



MBBC XXI - TRIP REPORT

Despite the fact that MBBC XX in Las Vegas was arguably the best trip in the history of the MBBC, everyone agreed that MBBC XXI would return to its home in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. There was actually some increased excitement for the return to Myrtle Beach, since it had been 2 years since we had last played there. We were looking forward to playing some of our favorite courses, returning to our usual traditions and maybe seeing a familiar face.

Perhaps the most interesting development heading into the 21st rendition of the MBBC was the fact that Dan was unemployed. He had been let go from his previous position, but because of a lengthy severance package, he had been a stay-at-home dad for several months. He spent much of the time off cranking out miles and pounds on a bicycle, but also had time to play numerous warm-up rounds, which many thought would lead to the return of the old Dan. Scott purchased a new house just a few weeks before the trip. He actually did not play at all in the buildup to the MBBC. After Vegas, Scott played once in the Outer Banks in August, and then again in late February with Droz, when Droz was in the area for work. Scott was still looking to defend his title and win his first title in Myrtle Beach since 2003, a fact that the rest of the group likes to point out often. Besides planning bat mitzvahs, Paul and Droz were in their usual pre-MBBC mode. As usual, Paul hammered balls regularly at the driving range and considered himself ready to contend. Droz took some lessons and played a few rounds, including one the day before we left for Myrtle Beach (believed to be a first in MBBC history).

As the defending champion, Scott had the honor of selecting the opening round course, and it was no major surprise that he selected the Legends – Heathland course. The rest of the lineup largely fell into place, with the usual players, Barefoot Fazio, Barefoot Love, Caledonia, True Blue and Grande Dunes. The Surf Club, a course that had not yet been played, was also thrown into the mix. Droz handled the golf and hotel arrangements. There was some talk of switching back to the Barefoot condos, but we agreed to stick with Grande Dunes, although there was a slight cost increase. As usual, flights were booked through U.S. Air, which is now American Airlines. Once again, Scott booked a flight out of Washington, D.C., despite vowing never to do that again.

Originally, Paul and Droz had booked a direct flight to Myrtle from Philly. And, for reasons I can't recall, Dan was originally, at least, considering a flight that would take him to Philadelphia to then join up with Paul and Droz on the flight to Myrtle. At some point, American Airlines suddenly canceled the direct flight from Philadelphia to Myrtle Beach. Everyone was able to re-book with a meet-up in Charlotte. Dan booked the rental car so long before the trip, that as the trip approached, we actually forgot whether anyone had made the reservation. Things appeared all set until the day before the trip when someone jokingly asked Droz if the scoreboard was ready. Droz had apparently forgotten all about the scoreboard, but was able to print things out at work, buy some additional supplies and put it together that evening. Things have not changed some 21 years later, as Scott was up half the night doing a half-assed job on the odds and prop bets.

Friday, May 19, 2017

Everyone was up relatively early in the morning to catch their flights. Scott had a pretty easy drive to Washington, D.C. Dan, as usual, got a ride to the airport. And, it was Paul's turn to pick Droz up for the drive to the airport.



Everyone had breakfast sandwiches. In addition to having a breakfast sandwich, Paul decided to buy a pair of sunglasses. Droz claims the attendant was "very helpful"



The glasses Paul bought would actually break during the trip...

We met up in Charlotte and made the quick hop to Myrtle Beach. We were only able to identify 1 or 2 of the courses from the air. We headed to baggage claim and everyone got their bags and clubs. Since Myrtle Beach International Airport has expanded over the last 5 or so years, they have moved the rental car desks from the main building to their own building. We headed over there and waited longer than we ever have to get the rental car. Dan had made the reservation. Scott kept him company in line, while Droz and Paul found somewhere to sit and mostly complained and whined about how long it was taking. We finally got the key to the mini-van and then headed to pick it up. We had to wait AGAIN, as we were told that it wasn't ready yet. It was frustrating, but we were in Myrtle and that much closer to getting onto the golf course.



While we were waiting for our car, Paul was asked to take a picture of a couple who were just picking up their car. It was unclear why they were so excited about picking up their rental car that they felt the need to document it, but we can only assume that they were there for the MBBC...



Our mini-van finally showed up and we went through the usual routine of loading it up. I'm not entirely sure why it's so difficult, since we've been doing the same thing for 20 years, but when we first open the back gate of the mini-van, it's like some new Tetris puzzle that needs to be figured out and it seems to take longer than it should.



We all assumed our traditional seats in the mini-van and Scott sped over to Legends as fast as he could.

