



# RIGA *news*

Newsletter of the Rhode Island Golf Association

## A Major Championship Season



*That clinching feeling: Annika Sorenstam looks skyward after holding the final putt that sealed her play-off victory at Newport Country Club. Photo courtesy of Providence Journal/Bob Breidenbach.*

By Joe Sprague, Jr.

Even before the US Women's Open, 2006 was already a special golf year for me. I attended The Masters for the first time and went to Winged Foot for Wednesday's U.S. Open practice round. Both were meaningful to me for different reasons. I brought my father-in-law to The Masters where we had a great time. Augusta National – even with all my preconceived ideas about the place and years of watching it on TV – exceeded all expectations. The course is just magnificent, but there is an aura about the place that sets it apart - just pure golf, a shrine to the game.

I brought my mom to Winged Foot for the final practice round on Wednesday. She had been to The Masters with my dad in years past, and loved it, but had never been to a U.S. Open. We took

the train down, walked all 18 holes and watched the players trying to figure the course out. In some areas, traipsing through the rough was like walking through snowdrifts. "Welcome to the US Open," I said to my mom. We both had a snooze on the train ride home.

The week that follows the U.S. Open is always Northeast Amateur week. The RIGA has helped to run the tournament since its inception in 1962. The week started out with no problems and then the rain came on Friday night. It never stopped all weekend. For the first time ever we had to declare a 36-hole champion. Wannamoissett was under water and unplayable.

The same rain that derailed the Northeast Amateur was wreaking havoc at Newport Country Club as final preparations were underway for the U.S. Women's Open.

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Almost four inches of rain fell over the weekend forcing USGA officials to prohibit spectators for Monday's first practice round. It would be players and officials only.

### Next On The Tee

The USGA asked me to serve as a practice round starter, a job that I was really looking forward to. When I arrived at Newport on Monday it was strange to see only volunteers, officials and players. A major championship and the grandstands were empty. There wasn't much for me to do. I reported to the first tee and met some of the players as they teed off. I met Michelle

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# 2006 RIGA YEAR IN REVIEW

## 8th John P. Burke Memorial (Gross Division)

May 1-2, Newport CC/ Shelter Harbor GC

1. Tom Acciaro (Swansea CC)	34-35—69
Dan Mollicone (Quidnessett CC)	34-35—69
3. Tom McCormick (Kirkbrae CC)	36-36—72
4. Dr. George Pirie (Valley CC)	37-38—75
John Drohen (Alpine CC)	39-36—75
Dave Carvara (Montaup CC)	38-37—75
Gary McLane (Rhode Island CC)	40-35—75

## USGA Open (Local Qualifying)

May 18, North Kingstown GC

1. Kevin Silva (New Bedford, MA)	33-33—66
2. Todd Tremaglio (Wallingford, CT)	35-33—68
3. Brian Owens (Coventry, RI)	37-32—69
4. Ed Kirby (Wakefield, RI)	37-32—69
1st Alternate - Troy Pare (W. Warwick, RI)	37-33—70
2nd Alternate - Dave Tiedemann (Westerly, RI)	37-35—72



Dr. George Pirie, Senior Amateur Champion (Gross)



Mike Caprio (left) and Charlie Blanchard (right) at Mid-Amateur

## 13th Ed Perry Senior Four-Ball

May 22-23, Exeter CC

### (Gross Division)

1. Nick Cioe and Jacob Gaffey	68-69—137
2. Tom Goryl and Mark Forbes	67-71—138
Tom Acciaro and Dr. George Pirie	68-70—138
4. George Fowler and Scot Donahue	73-66—139
Paul Carney and Karl Augenstein	69-70—139

### (Net Division)

1. George Fowler and Scott Donahue	67-60—127
2. Paul Carney and Karl Augenstein	64-65—129
3. Ray Woishek and Bill Johnson	66-65—131

