



MBBC XXIV – WILLIAMSBURG TRIP REPORT

(*Disclaimer – We are now a little less than 4 weeks away from MBBC XXV. Despite constant badgering from other members, I am just now getting around to writing this stupid trip report, some 11 months after MBBC XXIV. I thought I took notes as I've done the last few years, but either I didn't take notes or they didn't transfer when I got a new phone earlier this year, so I'm working from pure memory here, so we'll see how good that is. According to Sandy, my memory is crap...)

MBBC XXIV was originally scheduled for Las Vegas in May but the global pandemic forced a shutdown of the entire country/world, so the MBBC had to be cancelled. Efforts were made to reschedule it for late October in Las Vegas with the hope that the pandemic would end by then, but that did not happen, so those plans were also cancelled. While it was never really openly discussed, there was some concern that the MBBC would be cancelled entirely. However, the players started thinking "outside the box" and agreed that the MBBC could be held in some form at a location all players could drive to with relative ease. Based on the advice of a neighbor, Droz proposed Williamsburg, Virginia and after some research by Scott and Dan (but not by Paul), the players agreed that Williamsburg was the best option, and the MBBC was officially set for Friday, October 23, 2020 – Tuesday, October 27, 2020. Scott spoke with Whitney of Virginia Golf Vacations, who booked the golf and set the group up to stay at the Powhatan Plantation Resort.



A picture of Whitney lifted from her Facebook account by the MBBC private investigator, Dan Hoelke.

The package Whitney put together included Royal New Kent Golf Club, Kingsmill Golf Club – River Course, Ford’s Colony Blackheath and Blue Heron and the Golden Horseshoe – Gold Course. In what may actually be a first, the group would actually schedule another round for the day we were leaving. The total cost for 5 rounds of golf and accommodations was \$789.00 per person.

The buildup to MBBC XXIV was a little more subdued than it usually is due largely to the pandemic. Earlier in the summer, the group got together at Penn National Golf Club. As usual, Droz played the most rounds before the tournament. Paul, Dan and Scott did not really play very much, and there were the usual claims that Paul was working on a new golf swing.

Friday, October 23, 2020

Dan was the first to leave home, as he had a longer trip. It was apparently Droz’s year to drive, so he picked up Paul and they headed down to Maryland to pick up Scott. Perhaps one of the few nice things about moving the MBBC to Williamsburg was that because of its proximity, with a 1:00 tee time at Royal New Kent, there wasn’t a huge rush to get there, so no one had to get up obscenely early to get there. Droz and Paul arrived at Scott’s house while Scott’s daughters were in the middle of remote school and were able to mostly avoid any lengthy conversations with Scott’s parents before getting back on the road. Dan was slightly ahead of them on southbound 95 near Fredericksburg and would be the first to arrive at Royal New Kent Golf Course. Dan was finishing up striping drives on the driving range when Droz, Paul and Scott arrived.

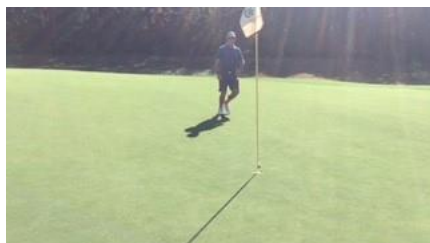


We checked in at the clubhouse and decided to grab lunch at the “Pub.” I think we annoyed the bartender a bit as we couldn’t make up our mind about sitting inside or outside before finally deciding to eat outside. We had a couple of beers and inhaled lunch before we got ready to tee it up.

Royal New Kent was a links-style course in the middle on nowhere on the way to Williamsburg. Despite being rated the most difficult course of the trip, it would actually turn out to be the consensus favorite of the group. As expected, Droz was playing the best and had birdie putts on each of the first 3 holes, but could not drain any of the putts. However, he would finally open the scoring on the 344-yard, Par 4 4th walking in a 30 foot, downhill right to left breaker for birdie.



Droz would double his total on the next hole, going back-to back draining another downhill putt from 25 feet on the 533-yard Par 5 5th hole.



After just 5 holes, it looked like Droz would run away with the 2020 title, but Dan would respond on 370-yard, Par 4 8th hole from 15 feet.



It looked like it would be a 2-man show until Scott joined the fun on the 354-yard, Par 4 11th hole, draining a downhiller of his own from about 10 feet.



