Rypien leads ACC with several guys in the hunt

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Record crowds on Saturday witnessed golf that, while it may not rival Augusta, proved to be intense. Nine points separate the leader and No. 10 player after two days of play at the American Century Championship.

Mark Rypien sits atop the leader board heading into Sunday's final round at Edgewood Tahoe. He last won the event in 1990 when traditional scoring was used. A 54-hole modified Stableford format was introduced in 2003.

Dan Quinn, who has a two-day total of 40 points – three behind Rypien, at a July 21 press conference said, "I've been kind of shocked that this is the score that's leading. Normally if you're 43 or 44 on Saturday, you're 10 or 12 points behind. So, I'm pretty happy … I still have a chance."



2011 ACC winner Jack Wagner get some extra help late Saturday. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Quinn has won the celebrity tournament four times; the most recent being in 2004.

But guys not often in the top 10 are in the hunt:

Mark Rypien, 43

Dan Quinn, 40

Mark Mulder, 38

Tony Romo, 37

John Elway, 37

John Smoltz, 37

Jack Wagner, 36

Billy Joe Tolliver, 33

Joe Theismann, 33

Chris Chandler, 32

Wagner, who won the event last year, was the last man standing on the driving range. Two people stood within close range offering the actor advice about his swing.

While many of the players are in it for the title, others are there to have fun – just like the fans.

Legendary All-Pro quarterback Joe Theismann didn’t hesitate to sign autographs as he walked the line of the putting green.

Jerry Rice could take a lesson from his elder. Even though his game has improved through the years and he has been known to mingle with the crowd, on Saturday he walked off the putting green without so much as a smile to the gang along the ropes.

This was in direct contrast to Alfonso Ribeiro and Carson Palmer who smiled and conversed with people as they were on

the putting green.

Even though Charles Barkley is usually jovial, he left hole 9 in a cart Saturday without a word to anyone despite a large crowd wanting his autograph.

The strip of sand along hole 17 was one big party on Saturday – as is tradition. The tournament provides this group with its own bar on the beach.

Douglas County sheriff's Sgt. Ron Elges and Deputy Adam Windsor kept an eye out to make sure the crowd stayed on the other side of the rope.

The tournament is on target to break last year's attendance record of 40,156. The single day record was set July 21 at 13,727. The previous record of 12,276 was from 2011.

Action begins July 22 at 8:05am. Here are Sunday's tee times.

– Susan Wood contributed to this story.

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Pet adoption fee cut in half in Placer County

Placer County Animal Services is offering half off the cost of adoptions for all animals at the animal shelters in Auburn and in Tahoe Vista through Aug. 31.

“We’ve seen a bountiful increase in the number of dogs and cats that have come into our shelters this year,” Mike Winters, Animal Services manager, said in a press release. “The summer months are a great time for families to consider adopting a new pet. A new pet could be a great addition to your family and we’d like to make it easier for families to do so.”

Placer County Animal Services is able to offer the half-off adoption promotion due to charitable contributions and the support of A New Hope Animal Foundation. The half-off fee will be $56 for dogs and $46 for cats.

The Auburn animal shelter is located at 11251 B Ave. and the Tahoe Vista shelter is located at 849 Shelter Road.

Temperatures in Tahoe climbing

The temps are starting to sizzle in Lake Tahoe. Expect the mercury to be in the 80s for the next week.

Thunderstorms are not in the forecast, according to the National Weather Service.

Winds will be up to 15 mph in the South Lake Tahoe area this weekend.

Keep applying the sunscreen.

— Lake Tahoe News staff report



Even AJ likes to smell the lupine in Lake Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

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Bats are the answer to helping wipeout mosquitoes

By Cheryl Millham

Since West Nile Virus (WNV) has been reported with two American Robins in the Tahoe Keys area, many people are all of a sudden interested in learning more about this disease.

So, "What is West Nile Virus and Where did it come from?"

WNV is a mosquito borne virus that has been found in parts of Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The virus was first detected in the United States in New York City in 1999. WNV had its first active case in California in 2002,

taking almost four years to cross the country.

