

# Sports

## Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf



## Teeing off with the pros

**Nondice Powell**  
Hunter Army Airfield

Wind, bunkers and sand all seem like things Soldiers could encounter during a deployment to war zones like Iraq or Afghanistan. Four Soldiers from Hunter Army Airfield found those elements and wildlife alligators while on a community outreach mission to Savannah's Hutchinson Island.

The four were chosen to participate in the Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Pro-Am at the Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa. The Pro-Am matches professional players from the Professional Golfers' Association of

America Tour of Champions Tour with teams of amateur golfers.

"Liberty Mutual Group, our title sponsor, donated the four spots in the Pro-Am as a way to honor our military," said Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Executive Director Tim Iley.

Between the cost of the four Soldiers participating in the Pro-Am and the "Birdies-for-Charity" fundraiser, more than \$31,000 was donated to the 3rd Infantry Division. The "Birdies-for-Charity" fundraiser raised \$100 for the Chaplains Fund for every birdie made on the four par-3 holes during the tournament. 71 birdies were made, raising a total of \$7,100. While ticket packages for one person started at \$25, active duty military and their families were also able to attend the tournament free.

"It is a great opportunity to have Soldiers involved with our event," said Iley. Allowing them free admission into the tournament, free food and drinks at the (United Service Organizations) tent, and the opportunity to play at the Pro-Am is the least we could

do."

With the current operations tempo and upcoming deployments, the chance to participate in the Pro-Am was an opportunity the Soldiers greatly appreciated.

"I've been playing golf for 20 years and this is an experience I've never had before," said Capt. Mary Beth Thompson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Aviation Brigade company commander. "It's really a great opportunity for us to come out and have some time off work right before we get ready to leave again."

Thompson played golf in high school and continued to play as time allowed. In 2005, she was a member of the All Army team.

"I haven't had much chance to play recently because of going back and forth from Iraq and just being busy as the company commander," she said.

Thompson and her teammates, Warrant Officer Eric Ward, A Company, 832nd Ordnance Battalion, Sgt. Maj. Allen Jacobs, Headquarters Support Company, 224th Military Intelligence Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Ramon Puchales, D Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, got the opportunity to

play with golf professional John Mahaffey.

Mahaffey turned professional in 1971. He earned one Champions Tour victory and ten PGA Tour victories.

"We play Pro-Ams every week, but we don't very often get an opportunity to play with people from the Armed Forces who have done so much for our country," said Mahaffey. "It was just a complete and utter thrill for me to play with these folks. We all had a great time and it was just very, very special."

Although Mahaffey has not served in the Armed Forces himself, he does have a special tie to the military.

"My fiancé is retired military," said Mahaffey. "She was in the Army and retired as a lieutenant colonel. She will be thrilled that I had this opportunity."

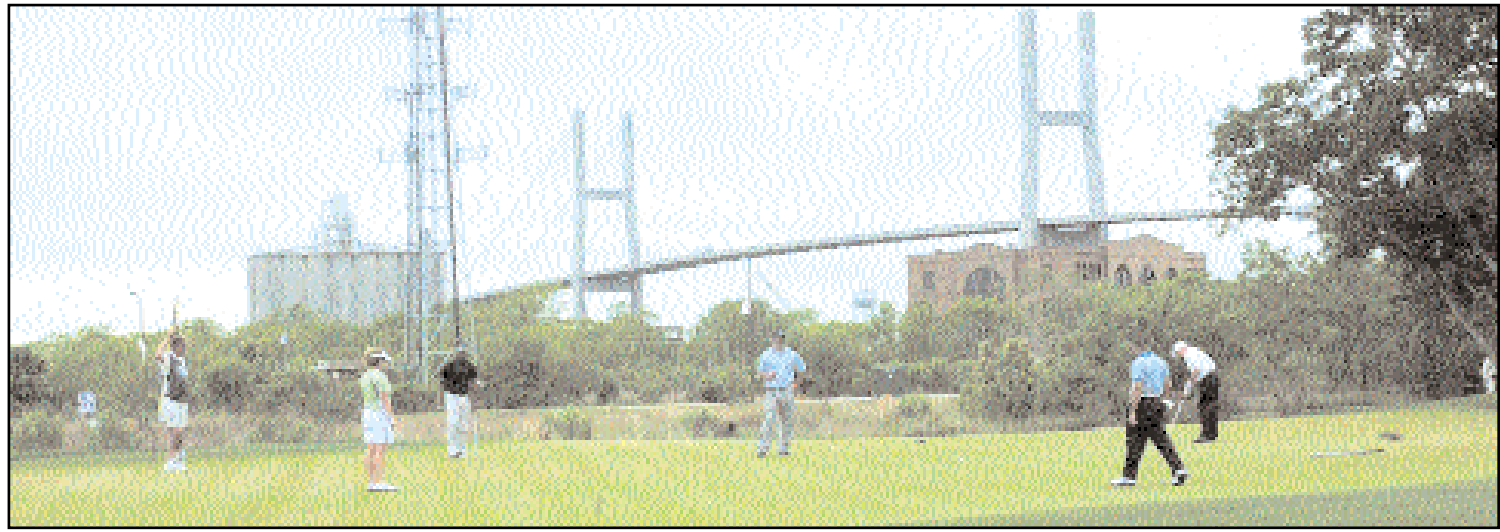
The Soldiers and Mahaffey finished their day at 14 under par.

