

Moore Is Better

By Betsey Mitchell

It wasn't until all of the players gathered on the practice putting green for a group picture that the Moore County Women's Amateur committee could truly see what a success this year's championship had become.



Last year the field topped out at 42 players but it was showing signs of improvement. Over the winter Franny Stewart, Rita Roberts, Bette Rycroft, and yours truly set out to find a way to get the field up to 60 players. The championship capacity is 96 but we didn't want to get our expectation too high.

To quote Anne Friesen of Friend to Friend, "We blew the doors off that."

Much of the credit goes to Pinehurst Country Club. They showed up with 30 players. If it had not been for some scheduling conflicts there would have been a similar response from Pinewild Country Club. Ten players made the commitment even though many ended up playing five days in a row. Not an easy task for the fifty-plus gang.

The final tally of players was 87 and by all accounts they had a great time at Mid Pines Inn and Golf Club. This golf course is the perfect layout for a field of varying skills. Regardless of handicap they could all negotiate tee to green.

Then again, many also reported things got pretty dicey around the greens. So many exclaimed, "I kept putting it off the green!" The spirit of Donald Ross was probably giggling a bit.

Tracy Spillane of Mint Hill who first introduced herself as "BB Shanks" provided a jolly and mostly unprintable description of her game and followed it with a charmingly sarcastic, "Golly gosh, those greens were tough."

She and April Zelinski licked their wounds with laughter and jokes declaring themselves to be "the princesses of last". It's hard to explain how golfers who actually care about playing well can let a rough day just roll off and find the joy in making a new friend.

Such is the best of women's golf.

Each day the weatherman threatened thundershowers that never appeared. It was Sandhills steamy but a healthy breeze kept the players from keeling over. All were glad to return to the air conditioned club house.

The committee had no way of knowing what caliber of player was going to submit an application. A middling yardage of 5,100 was chosen. This proved to be an interesting challenge to the younger players used to playing a course at least another thousand yards longer.

All of them came off the course the first day reporting being handcuffed by having to think about what club to use off a par 4. That was after they received the quick lesson of where driver would take them. They were appalled by their performance from 70 yards in.

I have mounted my soap box more than once about the folly of making golf courses longer to serve the players' longer game. I was delighted that they were bamboozled by wedges and wicked lies.

Still, the committee wants next year's championship to be full of the very best in the county. We will be working with these players and the Carolinas Golf Association in the coming weeks to create another set of tees for the championship division.

The venue also had a lot to do with the success of the tournament. We already know the golf course is top-notch. If you haven't experienced the renovation, put it on your short list. Attached to this fine track is a pleasant and professional staff in the golf shop ready to help out in every way imaginable. Our merry band of volunteers was regularly steered in the best direction.

The cherry on top was the awards luncheon. I don't know about the rest of the fine folks of Moore County, but I have never, ever been disappointed (make that always amazed) by a Mid Pines buffet. Just the brownies are enough to cure what ails your game.

We are very proud of the way this event has served Friend to Friend, the domestic violence shelter based in Carthage. When Franny and company were thinking about ways to raise the visibility on the championship, they thought having a connection to a charity that is truly in the service of women would be a could match.

No question, it has worked out well for all concerned. The players were drawn to the message of Friend to Friend and the players and sponsors raised \$4,500 dollars to help those truly in need.

The newly fashioned custom tees (thanks to Mike in the woodshop at Pinewild) with their distinctive purple hue were a hit and purple has become the official color of the Moore County Women's Amateur.

For those who missed out, mark your calendar now for next year. We will be back July 27-28, 2015 and are so very excited to report we will be hosted by the Country Club of North Carolina.

And, fellas – the men's Moore County Amateur is also going to be contested at Mid Pines on August 29-30, 2014. Let's see how you do with those devilish greens. You can get your applications at Robert's Golf Shop.