Super Shot Leads to Superintendent’s Cup

MARTINEZ WINS BASF TOURNAMENT AT PEOPLE VS. THE PROS

By Larry Ayllward, Editor in Chief

Rafael Martinez should have figured — especially after he chipped in a spectacular parsaving shot from 30 yards out — that this was going to be his day.

Martinez, the certified superintendent of Via Verde Country Club in San Dimas, Calif., made the super shot on the first hole of a three-hole playoff with the winner advancing to the Superintendent’s Cup of the People vs. The Pros, sponsored by BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals and held in September at the Barton Creek Resort in Austin, Texas.

Thanks to the shot, Martinez went on to defeat Matt Curl, superintendent of Indian Creek Golf and Country Club in Fairbury, Ill., in the playoff to advance. And then in the Superintendent’s Cup, held on Barton Creek’s challenging Fazio Foothills course, Martinez defeated Greg Wiles, superintendent of The Links at Echo Springs Golf Course, in match play to earn a $10,000 check and $10,000 worth of free BASF products. Wiles earned $5,000 and Curl $2,500 for their efforts.

Twenty superintendents joined nearly 200 competitors vying to play against PGA professionals Justin Leonard or Ben Crenshaw in the fourth-annual People vs. The Pros for the opportunity to win $100,000. The top two scoring superintendents not playing against the pros competed against one another in the second-annual Superintendent’s Cup.

The pros prevailed at the grand prize match, also held on the Fazio Foothills course. In the 18- to 49-year-old division, Jeff Jumonville conceded to Justin Leonard at the 15th hole. In the 50-and-over division, Ben Crenshaw closed out Jay Whiteside at the 18th hole. Both Leonard and Crenshaw received $100,000, and the runners-up received $50,000.

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"I think you could talk to a lot of superintendents who do not think the summer went by too fast. It was a brutal one here in the Northeast."
— John Carlone, certified superintendent of the Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, N.Y., on the long, hot summer that occurred in a considerable part of the country.

"There's a joke around the club that were having a membership drive — and were trying to drive it down to 100."
— Jon Jennings, certified superintendent of the prestigious Chicago Golf Club, on the limit of members allowed at the club, which is about 125.

Program participants receive information that allows them to compare their facilities' performance against the overall market. "This is the type of information decision makers in other industries rely on to understand and analyze trends," Hughes said.

It's no secret that many owners and operators have questioned the accuracy of participation reports from sources within the industry. Since the numbers reported in the Financial Benchmarks Program come directly from owners, credibility isn't an issue, said Hud Hinton, president and chief operating officer of Troon Golf, which manages operations at more than 160 courses. "These are the right metrics reported in an easy-to-understand format," Hinton added.

Hughes said that previous data wasn't "actionable."

"It wasn't something an operator could take a look at and say, 'This is what I need to do, and this is how I stack up against my competition,'" Hughes said. "That's the kind of information our members want."

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"I'm a golf course superintendent," Wiley said with a smile. "I'm used to riding around in golf cars. Rafael looked at me after the 12th hole and said, 'Man, I'm beat.' I said, 'So am I.'" Martinez and Wiles qualified for the event after winning their respective regional tournaments held by BASF earlier in the summer. BASF flew the two men and 18 other superintendents to Barton Creek, put them up for several days and treated them like... well... PGA players.

"This was a fantastic experience," Wiley said. "You can't beat playing in something like this."