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PINNACLE EXCEPTIONAL DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP RETURNS TO LAUGHLIN RANCH

The long drive has always fascinated golfers. The old saying about “drive for show, putt for dough” has its believers-though it doesn't ring true, as the best rated putters in the game aren't among the highest money winners. Rather, it is the “show” part of the equation that has become increasingly popular in the world of golf. Both for viewers and players alike.

Professional courses have been altered to accommodate the Tiger Woods and John Dalys of the golfing world. With the latest in golf technology even the skimpy built Davis Love III and Sergio Garcia boom drives out near the 350 yard plus range.

Long Drivers of America (LDA) picked up on the relatively recent fascination for the power golf drive and began holding competitions to see who could hit a golf ball the farthest. These competitions have gone well...but something was missing.

Accuracy.

There was no applying these power drivers to the real world of golf for they would fly four fairways over while winning their long ball competitions.

Thus, LDA came up with a competition that showcases the long drive-and more importantly, the long drive with accuracy.

The inaugural Pinnacle Exceptional Driver Championship (PEDC) took place at Laughlin Ranch Golf Club in Bullhead City last year. It returns to Laughlin Ranch for the 2006 installment on Thursday, November 9, through Saturday, November 11. The championship will be taped by ESPN for broadcast on Friday, November 24 (1 p.m. PST). The event is presented by Honda and sponsored by the Laughlin Tourism Committee.

“This year's event will be improved from last year's as the competitors have one year under their belts of either participating in it or watching it on TV-and now they know what they are preparing for,” explains Art Sellinger, CEO of Long Drivers of America and producer of the Pinnacle Exceptional Driver Championship. “And this year's format will be a bit different with head-to-head match play in the finals. Last year, all of the players competed against each other in brackets. We think the head-to-head format is an improvement.

“We'll also have ESPN's best golf analysts-Andy North and Roger Twibell-calling all the action.

“And, of course, we couldn't ask for a better backdrop than that at Laughlin Ranch.”

The competitors for the event are all amateurs who were determined through qualifying rounds that took place across the country from March through October. The 132 finalists (out of more than 7,000 total entrants) will face off in the first rounds of the Laughlin championship to be held on Thursday, November 9, and Friday, November 10 (10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. MST; 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. PST each day). The finals take place on Saturday, November 11 (11 a.m.-8:30 p.m. MST; 10 a.m.-7:30 p.m. PST).

The public is invited to view the competition which will take place at the 18th hole of the course (a special tee box will be constructed near the 18th green with the golfers hitting their long balls up the fairway).

There is no admission charge to come out and take part in the activities and view the competition. Food and beverages will be available for purchase.

“There should be plenty of seating around the 18th green - some bleacher seating, and seating on the range where people can watch the players



warm up,” explained Steve Wiley, director of marketing of Long Drivers of America. “There will be huge jumbo-tron screens set up for Saturday’s finals.”

In addition to the actual championship, the Pinnacle Distance Team will perform trick shots and long ball demonstrations. Among the members of the team is Jason Zuback who recently won his fifth Remax World Long Driver Championship.

Another feature that returns from last year’s competition is the Cobra Tech Van, a high-tech van that is not only a presentation in itself-with leather seating and flat-screen monitors that give golfers a chance to view the latest in Cobra Tech speed drivers-but has the capability to build custom drivers for golfers right on the spot. The van will be located at the driving range.

The first 1,000 people who come out Saturday to see the finals will receive a free pack of Pinnacle Exceptional golf balls. Lucky winners in the audience will also have a chance to win prizes from Cobra.

The event will culminate with a fireworks display at Laughlin Ranch set for Saturday evening after the finals.

“The best thing of all about this event is that it’s all free of charge to attend,” adds Sellinger. “And it’s a one-of-a-kind event. It’s not like the Remax World Championship which is very intense. This is such a fun event for the competitors because of its unique format and the fact that as amateurs they get to appear on ESPN-and they also get a chance to win \$50,000 and a new Honda.

“The pivotal point behind this competition is that it’s for all golfers who can hit the ball with accuracy. It is not a power game only and that means it opens up to a broader range of player. The good golfer sitting home watching this event can say to himself, ‘say, I can do that’ and so, next year he will enter. And maybe he-or she-will win.”

THE COMPETITION ITSELF

The golfers are trying to hit a golf ball long and straight. They attain points by driving five golf balls onto a championship grid that measures 40 yards in width. There is an “Exceptional Zone” on the grid within which golfers achieve maximum points for accuracy (within 10 yards left or right of center). Distance points increase at intervals of 10 yards, beginning at a minimum of 200 yards and up to a maximum of 320 yards.

The maximum score attainable during a five-ball set is 70 points. However, any competitor who places all five drives in the competition grid earns a bonus sixth ball allowing for scores to exceed 70 points. The competitor who amasses the highest point total wins. In case of ties, playoffs will be used to determine a winner.

The winner of the championship will receive \$50,000 plus a convertible Honda S2000. The second-place winner receives \$22,000. Prize money earned by other top finishers is: \$12,000 for third place; \$6,000 for fourth place; \$4,000 for fifth place; \$3,000 for sixth place; \$2,000 for seventh place; and \$1,000 for eighth place.

Players will be using USPGA approved golf equipment (their own if so approved) and hitting Pinnacle Exception balls. The competition was open to any amateur golfer, male or female, adult or junior. Everyone who entered this championship competed in the same division.

For information on golf at Laughlin Ranch Golf Club, call 928-754-1243 or 1-866-684-GOLF.