



# Trans-Miss Transcript

*Serving Golf for More than 100 Years*

[www.trans-miss.com](http://www.trans-miss.com)

## Long-awaited return **Wakonda Club welcomes Trans-Miss a fourth time**



# One of Iowa's best

*Cont'd on page 4*

# Greetings

## Dear Trans-Miss Members and Supporters,

■ I have been given the honor and responsibility of serving as president of the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association and its Turf Scholarship Fund. To my fellow directors I convey my thanks for their vote of confidence.



■ I hope to bring the same level of commitment and enthusiasm to the role as did my predecessor, Jack Clevenger. Our championship players always comment on how the Trans gets such great venues for events. Well, you can thank Jack Clevenger for his ability to dream big and make a convincing request! Jack has had a 10-year plan to obtain premier sites and keep them in a

rotation that benefits both the association and the host clubs. Fortunately for me and the players, Jack will continue to serve as our site chairman. Jack also knows that the growth of our turf scholarship fund and awards needs active support from our directors. Through his urging several fund-raising events are being done by members of our board of directors. Jack, thank you for your tireless efforts to keep the Trans-Miss on the golf map!

■ With our place secure on the national golf map, the new goal of our board of directors is to significantly enhance the level and breadth of our financial support to young men and women pursuing college degrees in turf science and management. A college education even at state-funded universities has become a very expensive venture. We need quality graduates from our turfgrass degree programs and our financial support will help.

■ Over the next two years we plan to conduct a capital campaign and increase the pool of our annual awards by 200%. Our directors have all committed to financially supporting this goal and your contribution will be equally appreciated. Also, we plan to personally contact our past scholars and member clubs to bring them back to the cause through promotion and membership. And, of course, there are dozens of golf clubs throughout the country that would support our efforts if they just knew about them. So we will be inviting them to join in as well.

■ While our sights are set on these long-term goals, our first step will be to increase the total dollar amount of turfgrass scholarships in 2008 to \$90,000; an increase of 65%. This will be good news to 40 future scholarship recipients at our 20 universities.

■ I look forward to serving as your president and please let me or our staff know how we can assist you in accomplishing the goals of the Trans-Miss.

Warmest regards,

*Hank Wilkinson*

Hank Wilkinson, President  
Trans-Mississippi Golf Association



# On the right track

## Trans-Miss scholarship winner gets back in the race



■ For Trans-Mississippi scholarship winner **Landon Messal**, learning that life is a marathon and not a sprint has been a valuable lesson. That realization has him lean and mean, and back on track for a career in golf course management. One that he hopes can lead to a spot managing

a top 100 course and maybe even some “major” golf moments somewhere down the road.

■ “Winning the Trans-Miss scholarship is quite an honor,” Messal said recently by cell phone as he huffed his way across the University of Tennessee campus in Knoxville. “It’s really the final stepping stone in my quest of going back to school. Taking a couple years off to figure things out is not that bad a thing to do.”

### Back to school

■ Messal was a promising student and student body president at De Smet Jesuit High in St. Louis in the late 1990s. A 3.95 GPA had him on his way to a mechanical engineering degree at the University of Tennessee. But as is the case for many an 18-year-old, things went off track.

■ In his Trans-Miss scholarship application, Messal called it “A lack of discipline prevalent in 18-year-olds, coupled with family problems.” A nearly perfect student in high school was suddenly barely surviving academically at UT. Later he hit rock bottom when he discovered he’d improperly withdrawn from school and had received four F grades, further crippling an already sub-par GPA.

■ That’s when Messal headed west. He enrolled at a California community college and began work for superintendent Javier Martinez at

Recreation Park Golf Course in Long Beach. During the next three years his life found purpose. He quit smoking, shed 60 pounds, got healthy and got interested in triathlons.

■ “As devastating as it was, I am thankful, as the next three years brought change, health, maturity, discipline, confidence, direction, drive and an overall sense of wellness” Messal wrote in his application. Taking the knowledge he’d received from Martinez, Messal moved down the road to El Dorado Golf Course in Long Beach and worked under Eddy Grattini.

■ “He’s really the one who helped me out a lot and explained the machines,” Messal recalls. And Messal discovered a passion for the work.

■ “What set this in stone for me was being outside, not in an office as I would be as an engineer,” Messal admits. “Oddly enough, I enjoyed the hard labor, being able to see the fruits of your labor at the end of the day.”

### Back at Rocky Top

■ With a new frame of mind and sense of purpose, the 27-year-old Messal has thrived upon his return to the University of Tennessee. Studying in the school’s turf program, he achieved a 3.45 GPA in the fall of 2006 and topped that with a 3.87 last fall. He started a triathlon club at the school and got involved in the University of Tennessee Turf Club. Recently, he became the turf club’s president. Last year the club attended the GCSAA’s Conference and Show and participated in the turf bowl for the first time.