## 57th Four-Ball Championship

June 6-9, Cranston CC

1. Connor McMahon and Brad Valois	65-66—131
2. Rick Audette and Bob Fournier	67-65—132
3. Drew Harker and David McAndrew	68-66—134
Garrett Medeiros and David Sampson	64-70—134
5. Eugene DiSarro and Jason Pannone	66-69—135

## 45th Northeast Amateur Invitational

June 22-25, Wannamoisett CC

1. Carlton Forrester (Birmingham, AL)	67-65—132
2. Webb Simpson (Raleigh, NC)	68-66—134
3. Erik Olson (Newcastle, WA)	69-66—135
4. Jim Renner (Plainville, MA)	72-64—136
Zack Robinson (Fort Worth, TX)	72-64—136
Dan Woltman (Beaver Dam, WI)	68-68—136
Dustin Johnson (N. Myrtle Beach, SC)	71-65—136
David May (Auburn, NY)	67-69—137

(Event shortened to 36 holes due to inclement weather.)

## 101st Amateur Championship

July 10-14, Rhode Island CC

Medalist: Jason Pannone (69-68—137)

### Quarter Finals

David Marino (Kirkbrae CC) def.	
Jason Pannone (Potowomut GC)	2 and 1
Bob Fournier (Quidnessett CC) def.	
Charlie Blanchard (Wannamoisett CC)	1 up
Eugene Disarro (Metacomet CC) def.	
Dan Mollicone (Quidnessett CC)	1 up
Brad Valois (Valley CC) def.	
Drew Harker (Rhode Island CC)	3 and 2

### Semi Finals

Marino def. Fournier	6 and 5
Valois def. DiSarro	3 and 2

### Finals

Valois def. Marino (36 holes)	2 and 1
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## New England Amateur

July 18-20, The Woodlands Club (Falmouth, ME) Par 288

1. Brad Valois (RI)	74-68-71-74—287
2. Kevin Velardo (MA)	72-69-76-72—289
3. Jeffrey Hedden (CT)	76-74-71-73—294
Trevor Murphy (VT)	70-72-81-71—294
5. Joseph Alvarez (ME)	72-70-79-74—295
Bill Drohen (MA)	68-77-72-78—295

## USGA Amateur (Sectional Qualifying)

July 25, Potowomut GC

1. Ben Spitz (Norwell, MA)	68-68—136
2. Andrew Dodt (Australia)	71-68—139
Connor McMahon (Portsmouth, RI)	70-69—139*

\*Qualified in Playoff

## Father & Son

July 26-27, Crystal Lake GC

### Senior Division (Gross)

1. Peter Hallas and Stephen Hallas	70
2. Jim Squadrito and Daniel Petrocelli	72
3. Tom Acciaro and Bobby Acciaro	73
Mark and Russell Marcantonio	73

### Senior Division (Net)

1. Ray Keough, Sr. and Ray Keough, Jr.	62
2. Bob Duarte, Sr. and Bob Duarte, Jr.	63

### Junior Division (Gross)

1. Charles and Chuck Sullivan	74
2. Arthur and Andrew Fiorenzano	77
William and Alex Jestings	77
Michael Tullo III and Michael Tullo IV	77

### Junior Division (Net)

1. Bob and Matthew Corio	65
2. Charles and Chuck Sullivan	66
Doug and Oliver Martel	66



State Amateur Finalists  
Brad Valois (left) and  
David Marino



Scott Donahue (left) and  
George Fowler at Senior Four-Ball  
(Net Champions)





Scott W. Cooke

## Message from the President

For the past 11 years, the USGA has handed out the Joe Dey Award to the individual whose extraordinary volunteer service to the game of golf deserves special recognition. This award is one of the most prestigious in all of golf and it is named in honor

of Joseph Dey, a former executive director of the USGA and the first commissioner of the PGA Tour.

