

He said it

"Johnny Miller criticizes everything I do."

— Tiger Woods, when asked about Miller's suggestion that Woods needs to get rid of swing coach Hank Haney.



# GOLF EXTRA

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Sunday, May 16, 2010 — C4

## Course Spotlight

# Target practice



Photos by Richard Lord / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Hitting the fairway on the par-4 11th hole at Cranwell is challenging, as is the uphill second shot on one of the course's most difficult holes.

## Cranwell course requires accuracy, touch

By Richard Lord  
Berkshire Eagle Staff

LENOX — Only 6,204 yards from the back tees?

Don't let the scorecard for the Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club course fool you.

After all, it doesn't show the elevation changes and small targets that make approach shots a measure of one's judgment and skill.

Or the sloping fairways that can create uphill, downhill or sidehill lies to contend with.

Or the lightning-quick downhill putts on some greens that require a surgeon's touch.

"Surprisingly challenging" is the way Director of Golf and Head Professional David Strawn describes it. He should know — he's in his 18th year at Cranwell.

While the course will challenge anyone's skills, it's still enjoyable for all levels of golfers. It's not overly long, and it is a visual beauty.

"It's important to play the proper tees [for your skill level]," Strawn said of the course originally designed by the noted team of Wayne Stiles and John Van Kleek way back in 1926.

While the differences between the back tees and the others is less than at most courses, finding the right one gives players a better opportunity to reach the best places to approach the greens from on the par-4s and 5s.

And tee-shot placement is crucial considering you are hitting to relatively small and well-guarded greens that are in many cases well above the level of the fairways.

It's early in the season but the course, and especially the greens, are already in great shape. Much of the credit, says Strawn, goes to new greens superintendent Tony Moore, who was elevated from an assistant's role this year. Moore has been at Cranwell since 2006 and worked as an assistant at several other courses including New York's Bethpage State Park Black Course, host to the U.S. Open in 2002 and '09.

"The course is the best it has been since I have been here," Strawn said. "Tony's done an unbelievable job. There's more attention to detail, he's very organized and everything is very positive."

The old-school design gives golfers an opportunity to start well. The big early test doesn't come

### Cranwell at a glance

**Location:** 55 Lee Road, Route 20, Lenox. **Par:** 70 (men), 71 (women).

**Yardage (back/front tees):** 6,204/5104.

**Course rating:** 70.0 (m), 70.2 (w). **Phone:** (413) 637-2563. **Website:** www.cranwell.com

**Tee times:** Call pro shop. During peak season, times can be made five days in advance for the public. Members can book times three weeks in advance.

**Practice facility:** Driving range is open to the public. Cranwell also has a short-game practice area near the pro shop.

**Greens fees:** All include carts. Through May 29: Monday-Thursday, \$45; Friday-Sunday, \$48. May 29-June 13: Monday-Thursday, \$69; After 1 p.m., \$39; Juniors under 16, \$30; 9 holes, \$49. Friday-Sunday, \$79; After 1 p.m., \$45; Juniors under 16, \$30; 9 holes, \$55. June 14-Sept 6: Monday-Thursday, \$99; After 1 p.m., \$53; Juniors under 16, \$30. Friday-Sunday, \$104; After 1 p.m., \$53; Juniors under 16, \$30. Sept. 7-closing: Monday-Thursday, \$40; Friday-Sunday, \$48.

**Memberships:** Cranwell offers a wide range of annual memberships ranging from a full-couple price of \$3,275 to a junior membership for those under 18 of \$400. Check the club's website for a detailed breakdown.



After splitting the fairway on the tight par-4 ninth hole, Cranwell head professional David Strawn prepares to hit to the green.

until No. 5, a long, downhill par-3 — a daunting 233 yards from the back tees — that has plenty of trouble, especially left of the green.

The seventh hole, a dogleg left par-4, features a left-to-right sloping fairway and an uphill second shot that is a definite challenge. Miss it right and you have issues. The seventh green and eighth tee offer perhaps the best views of the Berkshires on the course.

After the short, downhill par-4 eighth that is a distinct birdie possibility, the real test begins.

Holes 9-13 are visually stunning and very testing as you enter a stretch where golfers can't see any hole but the one they are playing.

The par-4 ninth is demanding off the tee, with a left-to-right sloping fairway, out of bounds right and trees left. The longer the drive, the tighter the fairway. Avoid the trouble and you are still facing a tough uphill approach to a level green.

