



Bobcat®

NORTH DAKOTA OPEN



WELCOME TO THE 55TH ANNUAL BOBCAT NORTH DAKOTA OPEN | FARGO COUNTRY CLUB

RECOVERY IN THE OFFSEASON FOR 2018 CHAMPION KEVIN STANEK LEADS TO COMEBACK

Kevin Stanek has been out on the golf course almost every weekend for as long as he can remember. Like most golfers, he got his start by toddling after his dad around golf courses in his hometown of Bellvue, Nebraska. He's also no stranger to the Bobcat North Dakota Open, as last year was his fifth year participating. But within the first few swings, he knew that this time around was going to be special.



"The tournament was a whole lot of fun and a little bit different than the years before. I was hitting the ball the best I'd ever hit it," says Stanek. "I didn't realize until afterward when I talked to my dad, but it was my grandpa's birthday, and he was definitely with me on those last few holes. I made some pretty crazy pars."

His momentum carried well into the second day, where he ended the day 13 under par with a 64. He remembers it well, as he had the opportunity to play with a member of his host family, Chris Siverson, who plays as an amateur every year. Stanek also kept spectators, including local legend and good friend Russ Newman, on their toes during the last two holes of the day.

"On hole eight I had a 10-footer slider down the hill that I then made for par. And then on hole nine, I made a horrible tee shot," he says. "I pulled it a little left into the trees and had to hook one around the trees and then got into the bunker by the green. I had a pretty tough shot, it was just about dark, and I had to make about a 25-footer. I made it!"

Stanek's win was notable in comparison to previous champions. Traditionally, there are three days of play, but on the third day of last year's tournament, golfers were at the mercy of Mother Nature. Although Stanek's tee-time was scheduled for around 10:30, rain delays prevented him and the other golfers from getting out on the course.

"It was off and on rain delays and they kept pushing it back and pushing it back and everyone was looking at me in the room like 'Ooh, Kev, we're getting closer!'," he says. "Then within 10 minutes of hitting balls and warming up, lightning struck all around us. After that, they went in and talked it over and said that was it, I was the champion."

After his big win, Stanek was faced with a decision: whether to keep golf at the top of his priority list or take care of his health. Throughout his athletic career, his back had always given him trouble. He threw his back out during his freshman year of college and has dealt with recurring injuries ever since. His most recent injury, however, would have resulted in permanent nerve damage had he not sought medical attention.

"I had the surgery I needed, and it was a success. It took me just about two months to where I could do anything at all. It was a long winter, to say the least," he says. "I've basically just been rehabbing. I got back from Arizona in May and I've actually been out helping my uncle out on the farm hauling hay and little odds and ends stuff."

He has big plans in store and hopes to be back in full swing toward the end of the summer and to return for the 2019 Bobcat North Dakota Open. If you see him out on the course, be sure to give him a (light) pat on the back for making that goal a reality.

TENURED VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: DON SCOTT



Lifelong Fargo resident Don Scott has been volunteering at the Bobcat North Dakota Open since 2008. To honor his decade of service, Scott has been named the 2019 Volunteer of the Year. He got his start volunteering at the tournament through a friend.

"I knew the executive director of The Village at the time, and he mentioned needing volunteers at the tournament. I said 'Well, I can sign up for that!'," says Don.

When he saw the positive impact the North Dakota Open had in his local community, he didn't hesitate to sign up as a volunteer year after year.

"I think it's a very worthwhile project that's good for the city," says Scott. "But it's also fun to go out and see some of these better golfers hit some good shots."

Scott, 83, retired after 40 years working as a banker in Fargo. He enjoys golfing, and after volunteering at the ND Open each year, he and some friends set up a time to golf together at the Fargo Country Club. He also works for the Alex

Stern Family Foundation in Fargo part-time and has volunteered at other local events such as the Fargo Marathon.

"When I first got started, there were some guys I golfed with that were also volunteering, and I've met a lot of other volunteers through The Village," says Scott. "So it's been a very rewarding endeavor for me."