Mahaffey was honored and enjoyed the opportunity to play a round of golf with the Soldiers. "I've never had a better group," he said. "I'm proud of them for what they're doing and proud of them for the way they played today."



Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Maj. Dave Moga (left), 3/3 Avn., shows Champions Tour golfer Don Pooley the controls of an AH-64D Apache Longbow April 19.



Nondice Powell

Golf Professional John Mahaffey takes a swing at the Liberty Mutual Legends of Golf Pro-Am while his amateur teammates (from left to right) Capt. Mary Beth Thompson, Sgt. Maj. Allen Jacobs, Warrant Officer Eric Ward, and Staff Sgt. Ramon Puchales look on.



Jimmy Currier

Steven Dill, one of Bradwell's top pitchers, is expected to pitch Monday.

## Bradwell back to the diamond after rest

Jimmy Currier  
Coastal Courier sports editor

After almost a week off, Bradwell's baseball team is ready to hit the diamond.

The Tigers host Wayne County Monday and Beach on Tuesday. Both games start at 5 p.m.

The Tigers last played on Tuesday, defeating Windsor Forest 11-1 in Savannah.

Savannah High forfeited Friday's game.

The wins improve the Tigers' record to 7-15 and 6-5 in Region 3-AAAAA.

In Tuesday's win, Nick Franks pitched the complete game — six innings — to earn his first win of the season.

The senior struck out 12 batters and allowed two hits. He also doubled at the plate.

Josh Magaw, Jeff Polk and Dominic Materne had two hits a piece.

Bradwell Institute coach Rhett Heeellgren said Franks and Steven Dill will each pitch between 30-40 pitches against Wayne County.

The Yellow Jackets are 12-5 and defeated Bradwell 10-4 in Jesup, March 2.

In Tuesday's region contest, Kentrell Hargrove is expected to start on the hill for the Tigers. Freshman Dylan Brown may pitch some too.

The Tigers and their fans will be watching the scoreboard Tuesday. Johnson hosts Groves at 4:30 p.m. in a game that could determine Bradwell's postseason plans.

If Johnson beats Groves, then Bradwell must beat both Jenkins and Groves to advance to the state playoffs. If Groves beats Johnson, then a Bradwell win over either Jenkins or Groves advances the Tigers.

Bradwell travels to Jenkins on Friday, and travels to Groves on May 1.

## Former Panther starts as GSU right guard

Jimmy Currier  
Coastal Courier sports editor

STATESBORO — Former Liberty County High School football star Marcelo Estrada was pumped for Georgia Southern's Blue-White game Saturday.

The senior right guard and the offensive line had a good game and fun in the process.

"It was fun. We had a good turnout and everybody was having fun," Estrada said. "I think that's the biggest thing this year. Everyone was having fun and having a good time."

Estrada impressed offensive line coach Shawn Bostick.

"Marcelo has been a treat," Bostick said. "The guy goes above and beyond the call of duty. He is a great player and a great person. I am extremely happy I have the pleasure of coaching that guy."

Estrada's Blue team lost 17-7 to the White team in front of over 3,000 screaming Eagle fans.

The Blue-White game is the culmination of spring practice, where the roster is divided into two teams.

Chris Hatcher is the third coach in as many years for Estrada to play under, but it's nothing new for Estrada, who played under three different coaches at LCHS.

"It's hard, but Hatcher made it a lot easier, especially the way he came in," he said. "He came in looking up at us and told us we are all doing a good job. Everyone is excited and we have a good squad."