No. 10 is a classic risk-reward par-4. At only 273 yards from an elevated tee, the big hitters can try to drive the green but plenty of trouble lurks around an elevated putting surface. The smarter play for most is a long- or mid-iron tee shot, leaving a short, uphill second shot.

No. 11 is a par-4 that plays longer than the 390 yards it measures. Golfers are faced with an uphill second shot to a green that slopes wickedly from back to front. Go past the hole and you are left with an Augusta National-like knee-knocker of a putt.

The scorecard calls the par-3 12th one of its signature holes and for good reason. It's a beautiful downhill 202-yard par-3, well-guarded in front with bunkers. Like on 11, being above the hole is to be avoided.

No. 13 is a dogleg left par-4 that is easier if you can turn the ball right-to-left. The second shot is to another elevated putting surface surrounded by trouble.

Golfers can take a deep breath after that with two relatively short par-4s, a par-5 that isn't overly long and a solid par-3 leading up to the finishing hole.

No. 18 measures 392 yards, with the biggest challenge being a small green that creates some big breaking putts.

Given its condition and a special offer through May 28 — \$40 with a cart Monday-Thursday, \$48 Friday-Sunday — this is a perfect time to play Cranwell. Some are unaware that the resort course is

even open to the public, says Strawn, though he estimates local golfers make up 90 percent of players prior to June and 50 percent during the summer season.

"It's a great golf course and we want all the golfers in the county to experience it," Strawn said. "For those who haven't played it, we think they are missing something special."

While the daily rates are on the high side during the peak summer season, it should be noted that summer twilight rates — \$53 with a cart — kick in at 1 p.m., much earlier in the day than most courses offer twilight rates. And juniors under 16 get to play for \$30.

"The early twilight time gives people a chance to play golf and still have time to go to Tanglewood or to any of the other activities that are popular during summer nights in the Berkshires," Strawn said.

Cranwell also offers varied annual membership packages that include perks such as unlimited use of the driving range, discounts at Cranwell's restaurants and shops as well as access to the spa. A membership also gives members 50 percent off greens fees at the highly regarded Crumpin-Fox course in Bernardston.

# Wyantenuck, Stockbridge host tournaments

PITTSFIELD

Wyantenuck Country Club and Stockbridge Golf Club will both have strong fields for their first major tournaments of the new season on Friday.

At Great Barrington, 60 two-man teams will tee off in a 1 p.m. shotgun start in the club's Men's Golf Spring Open, a two-day, 36-hole best-ball event.

Nearby, the Stockbridge Classic, an individual event with 60-plus low handicap players, will tee off at the same time in a one-day, 18-hole low gross event.

"We have a good lineup of teams, with a lot of guys coming in from the Springfield, Hartford and Albany areas," Wyantenuck head professional Tom Sullivan said of his club's tourney.

Among possible title contenders, according to Sullivan, are the teams of Jim Cocoa and Gary Grimaldi of Shaker Ridge CC (N.Y.) and Alistair Cato (The Orchards) and partner Ed Garbarcek (Wykoff CC).

A handful of teams from the host club could also be in the running. The Tommy Barry and Mike Igoe pairing and the Tom Berkel and Tom Diffendal duo are two of them.

If last year is any indication, it will be a birdie fest.

"Last year's winners, David Szweszl and Bill Hermanson, shot 67-63," said Sullivan, who reports the course is in "very, very good shape."

The field will be broken into flights based on the first-round scores. The second round starts with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Randy Driscoll and Marty Keenan, the past two Stockbridge club champions, will try to make their home-course advantage hold up in the Classic.

Head professional Steve Mazzariello said the field will be much larger than the 48 golfers who played in last year's event.

"There's been outstanding interest, well beyond what we expected," Mazzariello said. "Usually, people wait to sign up late to see what the weather is going to be, but we already have 60 entries and could reach 70."

"The course is a huge attraction and typically we have a nice payout, so we will have a good mix of players from as far away as the Cape and Boston."

There will also be a strong contingent from the Springfield area.

"All things considered, the course is in great shape, the greens and fairways are very good," Mazzariello said.

The only issues are in some low-lying areas, understandable considering the Housatonic River overflowed early in the spring and left part of the course under water.

### Strong showing by Mucha

Visit the Greenock Country Club pro shop and the odds are pretty good that head professional Bob Mucha will be ready to wait on you. Somehow, he has still managed to get his game in shape early in the season.

Mucha finished a strong third with a round of 70 in Monday's Northeastern New York PGA



### TEE TO GREEN

By Richard Lord

Pro Classic I at the Saratoga (N.Y.) Golf and Polo Club.

