

1st Annual Shooter McGavin Golf Classic – RECAP

July 24th-25th, 2010



The Legacy
Aberdeen, NC

Despite having contested the Ryder Cup for over 80 years, international golf took a step forward in quality and competitiveness this weekend in Aberdeen, NC at the 1st Annual Shooter McGavin Golf Classic. Two teams of five battled for the prestigious Shooter Cup in heat that historians have remarked “separated the men from the boys”. Team USA – led by captain Jason Casterline – arrived as underdogs by the international book makers but showed an intense team unity that would prove crucial in their battle against the favored Euros. The American team was rounded out by Steve Habicht, Jamie Casterline, Scott Butner and Will Stewart. Their opponents from across the pond were led by captain Rob Schabinger and included Jason Petty, Grey Davis, Dave Hedrick and Brandon Smith. Another twist for this year was the observer status for Dan Ferrell representing the Asia-Pacific region. All of the competitors were excited for his inclusion in the event but were wary of, as Bill Parcells once said, the potential for some “sneaky Jap plays”. Luckily Team Asia-Pacific represented himself admirably and will definitely be offered an invitation to participate again next year.



TEAM USA: (from left to right) Steve Habicht, Scott Butner, Jason Casterline, Will Stewart, Jamie Casterline



TEAM Euro: (from left to right) Dave Hedrick, Jason Petty, Rob Schabinger, Grey Davis, Brandon Smith

The format was simple: 2 days, 1 point available each day, winner determined by a chip-off, if tied. After weeks of debate and conversation on sports radio talk shows, the time had finally arrived to commence this epic battle.

DAY 1 – Modified Points Scoring System

Day 1 was a cumulative team scoring method rewarding the following points for each hole – to be totaled for the team to determine the Day 1 winner:

Eagle: 7 (why did we even bother to assign this value?)
Birdie: 5
Par: 3
Bogey: 1
Double Bogey: 0
Triple Bogey or worse: -1

The day began promptly at 12:04 with Jason Casterline, Jamie Casterline, Brandon Smith and Dan Ferrell teeing off in the first grouping. After seeing the initial foursome, many bystanders were asking if there was a 5'10" height limit on the tournament but that was not the case. They were followed by Rob Schabinger, Scott Butner and Steve Habicht at which time all squirrels and other forest-dwellers fled to seek shelter for their own safety. The final grouping was Dave Hedrick, Jason Petty, Will Stewart and Grey Davis. Several scientists were in attendance to observe the effects of playing golf in 100 degree heat and then drinking crap-tons of beer/liquor over the weekend so their attention was heavily skewed to this group.

At the end of the round, the team scores looked like this:

Team USA:

Jason Casterline: 94 (18 pts)
Jamie Casterline: 93(20 pts)
Steve Habicht: 90 (25 pts)
Scott Butner: 99 (13 pts)
Will Stewart: 103 (8 pts)

TOTAL: 84 points

Team Europe:

Rob Schabinger: 94 (17 pts)
Jason Petty: 92 (20 pts)
Grey Davis: 94 (20 pts)
Dave Hedrick: 98 (13 pts)
Brandon Smith: 106 (7 pts)

TOTAL: 77 points

With the impressive victory, Team USA took a 1 point lead and just needed 2 ½ points in the match play portion of the event to win the Shooter Cup.

Day 1 (evening)

After returning to the prestigious resort where the participants were staying (Comfort Inn), teams convened to establish the match-ups for tomorrow's match play competition. Before the teams could be sequestered to their own areas to strategize, there was an unfortunate incident. Jason Petty (of Team Euro) was unexpectedly "iced" by Team USA member Will Stewart. Many pundits find this type of gamesmanship unappealing but at the Shooter McGavin Golf Classic, it is highly encouraged. This theme would continue throughout dinner.



Being "iced" ... this is getting serious!

After strategizing and/or randomly selecting, the following matches were established (including handicaps based on toughest holes):

Group 1: USA – Jason Casterline
Vs.
Euro – Jason Petty (-2)

(With Dan Ferrell of Team Asia-Pacific acting as player-observer)

Group 2: USA – Will Stewart
Vs.
Euro – Rob Schabinger (-9)

Group 3: USA – Steve Habicht (-4)
Vs.
Euro – Grey Davis

Group 4: USA – Scott Butner
Vs.
Euro – Dave Hedrick (-1)

Group 5: USA – Jamie Casterline (-13)
Vs.
Euro – Brandon Smith

With the trash-talking in full force, all participants went to eat at the Hickory Tavern. The dinner began with Grey purchasing a jello shot for everyone after which Jason Casterline remarked, “this reminds me of high school. This time I hope the senior guys don’t take advantage of me ...”. At this point the \$10 buckets of Rolling Rock, Chocolate Cake Shots, Cosmos and drinks ending in –tini were flowing like water. After departing the restaurant, the new home base for liver damaging became Putter’s, the bar within the Comfort Inn (and yes, I did just type “bar within the Comfort Inn”). After more drinks, Dave throwing up in his mouth and Janice Casterline’s delicious cookies, everyone headed to bed and prepared for the grueling and deciding events of the morning.



