

# Latest golf products showcased

By Brad Emons  
staff writer

**G**OLF'S VERSION of the Auto Show will right in Observerland's own backyard — Friday through Sunday, March 9-11 at Schoolcraft Community College in Livonia.

The Golf Manufacturers Expo, one of the nation's largest consumer shows, features 70 of the world's best-known companies displaying their latest 1990 lines in apparel and equipment.

Cosponsors for the show are the Michigan Golf Manufacturers' Reps Association, radio station WJR (760 AM) and the Observer and Evening Newspapers.

## 'Big Cat' hits the long ball with the best

By Jim Toth  
staff writer

**D**ISTANCE, distance and more distance. That is what Evan "Big Cat" Williams is all about with a golf club in his hands.

The two-time national long driving champion and Rochester resident will surely make his presence known at the 1990 Golf Manufacturers Expo to be held March 9-11 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. After all, the nickname "Big Cat" has real meaning since Williams stands 6-foot-6 and weighs tops the 200-pound mark.

"Actually, it has been a great nickname because it goes along with long driving," explained Williams, who said he was tagged with the nickname following a scuffle he had while a member of the Canisius College men's basketball team in the late '60s. "Later that night, Cassius Clay knocked out Cleveland 'Big Cat' Williams for the world heavyweight title and I guess that kind of tells how I fared also. It stuck and it's kind of nice because it's got that macho ring to it like heavyweight boxing and long driving."

Promoting the sport of golf is nothing new to Williams. The much-traveled guru of golf has visited more than 44 states and made stops in 26 countries, explaining how and why he has mastered the art of distance.

"I LOVE WHAT I do," beamed Williams, a native of New Jersey, who with wife, Susan, and their two children, moved to Rochester five years ago. "I put in about 100 days out of the year of actual work and enjoy it very much because I'm doing it in a fun environment."

Williams, a 1971 graduate of Franklin College of Indiana, won the National Long Driving Championship in 1976 and 1977. In winning the 1976 title,

In addition the Expo will feature exhibits from regional and national golf resorts, tournaments, golf schools, and other golf related products and services. (See page 4 for complete listings of booths.)

Among the special features for the Golf Manufacturers Expo will be appearances by noted PGA teaching professionals as part of a seminar series throughout the weekend. The public will be invited to ask questions and learn more about the finer points of the game.

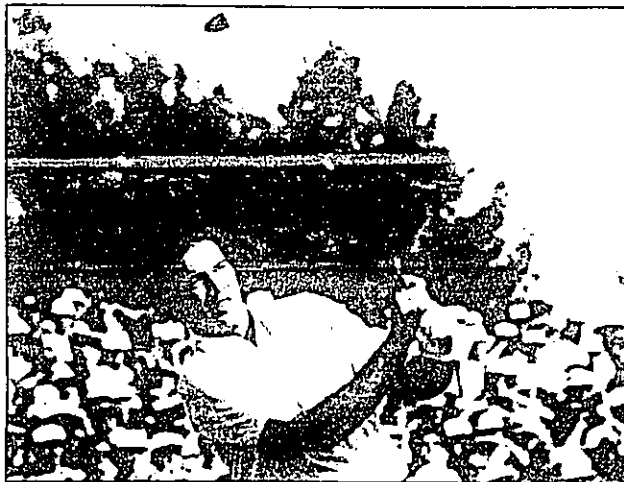
THE SEMINAR will also feature some influential individuals in the areas of golf equipment design, golf course architecture and physical conditioning.

As added attraction, a charity golf auction will be conducted to benefit the American Lung Association.

The silent auction, the first of its kind will feature golf equipment, golf vacation packages, opportunities to play with local celebrities, and golf memorabilia from the greatest names in the game.

Expo coordinator, Rex Goddley, a 1972 Plymouth High grad, expects a crowd upwards of 40,000 for the three-day event.

Goddley, chief organizer of the AAA Michigan Open and the Michigan Bell Skins Challenge, is currently director of Sportsmark Inc., a Bloomfield Hills-based national marketing firm.



