

Paul S. Rovner

From: Paul S. Rovner
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2015 4:38 PM
To: 'pennstatecpa@yahoo.com'
Subject: FW: MBBC XIX Trip Report

From: Scott [mailto:nittanylion96@hotmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2015 3:58 PM
To: Dan Hoelke; Eric A. Drossner; Paul S. Rovner; Scott
Subject: MBBC XIX Trip Report

It was a relatively quick turnaround from the 2014 MBBC to the 2015 MBBC. After Scott Woods caused a schedule change in 2014 due to the birth of his daughter Emma, the MBBC returned to its rightful place in mid-May. The group was actually a bit slow in booking the courses. The group was disappointed to learn that it would not be able to stay at the Barefoot Resorts Yacht Club as they were advised that the Yacht Club requires reservations of an entire week. The decision was made to switch to The Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, and there would be no complaints. The decision was also made to fly into Myrtle Beach as early as possible and play 2 rounds on Day 1 in order to avoid the traditional grind of 3 consecutive days of 36 holes. Therefore, Eric Drossner and Paul Rovner initially booked direct flights on U.S. Air from Philadelphia to Myrtle Beach. Dan Hoelke made arrangements to fly to Myrtle through Philadelphia with Drossner and Rovner. Scott Woods found a good rate out of Washington, D.C. but would be leaving at the ungodly hour of 5:45. A little more than a month before the trip, Drossner and Rovner learned that their flight to Myrtle Beach had been canceled. A quick change was made with Drossner and Rovner now flying directly on Spirit. Hoelke made new arrangements to fly through Charlotte where he would meet up with Woods. The players saw each other about 2 months before the MBBC, when they met up in Pittsburgh to attend NCAA tournament games. There had been discussions of playing a warm-up round in Pittsburgh that weekend, but the players elected not to do so. It was on the drive from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh that Drossner decided that the 2016 MBBC, the 20th installment, would be held in Las Vegas. Scott Woods booked the rental vehicle via Hotwire through Sixt at a rate of \$300.00. Since the MBBC returned to May, there were very few warm-up rounds. For the first time in many years, Scott Woods did not play a single warm-up round. In fact, about a week before the MBBC, he took his clubs out of his travel bag for the first time since the 2014 tournament and hit a half a bucket of balls. Woods seemed more focused on umpiring baseball games. Paul Rovner, who got a new set of clubs in the fall for his 40th birthday, played only one round of golf, but went to the range numerous times. During his one warm-up round, Rovner broke a window in a house with an errant drive. Dan Hoelke only played twice. As usual, Eric Drossner was the most prepared as he played a handful of times, including the day before the trip.

Woods and Hoelke woke at 2:45 a.m. in order to drive to the airport for their flights. Woods had to make the 40 minute drive to Washington, D.C. Hoelke's wife insisted on driving him to the airport (a decision that would cause problems later) and his son Jake made the trip as well since he woke up early that morning. Rovner and Drossner had the luxury of waking up at a somewhat more respectable hour. Woods and Hoelke met up in Charlotte before Drossner and Rovner even left Philadelphia. They made their connection to Myrtle Beach with the usual concern about whether or not their clubs also made the transfer. The 50 minute flight to Myrtle Beach was uneventful. Woods, who had failed to change his seat so that he would be sitting next to Hoelke was able to switch seats with a woman, so that they could do so. Behind them, a couple of idiots were amazed that the plane went over the Atlantic Ocean before turning back to land in Myrtle Beach and insisted that they could see

dolphins, which Woods and Hoelke highly doubt. There had been some discussion of Woods and Hoelke grabbing the rental vehicle before Rovner and Drossner arrived, but the the flight from Philadelphia actually landed shortly after the flight from Charlotte, so the foursome was able to hook up in the terminal. Woods revealed his latest t-shirt creation, memorializing all the years that he finished in second place:





All bags and golf clubs made it to Myrtle Beach, and the group made the short walk to the rental car building, where Woods picked up the keys and made the very smart decision to waive any additional insurance coverage. For some strange reason, Woods was also advised that the rental company had been unable to fill the gas tank, so they were left with 1/8 of a tank of gas. The group found and loaded the rental car without incident for the first time in several years. They piled into the mini-van in their usual positions and were off to the opening round at the Wachesaw Plantation Club. The trip to the opening round was a bit confusing for the group. Normally, they stop off at a fast food restaurant for lunch before hitting the links, but they arrived so early that there was no need to stop. They found the Wachesaw Plantation Club with little difficulty. The plan was to play Wachesaw East in the afternoon. Dan Hoelke had already contacted Wachesaw East to discuss the late afternoon round and was told they really didn't have any tee times after 2:30, but that we could probably work something out. Despite numerous requests, Eric Drossner made little effort to set up the afternoon round. It was thought that the 2 Wachesaw courses were affiliated, but the players were advised in the clubhouse that the courses were not linked in any way. So the group decided to play the opening round and deal with scheduling the afternoon round when they were finished. The tee time for the opening round was 11:00,

the first available for non-members. Because the players had arrived so early, they had approximately 45 minutes to hit balls at the driving range and use the practice chipping and putting greens.

