

A new tradition

GCI columnist and industry legend Dennis Lyon has been on the mend in recent months after suffering serious injuries as, while taking his faithful pooch Putter for a walk during the last holiday season, he was hit by a truck.

We're thrilled that Dennis is expected to make a full recovery, even with the significant medical expenses that have built up. Fortunately, one of the perks of the golf industry is that a helping hand is never too far away.

As involved as Dennis has been with the Colorado Golf Association (as a past president, for starters), it's no wonder they wanted to help him out. He, along with colleagues Ed Mate, director of the Colorado Golf Association; Gail Godbey, secretary and Bill Jewell, golf manager for the city of Lakewood, Colo., have run a "Tradition" tournament since 2004, in which some players wear turn-of-the-century golf attire and use a limited selection of clubs.

This year, the Tradition made a slight change, renamed in honor of Dennis Lyon, raising money to help him with medical expenses with a round at the Meadow Hills Golf Course in Aurora.

"We had 60 people participate," says Anne Bley, director of finance for the CGA. "There were architects, superintendents – Dennis had touched us all in some way. He's helped us so much over the years. He's just the kind of guy you want to do something nice for."

Besides just the players, his whole family showed up for the occasion, including his children and grandchildren. Dennis himself only played a few holes, since much of his time was spent catching up with people who had been cheering him



Check out our photo slideshow of Dennis with some of the players in the "Dennis Lyon Tradition Tournament" at bit.ly/GCILyonMH.

on in his recovery.

"It was just wonderful to me," he says. "There were so many colleagues and friends and family members that played."

The tournament itself raised \$5,000 in net proceeds, with an additional \$5,000 provided by The Wee One Foundation. After the round, the players had lunch, including several of Dennis's favorites like hamburgers and cole slaw, and visited.

"During lunch, some kind words were spoken by several people," he says. "That just meant a lot to me."

With this kind of backup, Dennis will be back to form in no time at all, we hope.

"I was so seriously injured, and people have just been so kind to me," he says. "I know I'll keep getting better."



SAND SWAP AT MUIRFIELD



For the first time in its 121-year history, the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield has sourced its bunker sand from outside the East Lothian grounds. In an historic move brought about by dwindling home-grown supplies, the club opted for a new, free-draining sand supplied by Hugh King & Co.

The venue began the significant sand-exchange program in March swapping materials in all 148 of its on-course bunkers and three practice bunkers.

"We have always used native sand," said Colin Irvine, course manager at Muirfield. "Before we moved over to Hugh King's sand, we quarried sand off the course but the supply was running out and we were beginning to get inconsistencies. It

meant sand in some of the bunkers was blowing away while others weren't draining as well as we liked, so we decided to do an exchange."

The landmark swap was made 16 months ahead of the 16th running of the Open Championship at Muirfield. More importantly, the sand had to win over the support of the members of the renowned club.

"It had to be free-draining and it had to be the right colour," Irvine explained. "We tried quite a few types of sand and worked with Hugh King to come up with a sand type that we liked and the members would like. In fact, a lot of people haven't even noticed the change, which is great. As far as I am concerned, no news is good news."

From THE FEED

The Lighter Side of Turf is an online Twitter gathering of golf course superintendents who both talk turf and have fun. Greg Shaffer, superintendent at Elcona Country Club, took home an Innovative Use of Twitter award from GCI's 2012 Social Media Awards – but Andrew Hardy of Pheasant Run Golf Course is curious who all should get a piece of that prize.

Andrew Hardy @pheasantturf
Hey @gtshaffer you better rip that @GCIMagazine award and send it to @TWRyanHoward. He's a co-founder.



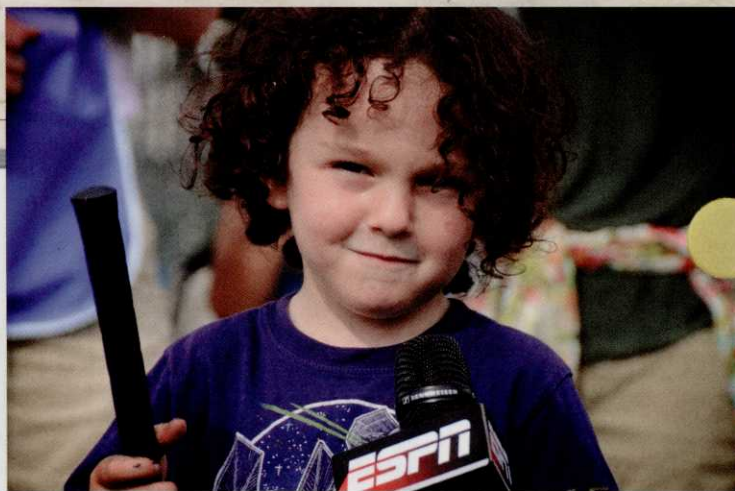
MAO @spartygrad95
Umm, I may not have FOUNDED it but let's all be honest... I AM THE AWARD.



Greg Shaffer @gtshaffer
Award was created to simply build your self esteem. Looks like it worked. #champ



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on Twitter @GCIMagazine!



Instant champions

Superintendents know – there's nothing like the scene of a major golf championship to bring out the best in a course and its players. Improv Everywhere, a New York "prank collective" that performs odd scenes to get people to laugh and play along, proved that the same holds true even when that course is a mini one.

Improv Everywhere is known for pulling off huge productions, and they're not afraid to get bigger names in on the fun: take, for instance, the spontaneous "Best Game Ever" experiment with sportcaster Jim Gray commentating a local Little League game, complete with Jumbotron and an instant cheering crowd.

Senior IE "agent" Charlie Todd received an e-mail from ESPN offering use of the Claret Jug from The Open Championship (you know the one, it comes with its own security guard?) as it passed through New York on a publicity tour.

"Ever since our 'Best Game Ever' mission, I've thought about doing a sequel with golf," says Todd. "Since it would be entirely too dangerous to have a gallery show up on an actual golf course where amateurs have way less control over the ball than professionals, a mini-golf course would work perfectly."

ESPN loved the idea, and worked with the Royal & Ancient Golf Association to provide caddy bibs, "Quiet" signs and a flag. The new Pier 25 Mini-Golf course gave the go-ahead, and the scene was set.

Five times throughout the day, a gallery, caddies, commentators and officials swooped in on an unsuspecting group of players, transforming the mini-golf site into a major golf event experience, with kids taking the starring roles.

Todd and another agent provided the commentary, with ESPN personality Jorge Andres for on-the-course interviews from the players. The caddies helped the kids line up their shots, and the gallery cheered them on. Each time, a winner was crowned, and the presentation of the Claret Jug was made, with the winner's "wife and son" coming in for a quick hug for the cameras.

"The biggest challenge for this stunt was the element of surprise," says Todd. "We worked hard to stay out of view of the players on the course, so we could swoop in all together and turn a normal hole into a major championship in a matter of seconds."

If only it was that quick to get a full-sized course ready for a tournament – maybe some IE agents could volunteer?



See footage from
the Mini-Golf
Open at [bit.ly/
ImprovEMini](http://bit.ly/ImprovEMini).

