

Welcome

America's 2020
National Private Club
Champions

*Coeur d'Alene Resort is the
new home of Executive Cup
for the next three years.*



Ben Whipple
75-75 – 150
The Cliffs in South Carolina
Overall Men's
National Champion



Lin Culver
75-80 – 155
Hammock Dunes in Florida
Overall Women's
National Champion



By Mark Pazdur, Tournament Director

COEUR D'ALENE, IDAHO: Two decades ago, America Online agreed to purchase Time Warner, the final original *Peanuts* comic strip was published, Vijay Singh won the Masters, and the first resident crew entered the International Space Station.

On a much more personal level, our family launched Executive Cup—to this day—the only tournament exclusively for private club champions. Over the past 20 years, the tournament has traveled across 7,000 miles from the

shores of Maui to the beaches of Puerto Vallarta to the lush tropics of Central Florida. Our goal has not wavered since day one to blend competition and camaraderie at some of the finest golf resorts around the world—a distance that equals 27 round trips to the International Space Station—and that doesn't include the addition of our newest location—The Coeur d'Alene Resort.

In our 20 years of Executive Cup, we have faced Mother Nature's Kona trade winds, fog delays, erupting



The resort holds a distinction of being a past recipient of *Condé Nast Traveler's* "Top U.S. Golf Resort" and being rated "America's Most Beautiful Resort Golf Course" by *Golf Magazine*.

Fun fact: Although Lake Coeur d'Alene is one of the cleanest bodies of water in America, a number of Ford Model T automobiles sit at the bottom as a result of drivers in the early 1900s misjudging the thickness of winter ice on its surface.



Horse Race Shootout participants

volcanoes, and torrential thunderstorms. On the man-made front, we have endured 9/11, the Great Recession, and COVID-19. Smoke from September wildfires that ravaged the West was our newest hurdle. An area larger than the state of Connecticut had burned just before the start of tournament week, creating a plume of smoke that reached Toronto, Canada.

We had 26 club champions, from 19 different states, compete for the right to earn the title "champions of champions." Eligibility for entry includes current champions, past club champions, senior champions, and couples champions. Trophies were awarded to male and female overall low gross champions...net and gross couples club champions... and age divisional net and gross titles for men and women under 60, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 and over.

ONE OF GOLF'S MOST ICONIC HOLES

When the Cordilleran Ice Sheet flowed south from Canada approximately 15,000 years ago, it helped create the topography necessary for Lake Coeur d'Alene. Today, the pristine body of water has over 100 miles of shoreline.

The Coeur d'Alene Resort started as a small lakefront motel. When the impressive 18-story tower opened, 25,000 locals showed up for a tour, backing up the off-ramp on Interstate 90. Today, the resort is one of the few mountain hotels in America located alongside a large, freshwater lake. I think you would agree with *Golf Digest's* viewpoint: "Coeur d'Alene is what every resort should be. It's not just upscale, it's posh. You aren't just pampered here, you're spoiled. It's not just an escape, it's an experience." ➤

Fantasy Island – Hole No. 14



The resort's par-3 with a floating green garners attention. An old log boom, used to harbor timber near the shoreline, was the impetus behind its design. Stepping on its tee box can prove intimidating. Case in point, the golf staff annually pulls 25,000 golf balls from the lake. Its distance from the tee, which changes every day, is controlled via an intricate, computer-controlled, underwater cable system. At approximately 15,000 square feet, the island may look intimidating, but it's a deceptively large target. To finish the hole, players board the "putter" boat, an electric-powered shuttle, ferrying golfers to and from the island green. As you depart the island, the boat captain will leave you with a personalized certificate of achievement, commemorating the completion of one of

the most memorable holes in golf. When the picturesque hole made its debut 28 years ago, the architectural team knew the green would have a life cycle. After decades of top-dressing with sand, it gained 200,000 pounds and was actually dropping closer to the lake's waterline. The island was disconnected from cables and three tugboats relocated it to nearby Cougar Bay for a full overhaul and facelift. Soil was removed and a new putting surface installed, but much of the work completed can't be seen. Large holding tanks were placed underneath the bunkers to capture runoff (preventing organic nutrients from seeping into Lake Coeur d'Alene) and a sophisticated network of cables was installed, allowing the island green complex to move to designated yardages.



Tricia Shoemaker
77-86 – 163
Lomas Santa Fe
GC in California
Women's 60-69
Gross Champion



Charlotte Kocher
80-76 – 156
LedgeRock GC
in Pennsylvania
Women's 60-69
Net Champion

Welcome Reception



LAKE TOWER rooms (with wall-to-wall picture windows) offer a luxury retreat with your own private balcony overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene and a gas-powered fireplace for that special evening glow.