I received a bulletin update from the California Department of Public Health on April 25, 2012. It read: “To date, there have been 3,146 human cases in California and 110 deaths. Last year (2011) 2,497 birds were tested, of which 28 percent were WNV positive. In addition, 108 dead tree squirrels were tested and 22 percent were positive. Dead bird surveillance is a key component of our early warning system, because positive birds are typically the first indicators of WNV in a county. Tree squirrels are also indicators of WNV in a local area.”

WNV is transmitted to people and animals by infected mosquito bites. The good news is that only certain species of mosquitoes carry the virus. A mosquito first acquires the infection by feeding on a bird with the virus in its blood. The virus lives in the mosquito and is transmitted to a new host in the mosquito’s saliva when the insect bites a person or animal. Human to human, bird or animal to human transmission of WNV does not occur.

So, please, if a bird or animal needs your help, help it. You cannot contract WNV from them, only by the bite of the mosquito.

Most people who are infected with WNV have no symptoms, whatsoever. The incubation period (the time between the bite and the onset of illness) range is five–15 days. Symptoms can include fever, headache, nausea, body aches, mild skin rash or swollen lymph nodes. One in every 150 people who are infected with WNV will require hospitalization.

So, what do you do if you find a dead bird or squirrel??

Get a plastic bag and reverse it. Put your hand inside the bag and pick up the dead bird or animal. Pull the plastic bag over the dead bird, then, call the WNV hotline, 877.968.2473. It is a toll free call and, if they want the dead bird or animal, they will arrange for a pick up. If they do not want it, just

dispose of it in your trash.

What can we do to limit mosquito bites?

When you are outside, in the early morning and evening, be sure you have mosquito repellent on exposed skin. Be certain window screens are tight fitting and in good repair (remember, screens keep out mosquitoes, but are nothing to a bear). Buy mosquito fish for your ponds and keep your water moving. Mosquitoes don’t lay eggs in moving water.

The best part is to let our local birds help out. All swallows can eat up to 1,000 mosquitoes per day.

Ducks eat mosquito larvae as do frogs and snakes.

But, the best of all are bats. Bats can eat up to 1,000 mosquitoes per hour in a feeding frenzy. Here, at Lake Tahoe, we have only insect eating bats. So, don’t harm them. But encourage them by putting up bat houses.

My facts for this article were taken from the California Surveillance and Facts about WNV.

Cheryl Millham is executive director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care on the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe.

Tour to showcase mountain gardens, growth post-Angora

By Linda Conaboy

In preparation for its ninth annual garden tour, the Lake

Tahoe Historical Society recently previewed all nine gardens that will be on view July 29. Five of the gardens are within the Angora burn area.

“It’s always scary to put this together, basically because we have to pick the gardens the year before. We looked at this year’s gardens in August and September last year,” Catherine Whelan, president of the historical society, said. “You just don’t know how gardens will turn out and what winter will do to them”



Creek bed and covered seating area in Marsha Ward-Hudson's garden. Photos/Linda Conaboy

Whelan said the historical society picks a variety of homes to showcase what can be done in a shade garden, as well as a sunny one and how to approach gardening at various levels – as well as to prove it’s possible to garden in the mountains.

“This year, we’re giving a special nod to the gardens in the Angora burn site. We support all of their struggles,” Whelan told *Lake Tahoe News.*

Traipsing around Debbie and Buzz Bera’s backyard it became apparent – yes, you can garden in the mountains. Although the Bera home wasn’t destroyed in the burn, their garden was singed.

Perennials are the corner stone in this not-too-large yard – bright perennials and the whimsical birdhouse fence tantalize the palette for more. More is the pond and waterfall fenced in by the wall of birdhouses, all on the sunny side of the yard. The shady areas include a greenhouse and enough hostas to add green to an otherwise difficult area to cultivate.

On to Marsha Ward-Hudson's home on Mt. Olympia Circle. The welcoming front yard has a carefully manicured lawn with lots of plantings surrounding the large porch. To get to the back, the preview party marched along stepping stones buried in verdant and pillowy ground cover, the kind that makes one want to take her shoes off to see if it's really as soft as it looks.

Who would think you could grow lush ground cover like this in the mountains? Believe it. In the backyard, a faux creek bed winds its way from the vegetable garden, along the lawn's curvy edge to the covered patio.



Landscaping with natural elements at the Cressy home.