Dan really made things interesting on the very next hole, the 172-yard, Par 3 12th hole, when with an assist from Paul, nailed a 20-footer (uphill for the first time) to pull even with Droz at 2.

Perhaps one of the most interesting things about the first day barrage was a new tradition that Dan and Scott adopted from a twosome they had played with at the Currituck Golf Club in the Outer Banks a few months earlier where all members of the group do a shot of fireball after a birdie. It's unclear if it was the fireball shots or great weather or something else that led to the round 1 barrage. (And perhaps it was the fact that we ran out of fireball on Day 1 that the barrage did not continue...)



Dan did have a chance to add a 3rd birdie and take the outright lead on the Par 5 17th hole, when he managed to reach the green in 2, but he was unable to 2-putt from 60+ feet.

Scores were actually pretty darn good for the opening round (with 1 exception):

Droz – 85

Scott – 88

Dan – 89

Paul – 108

More importantly, the MBBC leaderboard was Droz – 2, Dan – 2, Scott - 1, Paul- 0, and it appeared that it was going to be a very interesting tournament.

We then made the 30-45 minute drive to the Powhatan Plantation Resort in Williamsburg. Check-in was a bit of a pain in the ass, as despite the pandemic, the resort was pretty crowded and we had to wait quite a bit to get our room keys. The rooms were 2-bedroom condos. While not terrible, they were probably not as nice as at least Scott had expected based on his conversation with Whitney when he first booked the package.



Droz and Paul took the upstairs condo, while Scott and Dan crashed downstairs. (For reasons unclear, all gatherings were always in Dan and Scott's condo, and Droz and Paul never invited anyone to their place...)

After cleaning up, we headed out to dinner at Craft 31, a place Scott had researched prior to the trip. Paul had asked for a place with a decent IPA or 2, and we were also looking for a place that had outside seating. It was a bit crowded, but we were seated pretty quickly and had a pretty good first-night dinner.



After dinner, it was back to the condos and lights out to get ready for Day 2.

Saturday, October 24, 2020

A major issue in the planning of the trip was a Penn State football game on Saturday. Due to the fact that most trips have been in August or May, there have only been a few occasions when there was a Penn State football game during the MBBC. When the trip got delayed to October, Penn State was scheduled to play Iowa in what was expected to be a pretty important game. However, as the trip got closer, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Big Ten announced that it would be canceling the 2020 season. After significant backlash, the Big Ten caved and then announced that the start of the season would be delayed and that it would be a Big Ten only

schedule. Penn State would start the season on the road against Indiana on day 2 of the MBBC. Before the Big Ten reinstated the season, Scott had booked the Saturday round at The River Course at Kingsmill Resort for late morning. However, the game was announced as a 3:30 kickoff, so Scott contacted Whitney and was able to get an earlier tee time. Scott also did extensive research to find a sports bar with outdoor seating close to the golf course that would show the game with the idea being that we would finish the round relatively close to 3:30 and need to get to the sports bar as quickly as possible and watch the game there. (This would not actually work out this way...)

Everybody was up and ready to go at a reasonable time, and after some debate, it was decided that we would all get breakfast sandwiches from the nearby Chick Fil A. The line at Chick Fil A was deep, as usual, but everybody got a sandwich and we headed to The River Course at Kingsmill Resort, which there were high expectations for.



(Clearly not my best work)

The course was pretty crowded, but that was because there are multiple courses on site. We checked in and had plenty of time to hit some balls at the range and knocked some putts in on the putting green. Once we got off the first tee, we were able to play pretty quickly. The course was... fine. It was in pretty good shape, but there was not really anything spectacular about it, and did not really live up to the hype of a course that had hosted an LPGA event for several years. A lot of reviews said that the course was boring until the last 3 holes, which are along the water, which was basically true.

After the fireworks of Day 1, Dan would make the only birdie of the day on the 466-yard Par 5 7th hole from about 8 feet.



The most scenic hole is probably the Par 3 17th hole which plays along the James River.



Other than that, there was nothing particularly memorable about the course, and it was a bit of a disappointment. The overall scores were just okay: Droz – 87, Dan – 89, Scott – 97, Paul – 100. Dan’s birdie gave him the MBBC lead with 3, while Droz had 2, Scott 1 and Paul remained without a mark.

