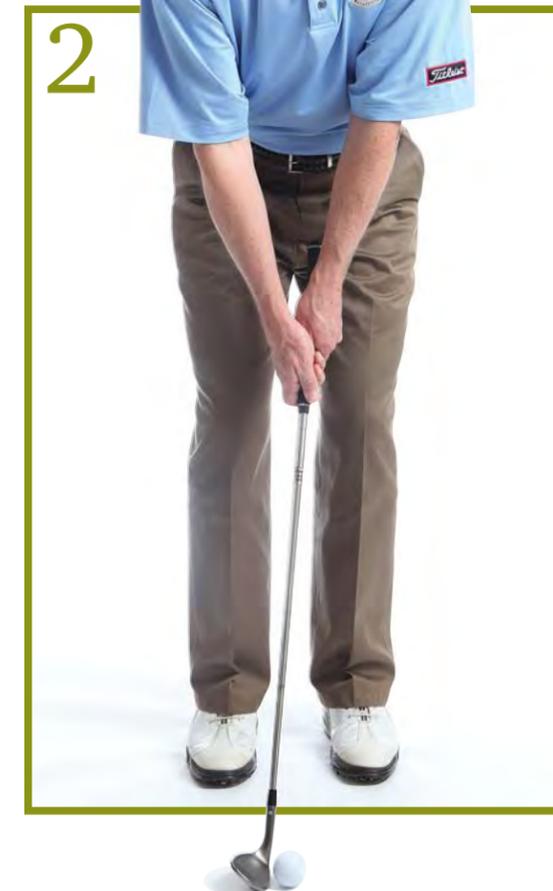
Photography by Russell Kirk/GOLFLINKS

I regularly see amateurs make small swings, from 50 yards and in, from their “big swing” address positions (wide stance and full club length). This forces you to decelerate through impact, a recipe for inconsistency on a shot that is already hard enough to begin with. The next time you’re faced with one of these half or three-quarter length shots, “cut your motors off” by making two small setup adjustments that will reduce the size and speed of your swing.

1) **Grip down.** When you lower your hands by two to three inches on the club, your upper body flexes toward the ball and your shoulder turn—one of the motors of the golf swing—is naturally restricted. This is a good thing because you don’t need a lot of shoulder rotation with this shot. Gripping down also shortens the effective length of the club, which decreases distance and gives you more control over the clubhead.

2) **Narrow your stance.** Bring your feet closer together so that your stance is about half as wide as it would be with your driver, and put about 60 percent of your weight on your front leg. These two adjustments will shorten your backswing, encourage a descending strike, and allow you to hit better shots toward the flagstick.

Brian Dobbie, the 2012 New Jersey PGA Teacher of the Year, is a teaching professional at Montclair Golf Club in West Orange, N.J.



PARTING SHOT

The Gentleman

Photo Courtesy of USGA Archives



This was the nickname bestowed on Johnny Farrell, one of the most talented players to ever come out of the Met Area. The White Plains, N.Y., native won the 1927 Met Open at Wykagyl Country Club—the last time the championship was held at the club, site of this year’s Ike Championship. The following year he captured his signature victory, the 1928 U.S. Open, by winning a 36-hole playoff over Bobby Jones, and was arguably the best golf professional in the country

during those years. He served as head professional at Quaker Ridge Golf Club from 1919 to 1930 and at Baltusrol Golf Club from 1934 to 1972. Farrell and his wife, Catherine, had five children, and in 1966 they were named the Family of the Year by the Metropolitan Golf Writers Association. In this photo from a 1929 tournament at Pebble Beach, Farrell (hitting out of the bunker) partnered with Walter Hagen against Glenna Collet and Marion Hollins.

FIVE THINGS

5 Things About... Steve Pikiell

BY: A.J. VOELPEL

Photo by Stony Brook University Athletics

Now in his eighth season as the men's head basketball coach at Stony Brook University on Long Island, Steve Pikiell is two weeks away from completing a transformation project so drastic that the Beverly Hills Housewives would be in awe. The Seawolves recently captured their third regular season America East title in the last four years. They'll have to survive the conference tournament (which begins March 9) but they are the Met Area's best chance for an NCAA Tournament bid in 2013.

Here are five things to know about SBU's lead man:

- 1** Prior to his arrival, Stony Brook failed to record a winning record in Division 1. Their 23 regular season wins this year are the most in the program's history.
- 2** Before becoming a coach, Steve was a four-year letter winner for the UConn Huskies under Jim Calhoun from 1987-91. He was team captain as a junior and senior, when UConn won its first Big East Championship and advanced to the Elite Eight and Sweet 16.
- 3** Between recruiting and coaching, he doesn't find much time to play golf. Though he does get a few calls from Calhoun to play in outings during the summer. "I make sure I play in those outings, which are usually scrambles, so every now and then I can whack a good one off the tee."
- 4** Pikiell is a big booster of his team and says 6'5" senior Tommy Brenton should be named America East Player of the Year. "The best part about him is that he's the most unselfish player in the league. He does everything and could play anywhere in the country."
- 5** He thinks the three key program builders are a school's administration, athletic director, and coaching staff. "Some people don't realize that. Everybody is trying hard to be good in men's basketball. Everybody."





