



# Trans-Miss Transcript

*Serving Golf for More than 100 Years*

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2009 Trans-Miss Match Play Championship

## **Top Golfers Finding Kansas is Land of Ahs**



Flint Hills  
**National**  
Golf Club

*Cont'd on page 3*

# Greetings

## Dear Trans-Miss Supporters,

■ In my financial industry occupation numbers and statistics are central to everything. They are the measure of opportunities, trends, gains or losses, forecasts and successes. I will grant you, everyone seems to be watching our nation's "numbers" very close these days!

■ Golf is a sport built on numbers too! While success playing the game depends on a "low" number, there are many aspects of the golf industry that depend on a "high" number for improvement and ultimate success. The Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund is no exception.

■ Here are some interesting "numbers" to know about the Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund:

- The first Trans-Miss turf scholarship was given 57 years ago in the amount of \$600. Probably a "full ride" stipend at that time. Today, depending on the university, a turfgrass student will pay 10 to 15 times that amount per year in tuition, fees and books.
- Trans-Miss turf scholarships range from \$1,500 to \$3,000 today.
- 42 students from 18 universities receive assistance each year.
- Five former Trans-Miss scholars are teaching faculty and turfgrass department heads.
- Over 800 men and women have received Trans-Miss turf scholarships since 1952. Over 300 of them are employed today in the golf industry.

■ In this issue of the Transcript you will see our list of 2008-09 Trans-Miss scholars, along with some of their comments. Also, you will read the compelling story about Steve Zaverl, a Michigan State student and Trans-Miss scholar. These future professionals have pledged to help the cause by planting the Trans-Miss heritage and growing new member club and golfer support in the years to come.

■ The Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund like any similar investment portfolio suffered some losses in 2008, but our professionally-managed accounts are holding strong and poised to take advantage of any economic recovery when it occurs. Most notably, the Fund continues to benefit from the generosity of our member clubs, players, directors and other supporters. 2008 was a very good year with just donations exceeding \$120,000.

■ As we look forward into 2009 and beyond I am appreciative of the support from our donors and

proud of my fellow directors for telling our story and recruiting others to the cause. The Trans-Miss is now studying ways to enhance our message and tell it even more effectively. We are about to "modernize" our brand and harness new technology to reach more golfers, clubs, turfgrass students and professionals.

■ In the meantime, I hope your golf "numbers" are declining while your continued interest in and support of the Trans-Miss is rising!

■ As always, "keep swinging", and I hope to see you at our next event!

Best regards,

*Hank Wilkinson*

Hank Wilkinson  
President  
Trans-Mississippi  
Golf Association



- Desolate landscape.
- Weather-beaten buildings on struggling family farms.
- A tornado on every spring horizon...
- Hollywood has taken calculated strides in painting the plains of Kansas as a less-than-desirable place to be.
- But discriminating golfers (and the associations that host key golf events) know better. So it is little surprise the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association calls on the Sunflower State for its annual match play championship for the fourth time in the last nine years as Andover's Flint Hills National Golf Club hosts the 106th edition of the event June 22-28.

- The course's lush turf and scenic beauty are in stark contrast of what you'd expect having watched "The Wizard of Oz" or any of those old films of the dust bowl era.
- "Most people who come here make the comment, 'I don't feel like I'm in Kansas,'" says Dave Henson, Flint Hills' director of golf. "You get on a particular hole on the golf course and really you can't see any of the other holes. (Then) with some of the vistas you get...you can just see forever."
- Barely entering its second decade, Flint Hills National has quickly developed into a leading Midwest golf destination. The private club near Wichita

played host to the Trans in 2003 after holding its first USGA championship, the 2001 U.S. Women's Amateur. The USGA quickly came calling again for one of its match-play championships and the U.S. Senior Amateur was contested at the course in the summer of 2007.

### *Course's teeth begin to show at No. 7*

- The "Emerald City" green you'll find at Flint Hills National is its generous zoysia fairways winding through the native blue stem and sand hills. Those fairways and the course's Cato

# Flint Hills National Golf Club

Crenshaw bentgrass greens are surrounded by lush bluegrass and protected by 66 strategically placed bunkers, which have undergone a renovation over the last few months.

■ “We just overhauled all of our bunkers...we’re just about ready to finish that program,” says Henson, 10 years the first assistant at Wichita’s Crestview Country Club before coming to Flint Hills. “We brought in some new sand from Ohio...it’s called Signature Sand. I think Southern Hills has it in their bunkers. A ball would hit in the face of our bunkers and plug instead of rolling back down into the bottom of the bunker...that was something we always fought. (With) this Ohio sand, the ball is able to hit into the face and roll back into the bottom.”

