

Depleted Field at ECI, but Tradition Still Continues

Devens, MA – Was it a 36 hole, 10th anniversary letdown that has tournament director Marc Zirolli baffled why multiple players failed to return to the ECI in 2013? Or is it simply just bad timing with the championship being played two weeks later on the calendar? Time will tell, but Zirolli doesn't think this will detract from what he expects to be a great week in Central Massachusetts for the 11th edition of the Endicott Players Championship. "Listen, things come up for players, they set their own schedules and agendas," said Zirolli on media day a couple of weeks back in Hartford, CT. "That won't stop us from having a great week with a great field." The field includes defending champion Brian Gill, and three-time champions John Dailey and Nick Turczak. Not returning this year are 2010 runner-up Alex Lawner, Craig Roderick, Tim Byram, Pete Woodward, Jeff Barnhart, and Ken Tessier, who has come so close to winning so many years previously. "It just doesn't fit into my schedule this year. I have no further comment," said Tessier via a phone text message last week. Conditions should be the best players have ever seen in the ten years played, with greens being the optimal piece of eye candy. "This is what everyone kind of wanted," Justin McLear said via phone interview Saturday while out in Milwaukee celebrating competitor and friend Derek Sharron's wedding. "The extra two weeks gives the greens more time to heal from aeration, and hopefully the weather holds up." Defending champ Brian Gill comes in at top form recently playing in the Hooters CT Assistant Championship and making the cut with rounds of 74-75. Dailey won yet another CT Match Play Challenge defeating Marc Zirolli 7&6 in round 1 and brother Colin 2&1 in the finals. Will this be the year the likes of McLear, Davis, or Barnes break through? McLear is hopeful. "I've always wanted to win this championship. It's such a special week."

Players to Watch

Brian Gill:

Defending champion always on his "A game"

Nick Turczak:

Turczak thinks this could be the year he returns to the winners circle. Claims it's the hardest he's ever worked on his game.

Justin McLear:

McLear is 3 months removed from off-season hip surgery. McLear thinks his body is 100% ready to win this championship.

Matt Barnes:

Barnes still searching for his 1st ECI title

Matt Davis:

Davis was atop the leaderboard during round 1 of last year's ECI, but faded after carding an 8 on the finishing hole at Blackstone.

Carl Bean:

Out of jail and ready to re-commit to another ECI run.

Ken Dargon:

Dargon would love to add another ECI title to his resume.

Marc Zirolli:

Zirolli is struggling off the tee early in 2013, but hopes to have his game ready for a cinderella story at the 11th anniversary.

John Dailey:

Dailey hopes he can contend this week just despite being busy with basketball as he was named new varsity coach at Fairfield Ludlowe High School this off-season.

Josh Clark:

Was caught snooping out some butts at EC volleyball practice in the Post Center last week. Isn't sure if the law will allow him to play this week.

Derek Sharron:

Honeymoon? What honeymoon! It's the ECI! Sharron hopes to win this week with his new bride in tow following the action.

Matt Gajda:

Lots of analysts think he can win this week.

Tim Byram:

Still slapping fannies at volleyball practice. Not playing this week.

Jerry Miceli:

Has a few ECI appearances in his belt. Best finish is T-3rd.