I am proud to announce that the recipient of 2007 Joe Dey Award is Massachusetts' own Harry McCracken. Harry is a member at the Charles River Country Club in Newton, MA and serves on committees with the Massachusetts Golf Association, the New England Golf Association, and the

United States Golf Association. For those who are involved in New England tournament golf, this should come as no surprise, as Harry has devoted over thirty five years to the game. The RIGA extends a warm, heart felt congratulations to Harry for winning this distinguished award.

Congratulations should also be given to Newport Country Club, its membership, the volunteers, the sponsors, and all the organizations that helped out at the 2006 U.S. Women's Open. Despite some inclement weather, the tournament was a tremendous success. For those who did not make it to Newport for the practice rounds, Bob Ward, Joe Sprague, and I were asked to serve as starters on both the 1st and 10th tees. It was a thrill to announce the groups and meet the players.

Finally, I would like to thank Joe, Bob, and Kate and my fellow committee members for another outstanding year of tournament golf in Rhode Island. I wish you all a joyous and healthy holiday season, and hope that we will see you in the spring. |

# Brad Faxon Receives First John P. Burke Award

Brad Faxon received the first John P. Burke Award on August 21st at a dinner marking the 60th anniversary of the John P. Burke Memorial Fund. The purpose of the Burke Award is to honor an individual or organization that has reached extraordinary levels of achievement while helping others through golf.

The dinner was held at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick and raised more than \$250,00 through individual and corporate donations. All the funds raised went to establishing an endowed Burke Fund Scholarship in Brad's name.

"Brad has demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the game's tradition of charitable support," said Bill Tracey, the Fund's president. "He exhibits the true meaning of the John P. Burke Award with his example of leadership and integrity both on and off the golf course, as evidenced in his involvement with many charity causes including the CVS Charity Classic, the Billy Andrade/Brad Faxon Charities for Children and the Brad Faxon Junior Golf Foundation."

In addition to the work he has done for numerous charities, Brad was also recognized for his outstanding career on the golf course which includes eight PGA Tour victories, one international win at the Australian Open and two appearances on the U.S. Ryder Cup Team. As an amateur Brad was a member of the U.S. Walker Cup Team and named NCAA Player of the Year in 1983 while playing for Furman University. Brad received the Payne Stewart Award in 2005, one of the highest honors the PGA Tour bestows on one of its own.

Closer to home he was a two-time winner of both the RI and New England Amateur Championships as well as a three-time RI Junior Amateur Champion. Brad won his sole RI Open title in 1985, the same title that John P. Burke won as an amateur in 1936 and 1938.



Brad Faxon poses with Joe Burke, twin brother of John P. Burke. Joe Burke spent 18 seasons as head pro at Newport Country Club.

More than 600 people came to the August 21st dinner to honor Brad including Governor Don Carcieri who gave Brad a special commendation from the State of Rhode Island. Others honoring Brad included Acushnet Company Chairman and CEO, Wally Uihlein and Rev. Joseph Lennon, O.P. The evening's Master of Ceremonies was former television anchor and RIGA tournament player, Jim King. Event organizers included Burke Fund Executive Director, Maury Davitt and Dinner Chairman, Ken McNaught.

The Burke Fund was founded in 1946 to honor the memory of one of the state's best golfers, Newport's Johnny Burke who was killed in World War II. Originally begun as a college scholarship fund for caddies from RIGA member clubs, the Fund expanded in the 1980's to include grounds crew and pro shop workers at the clubs. More than 900 students have received more than \$2 million dollar in scholarship aid over the years. |

Wie who teed off alone with her caddie. I felt badly for all the people who had put so much work into this one week. I felt worst of all for Newport's golf course superintendent, Bob Reynolds. After one of the wettest springs on record – 13 inches of rain fell between May 1 and June 6 – Bob and the crew had gotten the course in great condition for the championship. Many other superintendents from the RI Golf Course Superintendents Association had signed on to volunteer for the week. But now it was all about pumping water off the golf course, getting the course playable. The Newport Fire Department had been summoned with their hoses and pumps to assist in the effort.