■ Henson says, typical to a Tom Fazio design, Flint Hills National’s first few holes allow the player to get his or her round off to a good start if they are striking the ball properly. At No. 7, the course begins to bite back and with wind, undulating putting surfaces and water, Flint Hills offers plenty of challenge, even for a field the quality of the 2009 Trans. Playing to a par of 71 at just less than 7,000 yards, the course’s 18 unique holes include water hazards on eight, according to Henson.

■ “There is no one hole that looks like any other,” Henson says. “Nos. 1 through 6 give you a chance to feel good about the start of the round. The tough part of the course begins at No. 7...so seven through the remainder of the golf course is what people really consider challenging.”

### ***Building a Kansas golf destination***

■ When Rent-A-Center founder Tom Devlin spurned the idea of building his dream golf course in a more golf-centric locality, it became Kansas golf’s gain in general and the Wichita area’s in particular. According to Henson, Devlin chose not to build a course on a choice location near the coast or in the mountains and wanted to bring another top-

rated layout to south central Kansas. Devlin worked hard to convince elite golf course architect Tom Fazio that the property he’d chosen, just east of Wichita, could become the home to an elite facility.

■ “I remember him talking about going up in a helicopter and finding this piece of property,” Henson recalls. “(When he contacted Fazio) his first response was, ‘there is no ground in that part of the country worth me doing a golf course.’ But Tom, being persistent like he is, kept after (Fazio) and kept after him. Fazio looked at the topo maps and said ‘I’ll at least do you the favor of coming out and looking at the property.’ Once he walked the land, he said ‘You have a great piece of property here...let’s do something.’”

■ Fazio finally on board and his commitment to “real golf” at full steam, Devlin made the decision to get construction started as soon as possible. With club house, practice facility and all holes completed, the course opened in the summer of 1997.

■ Flint Hills National became Fazio’s second Kansas work, joining Hallbrook Country Club in the Kansas City suburb of Leawood. Original plans at Flint Hills called for golf-only on the one square mile of property. But there are now approximately 175 home sites near the course, though players seldom come into view of them as they work there way through their round.

### ***June brings best golf conditions***

■ Trans-Miss match play competitors catch a bit of a break this summer as the annual event is planned for June and that should help it avoid the Kansas heat typically found in July and August.

■ “We consider our best months of golf to be May, June, September and October,” Henson reports. “If there is a normal in Kansas, June you’re almost guaranteed great weather. We always have our biggest event, our member/guest, in June. We’ve moved it up to the first week in June and have

given the Trans what we consider the prime spot.”

■ As for strategy to be successful championship week, Henson says there is a little less of a premium on driving the ball at Flint Hills with its generous fairways.

■ “I would say, the closer you get to the greens, the more the challenge becomes,” says Henson, who played at Wichita State University with 2008 Trans-Miss champion Mike McCoy of West Des Moines, Iowa. “The guy that plays well here would be the one who is a good iron player hitting into the greens and he’s got to have a good short game. He’s got to have a variety of shots around the greens. Obviously (they’ve) got to be a good putter.”

■ Henson says you also have to be a “good thinker” to have success as you work your way around Flint Hills National, tabbed No. 49 on Golf Digest’s Top 100 in America list in 2007-08.

■ “You can get on this golf course after playing it a few times and feel like, ‘Hey, I can just overpower it’ and if you’re really on, you can do that a little bit,” he says. “But being a smart player really helps going around this course.”

### ***A championship week from early on***

■ When the USGA came to Kansas for its U.S. Women’s Amateur Championship in 2001, things were already hot at Flint Hills National. In fact, contestants faced temperatures above the century mark that entire July week. But the Kansas hospitality and the performance of the Flint Hills course overcame the heat and so impressed golf’s leading association, that the facility earned the 2007 U.S. Senior Amateur



Championship. The course has also been the site for several key state golf events.

■ “One thing with all of those events with people from out of state that come in, I think everybody has been pleasantly surprised with what’s here,” Henson says. “I think when they’re from L.A., or Minnesota or Florida or wherever they’re coming from for these big events, (Wichita) is not really on their radar. But once they come here and play, and they see the Midwest hospitality, how they’re treated in a lot of restaurants, they go away with a good feeling about the Midwest...”

■ Golf Retreats by Golf Digest, Flint Hills National boasts a 32-acre practice facility, one of the largest in the country, with extensive zoysia teeing areas. So Trans competitors will have more than ample room to work on their game during championship week.

■ “We’ve had to add teeing areas for the zoysia over the years for our members,” Henson says. “It’s unique. But it’s been a great facility.”

