



CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

*The Omni Homestead Resort—
host to 23 U.S. Presidents—
welcomes ALL private golf club
members to the 2024
Executive Cup Challenge.*

By Mark Pazdur, Tournament Director

HOT SPRINGS, VIRGINIA: In 1998, Netflix started renting out DVDs by mail. About a decade later, interest in DVD as a home entertainment format was beginning to wane, and Netflix made the pivot toward a streaming service. Rather than focus on *improving* the delivery of physical DVDs, Netflix would *reinvent* entertainment delivery. Today, the company has an NYSE stock value of over \$190 *billion*.

The same year Netflix was founded, we launched Executive Cup. Our original mission was to allow private club champions from around the country the opportunity to compete for national titles. Over the past two decades, our tournament has traveled across 7,000 miles from the shores of Maui to the beaches of Puerto Vallarta and from the lush tropics of Central Florida to the famous floating green in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The goal has not ➤

The Omni Homestead offers two of the finest mountain courses on the East Coast. The appropriately named Old Course completed its first six holes in 1892 and is distinguished as home of the nation's oldest first tee in continuous use. The Omni Homestead has been named a "Top 100 Golf Resorts in the World" for 2024-25 by *GOLF Magazine*.



Executive Cup 2023

wavered since day one—to blend competition and camaraderie at some of the finest golf resorts around the world.

I send out annual surveys to players, and one of the top questions is: Why don't you open up the tournament to *all* private club members? It's a question I have been mulling over the past couple of years. After all, only two percent of private club members will ever win a club championship.

THE BIG REVEAL

In 2024, Executive Cup will welcome *all* private club members to The Homestead in Hot Springs, Virginia.

This is our Netflix pivot. We have arranged an itinerary to appeal to club champions, private club members, and non-golfers alike. We also will offer optional round-trip ground transportation from the Roanoke Airport (about 90 minutes away). It's an undeniable convenience to have a "door to door" service.

After hearing The Omni Homestead Resort had been chosen by the USGA as the host site for the

2025 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur and the 2029 U.S. Senior Amateur, it seemed appropriate to return for another year.

An interesting fact, the resort had been the original presidential retreat before Camp David was established in Maryland. Over the course of America's history, 46 presidents have governed the land. Since opening as "America's First Resort" in 1766 (a decade before the signing of the Declaration of Independence), 23 presidents have visited The Omni Homestead Resort.

"Where else can you walk in the footsteps of Sam Snead [always wearing his folksy straw hat] and Babe Zaharias [winner of two gold medals at the 1932 Olympics]," ➤





exclaimed Kyle Kerestes, member at Shannopin Country Club in Pennsylvania and Reynolds Lake Oconee in Georgia. "I understand President Gerald Ford shot his best round as a mature golfer [he shot 81] on The Cascades."

THE 2023 EARLY ARRIVAL HORSE RACE SHOOTOUT

We had 11 two-person teams play in our optional early arrival Horse Race Shootout. After each hole, teams were eliminated until three remained for the final hole.

As a rain shower started to fall, Team Allan Johnson

(from Arrowhead Country Club in Arizona) proved victorious with the sudden death chip off. "What a nice way to start the week with my wife—Mary Jane—as we celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary," rejoiced Johnson.

COUPLES CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Our Couples Club Championship is always hotly contested, 2023 was no different.

Both Team Greene (from Greene Country Club in Ohio) and Team Simpson (from Cherry Hills Club in Colorado) shot a net 63 requiring a card off according to ➤



The appropriately named Old Course is distinguished as home of the nation's oldest first tee in continuous use. **The Cascades Course** (pictured) is ranked in "America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses" by *Golf Digest*.



USGA rules. A net eagle on hole No. 16 catapulted Mark and Mary Greene to victory.

Leigh and Vicky MacKay (from The Fox Club in Florida), with their score of 71, won the gross division. "What a great foursome we had to play with," exclaimed Vicki. "Our stretch of birdies on 15, 16, and 17 sealed the deal. The Cascades is challenging with its sidehill lies, something atypical in Florida. Actual distance ver-

sus playing distance can be very different and requires thought on club selection."

WELCOME COCKTAIL RECEPTION AND DINNER

Our first evening function began on a fun note. Marcia Everett took the podium to explain why they missed the Horse Race Shootout the day before.

"My husband Carl (from Sunnybrook Golf Club) ➤



in Pennsylvania) had been interested in attending Executive Cup for many years. I finally capitulated. As we started our nine-hour drive, I plugged The Homestead, Virginia, into Apple Maps. On the outskirts of Charlottesville, Virginia, something just didn't feel right. We soon realized there was a Homestead in Charlottesville, more than 90 miles away from where we were supposed to be. As graduates of Harvard and MIT you would think we would know what we are doing! We finally got back on track and arrived 30 minutes after the start of the Horse Race," explained Everett.

Participants dined on a lavish buffet and were entertained by a talented piano player and voice-over impersonator to great applause.

100,000 AMERICAN AIRLINES MILES QUESTION

Each year during our contest, our mission is to craft a question about the location whose answer isn't easily discoverable. Questions have ranged from how many Kona coffee beans are in the crystal vase (Mauna Kea Resort in Hawaii) to how many logos are in the golf shop (Pelican Hill Resort in California).

