

# Club pros pump big money game

By Bill Parker  
staff writer

Michigan's club golf professionals — heavily restricted by their duties at the local country clubs — dream of playing "big bucks" tournaments.

Their day has arrived. It may not be the awesome cash rewards offered at prestigious tournaments like the British Open or PGA, but \$18,000 is still a stimulating stipend for the local club pro.

And that's exactly what will be up for grabs Sept. 12-14 in the Michigan Bell Showdown at the Grand Traverse Resort Village, located six miles northeast of Traverse City.

Only the winners of Michigan's Professional Golfers' Association four individual match-play tournaments qualify for The Showdown.

The tournament, to be held on the sparkling 85-acre Jack Nicklaus-designed course nicknamed The Bear, is a "skins" type format where players compete for designated cash dividends on each hole.

The lowest score per hole — or "skin" — will win the pre-determined amount of money. The first six holes, for instance, will be played for \$500 each. The second six will be played for \$1,000 each and the final six will pay \$1,500 per hole.

"Could you imagine a coming down to the last hole and having an \$18,000 putt? That would be incredible," said Jeff Roth, head pro at the Birmingham Country Club and a Plymouth Salem graduate.

LOCAL PROS agree the 18-hole Showdown, which will be televised on major network affiliates throughout Michigan and in Toledo, Ohio, will be a big plus for the Michigan PGA.

It not only will give the Michigan PGA some needed exposure, but will shed some limelight on the often overshadowed local pro. And Michigan's club pros generally welcome the "skins" game with open pocket books.

But there is a mixed bag of feelings regarding the tournament site.

"Grand Traverse is a very, very nice place but I think the media attention would have been much better in the Metro Detroit area," said John Traub, head pro at the Great Oaks Country Club in Rochester and winner of the 1980 national Club Pro Championship.

"The Bear is a great course for a skin game," he said. "It's usually a very good shape and it's a very tough course. It's just not the best location to me. I'd be really surprised if they get a big gallery up there."

John Molenda, head pro at the Knollwood Country Club in West Bloomfield, also was skeptical about the Grand Traverse Resort course.

"I'm excited about the tournament. It's a great idea. I'm just not sure about The Bear at this time of year," said Molenda. "It gets a little cold up there in September. It's good

for golf but I don't think they'll get a good draw up there because it's so far from Metro Detroit."

The tournament's four participants will be the winners of the Michigan Open, The Yamaha Classic, The Hall Industries Michigan PGA Championship and the Michigan PGA Match Play.

TIM MATTHEWS of the Pine View Country Club in Three Rivers and Buddy Whitten of the Blythfield Country Club in Belmont, have already qualified by winning the Michigan Open and the Yamaha Classic, respectively.

The Michigan PGA Championship was held at the Indianwood Country Club in Lake Orion this week. The season's final qualifier will be the Michigan Michigan Match Play scheduled for the Tecumseh Country Club Sept. 8-11.

In the qualifying tournaments some of the golfers may feel added pressure down the stretch, especially if the competition is close.

"Coming into the finishing holes in the qualifying tournament, you're going to think about that skins game," said Ken Allard, head pro at the Katke-Cousins Golf Course at Oakland University.

"You start thinking about qualifying, lose your concentration, get a couple of bogeys and that's it," he said. "No skins and no money."

The Bear itself is a Scottish-influenced stadium course featuring elevated fairways, terraced greens and deep bunkers. Most of the holes are surrounded by some type of hazard.

It's the type of course that demands accuracy off the green," Molenda said. "It's a links type of a course with lots of mounds, ravinings and varying elevations. It's definitely an exciting course. I see pars winning some of the skins."

Qualifying or not, you can bet most of the local pros will be anxiously awaiting the outcome of The Showdown, the first skins tournament on the Michigan circuit.

"I'll be tuned in one way or another," said Allard. "If I'm not up there playing I'll have it tuned in on the TV, and I'll watch the action from down here."



Plymouth Salem graduate Jeff Roth likes the idea of a skins game for local club golf professionals.

## Men's golf tournament

sponsors: O&E/Whispering Willows

Men's 36-hole medal play: Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 13-14. Entry fee is \$32. Handicap maximum is 36.

Entries close at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 6. Shotgun start on Saturday, Sunday mornings. For pairings and starting times, call 476-4493 after noon Thursday, Sept. 11. Rain make-up dates — Sept. 20-21.

name .....  
address ..... (city) .....  
telephone ..... handicap .....

Send entry blank with check (not cash) payable to tournament director Gary Whitener, Whispering Willows, 20500 Newburgh, Livonia 48152.

Pairings will be made by the tournament committee. No requests for individual pairings will be taken. No changes will be made.

Open to all residents of Livonia, Plymouth, Canton, Garden City, Westland, Redford Township, Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Lathrup Village, Birmingham, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Township, Bloomfield Hills, Troy, Rochester and Avon Township. U.S.G.A. handicap or six 18-hole score cards are required.

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Registration is being held for those interested in participating in the Fifth Annual Rochester Apple Amble Five-mile Road Run and Two-mile Family Fun Walk.

The events are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 13 with the run beginning at 8:30 a.m. and the walk at 9 a.m.

Trophies will be presented to top male and female runners and special awards given to select walkers.

Cost for registration of the road run is \$7 per person through Sept. 5 and \$9 on race day. Cost for registration of the fun walk is \$4 per person.

Entry procedures include checks payable to Oakland University and mailed to Rochester Apple Amble, Oakland University, Lepley Sports Center, Rochester, Mich. 48063.

The event is sponsored by the Oakland University Greater Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rochester Arts Commission.

### OPEN HOUSE SET

The Oakland Live Y's swim team of the Rochester YMCA will be hosting an open house 1-4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 7, in the lobby of the Lepley Sports Center at Oakland University.

For further information, call Jan Gibson at 651-1657 or Ann Lowe at 651-2651.

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