



WELCOME TO THE 52ND ANNUAL BOBCAT NORTH DAKOTA OPEN | FARGO COUNTRY CLUB

## MILLER SAYS A 'HOMETOWN ADVANTAGE' HELPED HIM IN THE 2015 OPEN IN HIS FIRST TRIP TO FARGO

Matt Miller, the winner of the 2015 Bobcat North Dakota Open, said he felt like he had a hometown advantage, even though he had never been to Fargo.

"I didn't feel like it was a major adjustment during the practice round because I had grown up on courses like that in Bloomington, Illinois, so I felt really at home."

Miller has been golfing since he was 4 years old, and first learned from his dad.

He was especially grateful for the hospitality of Cliff and Jane Mattson, who he stayed with during the tournament — and also that the greens were in great shape during the tournament.

"It's a course where you have to make sure you don't get too far out of position, because it's very difficult to save par if you do," he says. "So you really have to think your way around."

Miller beat Fargo's own Tom Hoge — fresh off his first season on the PGA Tour, which included a recent round with Tiger Woods — by one stroke, over a Hoge-cheering crowd and fierce North Dakota winds. Miller gave away a three-stroke lead on the back nine but rallied with two birdies on the final two holes to win the tournament.

"It was a relief to win, because so much has to go right," Miller says. "To get past the last hole and win, it was fantastic."

Miller will use his winnings to pay for his entrance fee to the 2017 PGA Tour Qualifying School. Tuition for Q-School is part of the prize package for winning the Bobcat ND Open.

Since winning the Bobcat North Dakota Open, Miller moved to Dallas, Texas, and has played six events in Latin America, including the PGA Tour Latinoamérica. He also recently played two tournaments in Iowa before returning to Texas for the Texas State Open.



So what's next for Miller?

He hopes to get on the next Web.com tour — and will be back to Fargo for the 2016 Bobcat North Dakota Open. •

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR CELEBRATES 33 YEARS WITH THE TOURNAMENT



Steve Hohnadel has been a volunteer at the Annual Bobcat North Dakota Open for 33 years.

The tournament benefits The Village Family Service Center, where Hohnadel has worked since 1983. As the maintenance manager for The Village Family Service Center, he oversees the maintenance of all buildings and properties, and ensures they are properly furnished and that the shelves are always stocked.

Hohnadel finds his job rewarding because he knows he is a part of

something bigger than himself that helps others. He says he finds volunteering at the Bobcat North Dakota Open rewarding for the same reason, since it raises money for The Village Family Service Center.

"The Village is a place that has been helping people for 125 years with everything from adoptions to counseling," he says. "It's nice to be a part of it — and the tournament is something fun that raises money for the organization."

Although Hohnadel is in his 60s now and is often erecting tents and signs for the tournament amid the summer heat, he seems unfazed by the task.

"I do the physical stuff," he says, "but I suppose I'm built for it." Every year he puts up about five tents and 40 signs by himself - everything from signs that thank tournament sponsors to signs that direct people where to go.

In his free time, Hohnadel is an avid biker who teaches motorcycle safety training in the summer. The Casselton, North Dakota, native says the region is ideal for bikers because "it's flatter than Iowa, so you can see for miles and miles."

"You can stand on top of your dog house and watch him run away for three days," he says. •



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## FARGO COUNTRY CLUB GOLF COURSE UNDERGOES IMPROVEMENTS TO COMBAT FLOODING — JUST IN TIME FOR THE DAKOTAS TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

Although it may not look dramatic — or be noticed by most — the Fargo Country Club’s golf course recently underwent some major renovations that will make a big difference to Bobcat North Dakota Open golfers for years to come. The modifications come just in time, too, because this is the first year the Bobcat North Dakota Open will be home to the Dakotas Tour championship.

Aaron Porter, superintendent of the Fargo Country Club golf course, and his staff of 24 have been battling Red River flooding for years now. This year, they built a floodwall that will protect five holes along the back nine of the golf course from the overflowing riverbanks.

They also added tee boxes on the 14th hole and raised the first quarter of the hole 7 feet, to meet the height of the new floodwall. In addition, they widened the fairway by removing more than 1,000 trees, to make the placement of the floodwall possible.

“I’ve been working on renovations here for eight years,” Porter says. “Although we’ve done a lot of projects over the years, this was by far the biggest. The actual construction took three months, and then we spent the last six weeks seeding and sodding the new tees and fairways.”

Dennis Chandler, executive director of the Dakotas Tour, said the renovations are “subtle changes that will keep the entirety of the golf course in play not only for the Dakotas Tour event, but for the members of the Fargo Country Club throughout the golf season.”



Chandler reiterated how special the Fargo Country Club course is, and how pleased he is that these improvements will make it better than ever.

“The Fargo Country Club is a fantastic venue, and they do a wonderful job of compromising, but they shouldn’t have to,” Chandler says. “Almost every year they have to modify the course by shortening tee boxes to get around water, playing a hole as a par 4 instead of a par 5, or even, like last year, using a hole from the adjacent course in place of one that was unplayable. It makes it a teeth-grinder for everybody involved. These renovations should prevent the club — and Porter’s staff — from scrambling to modify the course so often.”

Tom Lehman, the architect hired by Fargo Country Club to oversee the renovations, is currently designing additional improvements to the golf course, including the addition of two new holes, which will be announced later this year. •

## HONORARY CHAIRMAN ‘MAKES GOLF HIS JOB’ AFTER RETIRING AS A SURGEON

The honorary chairman of this year’s Bobcat North Dakota Open is a self-described surgeon-turned-golfer.

“Golf is my job now,” he jokes.

Dr. Michael Howell completed about 5,000 gastric bypass surgeries during his 48 years as a bariatric surgeon in Fargo. Now he golfs nearly every day, and if there is a day he doesn’t play golf, he thinks about it.

But golf is not a new hobby for Dr. Howell, who has been hooked on the sport since he was 11 years old.

“I was caddying for my mother while she was playing with some friends,” Dr. Howell says. “When the ladies went in to have lunch, I went out to play golf — and fell in love with it right away.”

Dr. Howell played golf avidly for the next seven years, until he went into pre-med and then medical school. Then, in 1976, he joined the Fargo Country Club and began playing in the annual Bobcat North Dakota Open every year for the next three decades. When he was 40 years old, he won second place to Mike Podolak in the amateur gross division with a score of 218 — two over par.

Now, in addition to being a husband of 49 years to his wife Michela, a father to four grown children, and a grandpa to 10 grandchildren, Dr. Howell still golfs competitively in several golf associations: the North Dakota, Minnesota and Florida golf associations, The Society of Seniors, and the International and American Senior golf associations.

Not only is Dr. Howell passionate about the sport of golf, but he’s also a longtime supporter of the Bobcat North Dakota Open.

“It’s one of the highlights at the end of the summer season,” he says. “It’s a well-run tournament, and they’re fortunate to have Bobcat as a sponsor.” •



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