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Sundance at A-Ga-Ming Named 2023 Michigan Golf Course of the Year

KEWADIN, Mich. – The Sundance Course at A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort has been selected as the 2023 Michigan Golf Course of the Year by the Michigan Golf Course Association (MGCA).

Sundance, a Jerry Matthews design that opened in 2005, is one of two courses at the main campus of A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort and sits atop glacier-carved bluffs between Torch Lake and Grand Traverse Bay in Northern Michigan.

“Sundance has stood the test of time, and we feel it’s one of the top two or three courses Jerry Matthews designed in his great career,” Mike Brown, co-owner and general manager, said. “When it opened in 2005 it was named the third best new course in the country and we still get great feedback every year.”

The MGCA Course of the Year Award honors a member course that meets four criteria: Unique characteristics of the course; exceptional quality of ownership and management; outstanding contribution to its community; and significant contribution to the game.

“Getting nominated and winning this award from the MGCA is not something you expect, but I do think we are deserving especially with our involvement in First Tee, high school golf, collegiate golf and the various charity events and golf groups that play here and enjoy the experience,” Brown said. “It’s exciting to be considered and being named course of the year in Michigan is tremendous.”

Jada Paisley, executive director of the MGCA, said the MGCA is thrilled to announce Sundance as the 2023 MGCA Course of the Year.

“Sundance embodies all of the characteristics of the Course of the Year award,” she said. “The golf course has fostered a vibrant community hub where people can come together for golfing, socializing and events while supporting charitable causes that benefit the broader community.”

Part of the Sundance course rolls over links style ground and part of the course is cut through Northern Michigan hardwoods and is next to the resort’s original Torch course.

With water views combined with wide, playable fairways, classic green design, 110 bunkers and natural sand areas as well as heather-clad mounding, the course is stunning in appearance in all directions. It can be played at almost 7,000 yards and offers multiple tee options.

A-Ga-Ming was built in the mid-1970s by Detroit businessman Roy Wetmore. What is now the Torch course was redesigned by Chick Harbert, the 1954 PGA champion and Michigan Golf Hall of Fame member. The Antrim Dells course and Charlevoix Country Club courses located nearby are also part of the current resort, which include multiple restaurant and lodging options. Learn more at a-ga-ming.com.

Larry Lavelly is the co-owner and PGA director of golf, and the superintendent for the Sundance course is Nick Michalek.

Brown said Sundance is a favorite among the visitors and golfers of all abilities who come to A-Ga-Ming.

“We hear from people who play it for the first time telling us how much they love it, and we hear from our membership that has grown to about 350 members that rave about it,” he said.

“It’s a playable course. It can be pushed back to 7,000 yards and that makes it quite a challenge. We’ve hosted the last two (Michigan Junior State Amateur) championships and those kids can hit it a mile. We have a college tournament on Labor Day weekend, collegiate women, and we get great feedback from them. We are going to host the Big East (Conference Tournament) next year. Larry’s son (Josh) plays at Villanova and we have a connection there. We are getting recognition from all directions, and that still includes the primary part of our business with buddy trips and the golf travel groups who visit the Traverse City area. Sundance is outstanding and versatile. I think that’s a good way to put it.”

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ATTACHED: Photo of the Sundance course at A-Ga-Ming Golf Resort, courtesy A-Ga-Ming.