Friday, May 15, 2015

Finally, the group was sent off the 1st tee and the 2015 Myrtle Beach Birdie Championship was officially underway. As usual, there had been numerous discussions about when the first birdie would be fired and how many birdies would be made in the opening round. Many were concerned that the lack of warm-up rounds would translate into fewer birdies. As usual, the opening salvo came sooner than many expected. The 4th hole was a 442 yard, fairly straight Par 5, which some had eyed as a birdie opportunity. Scott Woods had been playing fairly well in the first few holes, as he was hitting fairways and greens, but was struggling on the putting green. On the fourth hole, he found the fairway with a decent drive and was left with just under 200 yards to the green with the pin in the front. Woods hit a solid 4-iron that ran up to the front fringe leaving him approximately 20 feet for eagle. Woods hit only a fair putt onto the green and drained the two foot birdie putt to open the scoring. Once known for going back-to-back, Woods had not done so in many years. That drought ended on the Par 4 5th hole, when Woods' hit his approach shot to no more than 5 feet and made his second birdie of the day. Woods' play pretty much fell apart shortly after his second birdie. Things were relatively quiet as the foursome finished up the front nine. All players grabbed a hot dog and chips at the turn and Woods and Hoelke decided it was also time to start drinking and bought 6-packs of beer. There has been a theory for many years that Hoelke plays better while drinking or hungover. That theory may have been proven during the 2015 MBBC. 4 holes and at least 3 beers later, Hoelke would get on the board. The Par 5 13th hole was a 3-shotter. Hoelke hit a decent drive, a solid second shot and then a wedge to 10-12 feet. He drained the putt for his opening birdie. Paul Rovner joined the party just 3 holes later, on the Par 4 16th hole. Rovner hit a poor tee shot but hammered a 3 hybrid from about 200 yards out. His ball rolled at least 50 yards onto the green before coming to rest 5 feet from the hole. Rovner drained the putt for birdie, leaving only the defending champion without a mark. The round ended without anymore fireworks, as the players seemed to begin to tire after an early morning. So, after 1 round of the MBBC, the scoreboard was Woods - 2, Hoelke - 1, Rovner, - 1, Drossner - 0.

The plan had been to head directly to Wachesaw East for the second round of the day. However, a quick phone call to the course nixed that plan, as they advised that they had no more tee times available. There was a quick discussion about alternatives and the group decided on the underrated Arrowhead and a 3:50 tee time was arranged. Woods had absolutely no idea how to get to Arrowhead from Wachesaw, so Hoelke used the iPhone directions app to guide him. Heavy traffic forced Drossner to use his Wayze app to find a detour. The group arrived shortly before their tee time. Off their usual eating schedule, all of the players grabbed hotdogs or sandwiches in the Arrowhead clubhouse. Hoelke also grabbed some more beer, although it would not be as effective for the afternoon round. The group was sent off the Cypress nine. The early play was encouraging as there were numerous pars, but birdie chances went begging. Woods had his annual blow-up on the Par 4 4th hole, chunking 3-4 balls into the water on his second shot and generously giving himself a 9 on the hole. Hoelke and Drossner played well throughout the round, but simply could not convert any birdie opportunities. Woods grabbed more beer at the turn, as the group headed to the Waterways nine. More beer didn't seem to help. No one was able to birdie and the group's most recent consecutive courses birdie streak came to an end. The scoreboard unfortunately remained the same as it had after the opening round. The foursome was the last group on the course and had little trouble finding their mini-van in the parking lot.

Everyone was starving after a long day, and the easy decision was made to eat at Outback. There was some concern of a long wait on a Friday night, but those concerns turned out to be misplaced. The group was seated quickly. Bread, Outback specials and beers were ordered all around, although Woods had about two sips of his beer. Everyone enjoyed their dinner and it was very clear that there was no chance of going out. After dinner, the group headed to the drop box for their new accommodations. All along, Woods and Hoelke had been under the impression that they needed to pick up the keys for the condo, as with Barefoot. Drossner, who was not

particularly forthcoming with information, finally informed them that they were not picking up the key because the condo is in a hotel-like setting with a front desk. They did, however, need to pick up the golf vouchers at the drop box; or so Drossner thought... The group made it to the dropbox, but found nothing for them. Drossner contacted the package provider, but reached a less than helpful man, who informed Drossner that he would need to make some phone calls and get back to him. The foursome decided to hit a grocery store before heading to the condo. They bought the usual supplies, but for the first time in MANY years, decided NOT to buy any beer.