■ “Landon has really elevated our turf program to a new level,” says Dr. John Sorochan, associate professor for turfgrass science and management at the University of Tennessee. “The turf club has regular meetings now and he really takes charge... he has excellent leadership skills.”



# A great test

■ The fireworks from Fourth of July will continue this year in central Iowa well into the following week as the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association returns to storied Wakonda Club in Des Moines. The association's 105th championship will be contested July 7-13 at the private club that takes its name from an Indian word roughly meaning "God's power."

■ The course has hosted major USGA events and some of the game's greatest players during its 86-year history. The Trans-Miss will be played here for a fourth time, but for the first time since the mid-'50s.

■ "All of our history and championships are based in amateur golf and the Trans-Miss is a key event. We feel it's been way too long and we're honored to have it (back)," says Dave Schneider, Wakonda's director of golf/general manager. "One of the things about our course is it's a great test of golf. You'll use every club in your bag. With our undulating greens and fairways, it's not necessarily a case where the longest hitter will win."

## One of Iowa's best

■ Playing to a par of 72, Wakonda's 6,900 yards will challenge Trans-Miss participants as one of Iowa's and the Midwest's best. The course hosted the 2007 Western Junior Amateur Championship to rave reviews, according to head professional Ryan Rinnels. Rinnels says the course's various elevation changes in the fairways make it play longer than it reads on the card.

■ Oak tree-lined Wakonda underwent renovation work which was completed just prior

to Rinnels' arrival in 2001.

Bunkers were added and work was done to tees and green surrounds on six or seven holes.

The course has bentgrass/poa greens and fairways, and bentgrass tees. Its Kentucky bluegrass/fescue rough reaches about 2 - 1/2 inches in the summer time and can provide some challenging lies, Rinnels says. Water comes into play on just a few holes, including a pond fronting the course's signature par-3 17th.

■ "A good ball striker should do well," Rinnels predicts for the Trans-Miss Championships at Wakonda. "And our greens will be hard and fast, so you need a good short game."

■ One thing to watch for, especially during one of their qualifying stroke-play rounds, will be how competitors get going.

Rinnels calls Wakonda's three-hole start "as tough as anywhere." The first is a 430-yard, par 4 from the back tees that doglegs left. The second shot is uphill to a hard green. The second hole is a "sneaky" par 3 that has two different greens. The shorter is postage stamp sized and the longer of the two is heavily bunkered. The third hole is another longish par 4, playing against a south wind typically. Tee shots that aren't long enough leave a difficult stance on the second shot.

■ "Probably the first three, even the first four holes are about as demanding a start as you'll ever see... Wakonda has to be at the top of the list," says Mike McCoy, a Wakonda member who won the 1995 Iowa Amateur Championship at the course and won the 2000 Trans-Miss Championship at White Bear Yacht Club in White Bear

Lake, Minn. "Wakonda is a classic golf course that really sits on a piece of ground and doesn't feel manufactured. It has more typographic changes than you'd think of in the state of Iowa.

There are some blind shots that make it different and fun - it's not necessarily all right there in front of you."

■ Wakonda's back nine starts with a 440-yard, par 4. The tee shot is uphill to a narrow fairway with rough and trees in play. The par-5 14th plays to about 200 yards to a multi-tiered green that slopes from left to right.

■ Miss the correct tier with your tee shot and you're facing a three-putt. The club's signature 17th hole is a 185-yard par 3 with a pond in front of the green and simply "a great looking hole," according to Rinnels. Wakonda should provide a stiff test of golf with subtle breaks to its greens and wind that usually affects play on most holes, even for a talented Trans-Miss field making a long-awaited return.

■ "We're very excited, our staff is looking forward to putting on a great show," Rinnels said.

■ Trans last arrived in '55  
The Wakonda Club has played its part in the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association's rich championship history. But it's been a while. The club first hosted the Trans-Miss in 1928, it returned seven years later and last hosted

# t of golf

the association's match play championship in 1955,

■ In the 1928 event, Ottumwa, Iowa's Art Bartlett defeated Bryan Winter in the final match. In 1935, Omaha's John Goodman was the champion, defeating John Dawson the finals. Goodman gained notoriety as the only amateur since the great Bobby Jones to win a U.S. Open.

■ In the 1955 championship, James Jackson of St. Louis knocked off Rex Baxter Jr. of Amarillo, Texas, 2 and 1 in the finals. Jackson reached the title match when he drained a 25-foot putt on the 18th hole of his semifinal match against Orrie Goens. Goens, an accomplished player, served as Wakonda course superintendent from 1968-1985. His fine work in that position at the club earned him a lifetime membership upon retirement.

