

Pinehurst Bound

Day-by-Day at the BASF People Versus the Pros Tournament

By Jeff Schaefer, Assistant Superintendent, North Oaks Golf Club

Last spring, I won the opportunity to play in the People versus the Pros Tournament at Pinehurst Golf Club, courtesy of BASF Turf and Ornamental Products. Without their support I would never have had the trip of a lifetime that I experienced. All during the event I was treated as a king and am very thankful to BASF for the chance to live a dream.

Tuesday, August 3rd: We arrived in North Carolina at 5:30 p.m. Picked up our suitcases and took the shuttle to Hertz Rental Agency, where we found out that we would be driving a brand new Ford Mustang with about 2,500 miles. Arrival time at Pinehurst was 7:30 p.m. After checking in and having dinner at Hackers Sports Bar we walked around the Pinehurst complex to get familiar with the surroundings.

Wednesday, August 4th: My first practice round was on Pinehurst #3 where the tournament would be played on Friday and Sunday.

It is a short course about 5,500 yards, but very tight, with a slope of 125. It was a few holes before I figured out how to hit out of Bermuda grass. What would be considered the first cut was very easy to have a buried lie. The greens were rolling about eight feet on the stimp but I still finished up with an 84. While I was playing golf Jessica figured out where the Spa was



and thoroughly enjoyed her day.

Jessica and I then finished off the evening at a cocktail reception courtesy of BASF and were introduced to everybody from BASF along with the other superintendents who were playing in the tournament. BASF also announced that the two highest placing superintendents would be playing each other on Pinehurst #2 before the final match on Monday. The winner would be getting \$10,000 along with \$10,000 in chemicals while the runner up

would get \$5,000 along with \$5,000 in chemicals. I was thrilled, the winner could be me!

Thursday, August 5th: I played my other practice round on Pinehurst #5 where the tournament was to be played on Saturday. This course is a lot longer but a quite a bit more open. I played about the best I can and ended up with a 79. The weather was sunny and the temperatures were in the middle 90s with very high humidity. After golfing

Jessica and I did some shopping in town, which reminded me of downtown Stillwater complete with all the little shops. We then finished off the evening with a big dinner with all of the 240 competitors. At that time all the rules were laid down for the three-day tournament.

Friday, August 6th: The first day of the tournament. My tee time was 10:48 a.m. so I went to the range around 9:00 a.m. to practice. It was there that I met the two people I would be playing during Friday and Saturday rounds. Dan was from Cleveland and bought a spot in the tournament on E-bay. John was from New York and he got a spot from ESPN. They were a couple of great guys.

Teeing up on the first hole I was so nervous all I could think about was just hit the ball. With around 300 people



Jeff Schaefer tees off at Pinehurst.

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watching I drove it into the rough. Coming up to the first green to putt, I watched Dan roll his putt about ten feet by when he was only around 5 feet so they really had the greens rolling fast. I'd say 11 feet on the stimp. I finished up with a 91 with a 9 on a par three. Pretty disappointing.

Even to this day I can't figure out how you can get a 9 on a par three. After golf Jessica and I went to the cocktail reception to see the scoreboard and all I have to say is there were some sandbaggers in the tournament. The lead score was 67 with a 13 handicap for a net of 54. COME ON!! A delightful dinner was hosted by BASF for the participating superintendents. They served chicken and steak that was very good.

Saturday, August 7th: The second day of the tournament was played on Pinehurst #5. We started at 8:20 a.m. and played the longest round of my life. Finished up at 3:30 p.m. in the afternoon. Played better though and shot an 87. After the second day I was in the middle of the pack. Jessica relaxed at the pool and met some of the wives and girl friends so she had made a few of friends there. Jessica and I went to dinner at the Carolina that evening and the food was excellent.



John Daly tees off at the BASF tourney.

Sunday, August 8th: This is the last day of competition. I started at 9:05 a.m. so for sure was not going to win. I met two new guys. Tom was from Florida and again bought his spot on E-bay and Richard was from Texas. He bought his spot on E-bay as well. We were all very relaxed with no pressure. Jessica decided

to walk along for the first time. I played my best of all three of my rounds and shot an 84 with three triple bogeys.

My round captured a trophy for low net for the day. The winner of the tournament was a 17 handicap and finished -25 net. RIGHT! I ended up 28th with -2 net and received a picture of Payne Stewart when he made the putt to win the Open in 1991. In hindsight I should have had my lucky charm Jessica walk all three rounds with me!

The final dinner gala was prime rib that was very good. John Daly was there, and I had a chance to talk to him. He asked about North Oaks and seemed to take a great interest in me personally and about the duties of an assistant at North Oaks. Gary McCord arrived late and was just introduced.

Monday, August 9th: Jessica and I went down to watch the final match. John Daly teed it up against the winner in my age bracket and Gary McCord took on the winner over 50. Both Daly and McCord lost their matches.

Later in the day Jessica did a lot more shopping and I golfed on Pinehurst #4 with the BASF Superintendents group. Although I didn't finish in the lead pack I still had a great time. The greens are not as tough as #2 but tight fairways made up for the differences.

Tuesday, August 10th: I had the chance to play #2, shot 92 and was happy. The greens are impossibly quick and undulated. We left at 5:00 p.m. and came home to 60 degrees. Jessica and I were treated like royalty the whole trip. It was an incredible experience and BASF did an excellent job of hosting the entire tournament. Hopefully next year I will have the opportunity to be a repeat player. Thank you BASF for sponsoring the event through the MGCSA.

"In hindsight I should have had my lucky charm, Jessica, walk all three rounds with me!"

The Old Golf Ball

A golfer, now into his golden years, had a lifelong ambition to play a hole in Pebble Beach, Calif., exactly the way the professionals do.

The pro's drive the ball over the ocean onto a green that is on a spit of land that juts out into the Pacific. It was something he had tried hundreds of times without success. His ball always fell short into the ocean.

Because of this, he never used a new ball on this particular hole. He always picked out one that had a cut or a nick.

Recently he went to Pebble Beach to try again. When he came to the fateful hole, he teed up an old, cut ball and said a silent prayer.

However, before he hit it, a powerful voice from above said, "WAIT ... REPLACE THAT OLD BALL WITH A BRAND-NEW BALL."

He complied, with some slight misgiving, despite the fact that the same force seemed to be implying that he was going to finally achieve his lifelong ambition.

As he stepped up to the tee once more, the voice came down again, "WAIT ... STEP BACK ... TAKE A PRACTICE SWING."

So he stepped back and took a practice swing.

The voice boomed out again, "TAKE ANOTHER PRACTICE SWING."

He did. Silence followed.

Then the voice spoke out again. "PUT BACK THE OLD BALL!"

—Submitted by
Jack Kolb