



FRENCH LICK RESORT®

FRENCH LICK & WEST BADEN · INDIANA

FRENCH LICK RESORT GOLF WELCOMES TED KITCHEL AS NEW GOLF BRAND AMBASSADOR

FRENCH LICK, Indiana (June 15, 2021) — He's best known in the Hoosier State for his basketball prowess. But golf is Ted Kitchel's life now, and he's embarking on a new position with French Lick Resort's golf team.

Kitchel, a starter on Indiana University's 1981 national championship basketball team, has come aboard as the resort's new Golf Brand Ambassador. Focusing on outreach to golf professionals around the state and regionally, Kitchel's focus will be continuing to grow the group golf business at French Lick Resort's three courses: the 18-hole championship Pete Dye and Donald Ross Courses, and the 9-hole Valley Links Course.

Kitchel will be working out of his home in Greenwood while drawing from three decades' worth of experience in the golf business, as he previously spent 30 years working for shoe and apparel brand FootJoy.

"I've called on a majority of all the golf pros in the state and throughout the Midwest. And this is an easy package to sell, because everybody's heard about the Pete Dye Course, and would like to get down and play it — and if they have played, they'd probably like to get back. It's a great opportunity to be able to stay at French Lick Springs Hotel, or stay in the dome at West Baden Springs Hotel and play golf where you get the old and the new. You get the old architecture at the Ross Course, and the new at Pete Dye. You get two very different golf courses, yet two outstanding challenges."

Kitchel didn't play golf growing up since his summers were spent working in the fields on his family's 1,700-acre farm. But during his college basketball career when Kitchel scored 1,336 career points, he picked up on golf when he and his IU teammates were invited to play in fundraisers and celebrity events.

Today, Kitchel is a 2-3 handicap golfer and a self-described "golf nut" who has established a presence in Indiana's golf scene.

"All the pros know him because he's worked with them for years," said Dave Harner, French Lick Resort's Director of Golf. "He just gets us in more doors. The fact that he has those connections already is key. He's well-respected in the golf community by the people he's worked with over the years."

Kitchel, 61, said his new path with French Lick is "a unique opportunity that fits in as I'm getting older." He's been able to personally witness the evolution of golf at French Lick Resort, recalling his curiosity about the progress of the award-winning Pete Dye Course at French Lick before it opened in 2009.

“I was driving through French Lick when there wasn’t a golf course and kind of watched it grow around me as Pete Dye was building it. When I would stop, I’d always come up and see how much more dirt had been moved and what was going on. I’ve played the course a number of times, and I look forward to playing it every time I get the chance. Anybody who’s an avid golfer and loves the game would feel the same way.”

Indeed, golf business is booming at French Lick — even during a pandemic year. Following a strong 2020 season when demand for outdoors and socially distanced recreation kept the golf courses busy, golf business at the resort’s three courses is up 50% in 2021 year to date over 2019. Kitchel expects that interest and demand to hold strong.

“We’ve already got people six months, a year in advance booking tee times to come and play here at Pete Dye,” Kitchel said. “I think it’s going to be a great year for golf this year, and even the next 2-3 years will be really good – especially for a resort atmosphere like this, with two great championship courses.”

And in case any of Kitchel’s future golf clients are wondering: Yes, talking basketball is just fine. It still happens all the time, nearly 40 years after Kitchel’s stellar career in Bloomington.

“I’m 61 years old and yet people see me as a national champion. They remember, ‘Oh he played at IU.’ My kids laugh all the time, because they’re out on business and they’ll say their name, and somebody will kind of give them that look and ask. It’s a nice thing that carries on with you forever and ever. Once a national champ, always a national champ at IU having played for Bob Knight. It’s something I’m very proud of, feel very fortunate and very lucky to have had that great opportunity.”

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ABOUT FRENCH LICK RESORT

French Lick Resort is a \$600 million historic restoration and casino development project that includes West Baden Springs Hotel, French Lick Springs Hotel and French Lick Casino. This Midwest premier resort destination features 757 guest rooms and suites; a 51,000 square-foot, single-level casino; 45 holes of golf including the fully restored 1917-designed Donald Ross Course at French Lick and the 18-hole Pete Dye Course at French Lick; two full-service spas with a combined 36 treatment rooms totaling 42,000 square feet; meeting and event space totaling 169,000 square feet; and an array of dining and entertainment options.

Media Contact:

Dyan Duncan

Director of Marketing

French Lick Resort

W: (812) 936-5926

C: (812) 639-7891

dduncan@frenchlick.com