

# Gratified on the Green



Play With A Pro Day was a rewarding experience for the pros and Sunshine Through Golf camp participants.



## By Tim Cronin

The sentence was as unscripted as it was unexpected. It came from touring professional Tim Clark, perhaps a half-hour before his pro-am pairing teed off the day before the BMW Championship, as the Western Open has been retitled.

Said Clark, "I'm learning something here."

But he wasn't at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, waiting to tackle Dubsread. Clark was across the street, having just played the first hole of the Three-Hole Sunshine Course, located at Midwest Golf House, with three of the nine participants in the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation's third annual Play With A Pro Day.

It was explained to Clark that he would be playing a hole with three children and adults with special needs, but it was clear he was affected by it, that this was more than a routine appearance.

Who among us could not learn how hard life is for someone, but how rewarding a few minutes can be for all, when you watch a doting father help his wheelchair-bound boy make a putt, then drive off the next tee?

"I'd rather be out here than be out there," Clark said, motioning toward

Austin and Brandt Snedeker, were of the same mind. Adopted Chicagoan Wilson, who also played in 2006, was only able to play one hole, but donated a bunch of goodies to the participants. Austin and Snedeker were each able to go around all three holes with their group, encouraging their fellow players.

Clark, Austin and Snedeker, it so happened, advanced all the way to the Tour Championship the next week. It's

Austin quipped, "Blame it on your caddie; he gave you the wrong club."

The best of Austin's partners in that group was Randy, who, taking Austin's advice on a break to the right on the final green, rolled in a 60-footer, as sweetly struck a putt as any that were made with money on the line across the street the rest of the week. When the putt dropped, Woody's smile was as big as Randy's.

Snedeker, in his first full year on the

PGA Tour, couldn't resist when asked to play. A volunteer worker with abused and disabled children in his hometown of Nashville, he was the first to arrive, and lingered, signing hats and posing for pictures after playing with Joanne, Alan and Jerry. Each autograph wasn't just a quickly scribbled



*Sunshine Through Golf Foundation participants received advice from touring pros in town for the BMW Championship. Clockwise, from the top, Alan Kilgore was greeted by Brandt Snedeker; Gerry Meyer received some club selection help from Woody Austin, and Danny Orlando chatted with Tim Clark.*



Cog Hill. "These kids are having more fun than 90 percent of the players there."

Then he checked the time with his caddie and said, "Let's play another hole."

Clark's feeling was not unique. The other touring professionals who made their way over, Mark Wilson, Woody

Austin, the last to arrive, mixed one-liners with sublime shotmaking. To a player named Tim, who danced a two-step on the first green after knocking in a par putt, Austin quipped, "You might want to come out of your shell." When Gary hit a good shot that went long,

proof that nice guys not only don't finish last, they wind up in the top 30.

name, but with a printed good luck message on the bill of the cap as well.

"This makes you realize how lucky you are to be playing golf for a living," Snedeker said. "And how hard some people have it."

Lesson learned. 🍀

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