The Legends parking lot was... packed, but with 3 courses it was not overly concerning. The wait for the rental car had prevented us from getting lunch or from hitting balls at the range. We still decided to try and grab lunch in the clubhouse, since the round included a free lunch. The clubhouse was even more crowded. We sat for a while before a waitress finally come to check on us, but when she let us know it was going to take quite a bit of time to get our food, we decided to bag it and head downstairs to the snack bar and grab some sandwiches, hotdogs and beer. We smacked some balls around on the putting green and then headed over to the 10th tee on the Heathland course, as we would be starting on the back.

Our starter, Glen, was very friendly, but perhaps overly so, as he continued to talk our ears off and ruined the video of the opening round tee-flippy by standing with his fat ass right in front of the camera and continuing to run his mouth.



The drives on the opening hole were all surprisingly solid, with I believe all four of us finding the fairway for the second year in a row. As usual, Scott was pessimistic about when the first birdie would come (setting the over/under at 8.5) and as usual, Scott was way off. On our third hole, the 145 yard Par 3 12th, Paul threw a dart to 3 feet and drained the putt to take the early lead.



The rest of the round was... brutal. Scott had a couple of birdie opportunities but could not convert. After the early birdie, Paul struggled mightily. Dan and Droz had their difficulties as well. The play was incredibly slow. It took us 2:50 to play the back nine and things got even worse when we made the turn to the front. There were 2 groups waiting on the tee box when we got there. The group in front of us decided they'd had enough and walked off. The second nine did not get go significantly faster and all together it was well over a 5-hour round. Dan had an interesting finish to his round, playing this shot from the water, as he would actually shoot 83 for his opening round.



There had been talk earlier in the week about rallying after the opening round and heading out to Broadway. After the 5+ hour round, any hope of rallying and going out was gone. Everyone was starving, so we headed to Outback, which was right across the street from the entrance to Legends. Surprisingly, there was virtually no wait for a table. As usual, a round of Outback specials were in order.



Scott ordered a beer but only had about 3 sips of it. Everyone was full and sleepy after dinner, and it was confirmed that there was absolutely no chance of going out after a long day. We headed to the grocery store to pick up the usual supplies.



We finally made it to Grande Dunes around 9:00 and checked into our room. Dan and Droz picked their room and Scott and Paul picked the kids' room. Paul quickly discovered that the refrigerator wasn't working and called down to the front desk to get someone to fix it. Surprisingly, someone came up and even more surprisingly, they were able to fix it pretty quickly.



Lights were out shortly thereafter, as we were set to play 36 at Barefoot the next day.

Saturday, May 20, 2017

As is usually the case, the second day of the MBBC was to be 36 holes at our favorite, Barefoot. Having not gone out the night before, everyone slept well and was up in plenty of time for the short drive to the course. Once again, the course was packed, but, once again, there wasn't much concern, since there are 4 courses and since we were to be the first group off the Fazio course. Once again, efforts to birdie the incredibly easy Par 4 1st hole were very poor. The first birdie of the day would come on the 440-yard Par 5 4th hole, which Scott and Dan insist should be birdied every year. The birdie came from a surprising source and in a surprising manner. Paul hit a wayward drive to the right. Generally, drives to the right end up in some large bushes and are lost. Paul's ball however was found on the cart path. He took relief from the cart path, but his second shot also went to the right. Once again, we assumed his ball was lost, but once again it was found near the cart path. Once again, Paul took relief, and he promptly flopped the ball to within 2 feet of the hole. He drained the putt to take a surprising 2-o-o-o lead.



4 holes later, Scott had an opportunity to get on the board, as he fired his tee shot to within 4 feet on the 127-yard Par 3 8th hole. Scott hit an awful putt that lipped out, and Paul remained the only one on the board. Scott was able to make up for it on the 154-yard Par3 11th hole, when he again hit his tee shot to about 4 feet. This time he was able to roll it in for his first birdie of the trip.



Paul responded on the Par 4 17th hole with his 3rd birdie of the trip. His approach shot found the green, but he was still left with at least 25 feet for birdie. However, Paul rolled a beautiful putt and it dropped.



Dan had an opportunity to get on the board on the 18th hole, but could not convert a 6-foot putt. And so, after 2 rounds, the score was 3-1-0-0.

