

RETURN TO THE TOP

SPORTS



Jim Strandemo won his first Pine to Palm title at Detroit Country Club in 31 years, claiming the Seniors division championship Sunday, Aug. 16.
Robert Williams / Tribune

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Strandemo, Nelson, Andrisen each P2P division champions



File photo

Pat Vincelli watches an approach shot during the 2008 Pine to Palm Senior tournament play. Vincelli was the Senior's runner-up and co-medalist.



Robert Williams / Tribune

Tyler Nelson fought through a murky front nine and picked up the Mid-Am championship in extra holes, defeating Eric Harris in 20 holes.

By Robert Williams
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Three-time Pine to Palm champion Jim Strandemo won his first title at Detroit Country Club in 31 years during an emotional week defeating former Mid-Am and Seniors champion AJ Greff 1-up in the Seniors division championship match.

"It was tough," said Strandemo. "Playing with a heavy heart. We lost a good friend this week, Pat Vincelli. I was a best ball partner with him in the state seniors. He passed away about a week ago. Saturday, I put my little dog Lefty down that I named after my dad, so it was tough."

Vincelli had a long and successful history at the tournament. He was 2004 John Rutledge Memorial Award recipient, the 2002 Seniors Division champion and medalist, 2006 Seniors Division champion, 1997 Championship Division runner-up, 2001 Seniors Division runner-up and 2008 Seniors Division medalist and runner-up.

The Vincellis are annual visitors to Detroit Lakes coming to the tournament the last 32 years and 44 out of the last 45. Ryan Vincelli represented the family this year reaching the Mid-Am Consolation final.

According to Ron Vincelli, Pat cherished all the memories from the Pine. His 2004 Rutledge

Award still has a place in his trophy room. The putt he lipped out on the 18th hole of Championship division in 1997, only to lose on the first extra hole to Bill Thompson, was one he always wished would have gone in.

Pat is also the oldest person to win the State Senior Match Play event. Strandemo reflected on his good friend and more than three decades at the Pine to Palm.

"I just love this tournament," he said. "I consider this home; I'm originally from Mahanomen. It's like coming back home. I have a lot of friends here and have lost a few friends and the golf course is just beautiful."

While the course looks the same, the play has definitely changed since Strandemo's era of the 1980's.

"It's pretty much the same but in my day the fairways and greens were much harder," he said. "We had to bounce 'em up a lot of times. It was a totally different game of golf."

Both Strandemo and Greff had to adapt and find success on days that were not their best.

"My golf game was really good, up until maybe today," Strandemo said. "I just kind of lost a little bit of my focus, but it kind of came back."

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Submitted photo

Jason Kuehn and his son Cooper had a miraculous day golfing at Lakeview on Tuesday, each recording a first hole-in-one.

Kuehns sink holes-in-one on same day

By Robert Williams
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Rossman Elementary School principal Jason Kuehn and his son Bennett had an incredible day on the golf course Tuesday, Aug. 18 pulling off the mathematically difficult feat of each recording a first-ever hole-in-one within hours of each other on the same course.

"It was pretty awesome," Jason said. "We have three boys and obviously, it was only one of the three that it happened with, but at the same time our oldest Cooper was there for both of them. He was pretty excited for his brother and me as well."

With COVID-19 restrictions limiting the usual summer routines for the boys, golf has become a consistent event for the Kuehn family.

"This summer has been a little different," said Jason. "We haven't had as many activities going on with the boys so we spent a lot of time golfing at Lakeview and watching our boys starting to play; they have varying passions for it. My oldest is very competitive and likes it a lot. Our youngest is five and if he plays one hole that's more than enough for him and Bennett falls right in the middle. He could play nine holes and be passionate or he could play two holes and run over to the park and be just as happy. It was kind of ironic that he got it. He was a little oblivious in the moment; he thinks it happens all the time. After seeing everyone else's reaction he realized how special it was."

Bennett got the crazy day started with his hole-in-one from the gold tees on No. 4 at Lakeview Golf

Course from 100 yards with a 6-iron.

The ace was witnessed by his scramble team: Cooper Kuehn, Miles Moen, Grayson Sliper and Justin Sliper.

One person who missed it was Jason, who was busy at work preparing for the upcoming school year.

"I had a poor dad moment," he said "We had meetings all day with school stuff. I picked up my phone about 4 p.m. after not looking at it from 1 p.m. on and I had about 60 texts on there from family and friends."

He called Cooper's phone right away and got to talk to Bennett about his shot.

"He was kind of beyond the moment at that time," said Jason.

Jason had planned to go out to the course later in the evening but rushed out after getting the news. Along with members of the Sliper family, he started his round at hole No. 10.

Jason sent a text to the clubhouse after finishing the 10th hole.

"Right after that I texted Margery (Smith) and Kris because they treated Bennett really well and got him a hat and made him feel really good about it," said Jason.

He grabbed his phone and sent another text right after the next shot he hit on the 11th tee box, a 132-yard poke with a pitching wedge.

"I texted her, 'you're not going to believe this, I just got one,'" Jason laughed.

He didn't see the shot go in on the green uphill from the tee box and did not know his first career ace was waiting for him in the hole.

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Summer tennis tourney champs



Submitted photo

Mya Anderson, Jordan Fields and Maren Strawsell were the champions of new head girls tennis coach Greg Unruh's 3-on-3 summer tournament.

