

TEEING OFF

Griffin has things in hand

CHIP SHOTS

FIELD TAKING SHAPE FOR KNBT LV. OPEN

Fresh off his appearance at the U.S. Open, Brian Bergstol is among the pros who will play in the inaugural KNBT Lehigh Valley Open next week.

The 36-hole tournament, a new entry onto the Philadelphia Section PGA schedule, will be held Tuesday and Wednesday at Riverview Country Club in Easton.

A long list of local club pros have entered, including Fox Hollow's Jim Booros, Willowbrook's Andy Kistler, Lehigh's Dave Olexson and Green Pond's John Kulhamer.

Alex Knoll, formerly playing on a sponsor's exemption, gained his status with the Philadelphia Section, so his exemption will go to Allentown Municipal head pro Jeff Wambold. Lehigh University golf coach Henry D'Alberto received the other sponsor's exemption.

Former Center Valley Club head pro Larry Wise is in the field, as are Riverview head pro Kevin Edwards and his assistant Gregg Meyer. In addition, 15 amateurs qualified for the event.

In conjunction with the tournament, two junior clinics are scheduled at Riverview from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, and from 9-10:30 a.m. Monday.

JUNIOR GIRLS GOLF TOUR BEGINS FIRST SEASON

The Lehigh Valley Junior Golf Tour has added a series of 10 events for girls beginning this summer. Players interested should be able to shoot 120 or better for 18 holes. For information, call 610-437-4982.

RATTIGAN, SCHIAVONE SEEK TO DEFEND TITLES

A pair of local championships will be up for grabs this month at Harkers Hollow and Wedgewood.

Jim Rattigan will play for his second consecutive title at the Lehigh Valley Amateur Medal Play, a 36-hole tournament scheduled for Friday and Saturday at Harkers Hollow in Phillipsburg.

On June 28, Stani Schiavone, a rising sophomore at Bangor High, goes for a repeat at the Lehigh Valley Women's Amateur Stroke Play at Wedgewood.

EAGLES' DAWKINS TO HOST BURN PREVENTION CLASSIC

Philadelphia Eagles safety Brian Dawkins will host the annual Burn Prevention Golf Classic on Monday at Saucon Valley Country Club.

Among the Eagles, former Eagles and coaches scheduled to appear are Quintin Mikell, Jim Johnson, Emmitt Thomas, Troy Vincent, Bobby Taylor, Hugh Douglas, Ike Reese, Mike Quick and William Thomas. Several Flyers and Philadelphia-area broadcasters will play as well.

A reception is scheduled for Sunday night, with a modified-scramble tournament following Monday.

Proceeds benefit the Burn Prevention Foundation, one of the leading burn-injury support and educational organizations in North America. For information, contact Dan Dillard at 610-969-3930.

TOURNEY TRAIL

BLUE RIDGE INVITATIONAL

■ **When:** June 20-22
■ **Where:** Blue Ridge C.C. 610-826-2504.

L.V. MEDAL PLAY

■ **When:** June 20-21.
■ **Where:** Harkers Hollow. 908-859-0977.

KNBT L.V. OPEN

■ **When:** June 23-25.
■ **Where:** Riverview. 610-437-982.

L.V. WOMEN'S AMATEUR STROKE PLAY

■ **When:** June 28.
■ **Where:** Wedgewood. 610-437-4982.

FIRECRACKER OPEN

■ **When:** June 29.
■ **Where:** Green Pond. 610-691-9453.

The MSG president, her staff are running '09 Women's Open.

By Beth Hudson
Of The Morning Call

LA JOLLA, Calif. | On the day before the opening round of the 2008 U.S. Open at Torrey Pines, Mimi Griffin was rushing around the golf course, preparing for an onslaught of fans and clients.

Two men approached Griffin, the owner of the Bethlehem-based MSG Promotions, Inc., eager to know how they could purchase a U.S. Open hospitality tent — for the Olympic Club in 2012, that is.

"It's amazing how far in advance everybody plans," Griffin said later.

