

BEST BALL

FIT TO BE TIED

Number 1 at Geneva is the easiest hole on the course. It is listed as the 18th handicap. The Geneva Open has proof. It registered six birdies and fifteen pars on Sunday. With 41 golfers that means over half the field scored par or better. Those of us who bogeyed should be ashamed. Three of those six birdies came from the Tim Hughes team. Blaise Plageman, Nate McCorkle, and Tom Prunte all birdied No. 1 but it only counted as minus 1. It was a great beginning to a sizzling round. Tim Hughes and Vince Gatto the other members of the team help put together a front nine that flamed like a Mell Voll tasty strip steak. Blaise birdied the difficult 4th hole catching a stroke giving his team an eagle tally on the score card. Blaise parred 5 catching another stroke. His blazing hot utensils continued to chop the field like a Japanese chef at a hibachi table and he sautéed the scorecard with a natural birdie on the 6th hole. Another par on 8 left an opening on No. 7 for help and Tim Hughes obliged. Tim's parred 7 carrying a 14 handicap gave the team another net birdie. Blaise played the outward side in 33 strokes and the team finished nine holes with a 7 under score.

The sizzle fizzled slightly on the backside playing the inward nine at 4 under par. After a disappointing par on 12, the easy par 5, Tim Hughes (missing from the photo but not missing on the course) gathered the team on his shoulders and parred holes 13 and 14 getting a shot on each. The "Geneva Factor" was taking a toll playing on their fourth day in a row and having consumed four cases of beer apiece, the team dug deep for their last bit of energy to finish strong. Blaise and Nate both parred the 400 yards 17th hole labeled "The Widow Maker" by John Skunza. With their handicap the team headed to the 18th sporting a 10 under par score. A natural birdie by Blaise on the 445 yards finishing hole and they then signed their score card totaling 61 strokes and looking good to capture the Best Ball title. Blaise closed with a score of 70, the best round of the day.

The Tim Hughes team finished early and gathered around 18 green watching the other foursomes end their round. One by one they were eliminated. Victory was in their sights. Then, out on the fairway, lurking like hungry and

confident beasts, were Ben Lloyd's team. Big guns Nick Boggess and Ron Szymczak prowled the grounds as if protecting Fay Wray (Matt Mazzocco and Ben Lloyd). Ron and Nick both roared to 37's on the backside. Remember Tim Hughes' team opened with three birdies on No. 1? Ben Lloyd's club began with three pars and Nick Boggess bogeyed on the first hole. That bogey got Nick's attention and he followed with a birdie on No.2 and an outward side of 36. Net birdies on the 3rd and 4th holes by Ron whipped the team into gear. Matt Mazzocco closed the front side with two pars catching a stroke on both. A team total of 5 under par after 9 holes meant much work was still needed to catch up.

Szymczak, Mazzocco, and Lloyd provided more than just roars to begin the backside chewing up the course with net birdies on 4 out of the first 5 holes. This set up an exciting climax. Nick Boggess lives for these moments. It is the stuff that created Geneva Legends in the past. Facing a 25 footer to tie for the win, Nick Boggess sunk his putt. A proud grin lit his face like a gorilla around a banana tree. I thought I saw him beat his chest. It was a classic finish.

Third place money went to the team of Jay Green-Mark Spangler-Shawn Dorn-Richie Heskett. They carded a nine under par 63 score.

Next year the co-champions will team to defend their titles. A footnote about this year's Best Ball Tournament came from Legend Vince Gatto who partnered with the Tim Hughes team. He shot an 83 and said, Blaise won't let me drink any alcohol." Hell, he had enough until his first tee shot that his pissing raised the water level of Lake Erie a quarter of an inch. The "B" and "C" players will draft squads to dethrone the champions. Don Rutherford who has been part of six winning teams will be back in the draft pool. He could be the first draft pick.