■ And if you have a little free time championship week and you have the right golf connections, you may want to check into a round at five-time Trans host Prairie Dunes Country Club. The Golf Digest Top 100 course, site of the 2002 U.S. Women’s Open and the 2006 Senior Open, is just a little more than an hour away in Hutchinson and offers another chance to experience high-quality golf in The Land of Oz.

A large, multi-story log cabin building with a prominent wooden structure and a balcony, likely a clubhouse or resort building. The building features a complex wooden truss system and a balcony with a railing. The scene is set during the day with natural light.

# Flint Hills National Golf Club

# Accident forces delay for Michigan State student

■ Some times life forces us to put the future on hold. A fall motorcycle accident has done just that for Michigan State University student Steve Zaverl. The Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholar suffered severe head trauma in the accident and is recovering in a Michigan care facility. But with determination and a positive outlook, the support of his family and the care he is receiving from medical professionals, Zaverl appears on the road to his recovery.

■ "Right now everything is just on hold," Steve's mother Janice Terry said recently. "We have hopes he'll be able to go back to school...it's just going to take time. Because each brain injury is different we don't know what to expect. There's no telling...it's going to take time."

## *A Sunday ride*

■ After playing in a weekend golf tournament last fall, Steve, 23, went for a motorcycle ride with his sister Dana and her husband before heading back to school.

■ "They were on a back road, and Steve was in the lead," Terry recounted. "They went around a corner, only doing 30 or 35 mph. There was some loose gravel on the road. He caught the gravel and was thrown off the bike."

■ Steve, who was wearing a full-face helmet at the time of the accident, was thrown into a marshy ditch. Dana, who has medical assistant training, was the first to reach him.

■ "He was responding to her and another person called the ambulance," Terry says. "They called for the helicopter because they could see there was head trauma. She called me and she called her dad. We met them at the hospital. They airlifted him to Spectrum (Hospital) in Grand Rapids."

■ Steve, who had suffered little other injury, did sustain a craniotomy with a subdural hemotoma. He spent 37 days in the Grand Rapids hospital, before moving to a nursing facility for 10 days. He then went to Mercy Rehabilitation for another 10 days and was released.

■ "He was home living with me for four days and then started running a fever," Terry says. "And we took him back to the ER and they found he had a brain abscess and he was back in the hospital for almost nine weeks."



■ After multiple brain surgeries, Steve is now at Heartland Health Care Center in Whitehall, Mich. Terry says Steve's spirits have remained "pretty good" throughout the ordeal.

■ "He basically has to start over from ground zero and re-learn everything," she says. "We really haven't gotten into (the future)."

## *Course work over baseball*

■ The youngest of three Zaverl children, Steve drew an early interest in agriculture lending a hand at his

grandparent's farm near Shelby, Mich.

■ "He was out there playing and working on the farm," Terry recalled. "They had cherries and asparagus."

■ Terry says Steve played Little League baseball and even tried football, but quickly gravitated to soccer and golf. At about the age of 12, Steve would go with his brother (Chris), sister and mom to Janice's aunt and uncle's driving range about 15 miles from home.

■ "I would go out there to help them out and take the kids with me," Terry says. (Steve) just started hitting balls and really liked it."

At 16, Steve wanted to begin working on a golf course. When he was cut from the baseball team that became possible and he went to work at Grand View Golf Course in New Era, Mich.

■ "I worked at the school and knew all the coaches," Terry says. "They were like, 'we want to make sure this is what Steve wants.' And he wanted to work instead of playing baseball."

■ Steve started as a cart boy since he was just 16. At the age of 18 and having graduated high school, he moved over to the maintenance side and began the regular upkeep work at the 18-hole public facility which features an "island green" on its signature hole.

■ "He was always hanging around with the maintenance guys and would help us change cups or do the little things," says 15-year Grand View superintendent Norm Talmadge. "He is a very hard worker...he just loved the work. That's why he went into turf management (at MSU). I kept teaching him more and more and he would tackle it. He wasn't afraid of anything. He's an all-around good kid...very dedicated. He's like a little brother to me."

## A Spartan in the Arizona sun

■ After a brief flirtation with a computer career and some classes at a nearby community college, Steve took some time away from school and kept working for Talmadge at the Grand View course.

■ “He also did odd jobs in the winter and worked for a jeep rental place out in Silver Lake sand dunes,” Terryn says. “He kept checking into different colleges and different programs. He really liked the golf course, so he applied at Michigan State and got in.”

■ Steve has flourished while in East Lansing. He had a 3.52 GPA in Michigan State’s highly regarded turf management program.

■ “He definitely had a fine first year...any time you have over 3.5 GPA in our turf program you have to be very dedicated because we ask

quite a bit of students from the start,” says Dr. John Rogers III, a professor in the MSU turf program.

