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32nd Trans-Mississippi Four-Ball Championships

Elliott, McCoy Play Bandon Dunes Golf as It was Meant to Be



Mike McCoy

Gene Elliott



American Amateur Golf Who's Who

If you know anything about American amateur golf you know the names Mike McCoy and Gene Elliott. The Iowans have been a leading force in regional and national amateur events in this country for a long, long time.

So when the two finally teamed for the Iowa Golf Association's Four-Ball Championship earlier this year, not surprisingly, the two West Des Moines players were victorious.

The Trans-Mississippi Golf Association got an inkling of how successful they might be when the duo finished second in 2008, the last time its annual fall Four-Ball Championship was contested at Bandon Dunes Resort.

This time, Glen Oaks Country Club's Elliott and McCoy shot rounds of 69, 64 and 66 in mid-October at the top-rated Oregon resort's Bandon Dunes, Pacific Dunes and Old Macdonald courses respectively and their 15-under total of 199 was good enough for a three-shot victory.

"It's just a nice way to cap the year. It's a great way as golfers to give something back to the game. It's a special organization and a great tournament," said McCoy, a Trans director and two-time winner of the

Trans Match Play Championship, the last coming in 2008 at his home Wakonda Country Club in Des Moines. "...it's doing so much good as golfers give back to the game and support students who want to study agronomy and become superintendents. There are a lot of great people involved in the Trans all over the country. They're doing good work, raising money and finding good kids to give scholarships to."

Three oddly gorgeous days on the Oregon coast at stunning Bandon Dunes, playing with a long-time friend and taking home another championship trophy – not too bad for the 50-year-old Elliott.

"Mike and I have been friends for 35 years and we've played in some four-balls. We started the year out winning the (Iowa Golf Assoc. Four-Ball)," he said. "It was the first time we'd ever played together in it and we ended up winning it. So we started the year with a win and we're ending the year with a win. Just thrilling to be here with my good friend and this is a wonderful championship. I'm just really excited."

Back-nine birdie string seals win

Elliott and McCoy entered the third and final



To see over 100 action and scenic photos from Bandon Dunes, visit www.trans-miss.com and click on Photo Gallery under the Four-Ball story on the home page.

round of the 2012 Four-Ball tied at 10-under with Greg Cole of The Woodland, Texas, and Dennis Dachtler of Folsom, Calif. Cole and Dachtler had opened the championship with a 4-under 68 at Bandon Dunes and came back with 6-under 65 at gusty Pacific Dunes the second day.

Elliott's birdies from inside 10 feet at the par-4 third and par-5 sixth holes had offset the team's three-putt bogeys at the par-3 second in a front-side, 1-under 33. That left them three shots clear of Cole and Dachtler, who'd suffered three bogeys in an opening 36.

McCoy then made two key pars, the first coming with an 8-foot putt at the par-4 11th and the second coming on a fine up-and-down at the par-3 12th to keep his team at 11-under for the championship.

"It was hard...we just weren't making any birdies," said McCoy, 49 and in the insurance business. "I was glad I was there. He didn't need me too much today. But I did make a couple nice pars."

That set the stage for Elliott who would then go on a three-hole birdie string to get the team to 14-under-par for the tournament. That helped McCoy/Elliott maintain a three-shot margin over Dachtler and Cole, who'd gone a three-birdie streak of his own with some fine wedge play. Elliott rolled in a 10-footer at the par-4 14th, almost holed out his wedge third at the par-5 15th for a tap-in birdie and then drained a bomb from more than 40 feet across the 16th green.

"We didn't know what they were doing up in front of us," said Elliott, a business owner. "I birdied the par 4 up the hill then on the par 5 I hit it close. So we finally had a couple in a row. Then I made the long one on 16 and I thought that puts some distance between us and the guys we were playing with, not

only them, but any of the guys in front of us."

Cole, a small business owner playing out of The Club at Carlton Woods, helped take away some of the sting of a difficult opening nine holes the third round at Old Mac with consecutive wedges to a foot at the par-4 13th and 14th holes. He then reached the par-5 15th in two and two putted for yet another birdie to get him and Dachtler into red figures for the day.

