

Ray Bolt Classic – A Special Celebration

Ray Bolt was one of the founders of the Winter Park accounting firm, Moore Stephens Lovelace P.A., and every year he would invite people to play golf after income tax filing day. Ray passed away in 2001 from colon cancer. Since then the firm has kept the tradition of playing golf after the 15th of April in his memory and named it the Ray Bolt Classic.

The first year they had a comfortable field of players and last year about 80 played.

After the 2004 event the company decided to take the tournament to the next level. They solicited bids from numerous high-end courses. Marketing Director, Leigh Celones, at Moore Stephens Lovelace began the search by having meetings at the different venues to see what they could offer. One of the locations she met with was Celebration Golf Club.

Once she sat down with the staff for her first meeting she knew where the event needed to be and who was going to host the 3rd Annual Ray Bolt Classic in 2005- Celebration.

In 2004, the golf club announced their Charitable Partnership, which is an ongoing program to help charity organizations and similar causes maximize their fundraising efforts from golf tournaments. Gene Garrote, the general manager at Celebration, stated “our owners and management are committed to giving something back to the Central Florida community that has been so good to the course.” A Duffer Dan favorite, Celebration does everything top shelf.

The Charitable Partnership Program was so encompassing it actually made the workload easier for the golf tournament committee. Upon arrival, golfers were ushered across a red carpet bordered by the prizes to be given away at the dinner reception. Kenny Hobbs, our favorite Nike representative, in

cooperation with Celebration provided prizes for a contest on the 3 hole Junior Course adjacent to the clubhouse. Registration, hole sponsor signage, mulligan and raffle ticket signs are all provided by the club and every one of

Celebration’s staff is there to provide assistance to the players. In addition to the excellent service, Celebration provides complimentary Golf Club passes as door prizes. The ‘piece de resistance’ is the \$15.00 per player donation made to the charity, which in the case of the Ray Bolt Classic was over \$2000. The total value of services and contributions made by the golf club were easily at \$5000.



Gene Garrote, Kye Bolt, Leigh Celones and Bill Miller



The golf committee for the Classic substantially increased their entry and sponsorship fees, plus sold the luncheon, dinner reception and beverage cart cost as separate sponsorships. They were so successful they actually had to turn away last minute requests. They easily tripled their charity efforts, which went to the American Cancer Society this year. Leigh said, “the folks at Celebration just gave so much back in so many different ways and still made us feel it was all about us and helping others. We are certainly returning to Celebration.” Rated ****1/2 stars & in the Top 200 for Service and Course Condition by Golf Digest’s “Best Places to Play” 2004-2005