

2009 ECI Champion's Corner Questionnaire
With Marc Zirolli and 2008 champion, John Dailey

1. John, you've always had a competitive fire. The ECI was one of your "majors" that you just had to have. Now that you've won it – now a defending champion – what is your outlook now that the monkey is off your back?

JD: Well Marc, first let me start by saying thanks for the interview. I've always enjoyed reading previous "Champions Corners" with the likes of Nick Turczak, Brian Gill, and Ken Dargon, so it's an absolute thrill for me to answer this year. With regards to your question, yes the monkey is off my back, and that will allow me to really enjoy my return this year as defending champion, but I still want to play some good golf, and it's still a goal of mine to win the 2009 ECI. I feel like I'm a proven winner, but I think there are more titles out there for me if I can play well.

2. Do you have the same outlook as Tiger Woods? In other words, including the ECI as a "major," is it important to you to win as many majors as possible between the ECI and the CSGA during your career?

JD: Not necessarily, I mean the ECI is a great event, and it's a personal major for me, but it's not on the same level as a state amateur, or New England Public Links etc. All the guys in the field know it. The ECI is a real highlight on our schedules, but if you ask any one of the 16 players in the field, there's no question they would all like to be in contention at a state major championship or USGA major championship before this.

3. Do you consider Nick Turczak's three-peat at the ECI a legacy of this young, yet very popular, tournament? Has he set the standard?

JD: No question. Nick is a great player and he really raised the bar after his three-year run. I think if anything else, he elevated other players' games. I think after his third title, guys really wanted to come out and beat him. For me, it was more about my close misses than anything else. I finished 2nd in 2006 and 2007, and I knew a tournament title wasn't far off. Nick is a great player to have the event, he adds so much credibility to the golf tournament.

4. What do you think other ECI competitors think of you as a golfer post college? Does this affect you in any way on and off the golf course?

JD: I'm not sure what they think and I really don't care. I define my own goals, and I've worked 100 times harder on my game after graduating from Endicott. My college career really laid the groundwork for my improvements in golf. I had a great coach and great teammates around me. I learned etiquette, and how to

lose and win like a gentleman. I always worry about my own game and not what others think about the scores I shoot.

- 5.** As we approach the 7th annual ECI, at what level would you like to see this tournament in 5 years?

JD: Well, being on the advisory board to this tournament has really allowed me to connect with all of my former teammates, friends, and colleagues through the years. We're only 3 short years away from our 10th anniversary, and I'd like to see that become a two-day event, with hotels, fancy dinners, two galas, itineraries, guest speakers, the whole bit. Maybe even add four more players to the tournament. I'd also like the event to stay at Red Tail. I know in the past there has been some talk about finding a golf course closer to the greater Boston area, but I really love the Red Tail layout; they've been such gracious hosts for us through the years. This is a great event; one I look forward to every spring. I'd hate to see it fade away, and I don't think it will. We're starting to make a connection with Endicott's current golf program and the athletic department, so the event has a nice charitable tie to it as well!

- 6.** We are less than 3 weeks away from this event. How will you prepare? Please correlate to question number one as defending champion.

JD: Yeah, I mean it's a big event. I'm coming off a nice win over Marc Zirolli at the CT Match Play Challenge two weeks ago, and I feel like I'm playing some decent golf for so early in the season. Last year, the win really kick started a hot spring for me as I went on to play well in club tournaments down in Fairfield, and had a good summer with the CSGA and NEPGA events as well. I'm off to a wedding in NY this weekend, and I'll start to get focused next week, playing some rounds, practicing a bit, but during ECI week is when things heat up. I will try and get in 2 or 3 workouts that week, eat healthy, get some good sleep, and map out a game plan with regards to golf. I'll make sure I work on hitting different shots that set up for some of the holes at Red Tail, and I'll work on my short game as well that week. I know I'm traveling up to the greater Boston area Saturday morning, and we have the Par 3 contest that day and the Gala that evening, so it's a lot. I didn't even mention the press obligations that week as well. I'll make sure I'm as ready as I can be that week and we'll just see how it goes.

- 7.** In 2008, the ECI started to "give back." Last year's event was able to raise \$75 dollars for the Endicott College varsity golf team. Is it important to you, as a charter member of EC Golf (2000), to see this program continue to prosper?

JD: Yes, very important, as I alluded to this back in a previous question regarding the future of the tournament. I think the athletic department has finally found a leader for their golf program in Matt Hess. He's a great guy, with a tremendous background. I know when I was playing; I always appreciated the

free gear, and the moments on and off the course with my teammates. As years go by, and we all start to make a little more money (hopefully) I think we will be able to make a larger donation to the program. However, in this trying economy, I think it's nice that we can donate something back to the program, even if it's a small amount, and they appreciate it I'm sure.

8. Who will win the 2009 ECI?

JD: I'll keep that answer to myself!!

Thanks, John. We are looking forward to seeing you defend your title on May 3rd.
Thanks Marc!