"We didn't get out of the blocks very well today," said the 49-year-old Cole, who'd also stuffed a wedge to a foot at the par-5 sixth. "I think Pacific may be a harder course, but after today I don't know why I would say that. We weren't driving it well early and got some balls off the fairway that kind of wound up in some really tough lies. I got a little groove going (on the back nine) and I thought we'd press them a little and they responded really well."

Dachtler, a 54-year-old financial planner playing out of Rancho Murieta Country Club, holed a long, links-style putt from in front of the 10th green for birdie. Cole later birdied the par-4 home hole as the two finished the day at 2-under 69. Their 12-under 202 total was a shot better than Mark Mance of Whitefish, Mont., and San Francisco's Randy Haag. Mance and Haag had 66 the third day to go along with 68 at Bandon Dunes and a 69 at Pacific Dunes.

Three teams tied for fourth at 10-under 204, including Lawrence, Kan.'s Thomas Rainboldt and Topeka, Kan.'s Mark Elliott (70-70-64), Dallas's Andrew Lawson and Los Angeles's James Lawson (67-70-67), and Denver's Tom Krystyn and Plymouth, Mass.'s Al Martin (68-67-69).

Second day is moving day

Elliott got the team going the second day at Pacific



Dunes as he and McCoy shot 64 to move to the top of the leader board.

“Gene came out like a bull looking at a red cape yesterday,” McCoy said. “...Gene took over that second day and just played fantastic.”

They made seven birdies against no bogeys at the top-rated Pacific Dunes and went from three back to tied for the lead by day’s end.

“I told Mike on the practice green ‘I’ve got a lot of game today’ and I went out and made four birdies on the front and one birdie on the back,” Elliott said. “Mike made two birdies on the back so we shot 7-under yesterday.”

Making an adjustment to the links style of play at the Bandon Dunes courses was an easy one for the accomplished players.

“It’s just fantastic...such a wonderful place here in America that you don’t have to go across the pond to play a golf course like this,” McCoy said. “It’s a treasure in America for golfers to have a place this they come to. We were just so fortunate to get three great days. I promise you we’ll be back.”

And with no fewer than 10 birdies the last two rounds, Elliott was in his element.

“I love it...I’ve played in three British Amateurs. Like Mike said, coming over here is like going to Scotland,” he said. “I love this kind of golf. We don’t get much of it here in North America. To have an opportunity to play the Trans Four-Ball at a place like this, I’ll be there every time. And we lucked out on the weather because it can be raining sideways here.” McCoy and Elliott kept themselves in the championship the first day, shooting a 3-under 69.

“We bogeyed the first hole and we were just battling to put a respectable score up, which we did,” McCoy said. “We stayed in the tournament the first

day. We weren’t at our best but we hung around and then of course Gene took over the second day.”

As the eventual winners did, Cole and Dachtler made a big move during their second round played at Pacific Dunes. Each player had a pair of birdies in an opening-nine 33 and they added three more on the back en route to a 6-under 65.

“I think we played a good team game...Greg actually made more birdies,” said Dachtler, playing in his first Trans event. “I was able to make some pars when Greg was out of the hole and overall I think we played as a team. Every once in a while Greg had to (slap) me to get me going. But other than that it was pretty good.”

Cole, a veteran of two Trans championships playing in his first Four-Ball, eagled the par-5 ninth and Dachtler made three birdies during the team’s opening-round 69 at the Bandon Dunes course.

“Fantastic...it’s different golf than we’re used to playing and that’s what makes it fun,” said Cole. “If you can’t have fun out here you shouldn’t be playing golf.”

Longtime friends claim Senior Division at 17-under

It’s been a long time since Rick George and Paul Schlachter became good friends while attending Michigan State University in the late 60s and early 70s. They weren’t members of the Spartans’ golf team, but oh how their games have developed over the years since college.

Greenwood Village, Colo.’s George and Bridgeville, Pa.’s Schlachter teamed to win the Senior Division at the 2012 Trans Four-Ball at Bandon Dunes. The duo



had an opening-round 64 at Pacific Dunes and never trailed en route to a two-shot victory over Watsonville, Calif.'s Robert Cayton and Monterey, Calif.'s Casey Boyns, who joined them in the final group for the third round.