Drossner received a return phone from the guy who was supposed to be manning the desk for the package provider and he advised that someone would deliver the golf vouchers to the hotel front desk the next day. Drossner was concerned about whether or not the group would be able to play at Barefoot the next, but it would turn out to not be a problem. The group didn't actually make it into their condo until close to 11:00 p.m. Upon reaching the condo, they were surprised to find what might be considered a slight upgrade from the Barefoot condos. There was something of a dilemma. There were 3 bedrooms. Two of the rooms had king

beds, while one of the bedrooms had 2 double beds. After some discussions, Hoelke and Rovner claimed the king beds breaking up the traditional room pairings and leaving Woods and Drossner to room together for the first time in MBBC history. Everyone showered and lights were out very quickly with 36 more holes the next day and an ambitious plan to go out.

Saturday, May 16, 2015

Due to the fact that the group was not staying at Barefoot, they had to wake up slightly earlier than usual for their traditional Saturday rounds at Barefoot. They made the still relatively short drive to their favorite venue. They were checked in with no problem despite not yet having the vouchers. They were the first group off of the Fazio course. Efforts to birdie the elusive first hole were unsuccessful. The first birdie of the day would come on one of the most frustrating holes of the MBBC, the 442 yard Par 5 4th hole. It is a relatively short, straight-forward Par 5 that the group struggles to birdie. Paul Rovner hit a good tee and an excellent second shot to just short of the green. He hit a solid chip to approximately 5 feet and sank the putt for his second birdie of the trip tying Woods atop the leader board. Eric Drossner would finally get on the board on the Par 3 8th hole firing his tee shot to about 8 feet and sinking the putt. Things got very exciting just 3 holes later on the Par 3 11th hole. Hoelke, Drossner and Rovner hit solid shots onto the green leaving 3 quality birdie opportunities, with Rovner inside of 3 feet.



Hoelke was unable to convert. Drossner drained his putt to briefly take the lead by virtue of the tiebreaker, before 30 seconds later, Rovner moved back into the lead by making his putt. Things were relatively quiet over

the next few holes with no strikes. One of the more attractive cart girls in recent memory (name unknown) made an appearance as the group's opening round came to a close. Woods was able to snap a picture of her, which became something of a theme for the trip.



Eric Drossner continued his uncanny mastery of Tom Fazio's Par 3's and the Par 3 16th hole, a hole that had not previously been birdied by the group. Drossner through a strike inside of 10 feet and made another putt for his 3rd birdie of the round, making him -3 on the Fazio Par 3's. The next hole would yield the group's 6th birdie of the round. Scott Woods hit a massive drive, but a less than stellar approach to the green leaving himself more than 25 feet. Drossner took Woods to school on his putt, and Woods learned his lesson and drained the putt. There were no birdies on the 18th hole, which has had its share of fireworks in years past. Therefore, after 3 seemingly quick rounds, the scoreboard was Drossner - 3, Woods - 3, Rovner - 3, Hoelke - 1.

Despite something of a consensus to eat lunch and play the second round fairly quickly, the group agreed that a trip to Martin's (actually known as, PGA Superstore) was in order. Everyone bought boxes of balls with Woods still using the gist card he received from the other members for his 40th birthday. Woods also bought ball markers for his "nephews" Nate and Jake Hoelke. The return trip to Barefoot was halted once again by the drawbridge. The crew finally made it back to the Barefoot clubhouse for a pretty good lunch and the traditional group bathroom "sit down." They were back out on their favorite course, Barefoot Love, shortly after 1:00 p.m. For the first time in MBBC history, the group was sent off the 10th hole on Barefoot, which was somewhat disconcerting, since it they were not playing it in the traditional order and since it meant a longer wait for the 4th hole. The benefit to playing the back nine first was that the 4th would be the group's second favorite hole, the short Par 5 13th hole, known to the group only as The Bridges. Each player was actually able to hit decent tee shots in play, keeping hopes for birdie alive.