The 17th and 18th fairways (holes 8 and 9 for the championship) were almost completely underwater. Amazingly Bob, the crew and all their extra help pumped off most of the water. The course was opened Tuesday for spectators. It was going to be muddy, but things were starting to dry out. When I arrived at the course around 6:30 a.m. I went to the USGA trailer and picked up my radio and starter's sheet. Players are required to sign up ahead of time for practice rounds and the starter announces each player just before she tees off.

I watch women's golf on TV, but not as often as I watch the men. I had checked the Women's Open web site leading up to the event to see the list of players. Knowing I was going to have to announce names like Stacy Prammanasudh, Virada Nirapathpongporn, Shi Hyun Ahn and Kyeong Eun Bae was giving me a little bit of stress. I knew I could handle Meg Mallon and Julie Inkster, but these others I wasn't so sure. Bob Ward, RIGA Director of Rules and Competitions, and Scott Cooke, RIGA President, were also acting as starters. We had joked about messing up the names in the weeks leading up, so knowing they were going to be struggling, too, gave me a small measure of comfort.

Fortunately all three of us survived. The USGA did not kick us off the property and we kept the name-mangling to a minimum. I actually had a great time with it, and the players couldn't have been nicer. And some of the best players were also the most personable. Lorena Ochoa, Julie Inkster and Se Ri

Pak were all very friendly and chatty before teeing off. I'm not so sure it would have been the same with the guys at the U.S. Open.

I was prepared for my official duties to end on Wednesday. I'd planned to head back to the RIGA office, get ready for the upcoming State Amateur at RICC and maybe come back to watch some golf on the weekend. I was shocked when a USGA official came up to me on Tuesday and said, "Would you like to serve as a walking Rules official on Thursday and Friday?" It didn't take me long to answer, "yes."

I attended the Rules meeting back at the Viking Hotel on Wednesday night. Mike Davis, the USGA Official in Charge, gave last minute instructions along with other USGA staff and committee members. That's also when I found out what groups I'd be walking with. I was going to be the second official with each group, what is known as the Official Observer whose main duties are to assist the lead Rules official in the group and walk ahead to spot tee shots on certain holes. I wasn't required to actually make rulings so the pressure was off.

### "Hi, I'm Annika"

Robin Elbardowil, the Executive Director of the Colorado Women's Golf Association, was going to be the lead official in my group for the first round. I was pleased because Robin is someone who I knew from various national meetings, and I'm sure we'd have a good time. We both did a double-take when we saw our names next to our group. I checked it three times. It wasn't a mistake. We would be with Annika Sorenstam, Natalie Gulbis and Ai Miyazato. We looked at each other and said, "Wow."

Robin checked the back of the sheet. "Did you see who you're with for the second round?" She showed me the sheet. "You've got to be kidding me," I said out loud. Next to my name was Michelle Wie, Suzann Pettersen and Brittany Lang. If I wasn't nervous before I was nervous now.

Thursday was disappointing for everyone. With the fog that never blew out there was no golf played. The first round would be pushed back to Friday.

I arrived at the course hours before my 1:25 starting time. I picked up my radio and Rules material, had lunch and met Robin on the first tee. The grand stands had been packed for hours in anticipation of the world's best woman golfer. There was a huge ovation when she emerged from under the ropes. "Hi, I'm Annika", she said as she extended her hand for a polite handshake. That was the last thing she'd say to me all day. Not unfriendly, just all business. Natalie was more talkative. If there was a wait in the fairway she'd engage Robin or me in conversation.

Annika was focused from her first swing. She hit the ball beautifully off the tee and her irons were Hogan-esque in their precision. She shot a two under-par 69 and it's the highest score she could have shot. She was never in danger of making a bogey, and all her birdies were kick-ins. Natalie (76) and Ai Miyazato (74) each had their struggles. There were no significant Rules questions so Robin and I had a fantastic day.