Things would not go as planned for the rest of the day. The plan was to replay the Love course in the afternoon. That was not to be, as there were basically no tee times available. We decided we would schedule Love for the next morning and then play the Surf Club in the afternoon. With that problem resolved, we also decided we would have lunch in the clubhouse, then head back to the hotel and hit the pool, before heading out for a big night at Broadway. While we ate lunch, Droz was “concerned” that Samantha was still at a function in New Jersey, when she only had a short time to get Ryan to his baseball game. She assured him that he would get him there in time. In fact, Ryan would make it to his game and would have a hit in a last inning rally that saw his team come back from down 8-5 to win 9-8. Droz got to watch via facetime. We hung out in the pool for a good bit of time, and had a few drinks and relaxed. Everyone was confident that all of the relaxing would likely lead to a barrage on the Love course the next morning...



After the pool, we got cleaned up and took an Uber to Broadway. Since we were there so early, we decided we would eat dinner and have some drinks at Good Time Charlie's. We had eaten there before and it had been pretty good, and we couldn't really decide on any other place. We were able to grab a table right outside. We were waited on by Alexis, who was being trained by Janelle. (We are getting very old...)



After a dinner, a few drinks and after The Preakness, we headed over to Crocodile Rocks. The place was crowded as usual, and unfortunately, Malorie was apparently long gone. We grabbed a round of drinks at the bar and settled in. Unfortunately, the night would end abruptly. Droz got a call from Sam telling him that Ryan was having a

medical issue and was going to be admitted to the hospital. Droz immediately made arrangements to catch the next available flight home out of Wilmington. After taking a cab home and re-grouping, we drove to Wilmington and dropped Droz off at the airport, where we're told he had a great night. Droz made it home the next morning, and Ryan is doing very well. (As a side note, Dan would later realize that Droz had taken his 56 degree wedge home with him, so Dan was without it for the remainder of the trip).

Sunday, May 21, 2017

With Droz gone, Scott, Dan and Paul reluctantly pressed on. After a brief night's sleep, we headed back to Barefoot for our round on the Love course. Paul was actually able to get a raincheck for Droz, something that would continue at all of the courses the rest of the trip. We were sent off the back 9, which was somewhat disappointing, since it meant we'd have to wait a little longer for our shot at the 4th hole. But... it also meant we'd get a shot at "the bridges" hole sooner. Lightning would in fact strike on the 447 Par 513th hole, which we call "The Bridges." Dan hit a massive drive to the middle of the fairway, Scott hit a decent drive, while Paul hit a wayward drive that actually managed to catch a piece of the fairway. With the sun in our face on second shots toward the green, it was difficult to tell where our second shots landed. Paul actually didn't have to worry too much about that since his second shot went dead left into the woods. Dan also did not hit the best of second shots, but was still in play. However his third shot ended up over the green and plugged in the wet grass. Scott hit a solid 5-wood from the fairway and it ended up on the right side of the green, although a long way from the hole. Scott's eagle putt was poor, but he still had 7 feet for birdie, which he managed to sink for his second birdie.



As he has a tendency to do, Scott would go back-to-back at the 361 yard Par 4 14th hole, a somewhat difficult hole with a 2 tiered green. Scott stuffed his approach to 4 feet and drained the putt into a tie with Paul 3 birdies, but to actually take the lead by virtue of the tiebreaker.



There would be no other birdies in the round. The run through holes 1-4, the groups' favorite stretch of holes was birdie-less, but not without some excitement. Paul nearly holed his chip for birdie on the 1st. Dan's 20-foot birdie putt on 2 did everything but go in. And then there the adventures on the Par 4 4th. Scott and Paul hit massive drives just short of the green. Dan went right into "the valley." Dan's approach ended up against the fake ruins, but Dan didn't realize he was entitled to relief from the fake walls and played it from there, leading to a double bogey. Scott and Paul needed to only get their chips close for birdie, but neither were able to come very close. Scott's chip left himself about 6 feet for birdie, which he missed. Everyone walked off realizing it would likely be at least another 2 years before we had another shot at our favorite hole. The round ended without any further drama and with the scoreboard now 3-3-0-0.

Despite the fact that Droz was no longer with us, we still kept our tradition of eating lunch at T.G.I.Fridays after Barefoot. Lunch was pretty good and if I'm not mistaken, we ordered the \$10 bottomless appetizers, which were pretty darn good.

