

# At a Scramble, Varied Strengths Come Into Play

*The Eastham Chamber's Tourney brings people together for fun and charity*

PROVINCETOWN INDEPENDENT BY [RYAN FITZGERALD](#) SEP 22, 2021

EASTHAM — Thunder and rain filled the morning of Thursday, Sept. 16, leaving participants in the annual Eastham Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament wondering if it would go on as scheduled that day.

But New England weather did what it does, and by noon the skies had cleared, and the Captains Golf Course in Brewster was ready to welcome teams to the 21st edition of the Chamber's annual tourney.

Golf tournaments can go one of two ways. Some are competitive, with players there to hone their skills. Others, this one included, are designed to be fun. Proceeds from the event benefit a few local causes: the Betty Fleming Nursing Scholarship, Eastham Resident College Scholarships and Tradesman Toolship, and the Neighbors-in-Need Fund for emergency assistance.

The match was a scramble, with foursomes teeing off from different holes at the start. Captains has two 18-hole courses, one called Port and the other Starboard. My team teed off from hole 13 on Port, and this being my first time participating in a golf tournament of any kind, I couldn't help feeling superstitious about that.

But I was steadied by good teammates. With me was my friend Jake McGrath, and an Eastham couple, Steve Schweikhart and Irene McGrath (who is not related to Jake).

Steve and Irene, from Hudson Lake, N.Y., recently moved to Eastham, and were tournament first-timers, but they knew the course because they're members at Captains. Jake and I had played the course a few times, too, so we were all pretty familiar with how to approach each hole.



Left to right: Jake McGrath, Ryan Fitzgerald, Irene McGrath, and Steve Schweikhart.

In a scramble, each person in the group of four tees off, then the group chooses the best shot of the four and all hit their second shots from there. The player whose drive was best goes first on that second shot. Then, the three other players are allowed to drop a ball within a golf club's length from the original ball's lie and hit their second shots, and so on through each hole.

We all had different strengths. Jake could hit a long ball off the tee, so we relied on him for distance. Steve had pinpoint accuracy hitting his irons from the fairway onto, or right in front of, the green. Irene hit the ball consistently straight from anywhere on the course, so if all else failed we knew we could rely on her shot to keep us centered. Her approach shots close to the hole were also solid.



Left to right: Scott Bemiss, John McCarthy, Shawn DeLude, and Ken Taber.

I'm a competitive person by nature and felt a little disappointed in my inconsistent play. But I came through on putting. While everyone else was better at getting us to the hole, I sunk a few birdie and par putts to finish off their work.

At the end of the day, our team shot a combined 75 — three over par. Not too shabby.

Part of the fun was watching other groups come in. Community members, local business owners, and visitors mingle at this tournament. Ken Taber, who owns the Fairway Restaurant and Hole in One Bakery and Coffee Shop with his wife, Erica, brought a friend from New York, and those two partnered with Shawn DeLude, who runs Nauset Disposal, and Nauset Regional High School boys basketball coach John McCarthy.

There were prizes for longest drive, closest to the pin, or a hole in one. Steve had a near miss on the \$10,000 cash hole-in-one hole. He put the ball within a few feet of the cup. We were told it was the closest shot of the day.

After the tournament came dinner and a raffle at the Elks Lodge. There were about 50 people at dinner; more had played in the tournament. It was a good way to meet people like Aaron Burns and his father Steve, and Matt Burns and his father Gary. The two fathers are twins, and the foursome has been playing in the tournament as a team for several years.



Left to right: Aaron Burns, Gary Burns, Matt Burns, and Steve Burns. Gary and Steve are twins; Aaron, Steve's son, is an Orleans firefighter, and Steve is a retired firefighter. (Photos Rvan Fitzgerald)

The golf tourney is a great way for a young person who has made the not-so-easy decision to return to the Cape after college to feel connected to the community. My hope for next year's tournament is not so much about my drives — it's that next year I won't still be the youngest participant on the course.