

Old Friend, New Adventure

Betsey Mitchell/Columnist Nov 20, 2018

Once upon a time Hyland Golf Club was the place to play on the way in and out for players traveling to the Sandhills.

Even the locals got out of the habit of playing this Tom Jackson track, but it is time to return. The best way for the folks in the area to get back in the habit is to stop by and say hello to “Gat” or Doug and ask for your HVP card – Hyland Valuable Player.

This card can be yours for no charge and guarantees short notice access at an excellent rate for this golf course that is getting more polished every day.

I don’t know about you, but I had forgotten what a handsome course this is. The first two holes are an easy start and then the view opens up to a valley painted with fairways and lakes beckoning you to play on.

The third hole is the first of a series of challenging par 3s positioned throughout a golf course providing a fine experience for golfers of every level.

Beginners and super seniors will love the “baby blue” tees set to stress-reducing yardages and away from the golf ball hungry lakes.

The back tees will give the serious players all the course they need ... that was one of my other recollections as my buddy and I played. It was a CGA event a number of years back. I spent most of the day perched at the top of a hill waiting for the next player to hitch up his pants and take a stab at carrying the tree and the lake to cut the dogleg on the fifth hole. Many tried, only a few succeeded.

Always the mark of a good design; offer an easy road to par and a tough road to birdie or eagle.

I’ll admit that the cart paths still need some work, but I never had a bad lie in the fairway, the greens rolled true (and a few times my ball rolled really far), and the bunkers are consistent. My buddy even said, “I like these bunkers.” Who says that? Surely, not me ... but I confess, I visited a few and managed to exit each time in one try.

Hurling past at high speeds on U.S. 1, it’s easy to think that Hyland is too far away. I checked. It’s just minutes from Southern Pines and only eight miles from Pinehurst.

So, give it try. Tell your pals coming to town on their play and stay package to include Hyland Golf Club in their selection.

Here is another new thing for Pinehurst. In case you haven't heard, there are 102 women battling to get to or to return to the LPGA tour. It started on Wednesday at Pinehurst No. 6 for four rounds and then switches to Pinehurst No. 7 starting Oct. 31 for another four rounds.

You might recognize some of the names on the roster. Many have been in town before to play the Women's North and South. Here are some of the top N&S finishers: Lori Beth Adams – 2014 runner-up; Doris Chen – 2011 runner-up; Cydney Clanton – 2010 champion; Katelyn Dambaugh – runner-up; Kristen Gillman – 2016 champion; Alison Lee – 2014 champion; Bailey Tardy – 2015 champion.

Only the top 45 and ties will gain access to the LPGA tour. And if you think playing eight competitive round over two weeks is tough, some of these women have already managed to get through Stage 1 in California with 240-plus players, with 100 advancing to Stage 2 played in Florida with 194 players, with the top 80 and ties coming to Pinehurst.

If you have a kid who thinks she wants to play on the LPGA Tour, she has to really want it. Those 240 players who started in California did so at their own expense. These were all top amateurs or women who had already been playing on other professional tours.

A rookie has to get through 16 rounds of excellent golf to even manage a provisional status on the LPGA tour. One has to respect that level of fortitude.

So, head out to the course to see the future of the LPGA tour. Maybe watching those graceful, powerful swings for a few hours will rub off on your game.

You can find the complete roster by stopping by Pinehurst No. 6 or checking the website <http://leaderboard.symetratour.com/public/QSLeaderboard.aspx>

I wish all their dreams could come true, but I confess, I'm wishing harder for the Carolina gals. I have been watching some of them for many years, starting with junior golf on into college. They are remarkable women and I wish them all the best.

If you want someone to root for, pick one or two or all of these; Lori Beth Adams (Burlington), Cydney Clayton (Concord), Katelyn Dambaugh (Charleston, S.C.), Allison Emrey (Charlotte), Kristy McPherson (Conway), Katherine Perry (Cary), Maia Schechter (Chapel Hill), Lauren Stephenson (Lexington, S.C.), who also played on the Curtis Cup, and Laura Wearn (Charlotte).

Don't forget your socks, jacket and hat. It's chilly out there.

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