The bar “Putter’s” will never be the same after this weekend ...

Day 2 – Match Play

As the teams prepared for the Match Play event to begin at 9:16, the positive sportsmanship vibe of the Shooter McGavin Golf Classic was on display as everyone joined in for a group picture. This is arguably one of the best collections of golf talent even assembled on a golf course – and that argument was made by anyone who ever played golf. Regardless, it was time to go and despite the starter talking everyone's ear off, we were ready to begin.



What a good looking collection of men ... and Dan Ferrell

The Casterline/Petty match was a real heavyweight and pretty even (with only 2 strokes being conceded by Petty). The concern for team Euro was that Petty may have left much of his game in the Comfort Inn trash can along with several gin & tonics, lots of beer and one rib-eye sandwich. Those concerns seemed to come to reality as Casterline defeated Petty 2 & 1 for the win for Team USA. Special recognition for Petty who

battled back from a 4 hole deficit to make it interesting but Casterline was just too much (this began a positive trend in the match play event for balding participants ...)

The second match out (Stewart/Schabinger) was a topic of debate the night before. The question was, "will the 9 shots help even the match?" The answer: a resounding yes. Rob played a sterling front nine of 40 (including 3 birdies) but was still down 1 hole to Will who was the epitome of steady golf and really made the scores he needed to in order to hold on to the lead. Both golfers faltered down the stretch but Will was able to maintain a lead (even burying a 50 foot, bogey-saving putt to halve the hole on #15). Ultimately, they arrived at #18 all square with Will getting a shot but would each have to settle for ½ points as they ended all square.

That group played with the Habicht/Grey pairing which probably held the record over the weekend for most jokes by Grey and most giggles from Steve. This match was extremely close all the way with no player ever holding more than a one hole lead until Steve won #17 with a par to take the win 2 & 1.

The fourth pairing was Butner/Dave and was almost a true toss up with Dave only surrendering one stroke to his opponent. I am not sure the details of the match as all I could see was the disgusting, sweaty shorts of Butner but this too turned out to be a real nail biter. Ultimately, the match finished with a result of all square and ½ points to each team.

The final match was Jamie/Brandon and had another big handicap with Brandon getting 13 shots from the diminutive Casterline. Again, the underdogs represented and Brandon was able to salvage a ½ point for Team Euro finishing all square. This handicap/match play set-up proved that the pairings were all very equal despite some disparity between the day 1 scores and really showed the mettle of those getting shots to scrap for points for their respective teams.

With the 3 ½ to 1 ½ win on Day 2, Team USA was able to secure the 1st Annual Shooter McGavin Golf Classic and team captain Jason Casterline will now be able to proudly display the Shooter Cup for one year. Kudos go out to all participants for a great event and a few decent shots. To be the inaugural participants of anything is an honor and I know everyone had a great time.



Team USA celebrating with the 1st Annual Shooter Cup

Individual Awards

There were a couple of individual awards up for grabs throughout the weekend. First, there was a cash reward for the closest-to-the-pin on every par 3 and the winners of this were Dan Farrell, Brandon Smith, Rob Schabinger (x2), Steve Habicht, Jason Petty, and Dave Hedrick (And yes, that is only 7 people – there was one par 3 that none of the 11 of us hit the green – yikes).

Another was the “You Spend More Time in the Sand Than David Hasselhoff” Rake for the player that had to take the most bunker shots. This award was designed by Jason Casterline and was eventually won by Jason Casterline. There was a lot of debate throughout the week as to whether Jason may have purposely won this award. Knowing his love for LA County lifeguards, cars that talk, and eating burgers while being hammered and posting it on YouTube, there may be some truth to those rumors.

The final, and most prestigious, award was the Gold Jacket.



Augusta National: eat your heart out!

This was presented to the player with the lowest 2 day stroke-play score. Steve Habicht (90) had a minimal lead going into the final day but was caught by a solid front nine and a scrambling back nine from Rob Schabinger. The following shows the top 5 in contention for the jacket:

1 -- Rob Schabinger:	94-85=179
2 -- Steve Habicht:	90-90=180
3 -- Jason Casterline:	94-88=182
4 -- Grey Davis:	94-92=186
T5 -- Jamie Casterline:	93-94=187
T5 -- Jason Petty:	92-95=187

Steve's chance for the jacket evaporated on #18 as he had a "Jean van de Velde-ian" triple bogey 7. When asked about his play on #18, he channeled his inner Mickelson and replied, "I am such an idiot".



Conclusion

The 1st Annual Shooter McGavin Golf Classic was such a success that plans for the 2011 version are already beginning. Please contact Rob Schabinger, Jason Casterline or Will Stewart if you are interested in getting in on all the fun.