

Looking back and looking ahead

BY CARR MCCALLA

As we mentioned last month, this month's column will review the last four events of the 2006 LGA season and preview the 2007 schedule. We think you'll be excited with the venues that we've been able to acquire in 2007 and hope you'll mark your calendars now and plan to be with us at as many events as your schedule will allow.

2006 CHAMPIONSHIP SCHEDULE RECAP (CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH)

Mother Nature tried her hardest to become the default winner of our 4-Ball Championship, this year held at Ellendale Country Club in Houma in mid July. Jeff Calloway of Baton Rouge teamed with New Iberia's Kenley Jones to shoot a 9-under-par 63 on Saturday and take a one-shot lead over Covington's Tommy Brennan and Baton Rouge's Gayle Sanchez. On Sunday, the skies opened up at 8:30 a.m. and we weren't able to resume play until almost 2 p.m. The course held up wonderfully after the significant rain-fall that morning and the team of Gavin Johnson of New Orleans and Brett Casey of Houma made a tremendous run, shooting a 63 of their own to tie Calloway and Jones at 14-under-par 130 over 36 holes. Another sudden death playoff (the third in our first five events of the year) saw Jones, Calloway, and Casey just miss birdie putts on the first playoff hole before Johnson ran in a 12-footer for the win.

The University Club of Baton Rouge hosted our Mid-Amateur Championship the first weekend of August and was in immaculate condition for this Championship for our 25 years of age and older players. Our hard luck runner-up from this year's Amateur Championship, Tommy Brennan, fired a 6-under 66 the first day and a 5-under 67 on Saturday to distance himself somewhat from the field. Garrett Prather of Baton Rouge, our 2004 Amateur Champion, in his first year of eligibility for this championship, was in second alone after an even-par 72 and a 6-under 66 in his first two rounds. He started Sunday five shots in arrears of Brennan. Mother Nature again created havoc, as we weren't able to complete Friday's round until Saturday morning, nor Saturday's round until Sunday morning. After completion of the second round around 9:45 a.m. Sunday, we made the cut and re-paired for the final round, with the first groups going off both No. 1 and No. 10 at 10:30 a.m. Not surprisingly, the rains came again on Sunday afternoon. Play was suspended with the leaders having completed eight holes. Once play resumed after a two hour delay, Brennan promptly bogeyed Nos. 9 and 10 to get back to even par on the day. Prather, playing in the final group with Brennan, got to 2-under par on the day, reducing Brennan's lead to three through 12 holes. After Prather hit his tee shot to the right of the green on the difficult par-3 13th, Brennan laced a 4-iron to two feet and made the birdie putt to give himself a bit of breathing room. All pars coming in for Prather and a meaningless bogey on No. 18 for Brennan gave Tommy his fifth Mid-Amateur Championship (he also won this Championship in 1995, 1996, 1997, and 2005) and second in a row.

Two weeks later we were at Lafayette's Oakbourne Country

Club for our 17th Senior Amateur Championship. No less than six former Champions representing 10 titles were in the field at this wonderful venue that was hosting this Championship for the top 50 years of age and older players for the first time ever. Todd Lusk (1994, 1996, and 1997), Van Lee (1995), Jim Lipe (1999 and 2001), Frank Brame (2002 and 2005), Eddie Lyons (2003), and Darrel Benoit (2005) were all on hand to try and capture yet another crown. Hot weather dominated the week but fortunately the rains stayed away until after the final round was completed on Saturday. Former Champion Eddie Lyons of Shreveport, Sid Harp of Donaldsonville, and Lafayette's John Davis, a two-time LGA Mid-Am Champion playing in only his second Senior Am, shared the first round lead with 2-under-par 70s. After a second-round 71, Lyons took the lead alone through 36 holes, with Davis and Monroe's Doug Farr in close pursuit at one stroke back. Those three composed the final grouping on Saturday, with Davis shooting 37 and Lyons 38 on the front to tie for the lead heading into the back nine. Davis skirted disaster by sinking a 10 foot putt for bogey on No. 10, then eagled the short par-5 11th to wrest the lead from Lyons. A double-bogey five on No. 15 caused Lyons to fall two more shots behind. Playing two groups ahead of Davis, Oakbourne member Dennis Smith was quietly putting together the best round of the day, playing his last 12 holes in 3-under par to shoot a one-under 71 for the day. After Smith lipped out his birdie attempt on the tough 457-yard par-4 finishing hole, Davis was able to make a conservative bogey on No.

18 to take the title by one shot over Smith and two clear of Lyons. Our Age Group Championships were won by Eugene Hartenstine of Denham Springs (70 and over), Corky Yates of Pineville (65-69 years old) and Todd Lusk of Baton Rouge (60-64). The Oakbourne track was, as is always the case, in wonderful condition and thoroughly enjoyed by all the competitors. The last weekend in August saw Beaver Creek Golf Course in Zachary host our youngest LGA event, the Net Amateur and Net Club Team Championships. Conducted for the first time in 2000, this event was initiated to give our higher-handicap players an opportunity to compete in a true LGA Championship event and has continued to grow since that first event seven years ago. Randy Indovina from Baton Rouge broke through after consecutive runner-up finishes in 2005 and 2006 to take the title, but not before having to go three extra holes to fend off Jerry LeBus of Mandeville in a three-hole cumulative score playoff. Both finished at net 2-under-par 142. Tommy Parker of West Monroe and Julius Courville and Ricky Norwood of Lake Charles finished tied for third one shot back of Indovina and LeBus. Courville and Norwood anchored the Pine Shadows team from Lake Charles that took home the Net Club Team Championship by nine shots over defending Net Club Team Champion Calvert Crossing of Calhoun.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SANTONE AND NOTO

Cody Santone, the 2006 LGA Junior Amateur Champion, and runner-up Andrew Noto of Luling finished 26th in the 2006 International Junior 4-Ball Invitational at The Golf Club at Savannah Harbor in Savannah, Ga. They finished one-under-par



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