For Saturday's second round my tee time was 7:55 a.m. I had my clothes laid out the night before and got up at 4:30 to make sure I wasn't late. I arrived in plenty of time, picked up my gear and headed to the 10th tee where the people were lined two hundred yards down the fairway and five deep. I could feel my adrenaline kick in. The lead official was Martha Lang, a long-time USGA Committee member from Alabama. She gave Michelle a hug hello and exchanged pleasantries. They knew each other from other tournaments. I introduced myself and Michelle said, "Oh, hi!" recognizing me from the practice rounds.

A roar went up as Michelle was officially introduced. Her opening tee shot was not great, a low hook that found some tall grass. Shouts of "Go Michelle!" followed us as we walked down the fairway. Each hole was the same. Huge crowds that had camped out for hours to watch the teen prodigy screamed and yelled her name. It was all pretty cool to be a part of.

We had a couple of minor Rules situations and the group was basically going along fine. Then on the 7th hole (the

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club's 16th and the group's 16th of the day) Michelle pull-hooked her tee shot into the junk left of the lateral hazard. I happened to be in the right rough in the drive zone watching. I had a good line on the ball and immediately rushed over. NBC's Mark Rolfing was already there, microphone in hand, giving his commentary on live TV. A throng of people had circled the ball and I motioned for them to move back as I called back to Martha on the radio to say we'd found the ball. It was not in a good spot.

## Unplayable

State troopers who were part of Michelle's security detail tried to help move some people back. Other volunteers and spectators were in a panic because there was nowhere to go. It was jungle on one side and the brook on the other. When Michelle and her caddie arrived we had more or less secured the area. Martha, the lead official, gave Michelle her options and she ultimately took an unplayable. Even with her two club lengths it wasn't a bargain, but she was fortunate to draw a decent lie when she dropped. A gaggle of Asian photographers were about three feet from us and wouldn't move. Finally Michelle's caddie who was accustomed to such chaos screamed, "You people need to move now!!" They all scrambled, jumping the brook with cameras flying.

I was still only three feet away and thinking that Michelle could easily dump this into the water in front of the green or fly it over the green. All she did was hit an eight iron to ten feet and drain the putt, one of the most amazing pars I've ever seen. As we were walking down the fairway after all the pandemonium,

Martha said to me, "This is like walking around with a rock star." And she was right.

Michelle shot 72 and after two rounds was near the top of the leader board right behind Annika. I figured my dream week had ended, but not so fast. A USGA official approached me and said, "We might need you to walk with your own group on Sunday. Are you available?" Of course I was.

With Sunday comprising a grueling 36 holes for the players due to the fog day, I was assigned to my own group for the afternoon 18. Even though my group was not in contention I was pretty tense on the first tee. My group of three consisted of Dana Dormann, a two-time LPGA Tour winner who is now retired from the Tour; Beth Bader, five-year member of the LPGA Tour; and Amy Hung, LPGA Tour rookie from Taiwan who had won 10 events on the Japan LPGA Tour.

All three players were very friendly, especially Dana Dormann who had her husband caddying for her. I settled down after a couple of holes. Amy Hung had the best round, a 72 that vaulted her to a T24 finish. I could hear the roars from other parts of the course as the players in contention battled down the stretch. More importantly for me, no Rules controversies. It was getting to be dusk by the time I turned in my radio back at the USGA trailer. Annika was whisked past me in a cart to an awaiting car, no doubt already focusing for Monday's play-off. I watched Annika win the next day, this time while in front of a TV. What a week it had been – hectic, nerve wracking, fun. In the end, just pure golf.

WWW.RIGALINKS.ORG  
(401) 272-1350  
Providence, RI 02909  
One Button Hole Drive

RHODE ISLAND GOLF ASSOCIATION