Unfortunately, second shots were less than impressive and no birdies were converted. In fact, there were no birdies on the first 9 holes, prompting Woods and Hoelke to start drinking and get an early jump on the evening's festivities. Alcohol would once again assist Hoelke in making birdie and he found the mark on the Par 4 1st hole. Efforts on the driveable Par 4 4th hole were somewhat disappointing. Drossner hit a solid shot near the green, Hoelke hit his tee ball through a hole in the brick wall that he wasn't able to find, Riovner shanked his shot right and Woods hit an elephant's ass that found the fairway. There would be no birdies and the group suddenly realized that with MBBC XX expected to be held in Las Vegas, it would be 2 years before they had another shot at Love #4. There were no birdies the rest of the round, which suddenly raised questions about why the group thinks the Love course is so easy, when the stats suggest they actually struggle on it. In any event, halfway through MBBC XIX, the scoreboard was as follows: Drossner - 3, Woods - 3, Rovner - 3, Hoelke - 2.

The foursome made the quick trip back to their condo at Grande Dunes and despite being somewhat tired from 4 rounds of golf in 2 days, were excited for their annual trip to Broadway. Drossner got the golf vouchers at the front desk. Everyone showered and called a cab for the trip to Broadway. The players were optimistic about an eventful evening, but there were also concerns that those plans could come crashing down, as each was on the edge of exhaustion after 2 long days of travel and golf. The evening got off to a relatively slow start. The group had some difficulty agreeing on a place to eat. There was some talk about eating at Amici's, an Italian place that the group has generally liked, but ultimately they agreed to eat at Good Time Charley's, where they were hoping to "run into" Caitlyn, a waitress from the previous year, whom Woods and Hoelke were pretty big fans of. Unfortunately, the group was informed that Caitlyn was no longer working there. The group sat on the outside deck and was unfortunately waited on by a dude. The food was okay and the foursome nursed a couple of beers. There was still the potential for plans to fall apart, but the group rallied and made the short walk to Crocodile Rocks in their search for their all-time favorite waitress/bartender, Arica. The crew paid the

ridiculous \$10 cover. Crocodile Rocks was crowded, but not overly so, and the group was able to find standing room not far from the entrance and the front bar. Woods and Hoelke grabbed a round of beers from the front bar and quickly made friends with the bartender, Mallory.





Woods and Hoelke found her name to be very funny, because of Mallory from Family Ties, and when they tried to explain the connection to her, she pretended to understand the joke, but also admitted that she wasn't born until after the show went off the air. She still tolerated Woods' and Hoelke's frequent shouts of "Yo, Mallory!" Mallory is originally from southern Maryland and like a good bartender, she pretended to be interested in the fact that Woods is also from Maryland. Rovner didn't like the beer that Woods had picked out for him, so Woods "returned" it to Mallory, who was kind enough to change beers at no charge, only adding to her credentials for the group's bartender/waitress of the year. Mallory was very friendly and provided numerous drinks. At one point, Drossner complained that he wasn't getting drunk from beers, and the decision was made to get shooters although there was no consensus on what shooters to get. Woods and Hoelke turned to Mallory who made White Tic Tacs, which were pretty good. Later, Woods ordered a round of Orange Tic Tacs, which were not as good, but still did their job. Things got more and more interesting as the evening progressed. The group basically watched the show and people-watched for a while. Hoelke was especially taken by the t-shirt of one of people at the bar, so Woods jumped in for a quick picture.



As usual, there were numerous bachelorette parties at the bar. For some reason, Woods was especially intrigued by a group that gathered near them. The group was not especially attractive, but they were quickly approached and "talked-up" by a crew of "preppy" guys. Woods found it funny that at some point, the bachelorette group seemed to lose interest in the younger, preppy guys that they'd had shots with and seemed to show more interest in the 40-year-old + members of the MBBC. Woods was even somewhat concerned that there might be a "rumble" with the preppy guys for "moving in" on their territory, but those concerns turned out to be unfounded. The leader of the bachelorette group was from Boston and according to Drossner and Hoelke was pretty annoying, as she argued with Hoelke about the Steelers and Patriots. For reasons not entirely clear, she did cheer during the playing of the Penn State fight song in the latest money grab by the bartenders. Woods was intrigued by a member of another bachelorette party.



