

It's a Win-Win

By Betsey Mitchell

Back in May, our old friend Howard Ward asked if the Moore County Women's Amateur could be saved. Based on the event at Little River Golf & Resort on July 15-16, the answer is, Yes. What a marvel well organized women can be. A fresh point of view and few adjustments in format can make all the difference.

Entries had been dropping in recent years and the event was on life support but rather than throw in the towel a small band of women decided to give it another try. The hard working committee of Franny Stewart, Bette Rycroft and Rita Roberts accomplished the main goal which was to keep this annual event alive. They didn't stop there.

The 2012 championship had less than 30 entrants. By modifying the entry eligibility to include players from outside Moore County and allowing players to select their own pairing for the first round, this year's entries were up 40%. The committee didn't hit the goal of 60 players but they are encouraged about next year.

The championship was missing some its high level competitors because they were at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia competing in the 57th Carolinas/Virginias Women's Team Matches. Among the team of 24 players from North and South Carolina were two local college players; Amanda D'Ostroph of Whispering Pines and Karle Heimbecker of Sanford contributing to the Carolinas retention the cup for the fourth year in a row. The venerable Patty Moore who has won the Moore County six times was also at the team matches where she and her partner won every match. That woman knows how to win.

Speaking of winning. The big winner at the 2013 Moore County Women's Open Amateur was this year's benefactor Friend to Friend. The committee not only managed to get player participation up, they also raised a remarkable \$3,180 for this important organization serving battered women in Moore County. Anne Friesen, Executive Director of Friend to Friend was on hand for the presentation. The committee promised to continue this relationship for future tournaments.

Of course, this event is a golf championship and everyone wants to know who won. The trophy was earned by Mary-Katelyn Holanek of Cary, N.C. She is on the golf team at Campbell University and played two great rounds of golf for a winning score of 154.

My home-town gals from Pinewild made a good showing. Marjory Leidy hit a great shot into the 16th hole to win Closest-to-the-Pin. Flights prizes were won by Donna Rotondo, Jean Greishaber, and yours truly. I'm hoping a mention of my golf pals will encourage them to give me more putts the next time we play.

The best story is about the success of getting more women to play. Kristen Baker learned of this event through the Fayetteville paper and decided to give it a try. She had to set her alarm every morning at 5:30 to make her tee time at Little River. She drove from Salemburg, N.C. where she plays at Lakewood Country Club. She had never played in an individual stroke play



Mary-Katelyn Holanek, Anne Friesen, Michael Dooda

tournament before and though it wasn't obvious to us, she confessed mid-round, "I was really nervous. But I'm really glad I came."

At the end of the day, she had the added bonus of finishing third in her flight. I chatted with her a couple days after the tournament and she shared, "I'm still on cloud nine from the experience." I know she wasn't talking about the win, because she went on to say, "It was such a pleasure meeting you all and being able to play this great game with such a diverse group of empowered women."

Plans are already in the works for next year's Moore County Women's Amateur Open to be hosted by Mid Pines Golf Club on July 14-15. The renovations currently in the works that will be completed mid-August will be in fine form next year. Mark your calendar now; you won't want to miss it. In the meantime, there are still plenty of other opportunities to get out and test your nerve, ladies.

The North Carolina Women's Golf Association will be hosting this year's Team Net Tournament at the Country Club of Whispering Pines on August 24-25. Talk about a fun format for everybody! You create your own team of four; the scoring is two-best net balls for each hole; it's being played in your home county. This is a dream come true for the higher handicappers – I like to call them the Dot Masters! You can find an application on the web at www.ncwga.com/ncwga-net-team-tournament.

By way, the same goes for you guys stuck in the rut of your regular four-some. Hit the road and test your nerve. Get a taste of the thrill of trying something new.

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