Ward-Hudson utilizes old tires filled with what looks like well-amended soil to cage her veggies. Like other yards here, this one suffered from the fire retardant used to smother the fire; however, about two feet of new topsoil seems to be providing ample nutrients for the multitude of flowers and

emerging vegetables.

The third stop, the Angora Community Demonstration Garden proved to be a bittersweet one, for this is where Owen and Esther Evans once had a home. It was one of the 254 lost in the fire of 2007. Because of age, the Evans decided not to rebuild, but chose to create a garden to give back to their neighborhood.

A sign on the property states this collaborative garden is a model of water conversation, best management practices, defensible space and beauty. All of which became apparent by a stroll along the paths where various flowers, vegetables, ground covers and strawberry vines grow in profusion.

Like so many others, Lisa and Joe McAvoy not only had to plant another garden; they also had to rebuild their home, a task completed mainly by Joe McAvoy with a little help from his friends.

Lisa was responsible for the garden. Like the house, this, too, was a labor of love. With John Fellowes at Aspen Hollow Nursery, McAvoy created a visually resplendent and artful outdoor scene. “It’s going to be a forest,” McAvoy said. “To make way for new things, I keep moving plants around.”



Birdhouse fence at Debbie and Buzz Bera's home.

What has resulted, among the well-placed boulders, lush

foliage and a water feature that looks like a natural oasis in this garden is a lovely place to sit and contemplate the magnificent mountain views. But look the other way for a reminder of the fire as blackened trees rise on the mountain in front of the house.

When visiting, be sure to check out the fanciful garden art and various sitting areas in the McAvoy gardens.

It’s hard to believe what has been resurrected from the Angora disaster, especially when visiting Brooks and Karen Martin’s home and garden.

Brooks Martin said they had put the finishing touches on their garden just before the fire (a two-year project with the help of John Fellowes), only to have their home and their garden disappear the next day.

“All that made it through the fire were the prayer flags, the Quan Yin statue and the statue of St. Francis,” Brooks said.

A fresh start among their huge, natural boulders, the likes of which you may remember from the fictional Ponderosa Ranch, features multiple outdoor seating areas, a large water feature and even some tiny mushrooms sprouting on the home’s north side.

The seating areas are arranged to catch the day’s lighting as it strobes across the landscape – there’s lots of shade for hot Tahoe days and sun when it’s needed.

Next, on down the hill and off of Pioneer Trail for neighboring homes owned by the Cressy and Williams families.

Although both of these houses have the same gardening conditions in their adjoining yards, each was treated to a different landscape. Jennifer Cressy, who, along with John Roos, is in charge of the demonstration garden at Lake Tahoe Community College, used all-natural vegetation in her yard,

while the Williams produced more formal grounds amidst the towering evergreen trees.

Daniel Cressy designed and installed the many fountains in his yard, while the Williams opted for an in-ground koi pond, minus koi. In the Williams' yard it's interesting to note the juxtaposition of natural vegetation, fountains and succulents tucked into the landscape among the pines.

From the street, Stephanie and Neal Niederman's home is a delight. Walking from the side to the back yard it's easy to realize these folks have spent a lot of time and a great deal of effort on their yard.



Garden at the Niederman home.

"Our whole life is here," Stephanie Niederman said. "And the plant of the year is delphinium." Her tall and hearty delphiniums are enough to make even an inveterate gardener envious.

"The secret to our garden is well-amended soil," a thought echoed by nearly all the gardeners on our tour. The Niederman side yard is a plethora of green grass and plants that flourish in the shade, as evidenced by the healthy hostas lounging at the edge of the grass. The sun-loving varieties, grown from Stephanie's penchant for purchasing flower six-packs are happy too.

The last garden is Carole Spreklesen Foster’s. There is a lush garden cultivated on her original home site as well as the adjoining lot she purchased so she could grow more plants.

This is where you will find food, some provided by Harrah’s and Harveys, libations, and music courtesy of Dream Spirit Baroque Band, all to be enjoyed in Foster’s park – at least that’s what it may remind you of. Don’t forget to check out her authentic teepee, filled with all things Native American. The colt’s foot and Japanese willows are just two of the unique plants Spreklesen Foster grows.

Although Spreklesen Foster’s home is listed last on the tour, if it’s more convenient, there’s no need to visit it last. Food and drink will be served there all day.

