

# The Met Golfer

# EXTRA



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN GOLF ASSOCIATION

MGAGOLF.ORG



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November 2017

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*This page: Is there anything quite like fall golf? This year, the Met Area's active season was extended to November 14 and MGA Members took advantage of it! There were 19,546 scores posted in the Met Area from Nov. 1-14. (Photo: Par-five 4th at Bethpage Black by AJ Voelpel)*

# BACK TO SCHOOL

The schedule barely lets up for the Met Area's top collegiate competitors. After busy summers, players returned to their respective schools in the fall for a full slate of events – with many carrying success from one season to the next.



CORNELL UNIVERSITY

**MIKE GRABOYES**  
Cornell University | Senior  
Watchung, N.J.

Graboyes provided an emphatic finish to his fall season, firing a 67 in the third round of the Connecticut Cup to earn the individual win and lead the Big Red to a runner-up finish. Overall, Graboyes logged an impressive 71.4 scoring average in his four fall events, posting three top-three finishes in the process.



YALE UNIVERSITY

**JAMES NICHOLAS**  
Yale University | Junior  
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Nicholas carried momentum from an outstanding summer into the fall, earning his first collegiate title at the Cornell Invitational. He tallied a 71.5 scoring average in his four stroke play events, while his tie for fifth at the Macdonald Cup led the Bulldogs to a team victory on home turf.

CORNELL INVITATIONAL					
2 <sup>ND</sup> PLACE					
FIRST ROUND		SECOND ROUND		36 Total	
9	18	9	18	9	18
35	70	37	72	142	38
36	71	38	73	149	37
				144	39
				148	37
				140	35
				145	32
				54	285
				54	856



MIKE SCOTT/RHODE ISLAND ATHLETICS

**DAWSON JONES**  
University of Rhode Island | Junior  
Howell, N.J.

Jones registered a top-10 finish in three of his five fall events, leading the Rams' squad with a 72.7 scoring average over 14 rounds. His highest finish came in The Connecticut Cup, where he finished as runner-up (one shot behind Graboyes) and led his team to a fall-best third-place finish.



TOWSON UNIVERSITY

**ALIX LOWE**  
Towson University | Junior  
Farmingdale, N.Y.

A school-record 68, followed by rounds of 70-72 led Lowe to a third-place finish at the Pinehurst Challenge. The performance also earned her Colonial Athletic Association Women's Golfer of the Week honors. Lowe finished sixth or higher in four of her five events during the fall, posting a 73.9 scoring average to lead the Tigers.

## The Met Golfer EXTRA

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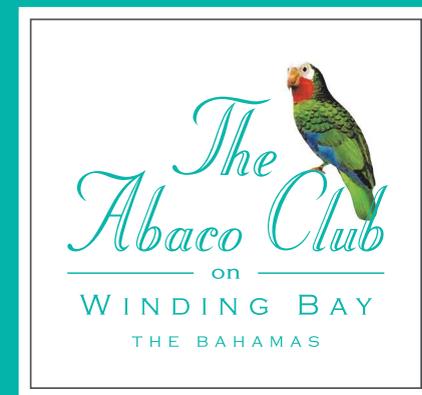
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# A Q&A with MIKE STRLEKAR

**M**ike Strlekar, PGA Director of Golf at Montclair Golf Club, felt fortunate enough to receive New Jersey PGA's Merchandiser of the Year Award in both 2009 and 2014. But, thanks to his continued dedication to the trade, consistently high level of service, and keen eye for detail, Strlekar was named the 2017 PGA Merchandiser of the Year for Private Facilities.

**Extra:** What does being recognized with this honor mean to you?

**Mike:** With so many great clubs and great golf pros just in our small section, [being named New Jersey Merchandiser of the Year] in itself was a tremendous honor. Being recognized by the PGA of America is something I never dreamed of. I was hoping the award ceremony would help this whole thing sink in but unfortunately I had to miss the annual meeting due to back surgery.

**E:** When members and guests walk in to the shop, what kind of impression should they have?

**M:** First and foremost, I want their first impression to be what a friendly and welcoming place the golf shop is. Then, once their eyes have a chance to scan the room, I want them to notice color. Whether it's the apparel or other display items that we use, I believe that color is a very appealing thing for the brain.