After lunch, it was off to The Surf Club, a course that had never been played before by the group. Scott had a little difficulty finding it, but Dan did a good job navigating. The drive up and the clubhouse were nothing significant. We checked in and Dan bought a logo ball. We hit some balls on the range for a little bit and then were sent off the first tee. The first 4 holes were fairly uneventful, but things changed at the 517 yard dogleg left, Par 5 5th hole. Dan hit a massive drive and a fantastic second shot that ended up on the fringe of the green leaving himself a tricky, downhill, 15-foot putt for eagle. Paul was on in 3, but still had 45+ feet for birdie. Paul's prayer was answered as his putt found the bottom of the cup for his 4th birdie, and he retook the lead.



Dan coaxed his eagle putt 2 feet past the cup and drained the putt for his first birdie of the trip.



The rest of the round was less than stellar with only a couple of notable birdie opportunities, which obviously went begging. Scott quickly soured on the course and vowed never to return, while Dan thought it was pretty good. Paul was somewhere in between.

We headed back to the room and decided that after the long day and the minimal sleep from the night before, this would be our traditional, pizza in the room, lights out by 10:00 night. We decided to order from a pizza place called Ducati's. To the best of my recollection, this was a place recommended by the concierge. With only 3 of us, we had some difficulty figuring out how many pizzas to order. We eventually decided on a medium tradition pizza and a Sicilian style pizza. When the pizza delivered, we only received the medium pizza and Paul was less than pleased. The delivery driver told Paul that Katie, the girl who took Paul's order is not very good, but that he would straighten things out. He quickly returned with the Sicilian pizza (which was awesome), and after eating, the lights were out fairly soon, since we needed to be up pretty early for the drive down south for 36 holes at True Blue and Caledonia. Even though we weren't in Vegas, Scott and Paul were still considering potential bets that they would have placed had they been in Vegas. The Boston Celtics and Cleveland Cavaliers were in the midst of the Eastern Conference Finals, and Sunday night's game featured a line of Cleveland -15.5. Scott and Paul joked that if they were in Vegas, they would consider betting on the Celtics money line of +1453. We were unable to stay awake to watch the game, so we were surprised to wake up the next morning and find out that the Celtics actually won the game and won us a pretty large sum of imaginary money...

Monday, May 22, 2017

We were up early and made the long trek south to True Blue. We were the first ones off the first tee. It was clear in the first few holes that the round was going to be a bit of a struggle. Birdie opportunities on the front nine were few and far between. Scott went for the green in 2 on the 4th hole, but ended up in the bunker and couldn't get up and down for the birdie. He did the same on the 9th. Dan also had a couple of birdie opportunities, but he could not convert. Scott had a golden opportunity for a birdie on the 138 yard, Par 3 14th hole, as he fired his tee ball to inside of 5 feet. But he hit an absolutely terrible putt that didn't even hit the cup. Dan had a few opportunities for birdie toward the end of the round, but couldn't get anything to drop, and so the group's modest streak of consecutive courses birdied would be broken.

We had lunch in the True Blue Clubhouse and had a couple of beers. We then made the short trip over to Caledonia. We were excited to see our old friend Mary there, although Scott made his usual idiot move of asking the person we were looking for if they still worked there.



Scott grabbed a 12-pack of beer, and we were sent off the front 9 with the course not too crowded. Dan hit a massive drive on the opening hole, but without his 56 degree wedge, could not put his chip anywhere near the hole. Paul's opening drive of the round went across the entrance road. It was a sign of things to come for the whole group. The lack of very many videos from the round is also a sign that there was nothing much worth videoing. Dan had the best opportunity for birdie on the day on the 477 yard, Par 5 8th hole. He went for it in 2 and ended up on to the left of the green. His chip was... weak, and he left himself 4 feet for birdie, which did not find the cup.

The entire round was probably best summed up by Scott's performance on the Par 4 18th hole. It's a difficult hole with a large body of water fronting the green. Scott's drive found the water, and so he dropped in front of hit and took aim at the green, while Paul took video and narrated Scott's efforts. The video has now become a favorite of the Hoelke boys as Scott put 4 more balls in the water and nearly ran out of balls before finding a Slazenger and a couple of other balls deep in his golf bag and before finally managing to clear the water. Scott would record a 14 on the hole.

Attempt #1 (skipper)



Attempt # 2 (right)



Attempt #3 (short)



Attempt #4 (chunk)



Attempt #5 (success!)



For the second consecutive round, there would be no birdies, and with only 1 round to go, the scoreboard was: Paul – 4, Scott – 3, Dan – 1, Droz – 0.

