

Red Tail Gears up for US Pub Links, but not before ECI makes it's Mark!

Devens, MA – Later next month, the Red Tail Golf Club, in conjunction with the USGA, will host the U.S. Public Links Women's Amateur Championship. While many on the Red Tail staff look forward to that important event, most look forward to a little tradition unlike any other making its way back to Central Massachusetts this weekend, the ECI. John Dailey also looks forward to his return as defending champion, with winning back to back titles on his mind. "I haven't had much time to think about it to be honest said Dailey on the phone over the weekend, but I will take this week to really soak up the atmosphere and enjoy my time here as defending champion. Many patrons are hoping the ECI committee puts the likes of Brian Gill, Nick Turczak, and John dailey all in one group to electrify the crowd early and often. "We have a full field again this year," said Marc Zirolli, co-tournament chairman. "If the weather is anything like it was this past weekend, we're in for a real treat on Sunday." Once again, a small donation will be made to the Endicott Golf team. Zirolli is pleased with the efforts of the players. Much like the PGA Tour, we're trying to send a "giveback" type of message making this tournament worth while for all involved. We're hoping that in 3 years, on our 10th anniversary that we will put on an event that the players won't soon forget; but, first things first. Will Ken Dargon return to the winners circle? Can Ken Tessier finally breakthrough? Will the likes of Craig Roderick, Derek Sharon, Josh Clark and Marc Zirolli be in contention on the back nine? We shall soon find out...

Players to Watch

John Dailey:

Dailey finally got the monkey off his back with an ECI crown in 2008, and looks to improve on a big season last year. "I'm going to free it up this weekend and have fun. The pressure is off now," said Dailey. "I'm going to have fun and see what happens. I'm certainly good enough to win, but I need to stay focused on the game plan, and enjoy the round!"

Ken Tessier:

Tessier's drowning of his golf ball on 18 back in 2008 dashed any hopes of winning his first ECI. Tessier flies in this year with a laundry list of injuries including a sprained wrist, ankle, and a jammed cock head. An injury he suffered while frolicking with long time friend and colleague Rich Nastasti recently on an AT trip to Myrtle Beach. "The pressure is on," said Tessier last week. "I would love to win this thing!"

Nick Turczak:

For the first time, Turczak comes into the event as a full time amateur, graduating from EC last spring. Turczak said that shouldn't change the way he's played over the years. "If anything, I don't have the little distractions anymore of being a college student such as girls, bong hits, beer pong, and school work. I am more focused than ever this week and I hope to get back to the winners circle."

Justin Mclear:

Mclear boasts a 70 in the Moses Brown Invitational to start the year, and says, "This is the best I've ever played coming into the ECI. I'm real excited about being here. This week is my only shot." Those are pretty confident words for a player who hasn't broken 80 in 6 previous starts at Red Tail. He would be a fan favorite to win this week though!

Matt Barnes:

Everyone is waiting for Barnes to win his first ECI, but some question his competitive fire this week. Barnes has been working with new swing coach Al Bundy in recent weeks and says he'll be ready to go this weekend.

Matt Davis:

Will Davis ever recover from the playoff loss of 2007? The 25-year-old certainly has the natural talent to make a lot of birdies and post a low number this weekend.

Alex Lawner:

Lawner can be sneaky and some think he's got a shot if he can keep his emotions in check this weekend. Lawner says he's on a new fitness program and likes his chances this weekend.

Carl Bean:

Bean is maybe the only one in the field who admits he's had a terrible spring, and in a text message last week, was quoted as saying he's playing like "Rich Beem on AIDS right now." Bean finished in the top 8 back in 2006, but that was his only round in the 80's in 6 previous tries.

Ken Dargon:

Dargon has joined the Granite Links Tour and has a new home in Bellingham, MA where he gets to work on his game quite a bit. By far the longest hitter in the field, Dargon looks to win his first crown since its inception back in 2003.

Marc Zirolli:

Zirolli is coming off another tough loss to John Dailey at the CT Match Play Challenge back in March, but said he's "close," whatever that means! Zirolli has been hitting the ball better of late, but many experts think he simply freezes up, and can't handle the pressure of an ECI. He looks to change all that this weekend.

Craig Roderick:

Roderick is back after a one-year layoff. He shot 86 at the Johnson and Wales Culinary Classic last weekend down in Rhode Island, and hopes to play his way into next year's championship, rather than receive a sponsor's invite. "I want to play this year," said Roderick last week. "I don't want to play poorly, and have to wait all year wondering if I'll be invited back or not."

Brian Gill:

Gill struggled in 2008 with an 81, but vows a better performance in 2009. Maybe the most gifted player in the field, if his ball striking is pure, he could run away with it.

Pete Woodward:

Woodward is battling a knee injury, but hopes this can save his season early on. He played in the Pinehurst Open back in late March, and struggled, but thinks he can compete this week if he limits the big number.

Josh Clark:

Clark has struggled in recent ECI's, but hopes to change that on Sunday.

Derek Sharon:

Now making residence in Chicago, Sharon hopes a flight instead of car ride doesn't hamper his play this weekend. Sharon shot a career low 87 back in 2007 and still thrives on his claim to fame, beating Marc Zirolli at the Endicup in 2001!

Matt Gajda:

No one has heard from Gadja, now playing out of Sea Island. Some question whether or not he's going to be here this week!