"To win a Trans-Miss championship is great," said the 60-year-old George, who saw his team shoot 67 on a gusty second day at Old Macdonald and finish with a 6-under 66 at Bandon Dunes to hold off the competition.

"I've known Paul for 40 years. To win the Trans at Bandon Dunes is something we'll remember forever."

It was a great second appearance in a Trans event for Schlachter. The last time he played in one in 2005 at Prairie Dunes, he was medalist and won one match before becoming ill with an infection that eventually sent him to the hospital the following week.

No illness this time and a trophy for the mantle after three rounds in the southwest Oregon sun.



Senior Champions Rick George (l) and Paul Schlachter (r)

"It was almost as good as it gets for the three days," said The Club at Nevillewood's Schlachter, 63 and a retired teacher. "You can run into anything in terms of weather. We only got 14 holes of our practice round in on Monday. But Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, it was a little cool in the morning but the afternoons were great. You got a little bit of the flavor of everything, particularly with the wind on Wednesday. It's a spec-

tacular setting. It was my second trip... To win the tournament on that golf course is something we'll always remember."

George and Schlachter parred the first seven holes the final day and found themselves tied with Boyns and Cayton as the latter squad had birdied three holes on the front side to overcome a double bogey at the par-5 third. But George and Schlachter made birdie at nos. 8 and 9 to get to 13-under for the championship.



After bogeying no. 10, they made birdie at the 11th and when Boyns and Cayton bogeyed no. 12, George and Schlachter would not be caught again. They then birdied four of their last six holes of the championship.

“We caught a little fire on the back nine, but those guys were tough,” recalled George, a retired mortgage banker whose home Castle Pines Golf Club will host the Trans Four-Ball in 2013. “They made some birdies on those holes too so we needed every one of them.”

Schlachter and George, a veteran of about a half-dozen Trans events including a second-place in a previous Four-Ball, made plenty of birdies the first day, shooting a 7-under 64 at Pacific Dunes to grab a one-shot lead over Trans Director Kip Colwell of Edina, Minn. and Minnetonka, Minn.’s Rick Soskin.

“We made 10 birdies the first day and that was offset with three bogeys,” Schlachter said. “That ended

up being a 64 and the first day was just a beautiful, sunny day with light breezes. And that was important to get off to a good start. The second round might have been even more important. We shot 67, but the wind was just howling over there at Old Macdonald. The scores that day were a good bit higher.”

Cayton and Boyns, who’d begun the event with a 68 at Pacific Dunes before sizzling to a 64 the second day at Old Macdonald, finished their day at Bandon Dunes with a 67. Their three-day total of 15-under 199 gave them solo second place by a single stroke. Reno, Nev.’s David Nelson and Reading, Pa.’s Chip Lutz made the biggest move in the Senior Division on the final day at Bandon Dunes. They turned in a stunning 11-under 61 and moved up to solo third place at 14-under 200. Nelson and Lutz, who turned in 68 and 71 the first two days, had six birdies on the front side and added five more in their bogey-free trip around Bandon Dunes. They’d made 10 birdies in



12 holes as they walked off the 16th green.

Coeur D'Alene, Idaho's Doug Potter and Colville, Wash.'s Kent Brown placed fourth in the Senior Division after 68-67-68—203.

Trans Director Denny Alexander and Pat Hare, both of Fort Worth, Texas, were the only Super Senior Division team to finish in red figures after their three rounds at Bandon Dunes. They had 71 at Pacific Dunes, 70 at Old Macdonald and 67 the final day at Bandon Dunes to total 6-under 208 and win the division by 13 shots.

Dallas's Gary Seaman and Woody Thames (73-74-74), and Laguna Niguel, Calif.'s Fred Pieracci and Graham Kemsley (69-76-76) tied for second at 221.



Super Senior Champions Denny Alexander (l) and Pat Hare (r)



For complete championship results, visit www.trans-miss.com and click on Results under the Four-Ball story on the home page.

Sutherland, Staff Maintain One of Four Bandon Dunes Gems

Trans Four-Ball teams get second look at top-rated Pacific Dunes

It is like picking your favorite three children of four.

