

Off The Fringe

His Superintendent's Cup Runneth Over

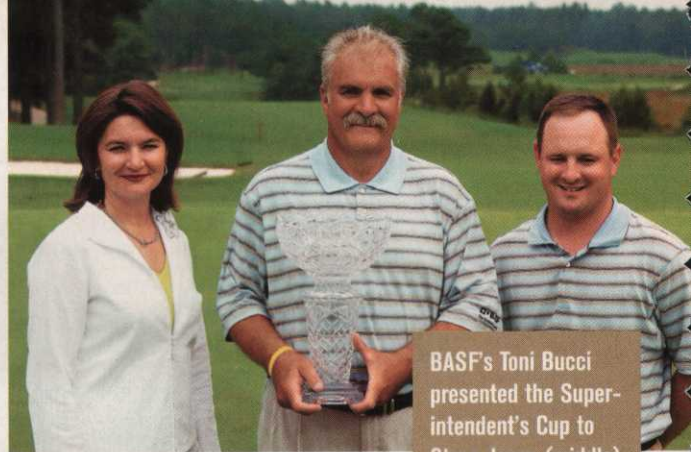
GREENVILLE COUNTRY CLUB'S STEVE JONES WINS MATCH AND MONEY AT BASF PEOPLE VS. THE PROS

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Anybody else might have considered it a bad omen. But not Steve Jones, the laid-back superintendent of Greenville (S.C.) Country Club.

What would you think if someone stole your golf clubs — a set of feel-good Titleists you had owned for 14 years — a few days before the golf tournament of your life at one of the world's great golf resorts? You might think the golf gods were trying to tell you something — something very discouraging.

But Jones, who sports a bushy mustache similar to Craig Stadler's soupstrainer, wasn't unnerved. He just secured a new set of Titleists (so new that the 3-wood wasn't even on the



BASF's Toni Bucci presented the Superintendent's Cup to Steve Jones (middle). Ron Dobosz (right) was runner-up.

market yet) and went out and won the BASF Superintendent's Cup Match on Pinehurst No. 8 during the 2006 People vs. the Pros tournament in Pinehurst, N.C., held Aug. 18 though Aug. 22. Jones defeated Ron Dobosz, the superintendent of Ludlow Country Club in Ludlow, Mass., in match play. To the victor went \$10,000 cash and \$10,000 worth of BASF products for Jones' home course. To Dobosz went the spoils, in the form of \$5,000.

The 54-year-old Jones and the 35-year-old Dobosz topped the three-day tournament's two respective age groups (18 to 49 and 50 and over) and earned the right to square off in the Superintendent's Cup on a hot, humid, breezeless and buggy late-summer day. The top two low-net winners in each age di-

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vision faced PGA Tour star Retief Goosen (18 to 49) and Champions Tour player Gary McCord (50 and over) in the Pro-Am Matches. Goosen and McCord triumphed.

Twenty-two superintendents participated in People vs. the Pros, courtesy of BASF, which held qualifying tournaments and flew the winners of those tournaments and their spouses to North Carolina and put them up at Pinehurst for several days.

Jones, who oversees the Riverside course at Greenville, arrived at Pinehurst two days after his clubs were stolen from his golf course's storage room. Karl Stefka, the course's head pro, called a Titleist representative at the company's headquarters and told the person of Jones' dilemma.

"They shipped the new clubs [the day after they were stolen]," the left-handed Jones said after closing out Dobosz on the 17th hole of their match, 2-and-1. "The first four rounds I play with them, and I win a tournament. That's pretty cool."

Jones received nine strokes from Dobosz, a scratch golfer, on the toughest nine holes of the course. He took advantage of that early and went 4-up on Dobosz after 11 holes.

The gallery was impressed with Jones' play, especially his monster drives. Jones was using the new Titleist 905R driver.

"I probably hit my driver 20 yards farther than I hit my



Steve Jones shows off his winning form.

old one," says Jones, who has been a superintendent for 19 years and has spent 35 years at Greenville.

Dobosz noticed Jones' crushing drives, which pushed 300 yards at times. "He hits the driver a mile, doesn't he?" remarked Dobosz, who played a stellar round but missed some shorts putts early in the match that hurt his chances.

Needless to say, Jones doesn't miss his old clubs very much. He says he'd like to thank the person who stole them.

What will the golfers/prize winners do with the loot? Dobosz joked that he and his wife, who attended the event with him, will pay off their shopping bills from their stay at quaint Pinehurst.


"I think we'll break even," Dobosz said with a chuckle.

Jones revealed matter-of-factly that his wife Sarah wants to remodel the bathroom at home. That's OK with Jones, but ... "I may give her half of the money and keep half of it," Jones said on a second thought.


One thing's for certain: Jones doesn't need the money to buy new clubs. He has a pretty good set now. ■

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