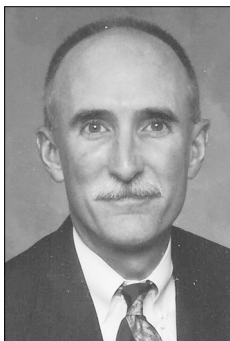


Sandbaggers Beware

BY CARR McCALLA

The LGA recently conducted its eighth annual Net Amateur Championship. One of the goals our board has identified is to provide competitive opportunities for our higher handicap players, i.e., net events that all golfers can participate in. One of the challenges in attracting larger fields to this championship is to change a perception that has become ingrained in many golfers across the state. The perception that any 'Net' event will more than likely be won by the player that best manipulates his handicap index (in other words...the best 'sandbagger') is one that we have found is hard to combat. The LGA sincerely believes that the vast majority of golfers simply want to compete on an even playing field and that is what we are attempting to provide with our Net Amateur Championship.



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The LGA has conducted its Net Amateur since 2000 and the average winning score in those eight championships has been 5-under-par net (and that's for 36 holes). We utilize the USGA's Exceptional Tournament Score Probability Table to reduce a player's index when his score exceeds a pre-determined probability.

The player's index is reduced for the round in question, his score recalculated and he plays with the reduced index for any subsequent rounds. The more a player's score exceeds the probability factor selected, the more his index is reduced.

What does this accomplish? It means we don't get many 'sandbaggers' in our championship. And the ones that do play have their handicap indexes reduced in such a way that they don't have their typical unfair advantage.

We are committed to continuing to conduct this championship. Having said that, we would love to see our entries increase in future years. We would also love to see some of our member clubs take our model and conduct their own net events using this format. We would be more than happy to share the structure of the event if any of our clubs would like to consider a local Net Championship similar to ours.

This year's Championship was conducted last month at Beaver Creek Golf Club in Zachary. The weather was gorgeous and the competition exciting with Shreveport's Resta Choate winning a three-hole cumulative score playoff for the title, besting Todd Perry of Calhoun. Both shot 36-hole net scores of 136 on the par-72 layout at Beaver Creek.

Rounding out the top 10 in the championship were: Defending Champion Randy Indovina of Baton Rouge (3rd/137), Darryl Beasley of Calhoun (4th/138), William Duncan of Baton Rouge (5th/141), first round co-leader Darrell Gerald of Baton Rouge (6th/142), Kevin Reed of Baton Rouge (7th/143), Ricky Norwood of Lake Charles (T-8/144), first round co-leader Kent Willis of Denham Springs (T-8/144), Chris Bertaut of Morgan City (T-

10/146), Marty Chapman of Maurice (T-10/146), and Brad Burkett of Greenwell Springs (T-10/146).

In the concurrent LGA Net Club Team Championship, the team from Calvert Crossing in Calhoun took home the title with a two-day total of 10-under-par 422. Representing Calvert Crossing were Todd Perry, Darryl Beasley, and Tommy Parker. Pine Shadows from Lake Charles, the defending champion in this event, took home second place with a one-over-par 433.

UPCOMING ENTRY DEADLINES

LGA entry deadlines approaching are June 19 (Junior Amateur Championship), June 22 (Mid-Amateur Championship) and July 10 (Four-Ball Championship). The Junior Am will be held at Beaver Creek, with the Mid-Am being conducted at Squire Creek Country Club in Choudrant.

The LGA will host seven qualifiers statewide in early July for the Mid-Am, with those not qualifying for championship rounds play receiving a \$100 refund from their entry fee. The Four-Ball Championship will be conducted at the Jim Lipe-designed University Club in Baton Rouge.

In addition, entry forms are also now available for the Senior Amateur (Carter Plantation/Aug. 16-18), and Senior Four-Ball (Atchafalaya GC at Idlewild/Sept. 15-16) Championships.

Simply go to the LGA's website at LGAgolf.org to enter online or download a hard copy of the entry form.

BUSHNELL PROMOTION

The LGA continues to partner with Bushnell in providing discount pricing for the Bushnell Tournament Edition Rangefinder. We are pleased to announce another promotion that will enable you to receive a free pair of Bolle' sunglasses when you purchase a rangefinder.

Click on the Bushnell logo at our LGA website homepage (www.LGAgolf.org) and you will be able to purchase the Tournament Edition Rangefinder for \$100 off the suggested retail price of \$499.99. Plug in your 8-digit LGA Handicap Network number and you will get an additional \$50 off. Once you make your purchase you will receive a coupon code for your free sunglasses.

The LGA is again allowing the use of distance measuring devices at each of its Championships in 2007.

USGA CHAMPIONSHIPS

I am excited to have been asked to officiate at some of the USGA Championships again this year. I will be at Oakmont for the Open later this month, at the Olympic Club in San Francisco for the Amateur in August, and at Bandon Dunes in Oregon for the Mid-Am in October.

At the risk of boring you, I will plan on keeping a diary and sharing some of the experiences I encounter at these Championships with you in this column over the summer.

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