Rising Star: Alex Edfort

BY A.J. VOELPEL

Alex Edfort sets his goals as high as a Manhattan skyscraper. It could be the main reason why the University of the Pacific senior has consistently improved since he enrolled in the Stockton, Calif., school nearly four years ago.

“Most of my success has to do with the work that I put in with Coach [Brandon] Goethals,” he says. “He has really helped me elevate my course management and decision making.”

Edfort, a 21-year-old native of Somerset, N.J., honed his game as amateur in the Met Area, compiling impressive finishes at the MGA/MetLife Public Links (runner-up in '10) and Met Amateur (semifinalist in '10, '11), with two good showings in

the U.S. Public Links mixed in (Round of 16 in '11, Round of 32 in '12).

But it's across the country where Edfort is achieving next-level status. Last season, he was named Big West Conference Player of the Year and set the school record for lowest scoring average (71.9). This past February, he helped his team win the Farms Collegiate Invitational in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., their first tournament victory since 2010.

“My ultimate goal is to qualify for the Walker Cup,” he said. “I feel like I'm close, but I haven't had that breakout performance yet. But I know I'm ready to break down that door and prove that I'm one of the top amateurs.”

RULES

What Happens Next?

BY BRIAN MAHONEY

Photo by John DeTemple Jr.

Here we see two-time MGA Player of the Year Michael Miller standing barefoot in a few inches of water, as he contemplates his next move during the French-American Challenge at Sebonack Golf Club last October. Following a tee shot on a par three, his ball lay precariously inside the margin of a water hazard but in a position that he might be able to advance it. Since the hazard was marked as a water hazard (yellow line) MGA Rules & Competitions Chairman Rob Bluestone reminded Michael that he had three options:

- 1) Stroke and distance (R26-1a). Under penalty of one stroke Michael could return to the tee, where he would be lying two (2).
- 2) Take a drop (R26-1b). Under penalty of one stroke he could drop a ball behind the water hazard, keeping the point at which the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard directly between him and the hole, with no limit to how far back he may go.
- 3) Play the ball as it lies. This is probably the highest risk/reward option, so buyers beware!

End result: Michael played the ball as it lay and was able to splash it out onto the green. Turns out it was worth getting a bit wet!



TECHNOLOGY

Analyze This

BY SCOTT KRAMER

The worlds of golf, technology and self-help have officially collided, and the results are staggering. Several mobile phone swing analyzers have emerged over the past year featuring instant feedback, detailed information and vivid graphics.

The SwingTIP (\$130) from Mobiplex, for example, is one of the best and most reliable. It's easy to use straight from the box. Download the free app to your iPhone or Android; clip the tiny, one-ounce sensor to your club's shaft; sync the Bluetooth; then swing away.

You'll quickly see an animation of your swing on your phone's screen, flanked by a display of your clubhead speed, swing path, clubface angle at impact, tempo, and probable point of impact. You can replay it from several angles: above your head, behind your body, or from in front of your chest. And the app stores all of your stats and trends—on your phone and in the cloud—plus offers video tips.

One suggestion with these devices is to take your hacks in the shade, where you can clearly see your phone's screen. Ironically, that'll keep you out of the dark regarding your swing.



54 Holes in... West Palm Beach

BY EVAN ROTHMAN

The PGA Tour's Florida Swing just kicked off at the Honda Classic, whose host course, the Champion at PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens, always ranks among the circuit's hardest. For the pros, Florida means the season is clicking into high gear; for Met Area golfers, it's a sign we need to start scraping the rust off our games, ideally with a visit to this golfing hotbed.

GOLF

- **PGA National Resort and Spa** (pgaresort.com). While the resort is indeed best known for Jack Nicklaus's Champion layout and the water-laden holes 15-17, dubbed the "Bear Trap," four other courses produce surpassing variety. These include the reinvented Fazio (opened in November with Tom II renovating George and Tom's original) and the very pleasant, newly renovated Estates.
- **Madison Green GC** (madisongreengolf.com). Home of the 2013 and 2014 Honda Classic qualifier, this well-regarded links-style layout features a serpentine routing through nature preserves—and is easy to reach, just minutes from downtown West Palm Beach.
- **North Palm Beach CC** (npbcc.org). Jack Nicklaus's gift to his longtime hometown packs a lot of punch into a small property. This village-owned course—one of only two Nicklaus munis—tests everything but your wallet.

LODGING

- **PGA National** (pgaresort.com). "Man caves" aren't only for musty basements. New one-bedroom "media rooms" at PGA National, which recently completed a \$100 million revitalization, offer huge HD TVs and lush wraparound sofas perfect for post-round lounging around in high style. Buddy trip, anyone?

OFF-COURSE

- **The Gardens Mall** (thegardensmall.com). One of the country's most chic malls—no, that isn't necessarily a contradiction in terms. Between Abercrombie & Fitch and Zales, you'll find Louis Vuitton and Saks Fifth Avenue.
- Many cognoscenti call the rustic Italian restaurant **Vic and Angelo's** (vicandangelos.com) the best eats in town; still, many Tour pros will be spotted tournament week at the draft beer-centric **Yard House** in Palm Beach Gardens, while **Rocco's Tacos** (roccostacos.com) is another hip eatery/hangout.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING
"THE BEAR TRAP"



"IT SHOULD BE WON OR LOST
RIGHT HERE"

"THREE GREAT FINISHING
HOLES ON THE PGA TOUR."