

Salt Lake City's Chad Young fires 64 to capture eighth annual Mesquite Amateur

The eighth annual Mesquite Amateur golf tournament is history after attracting more than 500 entrants while also bringing immense fanfare to a city 80 miles northeast of Las Vegas.

Played May 31-June 4 on six courses, the event drew entrants from 41 states along with Canada and England. If ever there was an ideal way to generate business during a down economy, the Mesquite Amateur was it.

Salt Lake City Fed Ex driver Chad Young, who has played in each of the Mesquite Amateur events, fired a champion round 64 Friday to win the tournament at the CasaBlanca Golf Course.

The top female in was runner up Naarah Turpen, a resident of Tucson, Ariz., who scored a 65.

"I have won my flight twice but never come close to winning the tournament," Young said. "Today my strength was my putting. I couldn't putt on Wednesday."

Young said there are many factors that keep him coming back to the Mesquite Amateur. He played the Canyons Tuesday, CasaBlanca on Wednesday and Falcon Ridge on Thursday before returning for the final round to the CasaBlanca.

"There are a lot of things that bring me back," he said. "The people you meet here are fantastic and so are the volunteers."

Young, 46, and his wife, Holly, both played in the tournament. In fact they play couples tournaments several times a year.

"It's a lot of fun to play golf together," said Young. "Holly finished fourth in her flight and in the eight years we have been playing the tournament, she has only missed the top four one time."

Five golfers tied for third with 66s on the final day including Jim Brey Meyer of Yakima, Wash.; Tanya Fasanella of Playa Del Rey, Calif.; Judith Handa of Carson City, Nev.; Jeff Moenck of Longview, Wash.; and Clayton Yakubow of Marysville, Wash.

Sponsored by Golf Mesquite Nevada along with the Mesquite Resort Association, the tournament showcased Mesquite courses CasaBlanca, Palms, Falcon Ridge, Oasis Palmer, Oasis Canyons; and The Chase at Coyote Springs in what had to be the best collection of golf courses in the country.

The brain child of Black Gaming Director of Sales Ann Sunstrum, the Mesquite Amateur featured more than golf considering that an action-filled schedule included Yoga, a margarita mix off, Zumba, a poker tournament and a gathering called "Cigars Under the Stars."

Yet another huge selling point was the nightly dinner gatherings in the CasaBlanca Event Center where the food, refreshments and film of each day's golf kept everyone enlightened.

Rated the second-largest amateur golf tournament in the country behind the World Am in Myrtle Beach, S.C., the Mesquite Amateur is expected to grow even more considering how many first-time players (a) entered and (b) committed to return in 2011.

Among the first-timers at the tournament was the Montross, Va., foursome of Gerald Bryan, 63, his wife Ruth; Charlie Beard and Terry McNeil.

“We found out about the tournament at the World Am,” Bryan said. “Yes sir, we’ll be back. The golf was awesome and the people were some of the nicest I have met.”

Ron Marshall journeyed to Mesquite for the first time from Broomfield, Colo., and he, too, said he would be back.

“I played as bad as I ever have before and enjoyed every bit of it,” said Marshall adding that Coyote Springs proved especially challenging. “I’ll be back, for sure.”

Grover Garvin, 71, and his buddy and former barber Arnie Fields, 71, both of Oakland, Calif., were among the event’s biggest fans.

“It really was a lot of fun,” said Garvin, a former University of California-Berkeley football coach who has played in all of the Mesquite Am events.

“I love this place,” said Fields. “The Coyote Springs course was as tough as anything I have every played. I sure struggled with it.”

The CasaBlanca Golf Club hosted the event’s final round action and Director of Golf Operations Bob Ault said the response was all good.

“It’s been a great tournament,” said Ault. “Everyone seems happy and I have been impressed with the amount of people who said they loved playing The Chase at Coyote Springs.”

Canadian brothers Neil and Paul MacKinnon played in the tournament for the first time playing the Els flight. Neil had a net 70 while Paul had a net 71.

“We found out about the tournament from Golf Digest and also at the World Am,” said Neil MacKinnon, 42, of Toronto. “This is the best amateur tournament I have seen and I have played in a few. You have smaller groups, the tournament is more organized and there are plenty of prizes not to mention that your food and hospitality sponsors were top-notch.”

Paul MacKinnon, 44, of Calgary Alberta added “The golf courses are way different than back home. Desert golf is five-star, for sure, and it’s recommended world-wide for anyone to come play. We will be back next year with three other Canadians.

“I mean, show me another amateur golf tournament where they feed you steak and lobster for dinner.”

One big example of the camaraderie of the tournament was a deep friendship between golfing friends Ralph Niau and Don Newey both of Green River, Wyo.

Newey, who was playing in his third Mesquite Amateur, journeyed to Mesquite again although suffering from a liver disorder.

Niau, a conductor with Union Pacific Railroad, won his division and donated his trophy to Newey.

“Don first entered the tournament before deciding to pull out in March when his health worsened,” explained Niau. “Then, he decided to come in May after surgery for his liver disorder. He played the entire tournament but went home early the last day.”

Full results from the tournament can be found at www.mesquiteamateur.com.

CAPTIONS:

MESQUITE AM MENS 2: Black Gaming Director of Sporting Events Christian Adderson, right, congratulates Chad Young of Salt Lake City for winning the championship round of the Mesquite Amateur at the CasaBlanca Golf Club.

MESQUITE AM MENS ACTION 1: Chad Young captured the championship round of the eighth annual Mesquite Amateur Friday at the CasaBlanca Golf Club.

MESQUITE AM WOMENS 1: Black Gaming Sporting Events Manager Christian Adderson poses with Naarah Turpen of Tuscon, Ariz., who fired a final round 65 Friday to finish runner up n the eighth annual Mesquite Amateur at the CasaBlanca Golf Club.

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