**E:** What is your top priority in arranging merchandise in the golf shop?

**M:** For me, consistency is everything. Everything folded should be done the same way, from the width of the item, to the logo facing out, to the tags being tucked in, and the items being in size order.

**E:** What do you feel have been the biggest changes in golf merchandising during your career?

**M:** I got into the business just at the tail end of the golf shop being a place that sold shirts, sweaters, clubs and balls. Now, golf shops are boutiques. We sell candles, stationary, water bottles, coffee mugs, key chains, and underwear.

**E:** In what ways do you make members want to buy from the shop, opposed to going online or using other retailers?

**M:** Everything we do is about creating relationships with our members and guests. Whether it's playing, teaching, walking the range and putting green, or walking through the Grill Room, we try to talk to everyone.

Visit [mgagolf.org](http://mgagolf.org) for the full Q&A with Mike Strlekar.



PEOPLE

Strlekar has been at West Orange, N.J.'s Montclair Golf Club since 1996 and has served as Director of Golf for the last 16 years.

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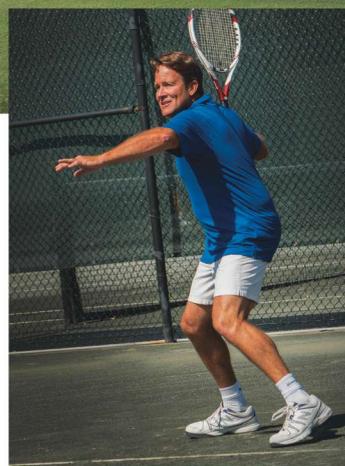
BY SCOTT KRAMER

# Giving Thanks

**T**hat magical holiday season has arrived. And in between office parties and family gatherings, people tend to be introspective, pause and give some thanks. This year, I'm thankful that I finally swapped out long irons for hybrids. In retrospect, they're so easy to hit that I'm frankly not sure what I was waiting for. And many golfers before me have felt that same elation. If you haven't joined the fray, there are new models on the market that you might want to try. Titleist's 818 (\$315 apiece) incorporates driver technology that results in distance, forgiveness and accuracy. It comes in the larger 818H1 for golfers wanting to sweep a larger head through impact; and the smaller, offset, iron-looking 818H2 for steeper swings. Callaway's Epic Star hybrid (\$300) has an ultralight carbon crown that maximizes forgiveness, and a clubface designed to boost ball speed. Tour Edge's hollow-body Exotics CBX Iron-Wood (\$200) has a high-strength steel 'L' cup face that lends forgiveness and distance with minimal ball spin. And its iron-like head yields solid feel and workability. XXIO's X (\$300) will help you improve accuracy and distance, thanks to its variable face thickness and lightweight shaft. It also features high-density rear weighting that helps shots launch nice and high. And Mizuno's loft-adjustable CLK (\$250) has a thin maraging steel face that generates fast ball speed.



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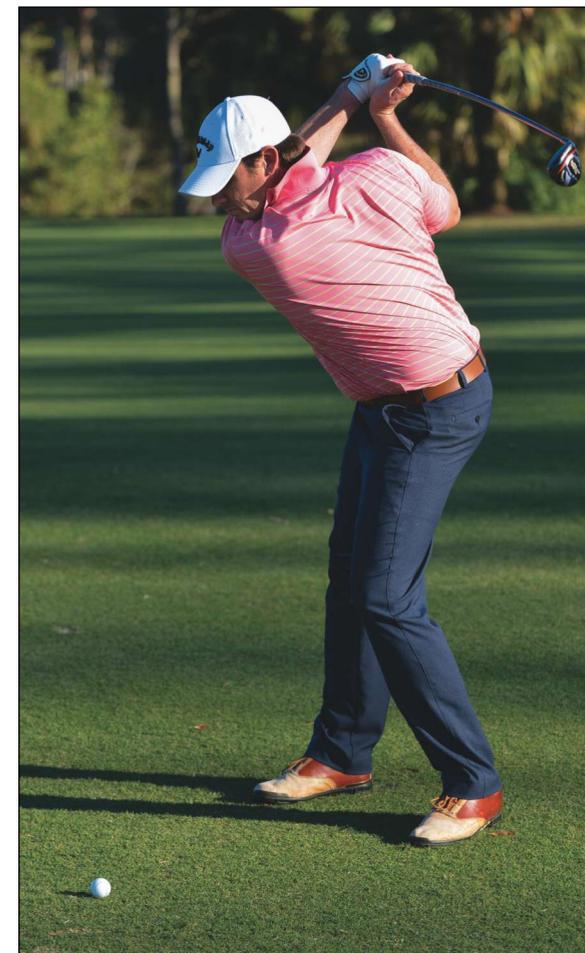
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Jonathan's Landing Golf Club offers the ultimate golf experience for players of all levels. With three championship courses spanning two unique locations, JL offers the range of play you need to step up your golf game! This premier private Club also offers an abundance of off-course amenities and truly has something for everyone.