We actually finished the round pretty quickly. After the round, we headed to Sportsmans Grille. We were seated outside without any problems, and the noon games had just started. We ate lunch pretty quickly and since it was still another 2 hours until Penn State kicked off, the general consensus was that we might as well just head back to the room to watch the game there. We stopped at a nearby gas station to grab some beer and other “essentials” and then headed back to the condo to get ready for Penn State @ Indiana.



The less said about the game, the better, but since it was part of the trip and a significant event, it is unfortunately necessary... Penn State dominated the majority of the game. Late in the 4th quarter, Penn State lead by 1 and had the ball at the Indiana 5 yard line. Paul actually wanted Penn State to score a touchdown so that he could win a bet he had placed on Penn State through his Fan Duel account. Scott mentioned that Indiana should actually let Penn State score the touchdown, so that they could get the ball back and try to score a touchdown and 2 point conversation, and that’s exactly what they did. Devyn Ford was allowed to score a touchdown. Indiana promptly marched down the field and scored a touchdown and then converted the 2-point conversion to tie the game and send it into overtime (Jordan Stout did have a 57-yard field goal attempt as time expired that fell short.) Penn State got the ball first in overtime and scored a touchdown. Indiana responded by scoring a touchdown and, according to the referees, converting the 2-point conversation to win the game 36-35.



There was not much to do after that. We ordered pizza for dinner from a local joint and with there being a threat of rain the next day, everyone headed to bed at a fairly reasonable hour.

Sunday, October 25, 2020



Sunday was scheduled to be 36-hole day at Ford's Colony Country Club. The weather had other plans. It was chilly in the morning and it was expected to rain heavily in the afternoon. It was very clear that a second round was highly unlikely. We started on the Blackheath Course at Ford's Colony. For some reason, we thought the white tees were too easy, so we played the Blue/White blend. There was not really anything special about the course. Paul was the only one to birdie, as he was able to sink a 4-footer on the 371-yard, Par 4 9th hole.



It started raining shortly after Paul's birdie. By the last few holes, it was a steady downpour. We were able to finish, but it was pretty miserable and there were no more birdies. Droz and Dan were on fire shooting 81 and 83, respectively with 10 and 9 pars each. Scott shot 98, while Paul shot 105 with his birdie. After 3 rounds, Dan remained at the top of the MBCB leaderboard with 3, Droz had 2, and Scott and Paul each had 1.

Scott checked in at the pro shop and was able to change the afternoon's tee time on the Blue Heron course to Monday afternoon. With golf washed out for the rest of the day, we grabbed lunch at Jersey Mike's, Dan helped Nate change his fantasy football lineup and we headed back to the condo to settle in and watch some NFL.

There were some issues with the condo television, as we did not have the Redzone channel, but Droz was able to stream it on the TV. Dan's 6-0 Pittsburgh Steelers were at the Tennessee Titans at 1:00. For the most part, Dan watched the game in his room, while Scott, Droz and Paul watched the Redzone Channel in the living room. The Steelers jumped out to an early lead, but the Titans made a second half charge. The Titans missed a lot field goal, and the Steelers won 27-24. The Eagles had already beaten the Giants on Thursday night.

We watched football the rest of the day before fulfilling an MBBC tradition and ordering Outback for dinner. Everyone then headed to bed with 36 holes of sloppy golf scheduled for the next day.

Monday, October 26, 2021

We were up relatively early for our scheduled tee time at The Golden Horseshoe Golf Club – Gold Course. It had rained pretty hard most of the night, so we weren't sure in what kind of condition the courses would be. We had a little difficulty finding the course but eventually did. There were not a lot of people there, and there was no one at the bag drop. The people in the pro shop said the course was wet but playable. We hit some balls off the tee and putted on the putting green while we waited for our time, and then we were off. The course was actually in pretty decent shape considering how much rain there had been.

Scott made the first birdie of the round on the 145-yard, Par 3 3rd hole. He hit his tee shot on the steep downhill hole to about 6 feet and was able to sink the putt.



Droz would respond on the 355-yard, Par 4 9th hole, when he drained a 12 footer.



That birdie would tie him with Dan at the top of the MBBC leaderboard with 3, but Droz would take the outright lead just 3 holes later, when he stuffed his tee shot on the 149-yard, Par 3 12th hole to about 2 foot and knocked it in for his second birdie of the round and 4th of the tourney.



There would be no more birdies in the round. Droz played very well, especially considering the conditions, as he shot an 83. Dan and Scott shot 92, while Paul slapped the ball around 106 times.

