

# CHIP SHOTS

## ST DENIS BOOKED

NEW VENUE – Friday's round will begin at noon on St. Denis Golf Course in Chardon, Ohio. This is a new course on the Geneva rotation. Opened in 1968, the layout is "Geneva Worthy". Nestled in the hills east of Cleveland, the rolling terrain makes for scenic views and plenty unbalanced stances. The course is fair but finds ways to humble those who challenge. Every time I play St. Denis, I stumble frustratingly off the 18<sup>th</sup> green astonished of my high scores yet determined to return and play better. The results are always the same. Wise men will pray not to partner with me in the Gavin Cup competition. The traditional fogies will lead us and hit the ceremonial first tee shots. Unlike Jack and Gary at the Masters, these dudes will come to play. Like Jack and Gary, these dudes are old. Do not let that fool you. Mini-Legend Jerry Graves was the Gavin Cup winner last year. St. Denis, here we come.

SAD NEWS – I settled in my chair with coffee and muffin in hand on Sunday, March 23 when I was blindsided by a text stating Wally Maley died earlier that morning. Shot my day to hell. Wally was a revered brother of the Geneva fraternity. He journeyed to Geneva yearly from 1990 until 2012 when his kidneys acted up and dialysis treatment prevented him from returning. An eventual transplant was believed to correct his problems. Instead, his quality of life worsened. I questioned Huck Plageman (another Geneva brother and close friend of Wally's) on cause of death thinking his body rejected the new kidney. I was wrong. According to Huck, "Actually his kidney was fine. He was fighting numerous stays in the hospital for staph infections. Nothing they could attribute it to. He had poor circulation in his legs and feet which caused sores that wouldn't heal, and he fought chronic back pain. In the end, it took a toll on his heart which caused him to basically be living out of his recliner and bed. His heart finally failed him". Wally was a cool guy, soft-spoken and a pleasure to be around. He was a sports enthusiast. Besides playing golf, he enjoyed watching football,

baseball, and hockey. His name appears on the Gavin Cup Trophy four times winning in 2003 with Denny Brake, 2006 with Joe Casa, 2009 with Jim Nogawick, and 2012 as Dick Plageman's partner. His play in 2012 was his last in Geneva. Huck said "...I know he loved Geneva and being with all the other golfers. He certainly had a rough last couple of years and his suffering is over". Rest in Peace Wally.

DREAMS COME TRUE – Every year as the doldrums of an Ohio winter digs deep into our being, we are teased by the beauty of the oceanside sights from Pebble Beach Golf Club. Do not tell me you have not had thoughts of playing this historic course at different times in your life. Granted, it is no Geneva but...I'm just saying. Well, here is a story of three Geneva brothers who made that dream come true. Legend Gary Glanzman, Mini-Legends Jerry Graves and Jack Berger packed their clubs and journeyed on their crusade in 2004. Jerry revealed he had \$25 a week from his pay direct deposited in a separate account to financially support his trip. The fourth member of the group was a dude named Clyde Strait. Though he never played in Geneva, he is a significant character in this event. Before we get to the golf, I want to point out that Clyde was invited because Legend Vince Gatto had family problems that made it necessary to scratch. Clyde had many phobias. The loud sleep apnea mask Clyde wore to bed kept Jerry from getting any sleep. So, Jerry turned on the TV but the sound kept Clyde awake and he insisted Jerry keep the volume low. Very unnerving for our Little Buddy who spent down time missing Vince. They were Felix and Oscar in real life. The night before they teed at Pebble Beach, Clyde unplugged Jerry's camera and killed the battery leaving them with no pictures. Mr. Strait was very lucky Jerry did not take a five iron to his head ala Elin did Tiger. The golf day started heavenly, sunny, warm, and no wind. Gary had birdie putts on the opening six holes, but did not make any. His reputation as a good putter took a major hit on this championship course. If that didn't stick in his craw, Our Short Buddy staked his iron on No.5, the 134 yards par 3 and made his 5 foot, breaking, downhill birdie putt. That guy is sneakily tough as you will see later. The weather began to sour and so did Gary's game. By the time they reached the 18<sup>th</sup> tee, it was Pebble Beach conditions, cloudy, windy (40 mph gusts according to Jerry

but we all know he is known to exaggerate) and spitting rain. The match, Gary and Jerry vs. Jack and Clyde, had four presses riding on this hole. Gary had nothing. His game took a dump. The pressure was on Jerry to win the match. The same held true for the other team. From the tee, Jack's goal was to stay clear of the ocean on the left. Success. He hit his ball so far right to the horror of the foursome and their forecaddie and they watched his Titleist bounce off a \$10 million dollar home. Good thing it was not Clint Eastwood's house. "Do you feel lucky?" Caddie Dave Brown instructed Clyde to use more club out of the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway bunker, but Clyde knew better. His shot ended short, leaving Jerry in the driver's seat. As time passes, memories are often skewed but Gary, Jerry, and Jack all vividly remember this scene. Jerry stood over his ball with every intention to make the putt. Just before he pulled the trigger, Gary blurted, "You can two putt and we win." The insulting insinuation to lag a short putt on the most famous hole in golf was told by all three with a hearty laugh. For years, Jerry tried to convince his friends that putt was for a par 5. "Don't let him shit you," Jack said. "I saved the scorecard. Jerry had a 7 and we all took 8's." There is a saying, "Do not confuse Irish blarney with the truth." Pebble Beach has hosted 7 men's major championships. The list of characters who stomped her fairways (Bing Crosby, Clint Eastwood, Bill Murray, Bob Hope, Phil Harris, etc.) also includes Legend Gary Glanzman, Mini-Legend Jerry Graves, and Mini-Legend Jack Berger.

NO GRAVES MAGIC IN 2025 – Remember last year? In his story book life, Jerry created another magical moment. After jumping into a blazing fire like a crazed leprechaun or maybe stumbling into the fire pit like a drunken Irishman, he scalded both legs with 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns. Our Little Buddy scorched his way around Geneva for the final two rounds and teamed with Michael Badia to win the Gavin Cup, a trick that would impress David Copperfield. There will be no pot of gold or trophy this year for Jerry. Our Short Buddy's luck is on sabbatical. Back in January, after one of Ohio's ice storms, Jerry slipped and plopped hard on the frozen blacktop. This act caused damage that is unfixable by Geneva. His fall landed Mr. Graves on his shoulder. He tore two muscles which required surgery and saw bones told him no way will he be repaired enough for golf by July. As

tall as Jerry stands, you would not think his descent could gather enough force to cause such extensive harm. Unable to defend his title, Jerry's absence will send Michael back to the Gavin Cup pool and he will be drawn another partner. The good thing is Jerry did not land on his head, and he plans to still grace us at Geneva. He intends to buy a couple extra bottles of booze to keep him company while we play golf. Security started building a three-foot fence around the fire pit to keep Jerry safe. Both fire and ice prove to be the Little Guy's most recent nemesis.

GENEVA BOUND – The harsh Winter is turning to Spring. The preparations to reunite at St. Denis on July 25 have begun. If there are any rookies planning to join us this year, please let me know. Thus far, I have not heard of any newcomers. Gathering names of "ins" and "outs" is under way. 13 tee times, 52 spots at St. Denis have been secured. As practiced in the past couple of years, we will log tee times for Friday and Saturday rounds. If you have a game for Saturday, please inform me and I will accommodate your wishes. This will be the 49<sup>th</sup> Geneva. Still a fantastic time. For three days we feel like lions prowling their carnivalistic jungle. It is a fact, however, a lion will not cheat on his wife, but a Tiger Wood.