Towards the end of the evening, the members of the MBBC experienced their first true celebrity sighting in their 19 years of traveling to Myrtle Beach. A large, older gentlemen entered the bar and was quickly escorted to a VIP table near the stage. While not as recognizable as he had been in his prime, rumors began to spread quickly that it was wrestling star Ric Flair. Not really needing another excuse to talk to Mallory, Woods confirmed with her that it was in fact Flair. She claimed that he comes once or twice a year as he knows the owners and lives in the Wilmington, North Carolina area. As word began to spread, a chorus of never-ending WOOOOOO's rang out throughout the bar. About an hour later, Flair came on stage and gave the members of the MBBC yet another memorable moment from Crocodile Rocks, as he took the stage to address the crowd and request The Pussy Song. Whether he was drunk or had taken too many shots to the head during his wrestling career or some combination of both, Flair's speech was eerily reminiscent of Joe Namath's "I want to kiss you" interview with Suzy Kolber on Monday Night Football many years ago. His speech was captured on video, but this writer does not have the computer skills to link it to this report.



Dan Hoelke went to great lengths to transcribe Flair's now in-famous speech:

"You know what...there comes a time.....You know...This guy and I have been friends for a long time. You know what. (inaudible) Their songs (Inaudible).....and you know what...We've been here for Bachelor Parties...We've been here for parties.. These guys are my friends , I love them...it's the best nightclub in the United States of America. And why I say that is because, and I'll tell you this, you know....if you're a single guy, if you're a single guy, you can't get laid in this place, you have no.....(inaudible). It's a good crew in here man. And they all come to get laid...you ready to go....Have a good time, guys...I love you guys...I want a say, I love you guys....But my favorite song, which nobody wants to hear....it's called I dedicate to my one girlfriend Miss Noran, is the one pussy song. Now guys....WOOOOO. Hey guys, guys...rock it out, have fun, get laid...don't drink and drive. Okay.."

Flair left the stage to an extended chorus of WOOO's and left the bar shortly thereafter. The players hung around Crocodile Rocks for a while longer, but finally decided it was time to go, but not before they made one last stop at Revolutions to check and see if Arica was still there. She was, looking as good as ever, but was

busier then ever. Woods was able to go into his annual creepy-guy mode with Arica and convince her to take the yearly picture with Hoelke (although no one really seems to know why Hoelke is the one who always gets to be close to her).



The group headed back to the condo, and chowed down on some of the junk food they'd obtained the day before. Drossner was especially pleased that Woods had made the decision to buy microwave popcorn. After a long day and an eventful night, the players headed to bed with a "rest" day scheduled for Sunday.

Sunday, May 17, 2015

The decision to play 2 rounds on Day 1 was to create something of a "rest" in the middle of the trip and avoid 3 straight days of 36 holes. So, the group had scheduled just a single round for Sunday. Normally, the group plays as early as possible, but they agreed to schedule Sunday's round for a little later, especially since they knew they would be going out the night before. The extra sleep was pretty helpful, as everyone awoke in relatively good shape after a fairly long evening of drinking. Despite being a little tired and sore, the group was looking forward to returning to one of their favorite venues, International World Tour. They were also looking forward to a relaxing afternoon off the golf course for the first time in MANY years. They made the drive to IWT, a route that Woods was completely unfamiliar with, and upon arriving, almost immediately realized that something was amiss. They learned that IWT had shut down its International 9, leaving only the Open and Championship 9's. It was not a big deal to the group as they preferred the remaining holes anyway, but it was a sign of things to come. IWT simply didn't have the country club feel the MBBC had experienced in 2 prior visits and it quickly became clear that the course has fallen on hard times. The players were able to hit balls at

the range and on the putting green and were sent off the Championship 9. However, because of the changes the course has undergone, the group was sent to play the 9th hole of the old International 9 as its first hole in place of the Championship 9's first hole. The course was in terrible shape and temperatures began to climb somewhat and the players quickly became frustrated with the exception of Drossner, who ignored the distractions and played an impressive round of golf. Woods was distracted on the second and third holes by phone calls from his wife, who was in wonderful mood because someone had come to the house to buy Woods' television that he had advertised on Craig's List and Woods was not really able to answer the specific questions that his wife had for him about the television, since he was in South Carolina and not at home. There were a few birdie opportunities over the first 9 holes, but no one was able to convert. The 9th green was in especially bad shape, and the course overall was lacking its pristine conditions. The group made the turn to the Open 9, which features the 1st and 18th holes from St. Andrews. On the first tee, the group posed for a photo by the course's photographer. Woods would fall victim to the picture scam as he bought the picture for \$20 when the photographer presented it to them on the final hole. Eric Drossner continued his stellar play on the St. Andrews first hole, by stuffing a wedge to approximately 8 feet and converting the birdie. There would be no more birdies the rest of the round, and Eric Drossner would go on to fire an impressive 77 for the round. After a pretty poor experience overall, the players agreed that they would likely not be returning to International World Tour. After 5 rounds the scoreboard was as follows: Drossner - 4, Woods - 3, Rovner -3, Hoelke - 2.