Evan 'Big Cat' Williams, a resident of Rochester, will be talking about hitting the long ball this weekend at the Golf Manufacturers Expo.

Williams smashed the ball 307 yards. He came back the following year with a 353-yard effort.

Williams also has the Bermuda Long Driving Championship (1978) and the Australian Long Driving Championship (1979) to his credit. His best effort off the tee was a 496-yard shot in Thailand in 1977.

With all the excitement generated by distance, Williams is quick to point out the rest of his game isn't too shabby either.

"I feel I'm a pretty good player," said Williams, who holds a trio of athletic records at Franklin, including a 76-yard punt and the single-game rebounding mark (27). "You can't hit a golf ball a long way without good fundamentals. I don't think a lot of times I'm given enough credit for the player I am. I always had the talent. I just had to cultivate it."

WILLIAMS HELD a PGA touring card for a brief period in 1975, but said he found more enjoyment in competing in long driving competitions and conducting clinics.

"Back in 1974 I knew I had something a little bit different," Williams

said. "You always seem to fall back on your own niche and that was mine."

"I always try and make my clinics as entertaining as possible," Williams continued. "I tell stories and hit fun shots and try and give every type of player something to take home. I want to give something to the beginner, a little more to the average player, and maybe that one key element to the advanced player's game."

Two of Williams' most interesting moments involve driving a golf ball through a 450-page phone book and smacking a ball hidden in an empty golf ball box some 250 yards down the fairway.

"You pick up something from players that have preceded you," Williams said of his clinic artillery. "You learn a little something from other people and then create yourself."

Williams, who plays out at Garland in Lewiston, Mich., is currently pushing the Pinnacle line of products, saying, "the ball may be one of the biggest advancements in the game."

"It may not be so noticeable to the average golfer, but it has made a great difference," Williams said.

SHOW TIMES for the event are 4 to 9 p.m. Friday, March 9; 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, March 10; and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, March 11.

Tickets for the Golf Manufacturers Expo are available at the door for \$5. (Children under 12 are free.)

Schoolcraft College is easily accessible, located on Haggerty between Seven and Seven Mile roads. The school is adjacent to I-75, just north of the 30 and 31st interchange.

The College offers over 20,000 square feet of show space, 120 booths, an auditorium for lectures, and an auxiliary hall that can provide additional 2,500 square feet of usable space.

There are also 400 lighted parking spaces on site.

## Seminars target you

Nathaniel Crosby, the son of the late Bing Crosby, will be one of 10 featured guests this weekend at the 1990 Golf Manufacturers Expo held at Schoolcraft College.

The public will be able to meet the experts and ask questions at four seminars scheduled to run Friday through Sunday.

Each of the four seminars will feature a nationally known individual from the areas of golf instruction, golf equipment design, golf course architecture and physical conditioning.

Among the speakers will be Jerry and Bruce Matthews and Bill Newcombe, all of whom are known as architects of golf courses throughout the country. Evan "Big Cat" Williams, of Rochester, who has twice won the national long-drive competition. Rick Smith, a top golf instructor in Michigan; Randy Erskine, the five-time AAA Michigan Open Champion; Eddie Langert, president of Langert Golf, one of golf's hottest new companies; Dr. Lewis Smith, sports psychologist; and Tom Platz, former Mr. Universe, and currently president of PrStyle Inc., which develops weight training programs for golfers. (See related stories).

CROSBY'S FATHER Bing was more well-known, perhaps, for the impact he made in Hollywood, but Nathaniel also brings an impressive background to the Expo.

The 28-year-old native of Los Angeles, Calif., was the U.S. Amateur champion in 1981 and turned professional in 1984. A 1984 graduate of the University of Miami (Fla.), Crosby placed third at the 1985 Portuguese Open.

Since 1988, Crosby has carried the title of president of the Toney Penna Golf Co., located in Jupiter, Fla.

The first seminar is scheduled for 6 p.m. Friday at Schoolcraft. Two seminars, at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., will be held Saturday, followed by a 2 p.m. seminar Sunday.