When you travel to Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, site of the 2012 Trans-Mississippi Four-Ball Championship, golfers have their pick of four of the United States' best courses. So it was hard to go wrong when the facility's Bandon Dunes, Pacific Dunes and Old Macdonald courses were selected for the 32nd version of the organization's fall team event.

Each of the entries got to play those three stunning layouts, nestled along the southwestern Oregon coast and experience "golf as it was meant to be." And that entry included a round on the course rated 15th in America in 2011 by Golf Digest – Pacific Dunes.

The importance of preparing his course for an organization that helps young students interested in golf turf management was not lost on Jeff Sutherland, superintendent at the highly regarded Pacific Dunes layout.

"To have the opportunity to say 'Bandon Dunes Resort is helping support education of the future superintendents of the world' that's a big thing," said Sutherland, who earned a turf degree from Southwestern Oregon Community College.

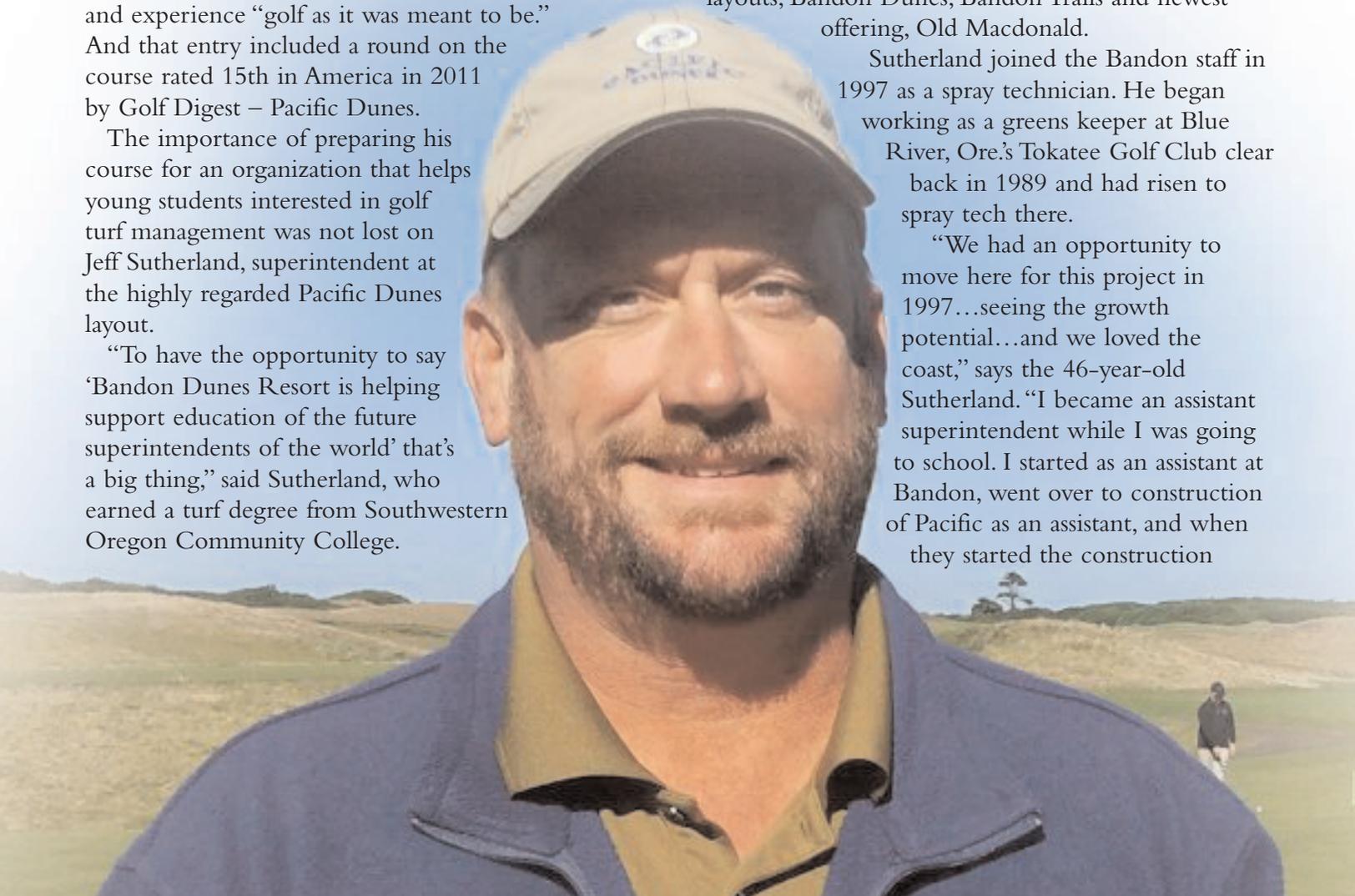
"We think highly of it. Similar to the Evans Scholarship, it really helps those kids get into college that normally couldn't. This helps kids get that education and have a goal to go for."