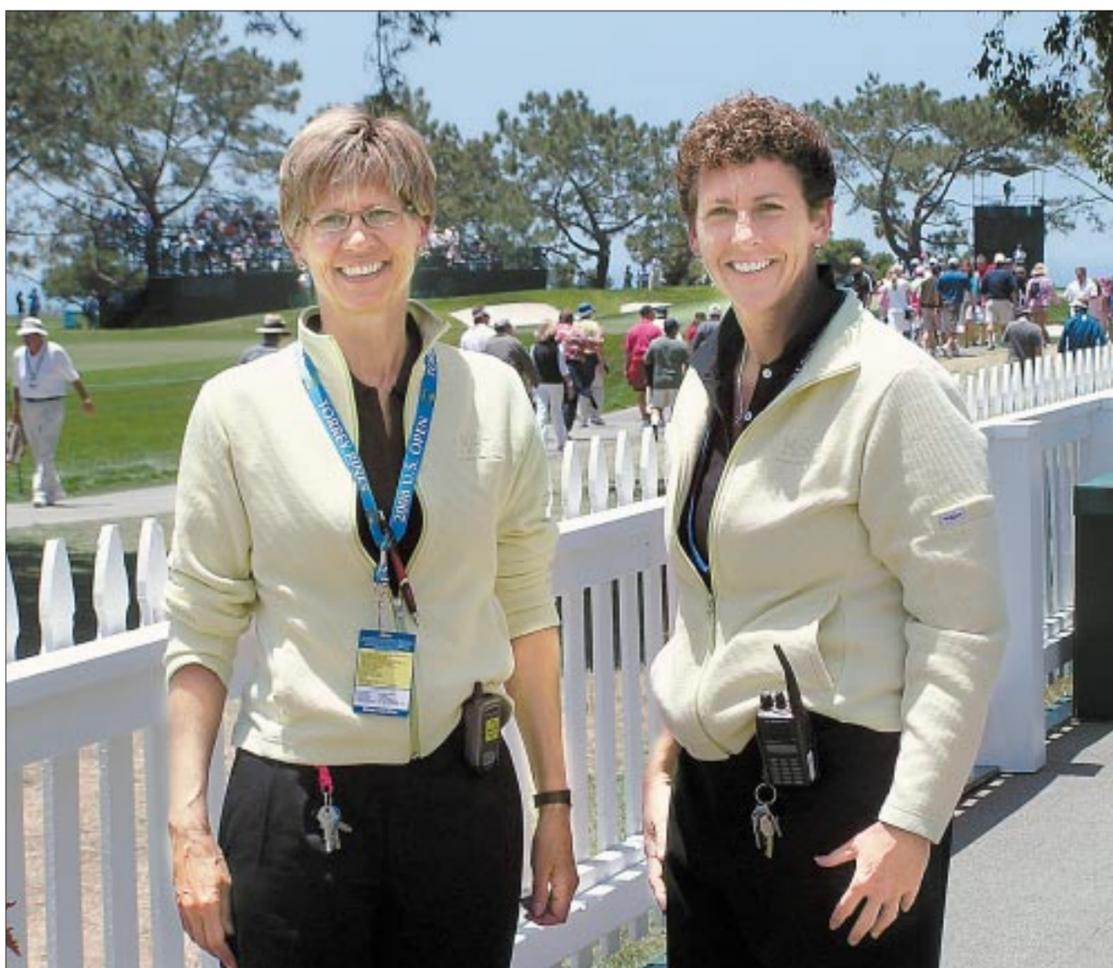
Include Griffin in that group.

She and 30 members of her staff worked from about 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day last week, running 63 hospitality tents at Torrey Pines. The company has a contract with the United States Golf Association to sell, build and oversee corporate hospitality at the annual U.S. Open, including next year's event at Bethpage in Farmingdale, N.Y.

But those duties don't prevent Griffin and her energetic staff from looking toward one particular week they have circled on their calendar — July 6-12, 2009, the U.S. Women's Open at Saucon Valley Country Club in Bethlehem. The tournament presents a new challenge for MSG Promotions, because Griffin's company is overseeing the entire event — from hospitality to volunteers to ticket sales.

"It's a big, once-in-a-decade opportunity to put our best foot forward," Griffin said, referring not just to her business, but to the Lehigh Valley in general.

For that reason, she and her employees take each step with 2009 in mind. They want next year's Women's Open to rival the atmosphere of the men's version — particularly in terms of corporate hospitality, community enthusiasm and participation.



MIMI GRIFFIN (left) and Jeanne Taylor of MSG Promotions ran corporate hospitality at the U.S. Open last week at Torrey Pines. Their company will be running everything — or so it seems — at the 2009 U.S. Women's Open at Saucon Valley Country Club.

Their first task, of course, is making sure people — even those who don't follow golf — understand the magnitude of the event.

"This is worth planning for," Griffin said, motioning toward thousands of spectators who were walking around Torrey Pines last Wednesday. "If you're just here as a fan, this is an awesome experience and one you certainly don't have every day."

The company's Web site, www.msgpromotions.com, offers details about various hospitality options — from tables to tents to skyboxes (something the men's tourney doesn't have). There's a link for ticket buyers as well, and prices are lower for those who purchase them by June 30 of this year. For example, a final-round ticket is \$30 now and will go up to \$45 on July 1; a

championship week package is currently \$110 and will increase to \$130 on July 1.

Griffin said those dates are firm, a way to thank those who act early. Still, selling tickets is only the beginning, said Jeanne Taylor.

"The one nice thing about corporate hospitality is it appeals to every business," said Taylor, MSG's executive vice president. "You can get a tent for a single day or all week."

"We have a whole marketing program to appeal to people in their 20s and 30s. It's going to be the greatest bar in Bethlehem for that week. We have kids' initiatives. The event is for everybody."

When it comes to the advertising campaign, Griffin plans to give a glimpse of what the golfers are like

as individuals. Then there's the adopt-a-player program for children.

"It's third- and fourth-graders from schools in the Lehigh Valley," said marketing account executive Emily Geosits, a graduate of Emmaus High and Lehigh.

