

Limited Field Doesn't Stop ECI

DEVENS, Mass. – Justin McLearn has a swollen testicle, Brian Gill is a dedicated family man, Craig Roderick has been placed on the Maine Golf Association's "major medical list," and the ECI committee can't get in touch with Matt Barnes. Matt was last seen playing golf with Caitlin Jenner out West. That being said, the ECI is back for yet another year of slices, whiffs, "god damnit's," and the occasional birdie with a limited field. Despite the low commitments this year, Tournament director Marc Zirolli is not worried. "It's just one of those years," said Zirolli at Media Day in Devens last week. "We've got guys hurt, schedule conflicts arise, and some family commitments. It happens. I'm confident next year we will regroup with a stronger field." Despite the sparse field, defending champion Nick Turczak is back in the field just despite the birth of his second child only weeks ago. "I'm going to come in and play the best I can," said Turczak from his ranch in Salem, Mass., last week via conference call. Also in the field are past champions John Dailey and Kenneth Dargon. Matt Gajda returns after a year away from the championship, and Kenneth Tessier is making the road trip up from Georgia still chasing that elusive first title. "One of these years it's going to happen," noted Tessier in an interview with Tim Rosaforte of the Golf Channel last week. "Hopefully it's this year." Will Turczak get the job done again in 2018, or will it be dark horse that sneaks up the leaderboard to win the title? Time will tell, but one thing is for sure, the ECI is back for another year!

Players to Watch

Nick Turczak:

The defending champion is ready to pounce again!

Justin McLearn:

Underwent a scoping of his penis last week to make sure his unit still met the size requirement to ride the dizzy cups at the Peabody carnival later this summer. McLearn is hoping to return in 2019.

Matt Davis:

Still not ready to make his return after serving a one-year suspension in 2017. His agent at IMG told ESPN Davis will return on "his terms."

John Dailey:

Can Dailey secure his 5th victory before tying the knot in July?

Kenneth Dargon:

Dargon has the fire power to attack Red Tail. Question is can he keep the big number out of play?

Marc Zirolli:

Zirolli seems content that he will never win an ECI, but he is a fan favorite at the event. Almost like a Jerry Kelly playing in the Travelers Championship, Zirolli will be tipping the cap and smiling all round long.

Derek Sharon:

Possible sleeper.

Matt Gajda:

If Gajda stays away from disabled women during his travels up to Boston, he could be a solid pick to win this weekend.

Ken Tessier:

Tessier comes into the event tournament ready. He's played more golf than anyone in the field in 2018. Will it translate into a win Saturday?

Jeff Barnhart:

Barnhart making a return appearance to the ECI.

Pete Woodward:

Always a solid pick in the ECI, Woodward's best finish is 3rd place. Is his time running out?

Josh Clark:

The ECI will be taking a close look at Clark this weekend on the course for any illegal substances in his bag.

Carl Bean:

Osama Bin Laden is dead, but not the ECI's version of Osama. Bean is back, but will he keep his big choo choo on the tracks for this weekend's championship?

Jerry Miceli:

Still no commitment from the youngest player in the field.