Estrada also is excited about the new offense, the "Hatch Attack," which is a shotgun-oriented spread offense.

"It's a fun offense and it better suits our style and personnel than last year with the pro," he said.

In the spring game, fans saw the "Attack" at work.

The Blue team passed the ball 34 times for 187 yards and the White team threw the ball 50 times for 367 yards.

Last season, Estrada and the line were in a three-point stance. This season, they switch to a two-point stance.

Estrada explained that in the two-point stance, the linemen's hands aren't on the ground and they stand more like a linebacker. This stance helps in executing the spread offense.

Last season, Estrada started all of GSU's 11 games. He grounded 149 defenders and had a team-high 21 against Central Arkansas.

While at Liberty County, he lettered in football all four years and was captain for his sophomore, junior and senior seasons.

He led the Panthers in tackles in 2000, 2001 and 2002.

## Panthers' 10-0 lost dampers county post-season aspirations

Jimmy Currier  
Coastal Courier sports editor

Liberty County's postseason aspirations are gone with the wind. The Panthers lost 10-0 at Burke County Saturday to fall to 3-5 in Region 3-AAA south.

The loss was disappointing to LCHS coach Steve Cotrell and the baseball players, who were projected to make the state playoffs this season.

Fielding miscues continued to haunt the Panthers, as they made three errors and several mental mistakes. The Cadets took advantage of the miscues to score seven runs in the third inning.

In other sub-region action, Richmond Hill (7-2) defeated Burke County (4-5) and South Effingham (7-2) defeated Hephzibah (1-8).

Burke County and Benedictine play Friday for the third and final sub-region playoff spot.

Liberty County returns to action Thursday at 5:30 p.m., hosting Pierce County. The Panthers finish the season Friday at 5:30 p.m., hosting South Effingham.

Friday, Liberty County defeated Hephzibah 6-5.

The Panthers trailed 5-2 in the fifth inning, but rallied with four runs in the fifth inning.

Senior Erik Mattingly, who went 3-for-4, started the inning off with a hit and later knocked in the go-ahead run. Senior Robert Walsh tied the game with a sacrifice fly.

# Army splits doubleheader with Navy

www.goarmysports.com

WEST POINT, N.Y. – Andy Ernesto laced a game-winning double with one out in the bottom of the eighth inning after the Black Knights had tied the score with two runs in the bottom of the seventh as Army rallied for a 4-3 victory over arch-rival Navy in the first game of the teams' Patriot League doubleheader, Saturday afternoon at sun-splashed Doubleday Field. It marked the second straight Patriot League contest in which Army mounted a comeback to tie the score in its last at-bat before winning in extra frames.

Navy jumped out to a 6-2 lead in the nightcap before holding on for a 6-4 win behind the complete-game pitching performance of Mark McCoy to earn a split of the conference twinbill.

The opener featured the first matchup of All-American pitchers in service academy history, putting Army ace Nick Hill against Navy standout Mitch Harris. While neither figured in the final decision, both delivered as promised.

Navy broke through first, scoring two runs on three hits against Hill in the top of the third inning. The Mids loaded the bases with no outs when B.J. Bickel and Renaldo Hollins reached on leadoff singles and Michael Garcia walked. It appeared Hill would escape unscathed when he promptly struck out Harris, Navy's leading power threat, and Thomas Hamilton, the Mids' cleanup hitter. But the Black Knights' southpaw fell behind Michael Speciale 3-1 and the freshman outfielder smacked a clutch single to left-center field, scoring Bickel and Hollins.

Army sliced the deficit in half with an unearned run in the bottom of the stanza when Tony Capozzi singled to center with two outs, stole second base and scored on a fielding error by Navy third baseman Drew Lydon.

Both pitchers settled down from there with neither team able to add to its respective run total until the seventh inning. While Hill did not allow another Navy baserunner to reach scoring position until the seventh, Harris stranded the bases loaded in the fifth, then departed after allowing leadoff singles to Cole White and Chris Simmons in the sixth. Navy closer JD Melton worked out of the jam after relieving Harris in the sixth, fanning J.P. Polchinski and pinch-hitter Tom Frawley after Kyle Stramara had sacrificed White and Simmons into scoring position.

But the Mids' sidwinding right-hander, who earned freshman All-America honors last spring while enrolled at Wofford College, ran into deep trouble in the seventh.

