

# Perry hitting right notes at wheel of Baby Grand

By Tracy Renck  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

When Richard Perry was a teenager, he raced on the then-dirt track at Colorado National Speedway in Erie.

But as much as he loved racing for a checkered flag, he gave up the sport in pursuit of a college education.

"I received a scholarship to go to Parks College, and I thought that would be smart thing for me to do," Perry said.

It did turn out to be a wise decision for Perry. He graduated from college and went to work for Marri-

ott. The direction for Perry's life seemed to be set.

That is, until he took part in the Mini Grand Prix of Denver eight years ago.

During the benefit event, Perry raced in what essentially was a scaled-down quarter-Midget car.

"I took fourth place in the race and I was hooked on racing again," he said.

Perry began the process of getting back involved in motor sports, but he wanted to find something that made financial sense.

He found what he was looking for in a Baby Grand Stock Car. The Baby Grand also now is known as a Scaled Late Model and is two-thirds

the size and half the weight of a Late Model car.

"To buy a Late Model race car, it was going to cost me around \$20,000, and I was able to get a Baby Grand for a lot less than that," Perry said.

Perry, 43, purchased his Baby Grand car in 2000, and he has been racing ever since.

"I love the speed and the horsepower that this car has," said Perry, whose car (they currently cost about \$18,000) is equipped with a Yamaha XJR 1300 (1250cc) motorcycle engine. "They're a blast to drive."

Baby Grand cars can top out about 170 mph on long straight-aways, Perry said.

Saturday, competing with seven other drivers at I-26 Speedway in Pueblo, Perry won the Scaled Late Model Trophy Dash. But he had to settle for fourth place in the main event, which was won by J.D. Daniels, of Johnstown.

Two more Scaled Late Model events will be contested at I-26 Speedway, on June 24 and July 22. But Perry and the other Baby Grand racers keep plenty busy by competing in events sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Scaled Late Model Association and Miniature Motorsports Association.

The Baby Grand experience also is opening doors for female drivers. Mattie Whitten, of Centennial, and Desiree Trones, of Denver, finished sixth and seventh, respectively, Saturday in the main event.

"I would really like to be racing in the NASCAR Busch Series or Nextel Cup Series one day, and this Baby Grand car was a good step up for

me," said Whitten, 18.

"I get to compete against quality drivers and I also get valuable experience on different types of race tracks."

**THUNDER ON THE MOUNTAIN:** The third Mountain Madness NHRA Sport Compact Nationals will be contested Saturday and Sunday at Bandimere Speedway in Morrison.

It is the fifth of 11 events in the NHRA Xplod Sport Compact Racing Series. Gates open at 9 a.m. Saturday with heads-up qualifying sessions at 2, 4:30 and 7 p.m.

Sunday, the gates open at 8 a.m. The Xplod Stylefest is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Eliminations are scheduled for 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sunday.

Admission on Saturday is \$12 for adults and free for children younger than 12. Admission on Sunday is \$20 for adults and free for children younger than 12.

## Wie would prefer to try to win major

Associated Press

HAVRE DE GRACE, Md. — Playing in the U.S. Open wasn't the only thing on Michelle Wie's mind.

Her chances of getting to Winged Foot might have been better had she stayed in Hawaii for the 36-hole sectional qualifier instead of trying to get one of the 18 spots in a large field of PGA Tour players.

The one spot available at Poipu Bay, where there were only 10 players in the field, went to 15-year-old Tadd Fujikawa, whom Wie beat by two shots in the first stage of qualifying.

But staying in Hawaii would have meant missing the LPGA Championship, and that means just as much.

Given a choice between playing against Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson at the U.S. Open or winning the LPGA Championship for her first major and first victory in three years, Wie deliberated a few minutes before choosing the trophy.

"I think it would be to win this week," she said.

**MICKELSON EXPECTS STRONG WOODS:** Mickelson figures he would be lost if he tried to play a major after a 2½-month layoff.

While Mickelson is playing this week at the Barclays Classic in Harrison, N.Y., in preparation for the U.S. Open, Woods will return to competition next week at Winged Foot after an extended break after the Masters and the death of his father, Earl.

"For anybody else on tour, I think it would be a real challenge, but for him, I don't think the same rules apply," Mickelson said. "I don't think it's going to be a real challenge for him, unfortunately."

Coming off a fourth-place tie at the Memorial, Mickelson is tuning up at Westchester Country Club in his bid for a third consecutive major victory.