We made the long drive back to the hotel and decided to at least head out to dinner. There was the potential to rally and really go out, but I think we all knew how that was going to turn out. Paul pushed for Italian, and no one was opposed, so we got another recommendation and took an Uber to a place called Luigi's. In the uber, Dan and Paul watched a quick video that Scott had put together of his play on 18 at Caledonia, while Scott sat in the front seat and talked to a very odd female driver.



Dinner was decent. We were waited on by a weird chick named Laurel. After dinner, we decided to walk next door to Kirk's and keep up the tradition of having ice cream. It was clear that we would not be going out, so we got an Uber and headed back to the hotel as it began to pour down rain. Once again, lights were out early as we prepared for the final round of the 2017 MBBC.

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

The weather forecast had been pretty grim as we went to bed the night before. It was expected to rain all night and into the morning, raising the possibility that the final round would actually be washed out. However, when we woke up, the skies were clear, and it looked like it was going to be a decent day. The second we walked out the door, the skies opened up, and once again there was a very real possibility that the final round would be cancelled. We made the short trip over the bridge to the course. It poured as we dropped off the bags and checked in. The course was still open, so we headed to the first tee, where the rain then stopped. It picked back up again as we played the first hole. As we got to the second tee, it rained even harder and there was some discussion of heading back to the clubhouse as it was raining so hard that we couldn't even tee off. Shortly thereafter, the rain slowed down, and then actually stopped. Shortly after that, another storm arrived... After not being seen for several years, Stormin' Dan Hoelke suddenly made an appearance. Despite the rain, Dan had managed to hit his tee shot on the second hole to within 10 feet. As the rain slowed, Dan drained his putt for his second birdie of the trip.



Things got even more interesting at the 378 yard Par 4 3rd hole, a hole Dan birdied once before, albeit by holing a 50 yard chip shot. Dan stuffed his approach to 4 feet and drained that putt to go back-to-back and to tie Scott just 1 behind Paul with a whole lot of golf left to be played.



Dan made a good effort for thee in a row on the Par 5 4th hole, but could not convert. Efforts were also pretty bad on the short Par 4 6th hole that we all think is so easy. The second most exciting moment of the trip came on the 495 yard Par 5 7th hole. We all managed to get on the green in 3 and Paul was the first to putt. Paul managed to drain yet another lengthy putt for his 5th birdie of the trip, and while it wasn't officially over, it was close, as he opened up a 2 birdie lead with the number of holes slowly dwindling.



A lot of strange, funny, uncanny, memorable things have happened over the 21 years of the MBBC. Perhaps the... oddest occurred as we turned from the 9th hole to the 10th. There was a group on the tee box, so we knew we would have to wait. The cart girl, who had passed us a few holes earlier and who we had waved off was waiting for us. Dan decided he was going to grab something and asked Scott and Paul if they wanted anything. Both said they didn't. Dan. Scott and Paul weren't paying much attention as Dan, rather strangely bought a Coke (Dan NEVER drinks Coke). Scott didn't think

much of it until Dan started trying to get his attention gesturing toward the cart girl. Dan was finally able to tell Scott that the cart girl was actually... Arika. We proceeded to embarrass ourselves by asking if she was in fact Arika and freak her out by telling her that we take a picture with her every year but hadn't seen her there since Revolutions had closed. She told us that she was now working at a bar called Bourbon Street and told us to come by the next time we were in town. Despite likely being completely freaked out, Arika was kind enough to take her annual (and likely last) picture with Dan.



Dan was clearly... motivated... by seeing Arika as he caught fire on the back nine rattling off 4 pars in a row. Unfortunately, he was not motivated enough to drain any birdie putts. He made a decent effort on the Par 5 13th hole, but could not get up and down from near the green. An interesting dilemma came up as we approached the end of the road. The group in front of us was playing extremely slow. Besides the fact that the MBBC title was still up for grabs, Dan was playing out of his mind and had a chance to break 80. However, we were running out of time before we need to leave to make our flights. We pressed on, but there would be no birdies. Dan would also hit his drive on 17 into the water all but ending any chance of breaking 80. After Scott and Dan failed to birdie 17, Paul was declared the 2017 Myrtle Beach Birdie Champion.



We finished up on 18 and quickly loaded up the car. We headed back to the hotel room for quick showers and to finish packing, leaving behind only a few items in the refrigerator.



While we were a bit rushed, we still made it to the airport in plenty of time for our flights. We were so rushed that Scott didn't bother filling up the gas in the rental car, but the rental company never charged Dan's credit card for the fill-up. We made the quick hop to Charlotte and then everybody went their separate ways home with chatter already starting of a return to Vegas for MBBC XXII...