

# *Midwest Deaf Golfers Association*

## Newsletter

Fall 2006

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### ***Curtis Blankenburg – Two-time MDGA Champion***

Curtis Blankenburg captured his second MDGA championship, five years after the first one. After the first round, Curtis had a five-shot lead over Darrell Hovinen, the eventual runner-up. His 73 in the second round was the low round of the tournament. It gave Curtis a 12-shot lead after 36 holes. Darrell started off the third round hitting the ball very well, and Curtis was having problems with his putter, but Darrell had three putts on the 2nd and 4th holes and missed short birdie putts on the 5th, 6th and 7th holes. When Curtis made birdie on the 8th hole, the tournament was his.

In October, four local Illinois folks played at the Rail in Springfield, the site of next year's MDGA tournament. Bob Dramin reported that Curtis shot 75, but he wasn't the low scorer of the day. Mark Nagy shot 73. Hmm? Big improvement from August. Mark is retired so now he has more time to practice golf. I'm sure Curtis will enjoy to defend his championship next year.

### ***Flight Champions***

James Williams, from Florida, shot a final-round 83 to win the First Flight by two shots over Patrick Arnold. Arnold shot 85, they were tied after two rounds. Wally Riege won the Second Flight by two shots over Matt Gallo. Wally also shot 83 in the final round. This is Wally's 6th Flight championship, an MDGA record. There was a playoff for the Third Flight championship. Karl Gruetzner made par on the first playoff hole to defeat Todd Sprunger and Aurele Bourgeois. Gruetzner had already left the golf course to go swimming at the resort. Todd and Aurele graciously agreed to wait for Gruetzner to return to the golf course. Great sportsmanship.

David (Ebbie) Bosworth captured his second straight MDGA Senior championship. Bosworth is now in his mid-60's and is still playing wonderful golf, he might have finished in third place if he had played with the regular golfers. The Senior First Flight had a wonderful competition. Pat Sweeney won by one shot over Lewis Fowler. Three golfers were two behind Sweeney and two more were three behind. Istvan Kovacs, who grew up in Michigan, won the Senior Second Flight by five shots over Robert Byington.

### ***Handicap Champions***

Marek Kaminski captured the MDGA Handicap championship by four shots over second place finishers Curtis Blankenburg and James Williams, with Stephen Coppock and Joe Wiegiers just one shot behind in fourth place. Carlos Martinez won the MDGA Senior Handicap championship and the Frank B. Sullivan trophy by one shot over John Kaleta with Tom Chance and Pat Sweeney tied for third place, one shot behind Kaleta.

### ***Amazing Long-Time Golfers***

Arthur Gendreau participated in his 53rd straight MDGA tournament. He has never missed an MDGA tourney since 1954. This is a new MDGA record. It is probably a record for any golf tournament anywhere in the world. The old record was held by Jack Kunz who played in 52 straight tournaments from 1948 to 1999. Kunz is the only other golfer to hit the half-century mark.

Wilbur Sawhill played in his 49th tournament this year. Sawhill also set a new MDGA record this year. He shot 86 in the final round at The Natural. He is 86 years old, the oldest golfer to shoot his age in MDGA tourneys. He broke his old record of 83 from three years ago.

## ***New MDGA Hall-of-Famer***

Congratulations to Darrell Hovinen from Michigan who was elected to the MDGA Hall of Fame. He is now the 50<sup>th</sup> member out of more than 900 golfers. He participated in 15 MDGA tournaments, first tournament was in 1989 and is still playing. He was the Tournament Chairman in 1998 at Marywood Golf Club in Battle Creek, Michigan. He was the 1995 First Flight Champion at Eagle Creek in Indianapolis, Indiana. He was Secretary from 2000 to 2004 and is the current President since 2005. Darrell regrets not playing in the MDGA from 1992 to 1994. Otherwise he would have 18 straight tourneys since 1989 and would be in better shape to try to catch Art Gendreau.

## ***Sixth Annual Putting Contest***

Patrick Cullen, from New York, is the fifth MDGA putting champion, beating Willie Miller, from Iowa in the championship match. Third-place Bob Graf shows again why he is still one of the best putters in the Midwest. Five out of six years, Bob finishes in the money. Billy Burke, from Ohio, finished in fourth place. Only the top four finishers finished in the money because there were only 32 entries this time. The weather was a factor, it was quite hot and humid on Tuesday, in the mid-90's. Previous champions were Bob Dramin, Bob Graf, Darrell Hovinen (2) and John Rush.

## ***50th Annual State 4-Man Team Competition***

Michigan tried to defend its home turf but Illinois was just too strong. Illinois had four out of the the top five players. They are the heavy favorites to repeat again next year in Springfield. Curtis Blankenburg has always been one of the top Midwest golfers since his first year in 2001. Bob Dramin and Bryan Jendra have improved over the years and are now very consistent low 80's golfers. Mark Nagy comes back after a long absence to turn Illinois into a very strong team.

## ***Second MDGA Shootout***

In 1998, Michigan hosted a shootout after the second round. Mike Maxwell defeated Darrell Hovinen on the last hole. This year, we watched a shootout of the top players for the second time. We were not sure if we would have the shootout because of the weather, but the rain stayed away (same as in 1998) and we started the shootout. Eleven players teed off the 10th hole at Marsh Ridge, a beautiful downhill par 3 over a marsh to a green with trouble all around. Only three of the 11 golfers put their tee shot on the green.

The back nine of Marsh Ridge is very tight. On each hole, the loser hit his tee shot into trouble, except for the 17th, par three. Blankenburg, Hovinen and Nawrocki put their tee shot on the green. Nawrocki and Blankenburg both just missed their birdie putts and Hovinen made his. Nawrocki hit a wonderful blind shot to within five feet of the hole to advance to the final hole. On the last hole, Hovinen hit his tee shot into the woods and had to take a penalty drop while Nawrocki played straight down the middle and won with a par.

## ***Top Five Players in MDGA History***

This list is based on 60 years of MDGA golf, the Invitational in 1947 and the 59 tournaments from 1948 to 2006. All top 5 finishes are counted, only the top 5 finishes are counted. Champions like Bill Roberts, Mike Maxwell, Herb Deurmyer did not make this list. It is a very interesting list, that shows which golfers have been playing top-notch golf over the years.

Arthur Gendreau	28 times in the top 5, first one in 1957, last one in 1994
Norman Artz	27 times in the top 5, first one in 1962, last one in 2001
Jack Kunz	23 times in the top 5, first one in 1949, last one in 1981
William Tonigan	22 times in the top 5, first one in 1970, last one in 2003
Neil Johnson	21 times in the top 5, first one in 1966, last one in 1999

Artz and Kunz are no longer with us. Gendreau is 70 years old, Tonigan and Johnson are both in their 60's. The top active regular golfers are Mike Maxwell with 10 and Darrell Hovinen with 9 top five finishes.