

Suess looks to defend supers championship

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The breathtakingly scenic Pelican Hill Golf Club overlooking the Pacific Ocean features two of the six Southern California golf courses that will host the 1998 GCSAA Golf Championship, a highlight of the annual gathering of golf course superintendents from around the world.

The tournament, part of the 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show, will be held Feb. 2-3. For the fourth consecutive year, The Toro Co. is a co-sponsor of the event. The field is limited to 720 entries.

Defending champion Michael Suess, superintendent at the Wood-bridge Golf Links in Kings

Mountain, N.C., will head up of a field of as many as 700 golfers who will be divided into several flights based on handicaps. Suess won the 1997 tournament in Las Vegas in dramatic fashion, holing a 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole at Sunrise Country Club's Hawk Course to edge out Bill Martin, superintendent

at Marbella Golf & County Club in Hemet, Calif., by a single stroke. Todd Barker, the 1995 GCSAA champion and superintendent at Fore Lakes Golf Course in Taylorsville, Utah, finished third just two strokes back of Suess. In a classic finish, Suess, Martin and Barker were tied with two holes to play. Defending chapter team winners are Carolinas "A" team in gross

and California No. 7 net.

Tournament activities start with practice rounds on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 30-31, with a four-ball championship on Sunday, Feb. 1. For the first time, awards will be handed out in both two-person and four-person teams in the four-ball event. A welcoming reception will follow the four-ball in the evening and post-round 19th hole receptions will be held each night of tourney play. Official tourney play gets underway, Monday, Feb. 2, with different flights playing at different courses.

Following is a brief rundown on the courses that will host the 1998 GCSAA Golf Championship:

— **Cypress Golf Club** (host superintendent, Pat Gradoville/course rating 72.7, slope 140). Cypress Golf Club is a 6,510-yard par-71 high-end daily-fee layout designed by Perry Dye and featuring a natural look, severe mounding and water hazards. The sloping, undulating course was opened in 1992 on the site of an abandoned park-style golf course. Buffalograss and other low-maintenance native grasses make up rough areas. Of more than passing interest, a certain young phenom named Tiger Woods lived near the course while in high school and played here regularly. Woods holds the course record with a 63.

— **Dove Canyon Country Club** (host superintendent, Eric Lover/course rating 75, slope 140). Set in a canyon near the base of Saddleback Mountain, Dove Canyon is a Jack Nicklaus signature-design golf course that's part of a 850-acre upscale development. The par-71, 6,902-yard layout sits adjacent to Cleveland National Forest and the Audubon Society Nature Sanctuary, which provides a rich natural setting full of wildlife (mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, blacktailed deer), a waterfall, canyon features and native plants and trees. Dove Canyon features some tough carry shots and the course overall puts a premium on good golf management skills — a real "keep the ball in play" challenge.

— **Pelican Hill Golf Club** (host superintendent, Juan Franco Silva)

The Ocean North Course (course rating 71.7, slope 129)

One of two Tom Fazio-designed ultra-high-end daily-fee championship courses at this gorgeous California coastline venue. Both The Ocean North and The Ocean South courses were built among a series of coastal plateaus and canyons. The Ocean North course is a par-71, 6,656-yard links layout peppered with California coastal scrub. Generous fairways. Stunning scenery.

The Ocean South Course

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1948	Cleveland GCSA	1973	Connecticut Ass. GCS	1986	Rocky Mountain GCSA#1
1949	Cleveland GCSA	1974	Connecticut Ass. GCS	1987	Carolinas GCSA
1950	Cleveland GCSA	1975	Michigan&Border GCS	1988	Carolinas GCSA#1
1951	Cleveland GCSA	1976	Midwest Ass. of GCS	1989	Midwest Ass. of GCS#1
1952	Central Ohio GCSA	1977	Michigan&Border GCS	1990	Carolinas GCSA#1
1960	Michigan&Border GCS	1978	Old Dominion GCSA	1991	Carolinas GCSA
1962	Philadelphia Ass. GCS	1979	Iowa GCSA	1992	Georgia GCSA#1
1963	Michigan&Border GCS	1980	Florida West Coast	1993	California GCSA #1
1968	Heart of America GCS	1981	Florida GCSA	1994	Georgia GCSA#1
1969	Michigan&Border GCS	1982	Florida GCSA	1995	Carolinas GCSA (A)
1970	Southern California	1983	Carolinas GCSA#3	1996	Florida GCSA#1
1971	Southern California	1984	Carolinas (Beach B)	1997	Carolinas GCSA (A)



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GCSAA tourney

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(course rating 72.1, slope 130)
The 6,634-yard, par-70 Ocean South course features tumbling fairways dotted with stands of pines and acres of California scrub. A few of the hole names suggest what you face here: "Sudden Drop," "Sidewinder," "Canyon," "On the Rocks."

— **Oak Creek Golf Club** (host superintendent, Ken Coffman/ course rating 71.9, slope 127). The third Tom Fazio design in this year's tourney, Oak Creek is a 6,834-yard, par-71 course with soft, smooth sloping and subtle elevation changes set amidst towering eucalyptus trees and mountain ranges. Flatter than the Pelican Hill courses — and about 10 miles inland — Oak Creek offers generous fairways, challenging bunkers and greens complexes that put a premium on good second (or maybe third) shots.

— **Tustin Ranch Golf Club** (host superintendent Steve Plummer/ course rating 72.4, slope 129). Recently named the best-maintained public course in Orange County by the *Orange County Register*, Tustin Ranch is par-72, 6,736-yard Ted Robinson design with plentiful wildlife including bluebirds, coyotes, mallard ducks and Egyptian geese. Not a lot of nerve-shattering shots required here, but there is an island-style par-3.

Renault

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responded: "I got reaffirmation from the club members that yes they have concerns, but yes I have their blessing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. That's nice, but at the same time, the guys are paying your salary and you've got to serve them first... And then when you get home it's tough to balance between work and home.

"I wouldn't do it [be on the GCSAA board] unless I enjoyed it. It's fantastic. I like being there with a finger on the pulse."