After packing up, we had to hustle back to Ford's Colony Country Club for our rescheduled round on the Blue Heron Course. We decided to stop at Chick Fil A for lunch. It turned out to be a Chick Fil A at William and Mary College, which did not have a full menu. Since we did not have much time, we ate in the car on the way to Ford's Colony.

While it appeared to be a better layout than Blackheath, Blue Heron was a bit of a swamp.



Once again, we played the Blue/White blend tees. There would be no birdies and, in fact, the only real excitement in the round was a couple of near misses by Scott and Dan. Scott was playing some atrocious golf, as he hit only 2 greens all round. The second of those greens in regulation was on the Par 5 12th hole, when he somehow managed to stick a shot to within 3 feet. A birdie seemed guaranteed, but Scott missed the putt, not once, but twice and walked away with par.



Dan's miss was actually a bit more exciting and not pathetic like Scott's. Dan was playing pretty well in route to an 85 but had not been able to find a birdie. On the 18th green, he had a slippery, 25-foot downhill putt. He hit a nearly perfect putt that trickled toward the hole but, unfortunately stopped on the lip for a disappointing par.



We finished just as it started getting dark.



Again, Dan and Droz had the lowest scores of the round, 85 and 87. Paul managed a 96, while Scott threw up all over himself with a 103.

And so, at the close of the “scheduled” portion of the MBBC, the scoreboard was Droz – 4, Dan – 3, Scott – 2, Paul – 1. We had always planned to stay Monday night before going home on Tuesday, but we never booked any rounds for Tuesday. In the build-up to the MBBC, there had been some discussions about playing Tuesday morning before we left, but nothing was ever decided. During the trip, there were more discussions and everyone agreed that we would play a 6th and final round the next morning. There was a lot of discussion about where to play, before we were able to secure a morning tee time at Kiskiack Golf Club.

We headed back to the condo, cleaned up and rallied and headed into Williamsburg for dinner. There was some talk about actually making a night of it, but it would end up only being dinner. We ended up at Berret’s Seafood Restaurant and Taphouse Grill, which was actually a pretty decent find. We were able to sit outside. Despite it being a somewhat chilly night, there were heaters and we had a good time.



We were also able to continue our creepy tradition of finding and Facebook stalking an attractive waitress. This year, the honor went to Briana, a student at Longwood University.



We headed home to pack and clean up before heading to bed.

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Everyone was up pretty early to finish packing, clean up the condos and load the cars before then heading to Kiskiack Golf Club for the final round of the MBBC. Everyone still had a chance, but realistically it was a 2-man race between Droz and Dan. Kiskiack was absolutely packed, as there seemed to be some sort of outing or tournament, other than the MBBC. There was also a fog delay. We were eventually sent off the first tee. Like the other courses, Kiskiack had taken in quite a bit of rain over the last few days. It was a decent course and also relatively short, which made it a perfect course for the final round.

Paul barged out of the gates with a birdie from 15 feet on the 150-yard Par 3 2nd hole.



Things really heated up on 282-yard, Par 4 10th hole. Dan stuffed a wedge to inside of 2 feet and appeared on the verge of tying Droz for the MBBC lead. However, Droz would roll in an 8-footer of his own before Dan had a chance to convert.



Dan would knock his putt in to remain 1 behind Droz.



There was yet another twist when Paul managed a birdie on the 419-yard, Par 5 14th hole. For some reason, despite only being 419 yards, the scorecard labels the hole a Par 5. The best part about Paul's birdie was that he was on in 2 and putted for eagle but had no idea. He actually had no idea he'd made birdie until everyone congratulated him after making the 5-foot putt.



Truth be told, Scott was completely disinterested for large portions of the round and played miserably on his way to a 96. Dan, Droz and Paul continued to hunt birdies over the final 4 holes, but could not find one. Dan was absolutely on fire and shot a group-best round for the trip of 80 (A 7 on the Par 4 15th hole ruined a round in the 70's.) Droz shot an 82 and Paul shot a trip-best 87. Droz was the winner of the 2020 MBBC with the final scoreboard as follows:

Droz – 5

Dan – 4

Paul – 3

Scott – 2

We threw our clubs into the cars and changed for the less than fun rides home. Everybody made it home safely, and while we had a good time, everyone was looking forward to a return to Vegas in 2021...