■ The Wakonda Club has been the host for several key golf championships over the years. In 1963, the USGA chose Wakonda for its Amateur Championship. Included in the field were several leading players who went on to PGA Tour fame, including George Archer, Charles Coe and Dave Stockton. But it was future longtime Tour commis-

sioner and British Amateur champion Dean Beaman who won the event. Beaman downed Archer 5 and 4 in the semifinals before defeating R.H. Sikes 2 and 1 in the 36-hole finals.

■ The club hosted the Big 10 championships as far back as 1923, the 1947 Western Amateur, the Iowa Amateur on several occasions and various benefits and key exhibition matches. Legendary players like Water Hagen, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Babe Dedriksen Zaharias strode its historical fairways over the years.

■ William Boice Langford, a member of three Yale championship golf teams, designed Wakonda. Langford, who founded his design firm in 1915, formed a partnership with Theodore J. Moreau and they designed more than 250 courses.

■ In Iowa, Langford, and Moreau designed Credit Island and Duck Creek Park Country Club in Davenport and Ellis Park Municipal in Cedar Rapids. The firm also designed Kansas City Country Club in Mission Hills, Kan., a frequent Trans Championship stop. Opened on July 4, 1922, the clubhouse and grounds at Wakonda were completed for right at \$650,000.



*“Probably the first three, even the first four holes are about as demanding a start as you’ll ever see...”*

*Wakonda's signature 17th hole*

He's been a pleasure to have as a student."

■ Messal had the opportunity to intern at Quaker Ridge Golf Club in Scarsdale, N.Y., last summer. The course had lost its greens the last two seasons and some of golf course management's heavy hitters were brought in to help. That got Messal experience working with the likes of Paul Latshaw Jr. of Muirfield Village Golf Club, home of The Memorial Tournament and annually one of the nation's best-maintained courses.

With his success, Messal has begun to look at things from a different perspective at Tennessee.

■ "Pushing 10 years as a student, I wanted to do something to leave my mark," he says.

■ So he decided to try and raise the \$25,000 needed to start an endowment for a turf scholarship at UT. He's been trying to get a benefit golf tournament off the ground and has already raised more than \$10,000 towards the project.

■ "This Turfgrass Scholarship will be the first of its kind at UT, something I and our club will surely be proud of. The endowment provides the perfect venue for alumni to donate to a program that helped propel their career," Messal wrote.

### The finish line

■ With girlfriend (read that fiancée' if "everything works out as planned" according to Messal) Carrie Blair, a soon-to-be doctor having taken a job at the College of Charleston, Landon says his future will probably begin along the east coast somewhere. Smart man... He says he'd like to return to the St. Louis area some time, but a job somewhere in the south working with warm-season grasses appeals to him.

■ "And I like the warm weather," he says.

■ But the most important think will be balance.

■ "Some day I'd like to manage a top 100 golf course," Messal says. "But you need balance in your family life."

■ And that will be the hard part. One of his goals, the Ironman Triathlon, requires as much as 30 hours or more of training in swimming, biking and running each week. It's a sport Messal takes very seriously. In April, he co-founded the Southeastern Collegiate Triathlon Conference in Athens, Ga., along with representatives from universities of Georgia, Georgia State, Furman, Alabama and Clemson.

■ Recent drought conditions in that part of the world lead Messal back to thoughts of his chosen profession and what challenges golf course managers may face over the next 10 years.

■ "I think water conservation is peaking," says the two-year GCSAA member. "Really, conservation in total...advances in our chemistries so we put less down on the course. The next 10 to 15 years golf course management is going to be even more green-friendly.

"Educating the public is really the best way to promote the profession. We're getting to the point where the majority of golf course superintendents have two- or four-year degrees and they're better equipped to educate the public."

