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11th annual REFA Golf Outing: Chase for the REFA Cup

June 30, 2010 - Connecticut

By Jonathan Shrair

June 21: My alarm buzzer rang at 6:30 a.m. sharp. I sprang from bed and made my way to the window to see what the weather was outside. I was about to experience a golf outing from the standpoint of a host, and not a golfer, for the very first time. The real difference being that as a golfer it could be raining cats and dogs and still we tell ourselves that "the hard stuff won't come down for a while yet." But as a host, it's a much different story. Given all of the hard work, planning and preparation that goes into pulling off an event like this, the anxiety associated with weather-watching is worse than standing over a 1 ft. birdie putt (after your scramble partners have each just missed their putts).

As registrants left the sign-in station and walked towards me, strands of raffle tickets followed behind them like dreadlocks (all that was missing was the reggae music accompaniment). I've never seen more raffle tickets sold in such a short period of time in all my life. People were folding and stuffing, bending and tearing tickets - to get them to fit in their pockets, bags, or whatever they were carrying. Those without the long strands were greeted as they approached the gift station with a hearty, "Hello," and "did you know we have raffle tickets for sale?" And sure enough, back they went with smiles on their faces to help out a worthy and important cause. A portion of the proceeds from the day and raffle ticket sales were donated to Habitat for Humanity on REFA's behalf.

Around 10:30 a.m. the smiling faces of Connecticut's real estate finance community began making their way steadily to the course. It was like a parade of PGA Tour players minus all the bling, paparazzi, multiple logo-bedazzled golf clothes and giant golf bags. Come to think of it, it was nothing like a PGA Tour event - it was better because the folks here were all smiling, happy, and ready to have some fun. For them, this was not work.

The food was great and the set-up comfortable and relaxed.

I was perched high above the 13th hole. The \$10,000 Hole-in-One Giveaway Hole! It was a picturesque, 190 yd. Par 3 playing slightly uphill and with a pin location surrounded by steep and deep greenside bunkers. Into the wind, it had to be playing 200+ yards.

First up, the guys from the New Boston Fund and with one swing of the club, the REFA Classic was underway and these guys were pin-high, 10 ft. from the hole and putting for birdie. Their drive was beautiful. It came in hard and landed softly. From that point, I was sure it would be an exciting day and hopeful that someone would walk home \$10,000 richer. Unfortunately, the money was safer on that hole than it would have been if it were locked up in Fort Knox. It was not to happen.

Following golf, players enjoyed a well-needed cocktail party and shared the day's successes and failures over an ice cold drink (and some of the best chicken fingers this young writer has ever eaten).

President Mike Riccio then opened up the evening's event by thanking all of the sponsors who had

committed themselves and their organizations to helping put on this event, to make it something special and a huge success. He then turned the program back over to Mark [Schuman].

Mark wasted no time in announcing, "last chance for raffle tickets" as he stood in front of a brand new 32" flat screen TV, Kindle, FLIP HD Video Recorder, boxes of PRO V1, gift certificates, and golf clubs. One by one raffle tickets were selected and winners made their way up front to collect their gifts.

People who generally seemed to like each other, trust each other and respect each other enjoyed spending the day together.

REFA would like to thank the sponsors and the golfers for making this event such a huge success!

Jonathan Shrair is a REFA staff member.

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