

Gittleman to go for amateur title

By John Raby
staff writer

West Bloomfield golfer Jim Gittleman knows the meaning of the phrase "so close and yet so far." He learned it last year when he finished as runner-up at the Michigan Amateur Golf Championship.

Now, he's got a chance to find out the meaning of another motto — "It's nice to be on top."

Starting tomorrow, Gittleman, will challenge defending champion Bill McDonald (Royal Oak) and 382 qualifiers for the 71st Amateur Michigan Golf Championship. The Belding and Antrim Delts Country Clubs near Charlevoix will be tournament host.

McDonald and Gittleman, 38, are not strangers on the links.

Three weeks ago during the Michigan Public Links Play Championships at the Detroit Golf Club, Gittleman was paired with McDonald on the final round of play with the Royal Oak native leading. But Gittleman earned sweet revenge when he passed McDonald on the 15th hole to win the tourney by three shots.

Gittleman is patiently waiting to be the aggressor again tomorrow in the Michigan Amateur.

"I had played so little golf prior to the tournament last year that when I qualified it came as a big surprise," Gittleman said. "When I got through the first day of match play and to the

Sweet 16 party (for the remaining players), it was a bigger surprise. And after I had gotten through the second day of matches, I was in shellshock.

"THAT SATURDAY morning in the semifinals I had a magnificent match with one of the younger players, Jake Pilot. We tied 14 straight holes. Finally, I birdied the par-five 15th and went on to win."

"Then I went in against Bill," Gittleman continued. "Quite frankly, I was so thrilled just to get to the finals from not even expecting to qualify. Everything else was sort of secondary. Now since that time, I think much differently toward it. I'm wishing that I could have hitched up the pants one more time."

Gittleman realized he had to improve on his driving and putting game in order to give the Amateur another shot.

So far, his extra work seems to have paid off. In addition to his Public Link win, he finished second in the Horton-Smith Memorial at the Detroit Golf Club.

This will be the eighth year over a 21-year span which Gittleman has played in the Amateur. He's seen the competition improve greatly but not the turnover of quality players.

"Putting our two cumulative ages together (74), last year's final was probably the oldest final I've seen in 20 years," Gittleman said. "Right now — except for a one or two players who have to prove themselves — we don't have any really good young players like Dan Pohl (from Mount Pleasant who was runner-up in the 1982 Masters Tournament). So that makes for a weaker field than we run into."

THE TOURNAMENT itself will have two days of practice play, followed by qualifying rounds on Tuesday and Wednesday, in which the field must

be whittled down from the 384 participants to 63 qualifiers.

McDonald, because he won last year's match-play tourney, automatically qualifies for this year's championship.

The qualifying field will go through six rounds of 18-hole elimination play Thursday through Saturday until a winner is finally determined.

Although he has already beaten McDonald once this year, Gittleman

said that beating him — or anybody — is best done at the Michigan Amateur.

Absolutely. You can't win enough of the Public-type of tournaments to equal one Amateur title. That or the Michigan Open. "For us old guys, it's easy to keep the body in one piece," Gittleman said about the weeklong grind to the top. "It really helps if this isn't your first Amateur, no matter how good you are."

Fun run planned

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan and Oakland University will sponsor a Country Music Run and Walk Saturday July 31 at Oakland University in Rochester.

Starting the evening off will be a one-mile fun run at 5:30 p.m. At 5:45, a 3.1-mile run will start and at 5:50, a 3.1-mile walk will start. Then at 6:30, a 6.2-mile run will start.

The routes will cover the hilly grounds of Oakland University. From 7:30 p.m. until 10 there will be entertainment in the gymnasium with dancing to the sounds of Sneaky Pete.

Entry forms are available from Peggy Acton, Exercise Physiology Lab, Hollie Lepley Sports Center, Oakland University, Rochester 48063. No entries will be taken by telephone.

Fees are \$6.50 for the six- and three-mile runs; \$4.50 for the three-mile walk; \$3.50 for the one-mile run. All entry fees include a T-shirt. Profits will benefit Oakland University. All entry forms postmarked after July 24 must include \$1 over the regular fee and will not be guaranteed a T-shirt.

Showers and locker-room facilities will be available, and entrants are asked to provide their own lock. Park-

ing is available as marked, and people are urged to car pool.

• BASKETBALL CAMP

Detroit Pistons Center Kent Benson will be the special guest instructor at the Lake Norcross Basketball Camp July 25-30 and August 2-6 at Michigan Christian College in Rochester.

The camp is under the direction of Garth Pleasant and is open to any youngsters between the ages of 8 and 14.

The fee for the camp is \$70 with \$40 of that being a non-refundable registration fee. The camp will be limited to 30 youngsters.

For more information, contact Lake Norcross Basketball Camp, Michigan Christian College, Rochester 48063.

• CHARITY GAME

On June 27, when the Detroit Express plays the Chicago Sting at 7:30 p.m. at the Pontiac Silverdome, they also will be playing for kids with cystic fibrosis.

Tickets for the game can be purchased at discounted prices through the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Metropolitan Detroit Chapter, by phoning 552-9516. Adult tickets are \$4, and youth tickets are \$2.

Lacrosse camp set at St. Hugo's June 21-25

A lacrosse camp for children 10-15 will be held at the St. Hugo school in Bloomfield Hills beginning June 21 and running through June 25.

Ron Hebert, lacrosse coach at St. Hugo for the past two years, will be the

instructor. There is a \$25 fee for the camp, and those interested should bring their own stick.

For more information about the camp or if you would like to register, phone 548-9073, or 642-6151.

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