## 2007-08 Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholars

Oklahoma State University	Colby Jesse Johnson Samuel Taylor	
The Ohio State University	John Gruneisen Edward John Nangle	Jack Nicklaus Turf Scholarship Jack Nicklaus Turf Scholarship
South Dakota State University	Phillip J. Wohlers	
University of Minnesota	Christian Michael Dunn Charles Joseph Fischer Stephen J. Cox	Francis M. Whittaker Memorial Turf Scholarship Francis M. Whittaker Memorial Turf Scholarship Francis M. Whittaker Memorial Turf Scholarship
Oregon State University	Chad D. Kosel Russell C. Deboodt	
Utah State University	Kurt Nielsen	
Iowa State University	Shane R. Brockhoff Bradley Johnson	
The University of Arizona	Jaime Bannelos	
Purdue University	Adam Moeller Nick Gressley	James W. Vickers Turf Scholarship James W. Vickers Turf Scholarship
Kansas State University	Jonathan Bennett Zachary R. Lee	
Michigan State University	Paul Giordano Richard Goltowski Christopher J. Parsons Dominic Cercone Brandon Bordner Michael Gerard Donovan, Jr.	Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship
The University of Tennessee	J. Landon Messal	
University of Nebraska - Lincoln	Casey J. Wegner Peter Allen Schmidt	
Lake City Community College	Philip Soukup Justin Pawlicki	
California State Polytechnic University - Pomona	Nicholas T. Hanson Marvin D. Seaman	
University of Missouri - Columbia	Andrew Cox	
Texas A&M University	Charles Fontanier Cortland Alan Winkle Travis R. Ellis Alex Hayden Seth Thomas Riley Maxey	J. Curtis Ford Memorial Turf Scholarship
Colorado State University	David John Skiles David Bond	
Mississippi State University	Joseph Nelson	
The Pennsylvania State University	Bradley G. Allen Chris H. Bouwers Todd G. Brown	Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship
Louisiana State University	Lee Keim	

*Since the Trans-Miss Scholarship Fund granted a \$600 scholarship in 1953 to Colorado State University (then Colorado A&M), the Trans-Mississippi has become a national leader in assisting young men and women who are pursuing careers in turf management.*

*Significant grants are provided to young men and women at 18 universities. Funds for the scholarships come from tournament proceeds, member club dues and contributions by individuals and corporations as well as interest from the association's Endowment Fund.*

*If you would like to receive more information on the scholarship program or to apply for scholarships, send an email to: [golf@trans-miss.com](mailto:golf@trans-miss.com)*

# TMGA NEWS

## Deane Beman, former PGA Tour Commissioner, will be our guest at Wakonda

■ Mike McCoy, 2008 Tournament Chairman for the Trans-Mississippi Championship, and the Wakonda Club of Des Moines, Iowa recently secured the acceptance of their joint invitation to Deane Beman to attend the championship and be honored for his contributions to golf and commemorate his winning of the 1963 United State Amateur Championship played at Wakonda.

■ Mr. Beman was one of the most influential people in the world of golf during the twentieth century. As an amateur and a professional, he was one of the nation's best players over two decades. From 1974 to 1994 he served as the Commissioner of the PGA Tour, succeeding Joe Dey. He is a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, class of 2000, a facility that was built under his inspiration and guidance. The Senior PGA Tour (now known as the Champions Tour) and the Ben Hogan Tour (now known as the Nationwide Tour) were both started under his administration. Beman won a Trans-Miss title in 1960 at Wichita Country Club by defeating Jackie Cupit after having finished runner-up in 1959 to Jack Nicklaus at Woodhill Country Club.

■ To see Mr. Beman's profile at the World Golf Hall of Fame, see [www.wgv.com](http://www.wgv.com).

## Hank Wilkinson becomes new Trans president and welcomes new directors

■ The Trans-Miss board of directors held its annual spring meeting on March 8th at La Jolla Country Club and elected **Hank Wilkinson** as its president. He has been a member of the Trans-Miss board of directors since 1994 and has served in an officer capacity for several years. The Edina, Minnesota resident and member of The Minikahda Club will emphasize the growth of the association's membership and assets in order to enhance the number and amount of turf scholarship awards provided by the association.

■ Newly elected as treasurer was **Dorsey Lynch** of Paradise Valley, Arizona. First time elections to the Trans-Miss board of directors were **Kevin Kobalter** of San Rafael, California and **Tim Andersen** of Chaska, Minnesota. Kobalter is a member of The Meadow Club and is a past champion of the Trans-Miss Four-Ball. Andersen is a member of Hazeltine National Golf Club and a frequent Trans-Miss participant.

## Trans-Miss board votes to increase scholarships

■ During its discussions at the annual spring meeting the Trans-Miss board of directors unanimously voted to increase the level of scholarships annually awarded by the association to turf grass students around the country. Commencing with 2008, the awards will total \$90,000, an increase of \$44,000. There will be 20 scholarships of \$3,000 and 20 scholarships of \$1,500. In addition, the board set as its five-year goal to increase the total amount of annual awards to \$150,000. In so doing, the Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund continues its position as the largest donor of turf grass scholarships in the country.

*Entries are now being accepted for the 2008 Trans-Mississippi Championship to be held at Wakonda Club, July 7-13. Entry forms may be printed from the Trans-Miss website ([www.trans-miss.com](http://www.trans-miss.com)). The entry deadline is June 18th. The match play championship has divisions for both mid-amateurs and seniors.*