Frank Melett of Colonie (N.Y.) Golf and Country Club won with a 66 and Jeremy Kerr of Mohawk (N.Y.) GC fired a 69 to finish second.

"I was pretty happy how I played, it was my first competitive round of the year and it was cold and windy, a tough day to play," Mucha said.

The only negative came on the final hole, Mucha said, when he three-putted a par 5 he reached in two.

"At the time, I thought 69 was low and what a way that would be to lose, but a guy in the final group [Melett] came in with a 66," Mucha said.

A handful of other Berkshire County head professionals also finished in the top 15 in the 45-player field. Josh Hillman of Berkshire Hills and Rick Pohle of Taconic tied for sixth with rounds of 72, Wyantenuck's Tom Sullivan (73) tied for ninth, Cranwell Resort's Dave Strawn (74) tied for 12th and Stockbridge's Steve Mazzariello (76) tied for 15th.

Sullivan's 73 was good for second place in the Senior Division.

"I'm playing pretty well considering I have a bad shoulder," Sullivan said.

### Chip Shots

■ The honors keep on coming for eduKaytion Golf's Kay McMahon, who offers up a tip elsewhere on this page. McMahon has been named one of the top 50 female instructors in the country in a vote of her peers conducted by Golf Digest for Women.

■ The weather didn't cooperate for the Allied Golf Tour's opening event May 8 at Wahconah Country Club. Rain forced the postponement of event. The tourney is expected to be rescheduled for sometime in either September or October.

■ Milton Torres, an assistant professional at Wahconah, was the top finisher among Berkshire County players Tuesday in the Northeastern New York PGA's Assistant Pros Classic at Saratoga National Golf Club in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Torres shot a 75 to finish third. Scott Berliner of Shaker Ridge (N.Y.) CC won with a 71.

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### Upcoming events

**Friday** — Stockbridge Classic, Stockbridge GC  
**Friday-Saturday** — Men's Golf Spring Open, Wyantenuck CC  
**May 25** — Massachusetts Open qualifier, CC of Pittsfield

## The Right Way



Photos by Richard Lord / Berkshire Eagle Staff

As Kay McMahon demonstrates, keeping your hands ahead of the club face...

## Tip of the Week — by Kay McMahon

# Avoiding yips on your chips

Sharpen your game where it counts the most and shave off those extra strokes. Chips and pitches are your scoring tools and are often where errors occur. Many shots don't see enough air time, resulting in skulled shots.

Consider these phases for these shots:

- Technique.
- Planning.
- Execution.

**Technique** is how to understand the club's function, and more specifically the club head and how it is designed in order to operate correctly.

The "leading edge" of the club head needs to stay "down," or flush to the ground, to give the club the effective loft needed to achieve the right amount of loft, spin and length that you anticipate and want to execute.

To do that, the handle or your hands always need to stay ahead of the club head, no matter the length of the shot.

If the club head or leading edge passes your hands, you are trying to "lift it," or "scoop it," "help it" or other terms. This results in skulling

### The instructor

Kay McMahon won the Ellen Griffin Award — the LPGA's highest honor for teaching excellence — in 2009. She is the head instructor for eduKaytion Golf and the head professional at Egremont Country Club in Great Barrington. The website for eduKaytion Golf is [www.edukaytion.com](http://www.edukaytion.com).

the ball as the leading edge hits the golf ball on the equator, or results in hitting it too short because you have increased the loft too much.

The hands do the work. The hands need to follow through and not flip. The forward wrist needs to stay flat from the back of the hand to the forearm, while the back wrist needs to stay flexed or holding the clubhead behind it.

To vary the distance widen the swing or change clubs to create more height and vary-ing releases.

"Release the club head" means to keep it square to the target line. Faulty contact occurs

when the hands/wrists "flip" or "scoop," which causes the head to pass the hands, creating inconsistencies in all shots.

**Planning** is having a plan for two things:

- Knowing where you want to land the shot, like an airplane landing, is important.
- Knowing how much run the shot will have, like an airplane's run happens.

**Execution** is putting all this into action. Hold your finish to examine or review what you have done.

Skip the old adage of keeping your head down. Look up and look where the ball has landed. See if your planning is what actually happened. It is the only way to know if you need to make adjustments on future shots.

Hold your finish. Then also look at your hands or the club head to see what has happened to know how to effectively alter your technique.

Remember: Keeping your head up is always better than keeping your head down! It's all in the attitude and the technique.

## The Wrong Way



...as opposed to letting the club face and shaft get ahead of your hands, allows you to create the proper loft to hit consistent chips.