

# Northern exposure

## Shootout gives Gaylord a boost

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June marks the seventh straight year that ESPN will broadcast the Par-3 Shootout. The dates have been changed from late July to late June and the corporate sponsor has changed a few times. In 2005, the primary sponsor is ING.

But the changes have been relatively few. When defending champion Fred Couples puts the crystal trophy on the line against perennial Shootout contender Mickelson and Champions Tour representatives Gary McCord and Andy North on June 27-28, the format and the formula will be basically the same as it was from the start. Why fight success?

Since 1999, Treetops Resort and the Gaylord Golf Mecca of Otsego County have received national exposure through the annual broadcasting of the event.

In 2001, when Lee Trevino made his famous \$1 million hole-in-one on the 14th hole of the competition, possibly the richest single golf shot ever made, the public exposure increased exponentially.

When the legendary Arnold Palmer came to

Treetops the year after, the exposure grew even more.

From the beginning, Melling's goal was for the TV broadcast to benefit not just Treetops, but golfing and tourism in Otsego County and all of northern Michigan.

Just how valuable has that exposure been?

While it's difficult to put a price tag on that kind of publicity, the impact has been phenomenal, according to Paul Beachnau, the executive director of the Gaylord Area Tourism and Convention Bureau.

"The Par-3 Shootout has had a huge impact," Beachnau said. "Because of the Par-3, people instantaneously recognize Gaylord. It has opened a lot of doors."

Each winter, Beachnau travels throughout the Midwest promoting the Gaylord Golf Mecca and the Gaylord area.

"We get a lot of bookings just because of the name recognition," he said. "When we go to the golf shows, a lot of people know who we are right away because of the Shootout. It's so great to go to these places and have people come up

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