This year's question: How many tons of dynamite was used to carve The Cascades from the rugged mountain landscape. Answers ran the gamut from one ton to 415,000 tons—which, by the way, would be enough dynamite to blow up the entire Bath County. When asking players if they placed their guess, more than one ➤

Executive Cup 2023



exclaimed: “Can I change my answer to not enough?”

Several players had the correct answer of 20 tons, requiring a “sudden death” impromptu question. With the theme song of *Jeopardy* playing in the background, those still in the running had 30 seconds to write down an answer to: When was the first Women’s Golf Tournament held at The Homestead? The answer: October 12, 1900. After much cajoling from the group, Carl Everett was the grand-prize winner.

WINE TASTING EVENT

Our one-hour wine tasting event—hosted by Quyneh Cohen, a Level Two sommelier—was a grand slam home run. Discussions ranged from proper decanting, cork ver-

sus screw cap, and how Virginia (with 362 wineries in the state) is clawing its way up the charts for quality wine. Quyneh’s tips: (1) Your nose plays a major factor in taste. Don’t wear perfume or cologne to a wine tasting. (2) Port usually has hints of chocolate. Instead of serving chocolate with a fine port (a common occurrence), consider offering salted aged cheddar.

EXECUTIVE CUP COMPETITION

It was clear club champions came to compete.

Right out of the gate, Blake Miraglia (from Forest Highlands Golf Club in Arizona) was five under after five holes and six under after 10 holes—with three par-5s reachable in two to go—ended up shooting 68 ➤



Introducing Our 2023 “Champions of Champions”



Blake Miraglia
Forest Highlands in Arizona
Overall Men's Champion



Martha Mirman
Pinehurst Country Club in North Carolina
Overall Women's Champion



(four under par on The Cascades). Not to be outshined, Craig Howell (from Abacoa Golf Club in Florida) hit 17 out of 18 greens. “My putting was horrendous,” lamented Craig. “Bets are won and lost around the green.”

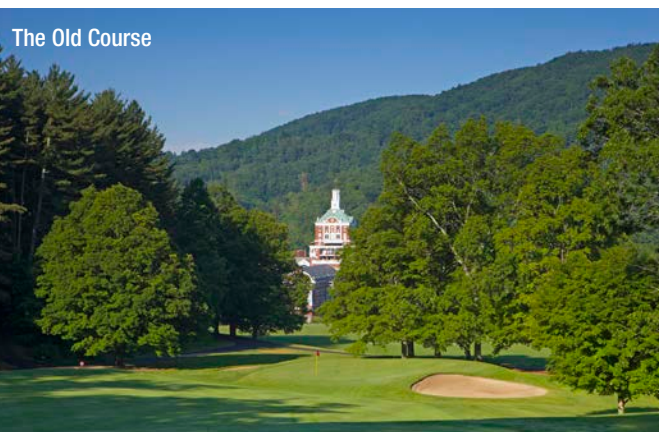
After round one, Martha Mirman (from Pinehurst Country Club in North Carolina) lead the women’s division with a solid 77.

When the final putts dropped after the 36-hole competition (one round each on The Old Course and The Cascades), the first round leads by Blake (total score of 68-74–142) and Martha (total score of 77-79–156) proved insurmountable by the rest of the field.

Before the trophy presentation, Parker Barnes Jr. (from Hound Ears Club in North Carolina) entertained all with a series of jokes to great applause. “Thanks to the staff at The Homestead for making us feel so welcome. The history, service, and amenities are fitting as ‘America’s First Resort,’” closed Blake during his acceptance speech.

With full bellies and awarded trophies, the 2023 Executive Cup drew to a close. ■

For information on the 2024 Executive Cup, please visit ExecutiveGolferMagazine.com.



Executive Cup Challenge

Hot Springs, Virginia • September 8-12, 2024

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

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

Trophies will be awarded to private club members age divisional net titles for men and women under 60, 60-69, 70-79, and 80 and over.

Sunday, September 8: Arrival • Optional Virginia Wine Tasting Event • Evening at Your Leisure

Monday, September 9: Full breakfast • Skins Game for Private Club Members (\$20 buy-in) • Couples Club Championship • Hot lunch • Welcome Reception and Dinner

Tuesday, September 10: Full breakfast • Private Club Members Round One (play to 100% of handicap) • Club Championship Round One • Hot lunch • Optional afternoon Horse Race Shootout for all • Evening At Your Leisure

Wednesday, September 11: Full breakfast • Private Club Members Final Round (play to 100% of handicap) • Club Championship Final Round • Hot lunch • Awards Reception and Dinner

Thursday, September 12: Full breakfast • Departure Day

PRICING: Single: \$4,302* • Double/one competitor: \$5,441* • Double/two competitors: \$6,221* • **EXTRA NIGHT:** \$400+ tax

• Round-trip ground transportation from Roanoke Airport in Virginia (ROA) available for \$300/person (about 81 miles)

*Tournament package pricing includes all taxes, resort fees, tips, and parking. Airfare is not included.

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