There was some debate about where to go for lunch, and the group made the fantastic decision to eat at the Grande Dunes clubhouse. They relaxed and enjoyed another solid meal, before heading back to the condo. They relaxed in the condo for a while, before heading to the pool for the first time in MANY years. The pool was relatively warm for mid-May. The players quickly realized that they hadn't brought a football to play with in the pool, but made do with a frisbee.



They moved to the hot tub for a little while, but that was a bit too hot and they finally ended up relaxing in lounge chairs, where Woods and Drossner dozed off briefly.



The players headed back to the room and relaxed some more before showering and deciding where to go out for dinner. They finally agreed on Benito's Brick Oven Pizza & Pasta in North Myrtle Beach near Barefoot. There was an extensive debate about what to order and who would share with whom, before they were finally able to put their orders in. During the dinner, there was some discussion about whether the "rest" day had worked out as the players had hoped and if it would have any positive affects on play the rest of the trip. Only Drossner claimed that he didn't feel any less tired then he did in previous years. The rest of the players agreed that the opportunity to play only once and to relax at the pool all afternoon made a world of difference in at least how they felt physically. Drossner seems to believe that a reduction in the number of rounds that will be played will

come sooner than the rest of the players think. Benito's proved to be a solid selection and everyone seemed relatively pleased with their dinner. The trip to North Myrtle Beach also gave the group the excuse to stop for ice cream at Painters Ice Cream in North Myrtle Beach, which they had discovered the year before. Rovner and Hoelke were excited to talk up the owner who claims to have gone to Penn State and who, for reasons not entirely clear to this writer, annoys the crap out of Woods. Ice cream proved to be a fitting end to the group's "rest" day.



The players headed back to the condo, watched some Sunday Night Baseball and Naked and Afraid before heading to bed in their respective rooms, with just 3 rounds of gold left in the 2014 MBBC.

Monday, May 18, 2015

The group had agreed to stick with the True Blue/Caledonia combination for the second consecutive year. What had previously only been on the schedule every other year has suddenly become a mainstay on the schedule as the players have agreed that they should play the combo on an annual basis. After the "rest" day, the group had little trouble waking up for the long trip to True Blue for round 6 of the tournament. True Blue was pretty crowded. The group got there early enough to stripe some balls at the driving range before they were sent off as the first group off the front nine. Play on the opening hole (rated the hardest hole on the course) was actually pretty solid as there were some decent looks at birdie that were not converted and the group played hole collectively at +1. There were decent birdie opportunities at several holes on the front nine including the Par 3 3rd, the Par 4 5th and the Par 3 7th, but no one was able to convert. While not playing terribly, Dan Hoelke was frustrated by his play on the front nine and once again turned to alcohol. The True Blue cart girl Angel, who appeared to live up to her white-trash name was good from afar but far from good.



However, Angel was friendly, and her service of whiskey to Hoelke would pay immediate dividends. Hoelke fired a wedge to inside of 5 feet on the difficult Par 5 10th hole and sank the birdie no more than 5 minutes after being served. Angel seemed pleased that her service had paid off for Hoelke, although it did not prove true again the second time around for Woods and Hoelke. There were several other birdie opportunities on the back nine, but no conversions, leading some to question whether the "rest" day had actually had the desired effect. The scoreboard with 2 rounds remaining was: Drossner - 4, Woods - 3, Rovner - 3, Hoelke - 3, with Paul Rovner looking to make a move in the afternoon at his suddenly new favorite course, Caledonia.

The group had lunch in the True Blue clubhouse, which was good as usual and Woods and Hoelke continued the flow of alcohol. They then headed over to Caledonia, which was fairly crowded. They had a decent wait

for their tee time, which allowed them to "sit down and relax." Woods met up with the fairly attractive bag-drop girl who had unloaded the group's clubs the year before and recommended the Island Bar & Grill for the group to eat lunch and watch football. Woods had never learned or forgotten her name the year before and was excited to learn her name. He believes he expressed that excitement to her without creeping her out too much. The group was somewhat disappointed to be sent off the back 9, which meant that they would finish on the short Par 3 9th hole, which only Drossner seems to be able to play well. The players generally struggled in the afternoon overall. Birdie opportunities were few and far between and those that did come up went begging. However, Paul Rovner would affirm his newfound love for Caledonia on the Par 4 1st hole (the group's 10th hole). Rovner actually hit a very poor tee shot and ended up in the rough. However, Rovner absolutely stuffed his second shot to approximately 1 foot and was able to drain the putt to suddenly move even with Drossner at the top of the leaderboard, although in second place because of the tiebreaker rule. The players limped to through the final 9 with no further birdies and Caledonia became the 4th consecutive course on the trip to feature only a single birdie. Woods and Drossner fired their worst 9 hole scores on the front 9 (the group's back 9) lending more evidence to Drossner's anti-rest day position. And the leaderboard heading into the final day was crowded and left all players with an opportunity to win the title: Drossner - 4, Rovner - 4, Woods - 3, Hoelke - 3, although with the way the group was playing, it seemed that the title was Drossner's to take once again.

