

CHIP SHOTS

MANAKIKI FRIDAY

BUCKLE UP – The Geneva Open is returning to Manakiki Country Club. I think this is the toughest track on our Friday rotation. Last played in 2015, few, if any, were swinging from the up tees. Green tee markers distance close to 6,000 yards and carry a slope of 122. The seniors, 65 and older, hit from the red tee markers and must cover 5,150 yards sloping at 115. Believe me, Manakiki is a true and fair test of golf. Part of Cleveland Metro Golf Parks, it is considered the crown jewel of their system which consists of 6 other golf courses. In the 1950's, it was the host of the PGA's Carling Open. "Oh Mabel, Black Label." In the 1990's, Manakiki was the initial course of Geneva's opening round. For 5 years, Gary Miller and Joe Casa took it upon themselves to reserve Friday tee times thus extending the Geneva Open from a two-day affair to a three. The rolling hills are lined with enough trees to speckle the turf to look like bright green carpet. That will be a whole different sight than what we will find in Geneva. Manakiki is a display of beauty that should be framed. Do not let that beauty fool you. If you mishit your ball into the rough, the thick grass will make the next shot more challenging. The best scores in 2015 were 79's, recorded by Legend Vince Gatto and Pat Dorn. The median tallies were north of 90. This 49th edition of the Geneva Open commences at noon on July 24. We have plenty of time to sharpen all the skills needed to be in Geneva shape.

WHERE'S THE BEEF? – Climbing from the deep freeze of January and February, I noticed a change in several Geneva brothers. Winter hibernation left clues the weather was so brutal that grocery shopping was impossible. Several of the old timers were half the men they were in the past. We witnessed the new look sported by Blaise Plageman last July after he shed over 100 pounds. I got news for him, no matter how hard he tries, he will never look like his father Dick. He can drop pounds, but his broad shoulders and muscular biceps keep Blaise intimidating without a badge and a gun. But what did I see in February? The more appropriate

question is what did I not see? Pounds. Yep, missing were pounds. Legend Vince Gatto, Mini-Legends Jack Berger and Jerry Graves, as well as Mark Schmitt are all on the needle. Jerry lost 45 pounds. My guess is he is shedding weight so he can jump in a ring of fire and hop out on his own. Although they are not wearing bell-bottoms, these dudes are proof if you save your attire, they may come in handy once again even if it is 30 years since last worn. I am afraid I will be the only fat person in Geneva this year. Get this. Vince, Jack, and Gary spent a week together in Florida. Vince limited his alcohol content to one beer a night. I know the only constant in this world is change but that is taking change a bit too far. The only thing more drastic is the BROWNS winning the Super Bowl. There was one night Legend Vince Gatto fell off the wagon. While cooking a seafood platter for dinner, the sauce required a quarter cup of red wine. Not wanting to waste the remaining fermented grapes, he consumed what was left in the bottle. Show me a chef that does not drink and I will show you an unsuccessful chef. Now you know why Gatto's Pizza was highly regarded. I am looking into the idea of pinning name cards to these guys shirts so they can be recognized.

WHAT TO EXPECT – Besides a bunch of old men shaping into chiseled Adonis' and a challenging round of golf on Manakiki's lush track, nothing new is in the works. We will play Skins on Friday and Saturday. The Manakiki game will be handicapped with each golfer catching strokes on their handicapped holes. These handicaps will be half their Gavin Cup strokes preventing anyone from receiving two shots on any hole. The Skins play in Geneva will be divided. The "A" and "B" golfers compete for skins, and the "C" and "D" hacks play in their own competition. Saturday Skins are scratch events. Many look forward to the Scramble which is a 9-hole match commencing after the early Saturday round. Included in the Scramble is a team Skins game. The final day of golf is highlighted by the Best Ball Tournament. Teams for this competition will be chosen by a draft at the Commissioner's Dinner that takes place Saturday night. The dinner is an extravagant polo shirt and shorts affair. Mini-Legend Jack Berger expects to be flanked on each side by Legends Gary Glanzman and Vince Gatto waiting to pounce on half of his steak since he cannot eat as much as

before. Concentrating on finishing Jack's steak may hinder Gary's draft choices. "A" players pick the Best Ball teams this year. All will compete against Mike Pagnanelli, Dagon Abdon, Pat Dorn, and Kyle Willis, last year's winners. The Gavin Cup pairs will be drawn on Thursday night at Lumpy's Hideaway in front of an anxious crowd. I am not sure if they are anxious to play golf or anxious to get to the Strip. The golfers will attempt to win the trophy from Mini-Legend Jack Berger and teammate Mike Pagnanelli. They were tremendous last year posting a 387 score and a record 45 under par. That twosome spent the weekend verifying the philosophy of Bill Parcells who said, "You lose with potential. You win with performance."