



Celebrities and locals gather to hit the links for charity

by Barry Ferris
Sierra Star Sports



Celebrities and local golfers gathered before the day's event to pose for a group photo. The celebrity golf tournament had over 130 golfers taking part. Events included the celebrity dinner on Thursday, the golf tournament on Friday and the celebration dinner and awards dinner also on Friday night. The proceeds from the event will benefit the Boys and Girls Club of Oakhurst. The total amount of funds raised is hoped to be between \$20,000 and \$25,000.

One hundred local children greeted 32 sports celebrities at the celebrity dinner held at the new cafetorium in Yosemite High School.

The dinner was held last Thursday as part of the Pines Resort Golf Tournament. This was a benefit affair for the raising of funds for the Boys and Girls Club of Oakhurst.

Lori and Tony McLean, Physical Therapists, and Theresa Wilson, local Realtor were sponsors of the dinner.

George Takata, sports director for Fresno television channel 47, KGPE, was greeted with cheers as he directed the participants to line-up for food.

Takata gave a brief history of each celebrity as the autograph seekers covered the room. The "celebs" pictures, T-shirts, balls and anything that could hold print were signed.

The celebrities spanned current players like lineman Josh Taves, an Oakland Raider, to 1950s' homerun hitter Gus Zernial. Six decades of professional athletes were represented.

Nick Lowery, six times all-NFL place kicker, addressed the audience after the dinner. He equated the balance involved in kicking a field goal to the maintaining balance in one's life.

"Concentrate on success and use good balance to make decisions that will lead to success," remarked Lowery.

Keynote speaker for the evening was former Raider Richard Harvey. Harvey thanked Brian Wilkinson, the event organizer, for inviting him.

Harvey then asked the audience a rhetorical question; "What do you do when you wake up in the morning? Do you prepare yourself for a successful day, and are you preparing yourself for a successful life?"

He continued. "Are you setting goals, and more important are you adjusting your attitude in order to achieve these goals? Eliminate words like don't, won't and can't. Let your persona be one of success, and the key to success is a good attitude."

The program ended with the raffling of numerous prizes. All of the children received gift coupons from some of the local eateries.

The second phase of the benefit was a golf tournament involving the celebrities and supporters of the Boys and Girls Club of Oakhurst.

This was the first time the public has seen the newly renovated golf course and clubhouse.

Bob Bard owner of the facility is proud of the changes. "We want the public to have an enjoyable experience playing golf and the using of the other aspects of the clubhouse at the Sierra Meadows Ranch Course. We have poured four and a half miles of concrete cart paths. We have raised par from 70 to 72. The fairways have been widened eliminating some of the rough. Our biggest improvements are the reconstruction of holes two and 10. Both are now par fives but they are still a challenge," boasted Bard.

He continued, "We have a new cafe called the Four Tears. The name is historical. The ranch was named this by the original owners because of the four lakes existing on the property."

General Manager, Mike Best, plans on holding some promotional tournaments for the area's residents.

"We want local people to play and see our course. We are excited about the course," said Best.

Christina Jacobsen is the new teaching professional, and she is pleased with her new job. She formerly was the pro at Marriot Desert Springs Resort and at the Ironwood Country Club.

She is also a member of the P.G.A. Ladies Professional Association.

The third phase of the event was a barbeque dinner following the golf tournament, plus the raffle and the silent auction. The big raffle prize was won by Tony Nehring. He won the four day house boat vacation.

There was a plethora of help by area supporters. Rhonda Scholz from the Pines was in charge of the silent auction. Pam O'Neill organized both meals.

Joy Claiborne and Rebecca Smock assisted in the passing out of "goodie" bags for the golfers. Maureen Chambers, Tess Moran, Donna Davis, Amy Wilde, Martha Robichaux, Brian Gearheart, Susan Macaulay Susie Martin and Dennis Rowe worked hard to make the event a success.

Brian Wilkinson is hoping \$20,000 to \$25,000 will be raised from the event in which 130 golfers participated.

The winning team consisted of Stacy Johnson, the new women's basketball coach at Fresno State, Gary Blate, Rick Slaton, Chuck Klein and Nick Price. The team shot an eight under par to capture first-place.

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