Shortly after leaving the Caledonia parking lot, Woods was heading back to the condo, when a bird suddenly flew right in front of the mini-van and Woods was unable to avoid hitting the bird. There was no damage to the vehicle, but it was a strange event. The group made the long drive back to the condo and mini-rallied to go out to dinner at Carolina Roadhouse. Hoelke was very impressed at Woods' immediate recollection that Carolina Roadhouse was where the group made the fateful decision to play 54 holes in one day in August several years prior. Seemingly like many things over the years, Carolina Roadhouse would not be able to live up to the players' memories. The group was generally disappointed with their dinners and the quality of the barbeque. They headed back to the condo with lights out relatively early before the final round.

Tuesday, May 19, 2015

The final round would feature a return to what was once one of the group's favorite courses, Grande Dunes. The group had played it 2 years before and was disappointed by some of the changes in the course conditions and the removal of the GPS devices in the carts. That had lead the group to not play Grande Dunes in 2014. However, Eric Drossner pushed for the group to give their beloved Dunes a second chance and everyone agreed. It also helped that that was where the group was staying, which would be convenient for getting to the airport. The crew thought they would have the chance to hit some balls at the range, but apparently range balls are no longer complimentary or at least need to be picked up at the clubhouse. The players warmed up on the putting and chipping greens before being the pace setters off the 1st hole. Eric Drossner seemingly put the champagne on ice on the Par 4 3rd hole, when he fired his approach to inside of 10 feet and converted his birdie moving him to 1 ahead of Rovner and 2 ahead of Woods and Hoelke with the champion's tiebreaker. Things were relatively quiet the rest of the front nine. No one was playing too poorly, but no one was playing very well either. Efforts on the short Par 4 6th hole were disappointing. Woods and Drossner hit bombs, but proceeded to chunk their approaches. The group had to wait for a while on the Par 5 7th hole, as they must have been playing too quickly and the grounds crew was still cutting the greens and moving the holes. After a somewhat annoying wait, the hole was reset and the group pressed on. The Par 3 8th hole remained completely frustrating to the group and still has not been birdied. And so it seemed that the MBBC would feature yet another anticlimactic victory for Drossner as the rest of the players would peter out and fail to make a final day charge. However, things took a bit a turn on the Par 4 9th hole. Woods found the fairway with a bomb of a drive. He skulled his second shot, but it hit the hill in front of the green and rolled to approximately 8 feet. Woods was unable to make the birdie putt (actually hitting a pretty poor putt), but it seemed to energize him for the final 9 holes. In fact, on the very next hole, the difficult Par 4, 10th, Woods hit another solid driver and then fired a dart to 5 feet, which he drained to move into a tie for second place. Woods

would then go back-to-back for the second time on the trip, as he fired his tee shot to inside of 3 feet on the Par 3, 11th hole. However, Drossner hit his shot to approximately 6 feet, and also made birdie to keep the distance between him and Woods. The Par 5 13th hole would once again prove to be a final day disappointment for Woods as it had been several years prior. Clearly in a groove off the tee, Woods crushed another drive into the valley giving him the opportunity to find the green in 2. Woods hit a solid 5-wood approach, but was slightly off line and ended up with a somewhat awkward chip to the green. Once again, Woods' touch eluded him and he was unable to get up and down for birdie. Woods continued to play well over the next few holes with decent birdie chances on 15 and 16, that he could not convert. Hoelke and Rovner were eliminated and as the group turned to the Par 5 17th hole, Woods would need to birdie 17 and 18 and have Drossner fail to birdie in order to win the title. Having birdied the 17th hole on 2 prior occasions, Woods had some confidence. His drive once again found the fairway and Woods was in position to at least get close to the green in 2. Woods initially picked out his 5-wood, but due to a bit of a tail wind, moved down to his 4 iron. He hit a solid shot which chased onto the front of the green and left him with 15 feet for eagle. Woods hit an absolutely awful eagle putt, as for the second time on the trip he left an eagle opportunity well short. Woods stepped up and drained the 4 footer for birdie becoming the first player in MBBC history to stave off elimination. Woods also became the last member of the group to fire 3 birdies in a single round. Woods moved to the 18th tee with an opportunity to steal the title with another birdie. Woods' chances of stealing the title would end fairly quickly. Woods crushed another driver, but went to far right and near the Woods. Despite the removal of several trees on the hole over the years, Woods had no angle to the green and was forced to punch out. He was not able to chip in from 45 yards away and Eric Drossner captured yet another title. The final scoreboard showed: Drossner - 6, Woods - 6, Rovner - 4, Hoelke - 3.