Bob Hope
81-79 – 160
Del Paso CC
in California
Men's 80+
Gross Champion



Don Doty
77-76 – 153
The Lakes G&CC
in Ohio
Men's 80+
Net Champion



WELCOME RECEPTION AND DINNER

Tournament week started on a high note with a lavish cocktail reception and dinner on the main patio overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene. Players were greeted to live music, top-shelf liquor, and a menu that would feed the hungriest of appetites. "I think most would agree this year has been stressful and challenging," expressed Chris Chaprnka, club champion at Abaco Golf Club in Jupiter, Florida. "Executive Cup allowed me to travel with one of my best friends, Craig Howell [also a club champion at

Abaco Golf Club], for a chance to enjoy the great outdoors and spend time together."

Entertainment for the evening included a magic show by Cecil the Magician who has been performing since the age of seven. His mix of campy tricks and comedy engaged our group with a couple of deep belly laughs. "He clearly knew his audience," said Tricia Shoemaker, club champion at Lomas Santa Fe Country Club in California. "Several of his acts were customized for our golf group." ➤

Horse Race Shootout



Craig Howell
73-77 – 150
Abaco GC
in Florida
Men's 60-69
Gross Champion



Kyle Kerestes
71-70 – 141
Shannopin CC
in Pennsylvania
Men's 60-69
Net Champion



John Daly took a chance in the 1992 Merrill Lynch Shootout Championship with a 313-yard drive on No. 13 – finishing within 15 feet of the pin – and dropping the putt for eagle on national television.

During the warm summer months, it is common to see guests enjoying the largest fleet of fresh water excursion boats west of the Mississippi River.

A PHOTO FINISH—HORSE RACE SHOOTOUT

Tournament week competition started on a high note with 13 teams participating in an early arrival, four hole, two-person, alternate shot Horse Race Shootout with bragging rights and \$500 of golf shop scrip on the line. Under improving smoky skies, it was clear that club champions came to compete. Routing includes playing four holes—1, 2, 3, and concluding on the famous island hole. Teams with par on the first three holes advanced without competing in a sudden death putt-off. By the time we reached the island green par-3, four teams remained. Rules for the final hole were modified. Instead of continuing the alternate shot for-

mat, each player on the team was allowed to hit a tee shot with the closest shot taking top prize. Team David Thornally (club champion at Fair Oaks Ranch G&CC in Texas) and Harvey Knoll (club champion at Hillcrest Country Club in Idaho) outlasted the competition for the victory with team Craig Howell and Chris Chaprnka taking second place.

A CONTINUING TRADITION

A tradition since the inception of Executive Cup is an annual guessing contest awarding 100,000 American Airlines frequent flier miles. As expected, this year's query was a head scratcher.

Competition



Gail Cooper
 104-103 – 207
 Champions GC
 in Texas
 Women's 70-79
 Gross Champion

The query? How many holes in one have been recorded since the opening of the resort's signature par-3 island hole. One clue was given. Last season, there were 36 holes in one on the PGA TOUR. According to the National Hole in One Registry the odds of a PGA TOUR professional carding a hole in one is 3,000:1. This compares to the odds of an average handicap player of 12,000:1 making an ace.

The guesses, from highest to lowest, were in a very narrow range (the answer was 67) with four participants off by only one. Rick Roth, Charlotte Kocher, Mar-

sha Doty, and Dave Culver were put on the spot for a tie-breaker question.

With the theme song of *Jeopardy* playing in the background, the foursome had one minute to formulate an answer to: What is the average number of round trips the Putter Boat makes to the island green per season. The four frantically deliberated with their table for a number. Rick Roth's answer of 7,200 round trips was closest (the answer was 7,312), earning him the equivalent of four domestic round trip flights. ►

Couples Club Championship



Ben and Bennie Whipple
The Cliffs in South Carolina
Gross Couples Club Champions (72)

Charlotte and Ed Kocher
LedgeRock GC in Pennsylvania
Net Couples Club Champions (66)



Stokely Doster shows off another reason Coeur d'Alene is a popular resort destination.



Jamie Kerestes
88-81 – 169
Shannopin CC
in Pennsylvania
Women's Under 60
Gross Champion

GOLF AT ITS FINEST

Slightly less smoke in the sky greeted competitors for the first round of competition. The day of golf started with a seven-minute boat ride on one of two custom-designed, handcrafted, Honduran mahogany boats ferrying players from the hotel to the course. Forecaddies greeted golfers dockside and provided an escort to the driving range. The club's custom-designed carts include plush seats and a tilt steering wheel.