■ “What impressed me about Steve was he is observant, not loud about it, but very determined. He typifies the kinds of students that come through Michigan State – highly driven, know what they want to do with their lives, highly focused.”

■ As part of the MSU program, Steve spent last summer serving as an intern at The Lodge at Ventana Canyon Golf & Racquet Club in Tucson, Ariz. There he worked for Director of Golf Maintenance Wally Dowe.

■ “Steve showed a tremendous amount of dedication and a desire to learn as much as possible,” Dowe says. “He was involved with our greens renovation this summer, which required working a tremendous amount of labor-intensive

hours. Steve proved to be extremely reliable and dependable throughout the summer.”

■ Dowe said the Spartan proved to be just that, “working the extra shift or staying the extra hour or two at the end of a long day to help finish the program.”

■ Steve was involved in installing drainage on greens, finding and locating existing drain tiles, installing irrigation pipe, wire and leads, as well as construction of bunkers during the Ventana renovation project, according to Dowe.

■ “Throughout the intern process Steve showed a strong desire to learn as much as possible through asking numerous questions, keeping a work journal and putting forth the time and effort that was needed,” Dowe said. “We certainly benefited from Steve selecting us as his internship choice.”

The Trans-Mississippi Turf Scholarship Fund is pleased to announce following the recipients of awards for the 2008-09 academic year:

University of Arizona

Kevin J. Malloy

California State Polytechnic University

Marvin Dumas Seaman

*Kent W. Kurtz Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Phillip Randall Cahoon

Colorado State University

Anthony R. Benes

David John Skiles

Steven A. Schommer

Iowa State University

Adam Hebbel

Ryan E. Madden

Kansas State University

Tanner J. Coble

Jeremiah Scott Stumpff

Lake City Community College

Philip Matthew Soukup

Robert Lee Mitchell

Michigan State University

Michael James Wallace

*Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Craig W. Ruhl

*Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship*

University of Minnesota

Joseph Thomas LeVoir

*Francis M. Whittaker Special Memorial*

*Turf Scholarship*

Brady Rutman

*Francis M. Whittaker Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Jason R. Lamers

*Francis M. Whittaker Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Mississippi State University

Ross Alan Overstreet

University of Missouri

Cory F. Gettemeier

University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Matthew A. Pedersen

Peter A. Schmidt

Ohio State University

Joseph Lachey

Jack Nicklaus Turf Scholarship

Matthew Jones

*Jack Nicklaus Turf Scholarship*

Oklahoma State University

Kenton Kline

Oregon State University

Joshua N. Lewis

Chris Robson

Pennsylvania State University

Dennis Hugill

*Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Dina G. Avvakumova

*Robert F. Vickers Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Jasmine Steinke

Purdue University

Nathan Fair

*James W. Vickers Turf Scholarship*

Nathan Herman

*James W. Vickers Turf Scholarship*

South Dakota State University

Jordan Loeks

University of Tennessee

Sean Elverd

Texas A&M University

Charles Robbins Jan

*J. Curtis Ford Memorial Turf Scholarship*

Cortland Alan Winkle

Alex Everett Hayden

Jeffrey Kuder

Cody Skarpa

Brandon Roberts

Utah State University

Jake Schneider

## Our Scholars Say “Thanks”

Dear Mr. Russell,

*I would like to thank you for granting me the Trans-Mississippi scholarship. I feel both honored and humbled to accept this wonderful award. I know that I worked hard throughout my tenure at Pennsylvania State University, but it is nice to be recognized for my efforts. This is a great accomplishment for me and it will help me as I enter into the golf industry.*

*As well, thank you for educating me about the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association. Now I understand the TMGA and the purpose of the organization. I will try my best to contribute in the future. I would like to see this association prosper and will help in any way that I can. It will be nice to see others benefit the way that I have.*

Sincerely, Jasmine Steinke

Pickering, Ontario

Dear Mr. Russell,

*I am writing to express my gratitude for the generous scholarship that I recently received from the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association. As a college student there are so many opportunities to pursue; and by receiving scholarship money I can spend more time exploring these. While I enjoy my current employment and find the work experience to be a valuable career advancement tool; I also believe in being involved in many other university activities. Because of the generous gifts of people such as you, I can dedicate more time to these activities.*

With much appreciation, Joseph Lachey  
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Mr. Russell,

*Thank you for choosing me as one of your Turfgrass Scholarship recipients from Iowa State University. It is an honor and a privilege to be recognized in such a way by the Trans-Mississippi. The scholarship will help me further my education in Turf Management and help to pay the high costs of out-of-state tuition.*

Sincerely, Ryan Madden

Ames, Iowa