The players headed back to the condo with time to take quick showers and pack before heading to the airport. Because of the changes in Rovner and Drossner's flights, they had moved their departure up from 4:00 to 2:30. Woods and Hoelke remained on the 4:00 flights out of Myrtle Beach and flights home would prove to be difficult for them. Woods dropped off Rovner and Drossner, so they could get through security and have lunch at Shake Shack/Steak N Shake before their flights. Woods dropped off the rental car without incident. In addition to the bird strike, Woods was concerned about a small crack in the front windshield that he was fairly certain was not there when he picked up the car. As of the writing of this report, Sixt has not made any demand for property damage of Woods, so it would appear any damage was not discovered or has been written off (because that's what they do, because they're the ones who are writing it off.) Rovner and Drossner made their flights and headed to Charlotte leaving Woods and Hoelke to kill time in the airport. Hoelke spent much of that time trying to interpret the Ric Flair speech with some success. Woods used his time differently.



Woods and Hoelke had lunch at the Mexican restaurant and waited for their flight. As the time for their flight approached, the airport began reporting delays, but the plane did finally arrive. The plane was boarded, but shortly after boarding the pilot advised the passengers that there was a weather stop in Charlotte and they could not leave until that stop was lifted. Rovner and Drossner were in Charlotte and reported no such stop as they had boarded their flights home to Philadelphia. There was a slight delay for them in Charlotte, but they were able to depart for Philadelphia, while Woods and Hoelke remained in Myrtle Beach. In fact, the plane, which had pushed back from the gate, actually returned to the gate and passengers were given the option of getting off the plane. Woods and Hoelke were concerned about making their connecting flights and Woods even briefly considered getting off the plane renting a car and driving home through the night. Hoelke decided to get on the phone with U.S. Air to see if they could make alternate arrangements for his connecting flight. All flights appeared to be full and it appeared that Hoelke would be staying overnight in Charlotte. Somehow Hoelke was able to get a confirmed seat on the last flight to Pittsburgh, although he was still unsure if this would prove to be true. Woods and Hoelke's flight to Charlotte was finally able to leave approximately 2 hours late. They were

further delayed in when they landed in Charlotte because there was no gate for the plane to go to. Hoelke was holding out hope that he could make an earlier connection to Pittsburgh, but the delay cost him an chance of doing so. Hoelke was able to confirm his seat on the last flight to Pittsburgh. Because of his wife's decision to drive him to the airport, Woods had to contact his dad to come and pick him up in Pittsburgh, when his flight landed around midnight. Woods was able to get put on standby for the last flight to Washington, D.C. and the attendants seemed fairly confident that Woods would get a seat. Woods and Hoelke grabbed a bite to eat and then waited Woods' gate for him to be called to board. Woods was finally called and was able to board and head home. Hoelke's adventure was far from over. Hoelke went to his gate ready to finally head home, but his flight was delayed even more because there was no flight crew. A flight crew was reportedly on its way. As Hoelke waited even longer, he suddenly developed an uncontrollable nosebleed and paramedics had to be called to the gate to assist him. The bleeding was stopped after approximately 25 minutes and a flight crew finally arrived. Hoelke finally boarded and arrived home to Pittsburgh at 1:15 a.m., where his dad was waiting to pick him up and the 2015 Myrtle Beach Birdie Championship FINALLY came to an end.

Plans for the 2016 MBBC are already in full swing. There had long been suggestions by this writer that the group should "celebrate" major anniversaries by going to different locations such as Arizona, Las Vegas and eventually Ireland or Scotland. Those suggestions were generally met with rather tepid responses, until Eric Drossner announced after traveling to Pittsburgh that the 2016 tournament, the groups' 20th, would be held in Las Vegas. Drossner's announcement has spurred a wave of planning and discussions with still more than 10 months until the trip. Woods has already contacted a booking agents, the week has all but been selected and the tournament has already been dubbed MBBC XX - Vegas Vacation. Numerous details still need to be worked out, but the countdown has begun and Vegas fever is already in full swing.