He's served in a variety of roles through the years, including ball spotter and golf cart driver. This year you'll find him under the scoring tent -- stop by and celebrate his 10 years of service!



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PUTTING 'BOBCAT' IN BOBCAT NORTH DAKOTA OPEN: 2019 HONORARY CHAIRMAN JOHN BENNETT

35 years ago, Fargo resident John Bennett decided he wanted to volunteer at the North Dakota Open. Little did he know that this decision would set the course for the Bobcat North Dakota Open you're witnessing today. That's why he's been named as this year's Honorary Chairman.

Before there was the Bobcat North Dakota Open, it was simply the North Dakota Open. Bennett was one of the key players in bringing on Melroe, now Bobcat Company, as a sponsor.

"I helped with the North Dakota Open before The Village was involved. I was on The Village board and myself and a couple of others decided to get a sponsor for the tournament," said Bennett. "Bob Spolum, the president of Melroe at the time, was a good friend of mine, and he said yes, Melroe would sponsor it."

Bennett has been a fixture at the tournament ever since.

"I've been volunteering as a starter, mainly on hole 10, for the past 35 years," says Bennett. "So, I get to see everyone in those two days."

What keeps him coming back year after year? The people. Throughout his years of service, Bennett has met people from all over that come together through their mutual love of the game, the community and good company.

Give hole 10 an extra wave this year as we celebrate John's last year as a starter and volunteer for the Bobcat North Dakota Open.

"Now that I can play in the wintertime and stay in better shape, we'll see what happens," he says. "It's been a fun tournament, and I've met some great people during all these years. It's a homecoming for a lot of people who come back to play in it."



THE ULTIMATE BOBCAT NORTH DAKOTA DEBUT FOR 2018 RUNNER-UP DAN SUTTON

The 2018 tournament was golfer Dan Sutton's first Bobcat North Dakota Open.

Fresh off the college course, Sutton made quite the entrance onto the professional scene. He closed out his first Dakota Tour at the Fargo Country Club in style – finishing second to Nebraskan golfer Kevin Stanek by only two strokes at 13 under par. Of the two rounds he played over the weekend, he remembers the back nine of the second round the most fondly.

"I almost had a chance to birdie every hole on that nine," he says. "On 10 I had hooked my drive left and thought it was going to go out of bounds, but it hit a tree and bounced back in. Then I punched it over the back of the green, which was the wrong side of the pin, and then I chipped in for birdie when I didn't even think I'd make par."

Originally from England, Sutton has been in the United States full-time since 2014, when he began his collegiate golfing career at the University of Idaho. As a newly professional golfer and a first-time player in the Bobcat North Dakota Open, Sutton has nothing but praise for the Fargo Country Club and the tournament overall.

"I really enjoyed playing on the golf course, and I thought the tournament was run really well. It was a shame about the weather on the last day, but there wasn't really much else we could do about that. Obviously, it would have been nice to go out and try and win, but it was good I played well."

Sutton was also able to reconnect with some of his former teammates from his time playing for the University of Idaho and the University of Kansas, where he transferred in 2016.

"I was sharing a room in a hotel with my former teammate, which I hadn't done all year, so that was exciting," he says. "Then I remember going around with a couple of my buddies to a little putting competition, and that was pretty fun."

After the 2018 tournament, Sutton went on to play in one more tournament in Nebraska before heading back to Wisconsin, where he resides for most of the year. Sutton spent the winter working full-time in Minneapolis while cleaning up his technique and practicing indoors with his coach to prepare for the upcoming spring and summer events. In April he was able to start practicing outside and competing.

"The first tournament that I did was the U.S. Open qualifier, and I missed by two shots, which was pretty rough," he says. "From there I played a few one-day tournaments in Wisconsin and Minnesota. I played three of those and won two of them."

He's looking forward to participating in the Tour for the second time, which will come to a close at the Fargo Country Club with the North Dakota Open, where Sutton will have another shot at the championship title.