The Fazio and the Hills courses at Old Trail provide a pure golf experience nestled among the natural beauty and rolling terrain of the nature preserves. This golfer's paradise presents a true test for players up to the challenge. The Fazio has been described as one of Tom Fazio's best designs and is revered as Jonathan's Landing's true championship course. The Hills, designed by Arthur Hills, is a shot maker's dream. This course lends itself to the pristine, natural surroundings and is known for requiring accuracy more than power.

The Village location, just a few miles east to the heart of Jupiter, is home to the JL Village course, designed by Tom Fazio. Meandering around the neighborhoods of the gated community and Intracoastal waters, this course features a one-of-a-kind ferry boat ride over the scenic waterway at the signature 17th hole.



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# FUN Without the Sun

**G**olf balls soared through the air in fluorescent colors of red, green, and blue at Rye Golf Club in Rye, N.Y., on October 26, as the club relaunched a growing—and glowing—tradition: night golf.

Even with chilly evening temperatures upon sunset, more than 40 players enjoyed the evening event that began with 6:30 p.m. tee times. LED lanterns marked the teeing grounds, while glow sticks hung from flagsticks and helped frame fairways and greens to guide players around the dark of the night.

The club began teeing it up after dark in 2013, originally using just holes 16-17-18 with the picturesque finish behind Whitby Castle. After a positive reaction to the event, they added Nos. 13-14-15 into the mix in 2014 to expand opportunities for play. Though momentum slowed without the event taking place in 2016 due to several areas of construction, players were eager for its return in 2017.

Several youngsters tried their skill on the course, but those just starting the game also had the opportunity to play with the glowing golf balls on a practice green where a host of obstacles set up a mini-course.



John Louis and son Jack (left), and Ken Meszkat and son Tripp as they finished play.

Myles Mullaly fires a tee shot down Rye Golf Club's 16th hole.

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For additional fun, the Lake Ridge Winery, European inspired Yalaha Bakery, and the many shops and restaurants within Mt. Dora are just minutes away.

Built in 1917, El Campeon (The Champion) golf course is celebrating her 100th anniversary this year.

This layout is a true classic design yet relevant to today's golfers and modern equipment advantages at 7,100 yards in length. El Campeon features 85 ft. elevation changes over 6 holes, various water elements and fairways lined with mature oaks and magnolias. The George O'Neil layout will test a player's shot making abilities over all 18 holes. Her sibling course, Las Colinas (The Hills) designed by Gary Koch, opened in 1992 and plays 7,230 yards upland through evergreen forests and rolling hills among Florida's undisturbed nature preserves.

Both Mission Inn courses have earned accolades from players and press alike. Regular players on GolfAdvisor.com have ranked El Campeon the No. 13



course in the nation for its timeless beauty, playability, layout design, and overall great golf experience. Las Colinas is consistently ranked in the top 25 among Florida's 1,200 courses by *GolfWeek* and *Golf Digest*.

Mission Inn Resort offers overnight lodging, meeting and banquet facilities, four on-site restaurants, a full service spa, plus 52 slip marina for boating and fishing on the Lake Harris chain.

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**T**wo things have become constants with PGA Jr. League: nationwide growth and team New Jersey from Royce Brook Golf Club advancing to the national championship. Since its launch in 2012, PGA Jr. League has exploded across the country, with a record of more than 42,000 juniors participating in the fun, team-centric format in 2017. Meanwhile, even with the initiative's continued growth and development, Royce Brook's PGA Director of Junior Development Anthony Latham continues to field highly talented squads, which have now advanced to five of the six national championships.

