

Off The Fringe

Kip Can

SUPERINTENDENT WINS
INAUGURAL SUPERINTENDENT'S
CUP AT PEOPLE VS. THE PROS

By Larry Aylward, Editor

Superintendent Kip Wilson came close, but there still was a cigar when it was over.

Wilson nearly earned the right to play John Daly for \$100,000 in the People vs. the Pros national tournament held last month at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina. The spoils weren't bad, however. Wilson, who lost to a Michigan golfer for the right to play Daly, ended up playing in and winning the event's Superintendent's Cup — sponsored by BASF Turf & Ornamental — and collecting a \$10,000 check and \$10,000 worth of free BASF products.

"This was a dream come true," said Wilson, who played for the Superintendent's Cup on Pinehurst's famed No. 2 course.

Wilson, superintendent of American Legion Golf Course in Kokomo, Ind., was one of 12 superintendents who participated in the People vs. the Pros tournament, which will be televised on ESPN in October. BASF sent the superintendents, all winners from regional qualifying tournaments held around the country, to the tournament and put them up at Pinehurst for several nights.

The second-annual People vs. the Pros featured 240 amateur golfers who competed in two three-day, 54-hole tournaments using their registered handicaps. The two winners in those tournaments — one in a 50-and-over division and one in a 49-and-under division — were pitted in head-to-head competition against PGA professionals Gary McCord and Daly, respectively.

BASF introduced the Superinten-



Kip Wilson (white shirt) accepts the Superintendent's Cup's first-place trophy from Steve Briggs, director of BASF's Specialty Products Department. Second-place finisher Matthew Fitzpatrick is to the far left, and GCSAA CEO Steve Mona is to the far right. Between Wilson and Briggs is Scott Van Pelt of ESPN.

dent's Cup this year. The tournament featured the top two superintendents overall from the three-day tournaments squaring off on Pinehurst No. 2. Wilson defeated Matthew Fitzpatrick, superintendent of Dublin (Ga.) Country Club, who won \$5,000.

Wilson was near the top of the leader board on the final day of the three-day tournament, but he and two others in the foursome lost to John Sniegowski of Cadillac, Mich., who went on to defeat Daly the next day and earn the \$100,000. (McCord also lost to amateur Phil Johnson in the 50-and-over division.) But Wilson, a 15 handicap, played strong the next day to win the Superintendent's Cup. He said he plans to invest some of the money in a college fund for his two small children. "My owner told me I wasn't going to get a raise for a couple of years," Wilson joked.

Wilson also said he plans on redeeming the \$10,000 in free product for Insignia and Emerald, BASF's two new fungicides.

After getting a taste of playing a tournament for money, Wilson knows how pressure-packed the PGA Tour



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John Daly (center) played a round on Pinehurst No. 2 with several representatives from sponsors of the People vs. the Pros. Daly played six holes with (from left) William Strickland, senior marketing manager for BASF Professional Turf; Bill Wisdom, group vice president of BASF Agricultural Products North America; Steve Mona, CEO of the GCSAA; and Jim Wilburn, president and CEO of Winnercomm. After playing three of the six holes with Daly, Wilburn remarked, "John, we were hitting the ball pretty good until you started playing with us." To which Daly replied, "I was hitting the ball pretty good until I started playing with you, too." Everyone guffawed.

must be. "Anybody who says that's an easy job ... they don't know what they're talking about," he said.

Wilson, who took his wife Stacy to the event, said he would never forget the experience, especially playing on Pinehurst No. 2.

"You know when you walk onto a course that the big boys are playing — it's just phenomenal," he said. "Every little blade of grass is in the perfect shape. It's trimmed real tight. The greens roll just as true as they can be."

Now Wilson can say, "I won at Pinehurst."