Navy plated what seemed to be an

important insurance run off Hill with two outs in the seventh as Hollins singled, advanced to second on a wild pitch and scored on a single up the middle by Garcia for a 3-1 Mid lead. But seven days after battling back from a three-run deficit in their final at-bat to stun Holy Cross, the Black Knights followed a similar formula to shock the Mids.

After Melton retired Ernesto on a flyout to open the inning, Capozzi was hit by a pitch. Army drew to within one run on Barnes Connell's double just inside the left field foul line. With Navy's infield drawn in after Connell stole third base, Dinga dumped a single into shallow left field to score the game-tying run. It marked Melton's first blown save after nine successful conversions this spring.

Navy mounted a threat in the top of the eighth inning thanks to consecutive one-out singles by Thomas Hamilton and Speciale against reliever Drew Clothier. But Dinga (2-0), Army's All-America stopper, came on to retire Bill Maugeri, on a pop foul to first base, and Steven Soares, on a fly ball to right field, as the Black Knights averted damage.

Army won the game moments later after Polchinski reached on an infield single with one out in the bottom of the eighth. He moved to second on a single to right-center by Caleb Love, who had entered the game as a defensive replacement an inning earlier. Ernesto then ripped a searing line drive over the head of Maugeri in left field to end the game, setting off a wild celebration at the plate as Polchinski crossed with the winning run.

Hill, who had allowed just two runs in 21 previous career innings against Navy, permitted three runs (all earned) on eight hits. He struck out eight and walked one. Harris, meanwhile, yielded four hits and one unearned run in five-plus innings of work. He struck out seven and walked two. Melton (2-1) suffered his first loss of the year for Navy, surrendering six hits and three runs over 2.1 innings of work.

"I really thought it was a solid day at the yard today," head coach Joe Sottolano. "There were two pretty good baseball games. When you look at the two games closely, we really lost one inning and that cost us a ball game. The first game was a great pitching matchup with Nick Hill doing a great job of keeping us within reach and our offense coming through in the clutch once again. This ballclub has a ton of heart and soul. Our players just seem to fight and scrap when their backs are to the wall."

The Black Knights (14-18-1, 5-7 Patriot) grabbed a 2-0 advantage in the second inning of the second contest, scoring a pair of runs off McCoy on consecutive singles by

Polchinski, Bo Cipra and Ernesto, and a sacrifice fly by Capozzi. Navy (30-14, 10-4 Patriot) nicked Army starter Ben Mayhew for a run in the third inning on an RBI groundout by Josh Martinez, then stormed in front 6-2 on the strength of a five-run fourth. B.J. Bickel, Hollins and Garcia registered run-scoring singles to highlight the uprising.

Army chipped away, scoring single runs off McCoy on an RBI groundout by Cipra in the fourth inning and a sacrifice fly by Simmons in the fifth. The Black Knights, though, would not seriously threaten again as Navy's junior right-hander retired 11 straight batters (and 14 of 15) to end the game. Army managed just one baserunner over the final four innings with McCoy gaining strength as the game progressed.

Bickel, who collected two hits in the opener, went 3-for-4 with one run scored and one run batted in to pace the Midshipmen's 10-hit attack in the nightcap. Ernesto and Polchinski finished the second game with two hits apiece for the Black Knights.

McCoy (6-4) allowed seven hits and four runs in going the distance to earn the victory. He struck out three and walked two. Mayhew (0-6) suffered the loss for Army, giving up eight hits and six runs (four earned) in three-plus innings of work.

"I thought our relievers did a great job of not letting the game get away from us," said Sottolano. "We just came up a little bit short offensively in the second game. We hit a lot of balls hard right at defenders. I'm very pleased with the offensive approach we took today. I can't wait to get back on the field again tomorrow."



Andy Ernesto

**Postgame Notes:** Navy snapped a five-game losing streak to Army at West Point with its victory in Saturday's nightcap. Army has now captured 11 of the last 14 meetings between the arch rivals. The Black Knights have won 10 of the last 12 series matchups.

Nick Hill allowed three earned runs against the Mids on Saturday. He had allowed a total of two earned runs in his previous 21 innings pitched versus the Mids. Hill saw his 15-inning scoreless streak snapped when Navy scored two runs in the third inning of the first game.

Barnes Connell doubled in both games. Milan Dinga extended his school-record consecutive scoreless appearance streak to 25. He has been unscored upon in nine outings this season.