American seaside links

Golf Digest's Ron Whitten once said "Pacific Dunes...emerges as perhaps the last great meeting of sand and sea on American soil." Opened in 2001, the layout, which plays to a modest-by-today's-standards 6,633 yards from the tips, requires shot making that may not be required at the facility's other three layouts, Bandon Dunes, Bandon Trails and newest offering, Old Macdonald.

Sutherland joined the Bandon staff in 1997 as a spray technician. He began working as a greens keeper at Blue River, Ore.'s Tokatee Golf Club clear back in 1989 and had risen to spray tech there.

"We had an opportunity to move here for this project in 1997...seeing the growth potential...and we loved the coast," says the 46-year-old Sutherland. "I became an assistant superintendent while I was going to school. I started as an assistant at Bandon, went over to construction of Pacific as an assistant, and when they started the construction



of Bandon Trails (Bandon Dunes Director of Agronomy Ken Nice) went over there...I moved up as superintendent of Pacific.”

Sutherland is among a staff of 17 full-time employees who maintain the course which hosted the 2006 Curtis Cup, the Pacific Northwest Amateur and the 2008 Trans Four-Ball. That includes 12 greens keepers, two spray technicians and a mechanic exclusively for Pacific Dunes.

According to Sutherland, the course’s turf includes Colonial bentgrass and two or three different types of fescue on Tom Doak’s Scottish links design.

“Bandon started out a little bigger percentage on the Colonial than we did. We dropped down a little bit on the planting of Pacific,” he adds. “When we started out we planted the tees in creeping bentgrass. That soon converted to Poa.”

The course has 50 acres of maintained turf (90 if you count the rough which is mowed twice a year), 95 bunkers and no water hazards – other than the Pacific Ocean on holes 4, 11 and 13 along the coast.

“Only in the wintertime if we get a lot of rain we will get the wetland in front of (no. 7),” Sutherland adds.

Managing changing turf for playability

With its stunning vistas, moderate climate and tons of airflow, Sutherland calls Pacific Dunes “one of the best properties to have a chance to work.”

“We took barren land full of gorse and nothing and put a beautiful golf course on it where there’s

plenty of wildlife now,” he says. “It’s a great place to work, a great environment with great people to work with.

“With our sandy-based soil drainage issues are minimal. The grass types themselves are somewhat self-sustaining. We don’t have to use a lot of fertilizers, very little pesticides, fungicides are very low...those are very good, environmentally-safe things.”

The staff does face the challenge of managing the Poa.

“It’s a battle that’s hard to win,” he admits. “Each year we convert more into the Poa. But we’re always going to have that fescue mix...and we’re finding that it’s a good blend. We’re learning to live with it...we don’t have much of a choice. It’s going to happen.

“But it’s trying to make the playability even because you’re going to have different growth habits. Poa in the wintertime grows a whole lot more than your fescue. So to get that very playable surface can be difficult at times.”

As the Trans was conducted on his course, Sutherland stressed the importance of turf education as it goes hand in hand with on-course experience. “(Education) is very important, nowadays, with the new technologies, that are out there...we don’t see it all from here,” he says. “There are a lot of new studies with information that you will get from classes. It helps with the experience all together. You have that education, but yet you need that work background too.”



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Founded in 1901, TMGA is one of the oldest and most prestigious golf organizations in the United States. Through its Turf Scholarship Program, the association perpetuates the training of qualified young people to become responsible for any golf facility's greatest physical asset - the course itself.

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