New Jersey nearly claimed the title this year, falling by a slim 6.5 to 5.5 margin to Georgia in the championship match at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., on November 19. "They played hard, and I couldn't ask for anything more. They never quit," said Latham. The team earned its bid to Arizona by winning the Mid-Atlantic Region, and then they tore through the Ryder Division with a 3-0 record before facing off against Georgia. The run to the finals wasn't the only excitement during the week though, as the team's Joshua Ryan and Garrett Engle—both 14 years old—blasted drives of 312 and 308 yards, respectively, in the pre-championship Skills Challenge.

You can see team New Jersey's experience on December 5 at 8 p.m., when Golf Channel airs a two-hour, prime time special highlighting the 2017 PGA Jr. League Championship.



# A League of their Own



# SAILFISH POINT

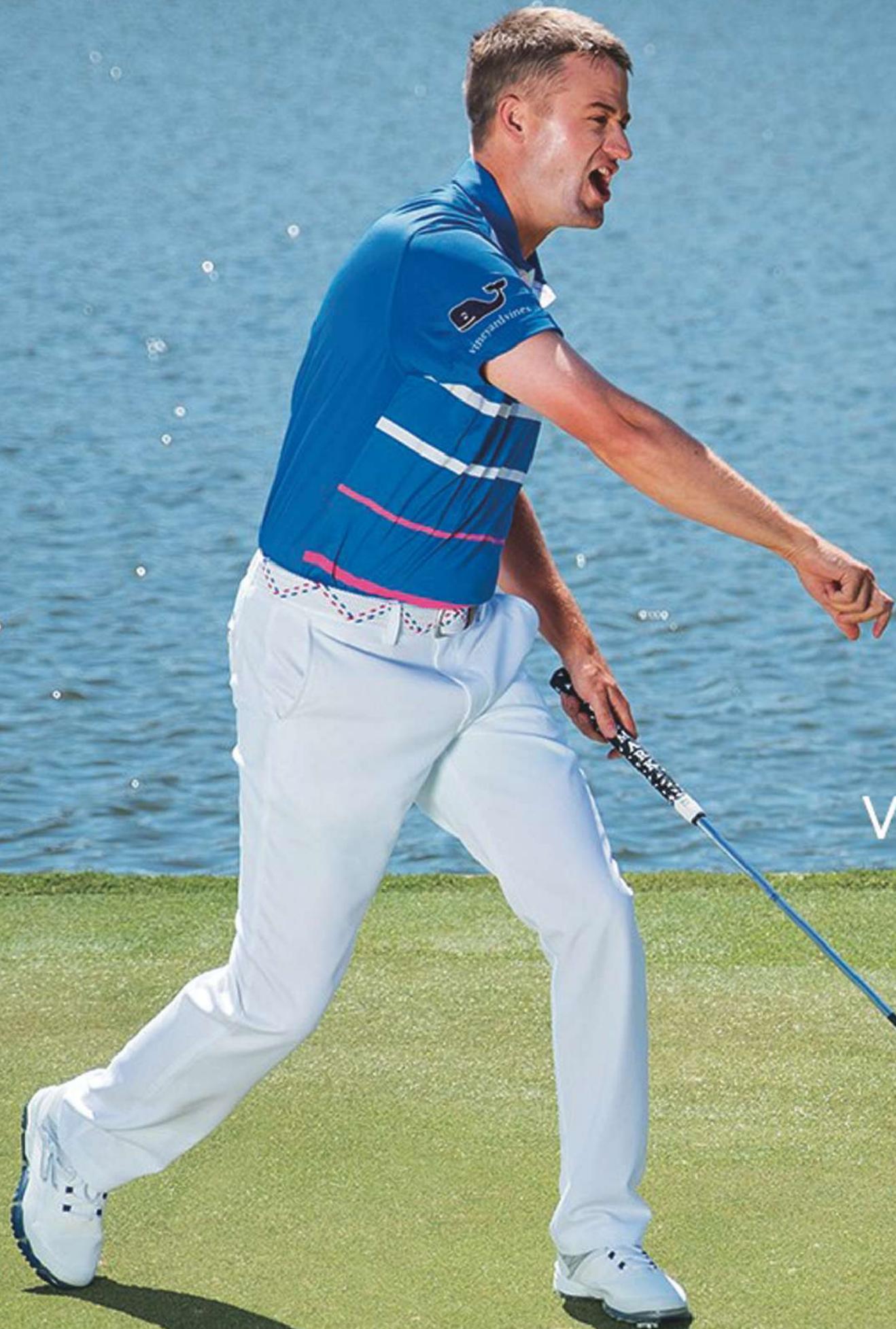
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# LAYOVER ▶ LOS CABOS

