

PGA veteran Morland makes triumphant return to win 3rd Annual Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Golf Tournament at Pheasant Run



It's been a banner week for the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.

Not only did the venerable organization announce its four inductees for its Class of 2025 on Tuesday night at Town Hall, but it also welcomed over 100 golfers to the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame's Third Annual Golf Tournament in optimal conditions on Thursday afternoon at Pheasant Run.

ASHOF President and Chair Javed S. Khan and Chair of the Induction Committee Melanie Pearson announced that Erlinda Biondic (Athlete?Running), Heather Morning (Coach?Ice Hockey), Kris King (Athlete?Hockey), and Robert Reid (Athlete?Football) will be enshrined at the 12th Annual Induction Celebration at the Royal Venetian Mansion on November 6 with Rod Black confirmed as Emcee.

To add an exclamation point to the midweek proceedings, Class of 2018 inductee David Morland IV returned from Florida to compete in the Scramble and led his team to victory with a stellar collective score of 59.

Morland?who competed in 120 events on the PGA Tour, including two US Opens?teamed up with legendary CFTO sports broadcaster Joe Tilley, and Newmarket Hyundai sponsors Tony Degobbo and Brayden Micucci to secure bragging rights for a year.

After a three-item auction was moderated briskly by Tournament Convener Mike Smith and a delectable roast beef dinner with all the fixings was enjoyed in the Clubhouse, attendees were treated to the raucous antics and amusing anecdotes of Joe Bowen and Jim Ralph.

The Hot Stove segment was emceed by FM 105.9 Morning Man and My Day with the Stanley Cup author Jim Lang.

Bowen was in fine form from the moment he took the microphone and stated matter-of-factly to the noisy attendees-- ?Be quiet?you *****? ? which brought down the house.

With this tone set, Bowen rolled out many engaging anecdotes about Wayne Gretzky after being prompted by Lang.

?I marveled at Gretzky's ability to create time and space?and his ability to think his way outside the box. He was a marvelous talent.?

When Lang referred to the dynamic duo of Leafs Radio as 'the best in the business,' Ralph complimented his long-time broadcast partner for his 'high quality calling of games' and compared Bowen to 'the great Danny Gullivan and Foster Hewitt,' which elicited appreciative applause from the attendees.

Bowen added humorously that 'we've been working together for twenty-nine years' including five marriages' and referred to his long-time sidekick as 'the Bob Uecker of our sport.'

Ralph's self-effacing humor—a technique popularized by Uecker in film, TV series, and as the voice of the Milwaukee Brewers for decades—endeared him to the audience, especially when he described his pre-performance jitters during his first emcee gig with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

'I had just been released by the Leafs-- and they asked me to be the Guest Speaker at an event?it turned out it was for the Alumni Association in front of 1,200 people?and I had to follow the performance of last year's emcee: John Candy.'

The mood switched from Ralph's untimely misfortunes to a sentimental moment that developed from an audience member's question who asked the revered play-by-play announcer, 'Where did 'Holy Mackinaw' originate?'

Bowen's response took him—and us-- back to his childhood.

'My dad would blurt out 'Holy Mackinaw' when Johnny Bower would make a great save for the Leafs. When Felix Potvin made a big save during one of my first games, I said 'Holy Mackinaw' and it became my calling card.'

Bowen acknowledged the breaking news that he will be retiring after the 2025-26 season, but averred that he's 'still having too much fun. I'm getting paid to call hockey games with a great guy. The last real job I had was when I was 1,250 feet under the ground nickel mining for Inco.'

The natural chemistry of Lang, Bowen, and Ralph worked seamlessly with Lang's propensity to throw timely questions, Bowen's high octane animated delivery, and Ralph's contrasting dead pan, ironic humor driving the well-paced discussion—punctuated with periodic profanity much to the amusement of the assembly. In a moment of seeming spontaneity, Bowen proposed a fourth prize to be auctioned: 'A Visit to the Booth at a Leafs game this season' for one person who would sit with Bowen and Ralph at the game of their choice.

Ralph intoned that 'Second prize is two games with us.'

After a flurry of bids, Bowen stopped the bidding when one of the female golfers offered the top bid. Looking into the audience, Bowen yelled triumphantly, 'Sold' to the nice-looking lady in the front row.'

We're going to miss these kinds of spontaneous and amusing moments that only Joe Bowen and Jim Ralph can create with their brilliant chemistry, flawless comic timing, and good-natured guffawing.

Convener Mike Smith summarized ASHOF's great day at Pheasant Run: 'The weather was ideal, the support from Sport Aurora, the Leafs Alumni joining us, so many Inductees joining us, too—our sponsors are seeing full value for the day and it was great to see our main sponsors Allegra and Newmarket Hyundai joining us. It was a picture-perfect day.'

By Jim Stewart