

## Tennessee regains title in Battle of the Smokies at Mt. Mitchell GC

Tennessee pulled away on the last day to end a four-year drought in the Battle of the Smokies Media Golf Challenge held at Mount Mitchell Golf Club.

The title and coveted black bear trophy went to the Tennessee media squad in convincing fashion, as the Volunteers defeated North Carolina media team



39-33 with several strong final-round performances in individual match play.

Tennessee won seven of twelve final round matches, though it was a halved match which delivered the victory. Freelance writer Traci Peel of Nashville earned a half point

on the final hole of her match to officially put Tennessee over the top.

Joe Hall of Tee Times Magazine in Nashville became the first team captain to

hoist the trophy twice. He was captain the last time Tennessee won the title.

“It’s been long overdue,” said Hall. “For those of us who have ‘suffered’ through being beaten rather solidly in the past, it feels good to have this smoky bear trophy back on the other side of the mountains.”

The Battle of the Smokies is contested annually between teams of media from both states. This year’s challenge featured 27 golfers competing in four rounds of Ryder Cup-style matches.

North Carolina captain, Sam Smith of the Carolina Golf Journal, had nothing but praise for the competitors and Mount Mitchell Golf Club.

“I was very proud of the North Carolina team that fought hard against a very good Tennessee team”, said Smith. “The Volunteers performance in the final matches was excellent, and earned them a third victory in the seven years of the event. All of the competitors were winners really, getting to play Mt. Mitchell and enjoy the great hospitality of our host Jim Floyd and his staff.”

Mount Mitchell Golf Club hosted the Battle as part of its 40th anniversary celebration. The scenic course, located at the base of the highest mountain east of the Mississippi, opened for play on June 6, 1975, and remains a wonderful venue for public play in the North Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains.

“Many of us had never been here before,” said Hall, “and it was a real treat to play such a great golf course.”

## 40 years-old and counting - Mt. Mitchell Golf Course

For years visitors from around the world have been coming to the Blue Ridge Mountains to see the tallest mountain east of the Mississippi – Mt. Mitchell (6,683 feet). For many that became just part of their visit 40-years ago after the Mt. Mitchell Golf Club opened in June of 1975. The Toe River Valley layout became an instant hit with golfing groups and families along with outdoor enthusiasts.

The owners, former UNC-Chapel Hill classmates Jim Floyd and Lee King, hired British architect Fred Hawtree to design the course, which turned out to be the only course the esteemed architect ever routed in America.

Hawtree crafted a front nine along the valley floor, bisected by the South Toe River with very little change in elevation. He routed in the back nine into a higher piece of the property, yet still kept it relatively flat for a course so high in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

“It’s only about three miles to the top of Mount Mitchell as the crow flies. But the land rises 3,600 feet in those three miles, so it makes for a dramatic backdrop,” Floyd said. “It’s not the typical hilly mountain course.

It’s flat for the most part.”

Mount Mitchell is wall-to-wall bent grass, giving the course a lush and soft feel most of the golfing season, which runs from April-mid November. The grass surface also results in the course playing longer than the 6,495 yards from the tips.

*Mt. Mitchell’s signature hole par-4 #14*



The back nine's signature hole is also the most difficult on the course, the 450-yard 14th. Golfers must hit a drive far enough to get around the corner, then face a second shot over the South Toe River to a green guarded by two large bunkers. Be happy with less than a monster score here, and enjoy the rest of the ride home finishing with the downhill 18th, again with an approach over water.

Floyd is pleased to see lots of familiar faces from the last 40 years, as well as a few new ones. The course's tees, fairways and greens are in excellent condition, and there's plenty to do after golf, including fly fishing in trophy waters throughout the course.

Mitchell Golf Club added a catch-and-release program for trout fishing four years ago, and Floyd said the fishing aspect of the resort has taken off recently. Permits for one (\$25) or three days (\$50) can be purchased in the pro shop. Anglers must supply their own fly rods.

The club stocks and maintains two miles of the South Toe River as it exits the Pisgah National Forest. These private trophy waters often yield rainbow trout in the 20-25 inch range. (Really!)

"It's turned into somewhat of a resort. It's not a full-blown resort because we don't have all the amenities, but we do have on-course accommodations, a full-service restaurant, friendly pub, hiking options at Mount Mitchell, and even horse-back riding at a dude ranch down the street," Floyd said.

As part of the 40th year celebration, the club is offering stay-and-play packages all season that start at \$99 per person for two rounds and one night of lodging. Three rounds of golf and two nights are available starting at \$159 per person.



## Elevate Your Game.

### 40th Anniversary Promotion

#### Stay & Play Package!

TWO ROUNDS, ONE NIGHT'S STAY

**\$99.00**

Per person, based on double occupancy. Includes green fees, cart fees, 1 BR or 2 BR condo or house.

Early Bird Arrival:  
\$105/Person - 2 Day/1 Night

## Mt. Mitchell Golf Club

Pro Shop 828-675-5454

Teo's Restaurant: 828-675-4911

Reservations: 828-675-4923

[www.mountmitchellgolf.com](http://www.mountmitchellgolf.com)

Golf Digest "Places To Play"

★★★★1/2 Rating • 2012

Golfweek, 2013:

Ranked #13 in NC "Best in State".

11484 State Hwy. 80 S. • Burnsville, NC 28714

Package includes Golf on arrival and departure day.

\$15.00 credit on dinner for two at Teo's in the Clubhouse (Tues.-Sat.).

Offer valid for parties of two or four with check-in Sunday through Thursday.

Three day/two nights available for \$159.00 per person (Sat.-Wed. check in).

All rates plus tax. Limited availability.

Code: Golfshow2015