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Details:

When: July 29

Time: 10 am-4 pm

Price: $20

Tickets are available from: Tahoe Outdoor Living, Aspen Hollow Nursery, Nel’s Garden Center, Sunbasin Nursery and at the Historical Society at 3058 Lake Tahoe Blvd. If there are tickets left, purchase them the day of the event at the Historical Society.

Ex-starting pitchers find success with small white ball

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Being a starting pitcher in Major League Baseball means a lot of days off from work. And like a lot of people with free time and money, golf fills in those hours.

Some of the former starting pitchers playing in this week's American Century Championship golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe say their prowess on the greens has something to do with being the best athletes on the diamond. A couple said it in jest, while Rick Rhoden didn't have a hint of sarcasm when he voiced that opinion.



Rick Rhoden is the only former starting pitcher to win Tahoe's celebrity golf tournament.

Rhoden has room to brag about his ability in both sports. In his 16 years as a Major League pitcher he won 151 games, had a 3.59 ERA, was an All Star twice, and played in two World Series.

Since retiring in 1989, he has won the ACC tourney eight times, the last being in 2009. He has qualified for the U.S. Senior Open, and has three top 10 finishes in the Champions Tour.

“It’s pretty much the same motion with transferring your weight,” Rhoden told *Lake Tahoe News* of the similarities of pitching and golfing.

While David Wells is one of 22 pitchers to throw a perfect game, his golf abilities don’t match. He says it’s the Atlanta Braves pitchers who give his profession a good reputation for what can be done on the links.



David Wells

During Tuesday’s practice round his tee shot on hole 8 didn’t even go 200 yards. He picked up the ball and moved it to closer to where the others in the foursome were making their second shot.

The only similarity between the two sports is “that you get pissed,” Wells said. He added that golf was more likely to benefit hitters than pitchers.

On the other side of the Stateline golf course Greg Maddux was proving former Braves pitchers know what to do with a little

white ball. But he said there are no similarities between the sports.



Former Braves pitcher Greg Maddux benefited from having a putting green at Turner Field. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“Golf is way harder,” Maddux said while signing autographs as he sat in his cart at the start of hole 15.

Fellow Braves teammate John Smoltz is also in the field at ACC.

Stories abound about how Maddux, Smoltz and Tom Glavine not only competed on the mound against opposing teams, but among themselves when it came time for golf.

According to *Golf Digest*, “When Atlanta won the 1995 World Series, they convinced then-team president Stan Kasten to install a putting green inside Turner Stadium after the Braves moved there in ’97. The artificial-turf green covered 360 square feet, included four holes and was surrounded by a floor-to-ceiling, panoramic mural of Augusta National.” (A restaurant has since replaced it.)



Bret Saberhagen

What Bret Saberhagen says is similar between being a starting pitcher and playing golf is the mental game. But the three-time All Star and two-time Cy Young winner also said having time allows his brethren to fine-tune their golf game.

For Hall of Famer Goose Gossage, it was all that time off between starts that allowed him to feel comfortable with a club in his hand.

“A relief pitcher couldn’t golf all day and do what I did,” Gossage told *Lake Tahoe News*. “I didn’t get to start the ninth with a three-run lead and no one on.”



Goose Gossage said his pitching schedule helped his golf game.

He also didn’t work every day and got paid more.

The other starting pitcher playing in this year’s celebrity golf tournament is Mark Mulder.

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Notes:

• The first round of the three-day tournament begins today.

• Go online to find out the pairings.

• First tee time July 20 is 9:10am.

• This 23rd annual event has a purse of $600,000.

• Corporate partnerships for the tournament have been secured through 2015.

Sheriff’s deputy working full time on Rubicon Trail

El Dorado County Sheriff John D’Agostini has created a new position and assigned a full time deputy to patrol the Rubicon Trail 40 hours every week during the OHV season.

In the past, most of the staffing for the Rubicon Trail was on overtime, and was limited by grant funds. This position is also from a grant. Its from California State Parks which also has rangers patrolling the trail.

D’Agostini and Supervisor Jack Sweeney worked closely to

secure other sources of funding such as the Infrastructure Mitigation Fund provided by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District. When finalized, the fund will provide for continued seasonal patrol staffing of two deputies and the maintenance of their equipment.