"I think competing for a championship, feeling the importance of each shot and trying to play at a high level ... is a great way to prepare for trying to do the same thing the next week," Mickelson said.

### This week

All times MDT  
LPGA TOUR

#### LPGA CHAMPIONSHIP

- Site: Havre de Grace, Md.
- Schedule: Today through Sunday.
- Course: Bulle Rock Golf Course (6,596 yards, par 72).
- Purse: \$1.8 million (\$270,000 to the winner).
- Television: The Golf Channel (2-5 p.m. today through Sunday).
- Defending champion: Annika Sorenstam.

#### PGA TOUR BARCLAYS CLASSIC

- Site: Harrison, N.Y.
- Schedule: Today through Sunday.
- Course: Westchester Country Club, West Course (6,839 yards, par 71).
- Purse: \$5.75 million (\$1,035,000 to the winner).
- Television: USA (2-4 p.m. today and Friday); KMGH-Channel 7 (noon to 3 p.m. Saturday; 1-4:30 p.m. Sunday).
- Defending champion: Padraig Harrington.

#### CHAMPIONS TOUR

- BANK OF AMERICA CHAMPIONSHIP
- Site: Concord, Mass.
- Schedule: Friday through Sunday.
- Course: Nashawtic Country Club (6,741 yards, par 72).
- Purse: \$1.6 million (\$240,000 to the winner).
- Television: The Golf Channel (11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday through Sunday).
- Defending champion: Mark McNulty.

#### ALSO THIS WEEK

- PGA EUROPEAN TOUR: BA-Caf Open, Vienna, Austria, today through Sunday.
- NATIONWIDE TOUR: LaSalle Bank Open, Glenview, Ill., today through Sunday.
- NGA HOOTERS TOUR: Statesville (N.C.) Classic, today through Sunday.
- ASIAN TOUR: Bangkok Airways Open, Koh Samui, Thailand, today through Sunday.
- PGA EUROPEAN SENIOR TOUR: Irvine Whitlock Jersey Seniors Classic, La Moyre, N.J., Friday through Sunday.
- PGA EUROPEAN CHALLENGE TOUR: Thomas Bjorn Open, Horsens, Denmark, today through Saturday.
- FUTURES TOUR: Team WLF.org Golf Classic, Saint Anne, Ill., Friday through Sunday.
- JAPAN LPGA TOUR: We Love KOBE Suntory Ladies Open, Hyogo, Japan, today through Sunday.

### SMITH SELECTED:

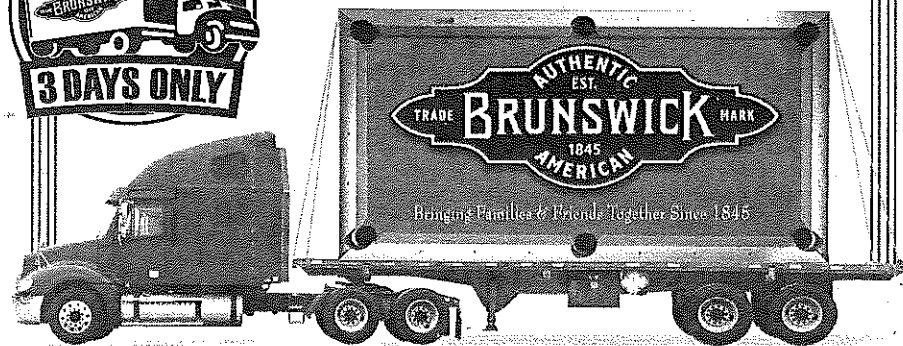
Marilynn Smith, one of the original 13 founders of the LPGA Tour, was selected for the World Golf Hall of Fame through the

### No Golf Report

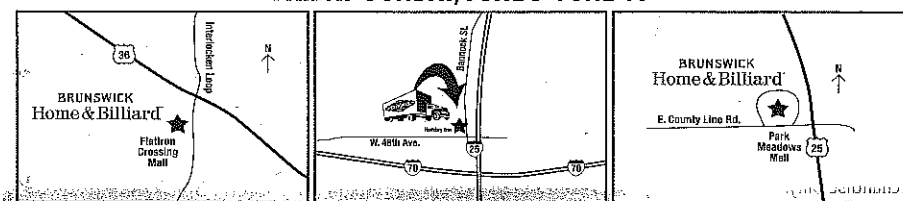
Lynn DeBruin is taking some time off. Her Golf Report will resume when she returns.

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