



Blustery conditions, giving spirit characterize SAFE/Jacobsen golf tourney

By Patrick Allen

Windy conditions and a tough course made for scarce scoring opportunities at the Sixth Annual SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament held January 18 at the ChampionsGate Golf Club in Orlando. However, the most notable statistic of the day was not posted on the leader board. The tournament raised an astonishing \$17,515 for the Foundation for Safer Athletic Field Environments (SAFE), a new record for the event. In his 4 years with Jacobsen and at his third golf tournament, Joe Zvanut, Jacobsen's sales promotion specialist, has seen the field grow from fewer than 80 to 138 participants this year and seen the money grow as well. He said, "The object of the tournament is to have a reliable source of income for the SAFE Foundation that is expandable for the future."

Jacobsen, a Textron Company, has been sponsoring the SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament at the STMA Conference and Exhibition for 6 years, with Zvanut and Monty Montague, regional sales manager out of Phoenix, spearheading the recent efforts. Zvanut said that Jacobsen originally got involved with the tournament solely because of the SAFE Foundation. When asked what specifically drew Jake to SAFE Zvanut said, "We feel that SAFE espouses the same commitments and beliefs that we hold at Jacobsen. We strive to provide the finest turf on earth, and we feel that dovetails quite nicely with SAFE and its commitment to educating the turfgrass professional."

Each year, Jacobsen scours the region where the STMA Annual Conference and Exhibition is being held, seeking out a top-100 course or a course that hosts a major event, sometimes even a PGA Tour stop. The World Points Father/Son Challenge took place at ChampionsGate in December 2005. With the STMA Conference being in San Antonio

next year, there will be a multitude of potential hosts. One option is The Quarry, famous for its back nine that plays in the bottom of a 100-year-old quarry pit.

By scheduling the event at these prestigious venues, according to Zvanut, "Jacobsen hopes to provide all the golfers with a unique golf experience on a course that they may not normally get to play." With 44 years of playing experience under his belt, Zvanut joked that he has yet to really learn the game, but enjoys being able to provide a challenging, yet fair test to the players in the tournament.

Big-time prizes

The prizes this year included: Ping G5 Drivers for each player on the winning teams in each flight; a golf bag emblazoned with the STMA and Jacobsen logos for each player on the second place teams; and gift certificates for merchandise at the pro shop for the third place teams. In addition, pro shop gift certificates were issued for closest-to-the-pin on two holes per flight and one long-drive hole per flight.

When asked what they may do to keep the event growing, Zvanut said, "Jacobsen may potentially sell hole sponsorships (tee and green), thus increasing donations to SAFE by allowing 36 extra opportunities. Also, we may change the prizes so that the winners can take the prize, or have the cash equivalent of the prize donated back into the SAFE Foundation. These are both items that have been discussed but are yet to be finalized."

Whatever changes are made, one thing is for sure: The Annual SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament provides turfgrass education students with opportunities and STMA members with memories.

Winners

"A" Flight: 1st Place (123.5) Mark Wadsworth, John Whitehead, Jeff Whitehead, Chris McCarthy; 2nd Place (130) Steve LeGros, Dan Douglas, Luke Yoder, Jim Koontz; 3rd Place (130.5) Kent Nevitt, Silverio Sanchez, Xavier Hinojosa.

"B" Flight: 1st Place (141.25) Neil Pate, Thomas MacKenzie, Jim Laiche, Todd Vanek; 2nd Place (150) Tom Burns, Steve Wightman, Bob Curry, Ken Curry; 3rd Place (151) Mark West, Debbie West, Rich Jordan, Travis Waters.

Jacobsen profile

For 85 years, Jacobsen brands have maintained the athletic fields at many of the highest profile venues in all of sports. The multi-brand company manufactures a full range of turf maintenance equipment, and personnel and burden carriers for the golf course, professional lawn care, sports field and general grounds maintenance markets. Jacobsen also supports university-conducted research projects to enhance the playability and safety of athletic fields. Jacobsen is proud to be associated with the Sports Turf Managers Association and are pleased to sponsor the annual SAFE Foundation Golf Tournament. ■



A Flight winners: Mark Wadsworth, John Whitehead, Jeff Whitehead, Chris McCarthy, with Jacobsen staffers Joe Zvanut and Monty Montague in between.



B Flight winners, from left to right: Tom MacKenzie, RTM Sport, Inc., Jim Laiche, The Toro Company, Todd Vanek, RTM Sport, Inc., and Neil Pate, The Cleveland Browns.

SAFE Events raise \$31,921

The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields (SAFE) raised a total of \$31,921 at the annual STMA Conference from the SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament, the SAFE Live and Silent Auctions and Raffle. That total represents an increase of more than 20% from the same events last year.

The SAFE/Jacobsen Golf Tournament saw a 10% increase in the donations from the players, sponsor, and mulligan purchases. The \$17,515 raised surpassed last years total by \$1,500.

More than 190 items were auctioned off at the SAFE Live and Silent Auctions and the SAFE Raffle, which raised \$14,406.

The SAFE Foundation is the charitable arm of the STMA. It was formed to fund research, scholarship and education to help sports turf managers with the challenges they face in managing athletic fields.