Deputy Tim Peterson was recently assigned to the OHV Unit for the summer season, which runs from May through September. He has been busy so far with more than 400 citizen contacts and assisting more than 200 people. Peterson spends his entire work week patrolling the trail and maintaining his vehicle.

The primary concerns of law enforcement are safety related. The majority of injuries and accidents on the trail are alcohol related.

Youngsters use Truckee River to learn to swim

By Adam Rasmussen, KTVN

With temperatures hitting the triple digits, people of all ages are flocking to the Truckee River, which is exactly why teaching kids some safety lessons is so important.

With strong currents and some rocky areas, swimming in the Truckee River is challenging. It’s easy to get swept away or thrown underwater.

On Saturday, kids learned how to swim and definitely had fun along the way.

“I got to swim with my BFFs and have fun with them,” says 9-year-old Chris LaDay.

The Truckee River Foundation was thrilled with Saturday's turnout, with 200 kids filling up the classes.

"We have kids come back here every single year, because they love it so much," says Debbie Leonard with the Truckee River Foundation.

Organizers say it's vital to teach them safety tips early-on.

Read the whole story

USFS faces lawsuit over access to Tahoe National Forest

By Amber Marra, Auburn Journal

Multiple groups of motor sports enthusiasts and individual riders are suing the US Forest Service and Department of Agriculture over preparations to close more than 800 miles of trails to off-road vehicles in the Tahoe National Forest.

The lawsuit was filed on Tuesday by Brandon Middleton, an attorney with Pacific Legal Foundation, for six local motor sports organizations and two individual enthusiasts.

The six organizations are Friends of Greenhorn, of Auburn; Friends of Tahoe Forest Access, Webilt Four Wheel Drive Club, Nevada County Woods Riders, Grass Valley 4-Wheel Drive Club and High Sierra Motorcycle Club. The two individual plaintiffs are David Wood, of Nevada County, and another Nevada County woman only identified as "Kyra" in a complaint.

“Off-road vehicle enthusiasts have been undeservedly attacked by environmental groups who paint a picture to their members that simply doesn’t exist on the scale they assert,” said Jacquelyne Theisen, of Auburn, with Friends of Greenhorn.

The U.S. Forest Service declined to comment on the lawsuit Tuesday morning. It is listed as a defendant along with the US Department of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, US Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell, Regional Forester for the Forest Service’s Pacific Southwest Region Randy Moore, and Forest Supervisor at the Tahoe National Forest Tom Quinn.

Pacific Legal Foundation gathered members of the represented organizations and concerned riders together at the American River Canyon Overlook Park in Auburn on Tuesday.

Read the whole story

Truckee woman representing Czech Republic in Olympics

By Lauren Gustus, Reno Gazette-Journal

Blame her chosen sport, the country she’s riding for or the town she’s decided to make her home.

Katerina Nash is flying into the London Olympics about as far under the radar as is possible.

And that’s precisely how the Truckee mountain biker prefers it.

“I think being a Czech citizen, she kind of falls through the

cracks," her husband, Marcus Nash, said. "If you read the media race reports, people say she's kind of overlooked because she's not from the U.S."

The 34-year-old has called Truckee home for more than a decade. But the native of Prachatice, Czech Republic, will compete for her birth country in women's mountain biking on Aug. 11 at Hadleigh Farm in Essex, just outside of London.

She will skip the opening festivities in London for a World Cup race nearby and then head to a hotel closer to her venue to allow for easier access to the course.

"To be an Olympic athlete, it kind of sounds really cool, and it is cool. But I am going to be racing in France the day of the Opening Ceremony," Nash said. "We are staying in Essex. We don't get to stay in the Olympic Village. You're already taking away all of the elements of people's perception of you're going to do this really cool stuff. Really, you're going to do this really important stuff.

"All the fun stuff kind of gets pretty much eliminated."

Well, not all of it. With a little luck, the UNR graduate could find herself on the podium.

Since its inception in 2002, Nash has been on Luna Chix Pro Team, a women's outfit sponsored by Clif Bar, among others. She is the No. 12-ranked racer in the International Cycling Union's World Cup cross country standings.

Read the whole story