"We're trying to create a pen-pal relationship with players from the U.S. Open. When the kids come to the Open, they'll wear a colored shirt [to represent] their player. Hopefully, if we get enough, there will be a sea of color on the course."

And, with just over a year to go, Geosits said the staff has a sense of urgency.

One group is headed to next week's U.S. Women's Open at Interlachen Country Club in Edina, Minn.

The idea, as always, is to keep the best ideas they see and come up with new

options as well. Taylor also plans to attend Musikfest this summer — not so much for the music, she said, but to learn more about local food favorites, vendors and pricing.

Next year's tournament will differ from the men's version in certain obvious ways. Taylor pointed to a 39,000-square foot merchandise tent at Torrey Pines and said the one at Saucon Valley will be about 14,000 square feet. But Griffin said the overall "quality" of the event will be consistent with what fans expect from the men's tournament.

"We want people to wear the U.S. Women's Open logo and just have a great time when they come out," Taylor said. "It's always on our mind."

beth.hudson@mcall.com
610-820-6501

THIS WEEK ON TOUR

BRIDGING THE GAP

A year ago at Oakmont, the USGA set up the par-3 8th hole to play at 300 yards for the final round of the U.S. Open. This year at Torrey Pines, the USGA set up the par-4 14th hole to play at 267 yards for the final round and playoff of the U.S. Open.

A par 3 played 33 yards longer than a par 4.

"Go figure that," Stewart Cink said.

Once the constant target of criticism for its long, rough-hewn U.S. Open slogs, the USGA received almost unanimous praise for the setup this year at Torrey Pines. Pdraig Harrington called it "exceptionally generous," and Phil Mickelson said the "USGA did the best job it's ever done."

Most of the kudos went to Mike Davis, the USGA's senior director of rules and competitions, and the official primarily responsible for course setup. Jeff Hall, a Bethlehem



THE 614-YARD, PAR-5 13TH HOLE at Torrey Pines is one of the holes which, while exceedingly long, was judged as 'fair' by most of the players.

Lenny Ignelzi
Associated Press

resident and Davis' assistant, said their team looked at Torrey Pines' length (officially the longest for a U.S. Open at 7,643 yards) as merely a suggestion.

The course played to that length only once: for the Golf Digest pre-tournament show involving Justin Timberlake, Tony Romo and Matt Lauer. For the final round, all three par 5s were reachable and the 14th was played from the red tees, specifically to prod

players into attempting to drive the green.

"For years and years and years, we've seen 480-yard par 4s and high rough," Cink said. "It's wonderful to see something different. ... Players are going to rave about this one, and that will get [the USGA's] attention."

"They don't want to hear complaining. Before, there's always been an us-vs.-them mentality. This helped bridge the gap."

ON THE TEE ...



ROB BOSAK

- **Age:** 39
- **Residence:** Bethlehem Township
- **Family:** Single
- **Profile:** Senior financial analyst at Crayola ... PIAA basketball official ... Played golf, baseball and basketball at Freedom High (Class of 1987) ... Won 2007 titles at Tarz Ford Memorial (with Sal Picone) and GALV Better Ball of Partners (with Dave Ambrose) ... 2006 Lehigh Valley Amateur runner-up ... 2005 Southmoore club champ and 2003 Northeast Pa. Stroke Play champ.
- **Home course:** Bethlehem Municipal
- **Handicap:** 1.2
- **Favorite club and why:** Lob wedge. My touch around the greens is one of my strengths, and it's fun hitting different kinds of shots with it.
- **Favorite golfer and why:** Phil Mickelson. He makes watching golf fun, one way or the other.
- **Best shot ever:** A 225-yard 2-iron that I holed for double eagle at High Bridge Hills.
- **Lowest score ever:** A 65 at Bethlehem Municipal.
- **One hole would love to play and why:** The 13th at Augusta. The beauty and the risk-reward aspect of the hole appeals to me.
- **Tip:** Minimize the use of your hands not only in the full swing but also on chip shots and putts. You will be much more consistent if you use the larger muscles of your body to control the club.

THE SCHEDULE

TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

■ **Course:** TPC River Highlands (6,820 yards, par 70), Cromwell, Conn.
■ **Purse:** \$6 million. **Winner's share:** \$1.08 million.
■ **Defending champ:** Hunter Mahan.
■ **TV:** Golf Channel (Thu-Fri 3-6 p.m.), CBS (Sat-Sun 3-6 p.m.).



BANK OF AMERICA CHAMPIONSHIP

■ **Course:** Nashawtuc Country Club (6,741 yards, par 71), Concord, Mass.
■ **Purse:** \$1.65 million. **Winner's share:** \$247,000.
■ **Defending champ:** Jay Haas.
■ **TV:** Golf Channel (Fri 1-3 p.m., Sat-Sun 1-4 p.m.).



WEGMANS CHAMPIONSHIP

■ **Course:** Locust Hill Country Club (6,329 yards, par 72), Pittsford, N.Y.
■ **Purse:** \$2 million. **Winner's share:** \$270,000.
■ **Defending champ:** Lorena Ochoa.
■ **TV:** ESPN2 (Fri noon-2 p.m., Sat-Sun 2-4 p.m.).