BY TIM HARTIN

**M**ountains, desert, and sea remarkably collide at the southern end of the Baja Peninsula, lending to some of the most dramatic golf landscapes in the world. Over the last 25 years, Los Cabos has transformed from a laid-back fishing destination to a high-end golf destination now offering more than a dozen world-class, championship courses.

## COURSES:

- 1 Quivira Golf Club** – This epic Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course lies upon a spectacular site marked by huge dunes, sheer cliffs and rolling foothills. It has more oceanfront exposure than any other course in Cabo and has been showered with awards since its debut in 2014. Play is only available to real estate owners in Quivira Los Cabos and guests of the Pueblo Bonito Resorts.
- 2 Palmilla Golf Club** – The Arroyo and Mountain nines stand as Nicklaus' first design in the region—opening in 1992—while his Ocean nine (completed in 1997) rounds out the 27-hole facility at Palmilla. Each provides its own flavor, the Ocean swinging down with a pair of beach-side holes, the Mountain climbing to present outstanding views of the Sea of Cortez, and the Arroyo traversing through cacti and across canyons.
- 3 Cabo Real Golf Club** – Located between Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo, this Robert Trent Jones II layout opens softly with wide fairways leading down to the beach. The challenge begins as play turns to the inward nine, which climbs into the foothills and features ridge-running fairways and small, elevated greens—not to mention the breathtaking views.

Keeping your focus on the golf may be even more challenging than finding the green on Quivira's par-three 6th, which measures 180 yards from the back tees.



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The resort is renowned for the 18-hole championship Miller course and the Soffer course voted among the top 100 “Best Resort Courses” by Golf Week. Both pristine golf courses have gone through more than \$45 million in renovations changing the landscape of Florida golf. The South Course’s (Soffer) debut was December 2006 and the North (Miller) opened in December 2007. Originally designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr., both courses offer lush, tropical grounds accentuated with a variety of elevation changes, contoured fairways, sharp changes within holes and strategically placed water features. Varied flora and trees indigenous to Florida’s tropical climate create an oasis-like feel throughout the courses giving nearly each hole a private feel, with more than \$100,000 in landscaping spent on each hole of play. Occasionally, a beautiful statue can be found nestled within the foliage, reminding golfers that beauty surrounds them at every turn.

The resort’s courses are home to hundreds of birds that continue to call Turnberry home. Special nesting areas have been positioned throughout the courses. Even a separate “Flamingo Island” was built within Lake Julius, the largest and deepest body of water at the resort named after Golf Hall of Famer and former Golf Director Julius Boros. The Island ensures resident Flamingoes are able to nest and nurture their young in a natural environment.

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Spreading the

# SMITH STORY



Thompson and Mackesey (center left, and right) joined by the MGA's Brian Mahoney and Jay Mottola at Golf Central.

**A** whirlwind tour throughout the Met Area allowed Carnoustie Golf Club Captain Bill Thompson and Overseas Historian David Mackesey to visit locations important to the very story they were sharing: the legacy of the Smith family.

Coming from a working class family, Carnoustie's Alex, Willie, and Macdonald—three of five brothers—rose to stand among the world's best competitors. Thompson and Mackesey carried special pieces from the club's archives, including original medals and replica trophies from both the U.S. Open and Met Open, and the Alex Smith Memorial Trophy (formerly awarded to medalist of the PGA Championship). Willie won the U.S. Open in 1899, while Alex won a pair of U.S. Opens and four Met Opens. Macdonald won the Met Open three times and won 31 total medals in as many years.

The pair's trip coincides with the club's 175th anniversary and completion of a new book detailing the club's history. Stops along the way included the USGA and MGA, as well as Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, where Willie briefly worked, and next summer's Met Open host Wykagyl Country Club, where Alex served as a professional for more than 10 years and won his second Met Open in 1909.