



Richly Rewarding

Classic 100 Golf Marathon participants endured a long day to help raise funds for the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation

By Matt Baylor

To many, a marathon is a journey that requires months of preparation and training, culminating in a 26.2-mile odyssey by foot. While there were no 5 a.m. training runs or blistered feet for the 23 participants of the inaugural Classic 100 Golf Marathon, there were several months of hard work for each golfer, securing per hole pledges for their participation in the event.

Conceived in March, the golf marathon, held May 30 to benefit the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation, helped raise more than \$110,000 in funds for the organization. Zigfield Troy Golf Course in Woodridge, Ill. donated the use of its nine-hole, par-3 layout for the event. The only rules for the event was that a player must play at least three balls simultaneously and play 100 holes of golf. Participants also were required to commit \$1 per hole individually, plus raise \$25 or more per hole in pledges.

“This event would not have been

While Sunshine Through Golf Foundation camper JoAnn Adamski (right) showed that the Classic 100 Golf Marathon was great fun, the effort also was a boost to the bottom line.



PHOTOS BY BUZZ ORR/CDDA

**PARTICIPANTS
IN CLASSIC
100 GOLF
MARATHON**

**Bob Berry
Dan Blouin
Peter Carey
Luke Cella
Denny Davenport
Andrew Gableman
Anne Gardner
Don Gardner
Kevin Gratkowski
Carl Hopphan
Alan Hunken
Pat Kenny
Andrew Louthain
Tom Mikrut
Brittany Ottolini
Matt Pekarek
Tom Roth
John Smollen
Chris Stevens
Beth Telling
Jerry Williams
Hank Zonarini
John Zonarini**



After John Zonarini and his father, Hank, played (top), they checked out the financial leaderboard. Beth Telling (left) was passionate about the cause and initiated a grassroots fundraising campaign.

successful without the hard work of the Foundation staff and the participants here today,” said Bob Berry, the event’s player captain. “The event had a three-month setup, and the process started slow. At times we had our doubts.”

Things began to turn around for the event in mid-April. After a meeting of the principals, the event gained momentum and took off. In the final six weeks of the campaign alone, the event garnered nearly \$70,000, with one participant bringing in nearly \$20,000 on his own.

“The response of our donors and the friends, family and associates of the participants was great,” Berry added. “It is a great cause and people showed warm hearts during difficult economic times.”

While some golfers came to the event with large donations from friends, family or business associates, one of the more unique stories of the event was Beth Telling, a bartender at the Prairie House in Prairie View, Ill. A self-described “golf nut,” Telling saw an advertisement for the event and immediately began a grassroots fundraising campaign to bankroll her participation.

“I saw the link online and it spoke to me,” Telling said. “Golf is a passion of mine.”

With donations as small as \$5 and the largest of \$105, Telling reached her goal the evening before the event, garnering the final \$65 from a patron following a pool match to reach \$2,535.

“I just showed people the sheet (event information sheet) and got \$5, \$10, \$20 from folks, probably with an average of \$20,” Telling added. “We’ve done a good thing here today. Participating in this event is going to leave me with a warm, fuzzy feeling inside.”

Among the luckiest participants were JoAnn Adamski and Adam Sikora, Sunshine Through Golf campers of the Southeast Association for Special Parks and Recreation, who played several holes and participated in a putting contest with many competitors upon the completion of the event.

“This was a great and wonderful event for us,” Adamski noted. With the money raised through the golf marathon, programs like those that Adamski and Sikora participate in will be continuing.

“What these folks have done here today has truly helped the Foundation during a down economy,” said Brittany Ottolini, Sunshine Through Golf Foundation assistant executive director. “With this, we’ll be able to both continue and improve the programs we already offer to special recreation associations throughout the District.”

Throughout the day, more than 2,000 holes were played, with an average score of 352 and the average “round” lasting five hours. Low round of the day, a 12-under par 288, was shot by Kevin Gratkowski, who, along with playing partner John Smollen, took on the added challenge of walking all 100 holes. 🌞