Those who arrived early enough warmed up on one of the more unusual driving ranges in the West where you hit your pyramid of floating golf balls into Lake Coeur d'Alene. I found it ironic that every practice shot you hit ends up in water, then you immediately switch gears on the first tee to avoid all water hazards on the course!

The Scott Miller design features tee-to-green bent grass and is accented by a vivid color palette of 1,500 wild flowers, 25,000 junipers, and 30,000 geraniums.

Our Couples Club Championship allows couples club champions to compete for gross and net titles while enjoying each other's company. "We both had our hits and misses," grimaced Jamie Kerestes, club champion at Shannopin Country Club in Pennsylvania. At the conclusion of play, Ben and Bennie Whipple (couples club champions from The Cliffs in South Carolina) captured the gross title with a solid 72, and Ed and Charlotte Kocher (couples club champions from LedgeRock Golf Club in Pennsylvania) took the net title with a 66 after a card-off against Richie and Gail Cooper (couples club champions from Champions Golf Club in Texas).



Don Doty's performance of "Ode to Whiskey" was a crowd pleaser at the Awards Dinner.



Walt Klenz
78-80 – 158
The Boulders
in Arizona
Men's 70-79
Gross Champion



Ed Kocher
73-74 – 147
LedgeRock GC
in Pennsylvania
Men's 70-79
Net Champion

Conclusion of Competition

Craig congratulates Ben after the sudden death playoff.

If your spouse isn't a club champion nor plays golf, not to worry. Over 100 shops and cafes are outside the lobby and MSNBC.com named the resort's spa one of the "World's Most Romantic."

INDIVIDUAL PLAY—DAY ONE

After conclusion of the first day of individual play, the stage was set for an exciting finish. Only four shots separated both the men's and women's final pairings.

"Our age bracket competition was no less exciting," exclaimed Walt Klenz, club champion at The Boulders in Scottsdale, Arizona. "The lead changed in our group several times."

THE FINAL ROUND

Lin Culver, club champion at Hammock Dunes Club in Palm Coast, Florida, is a competitor to be reckoned with. With a two-shot lead going into the final round, she widened the distance from the rest of the field shortly after teeing off and never looked back. "Coeur d'Alene requires brains over brawn," detailed Culver. "Accuracy is favored over length. Course management is key and you quickly learn where you *don't* want to be."

Our men's title was a tightly contested battle. Ben Whipple, defending Executive Cup overall champion, was three down with four to play against Craig Howell. Ben's recovery shot on eighteen was a "leaner" on the cup that resulted in an easy tap-in, leading to a sudden death play-

off. Ben repeated the feat with a tough up-and-down on the first playoff hole to secure the title.

"I came close, but couldn't seal the deal," expressed Howell. "My ball striking yesterday was a once in a blue moon event and my putter was hot today. Self-doubt is a downfall. I want to congratulate Ben. He is a true competitor." With Ben's win, he has won Executive Cup overall titles at Mauna Kea in Hawaii, Vidanta in Mexico, Grand Cypress in Florida, and, now, Coeur d'Alene Resort.

CONCLUSION OF A MEMORABLE TIME

The Awards Dinner and Cocktail Reception was an elegant affair set on the resort's open-air patio overlooking Lake Coeur d'Alene. Our group enjoyed live music, an open bar, and delicacies that included smoke-roasted troll caught king salmon and lobster medallions.

Entertainment started on a high note with a performance by Don Doty, club champion at The Lakes G&CC in Ohio, with his Ode to Whiskey. "Whiskey puts song in your step and laughter in your heart," began Doty. His act resulted in a standing ovation for a job well done.

The night concluded with a formal awards presentation, hearty goodbyes, and newly formed friendships. ►



Executive Cup Challenge

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho • September 12-16, 2021

Arrive Sunday, Depart Thursday • A Four-Night, Three-Day Golf Tournament

Trophies will be awarded to male and female overall low gross champions, net and gross couples club champions, and age divisional net and gross titles for men and women under 60, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 and over.

Sunday, September 12: Arrival • Optional afternoon Horse Race Shootout

Monday, September 13: Full breakfast • Couples Club Championship • Hot lunch • Welcome Reception and Dinner

Tuesday, September 14: Full breakfast • Executive Cup Round #1 Individual Play • Hot lunch • Evening at your leisure

Wednesday, September 15: Full breakfast • Executive Cup Final Round Individual Play • Hot lunch • Awards Reception and Dinner

Thursday, September 16: Full breakfast • Departure Day

PRICING: Single: \$3,300 • Double/one competitor: \$4,140 • Double/two competitors: \$4,680 • **EXTRA NIGHT:** \$376+tax

For more information, or to sign up, please contact Mark Pazdur at Mark@ExecutiveGolferMagazine.com or (949) 933-6478

