

# LPGA FOUNDER'S CUP EXPERIENCE



## **Part I:**

The LPGA Founder's Cup tournament was held in Phoenix, Arizona, a few weeks ago. Wildfire Golf Club and the JW Marriott were the host course and hotel. I had the opportunity to walk around and follow the players on Saturday and Sunday of the three day event. It wasn't quite as busy as the Phoenix Open which was a nice surprise. I found the

parking to be easier, the crowds not as rowdy, I didn't have to have my purse searched for my phone, and people were actually there for the golf vs. the booze. Although, I have to admit, I missed the humor of being able to watch the fashion show of overdressed women getting their stilettos stuck in the turf – an event witnessed yearly at the Phoenix Open.

When I heard the tournament was for charity and there wasn't a purse, I wondered why in the world so many players would (field of 134) take the time out of their already busy schedules to travel so far and spare the extra expenses to not earn a dime. It is widely known that the LPGA purses aren't very big to begin with. In addition, the plight of earning an LPGA pro card and not consistently making the cut can drain personal and investor pockets quickly. I assumed it must be solely for ego, bragging rights, and a nice trip to sunny, dry Arizona.

Then I saw it.....The LPGA FOUNDERS board. It was an impressive list of 13 very special women who made the LPGA possible when they came together in 1950 and formed the organization as we know it today.

## **LADIES PROFESSIONAL GOLF ASSOCIATION FOUNDING MEMBERS:**

Alice Bauer    Bettye Danoff    Marlene Bauer Hagge    Opal Hill  
Sally Sessions    Shirley Spork    Babe Zaharias    Patty Berg  
Helen Dettweiler    Helen Hicks    Betty Jameson    Marilynn Smith  
Louise Suggs

These 13 ladies were dedicated to golf as a game and a career. They are responsible for everything...from drafting by-laws, setting up the courses, developing the membership, to organizing all tournaments and finding sponsors. According to the LPGA website, this new organization was a "labor of love" to these women and the financial rewards were non-existent in the beginning.

Kari Webb may have been the tournament winner with the lowest score, but there were a lot more winners that came out of this tournament. The LPGA donated a million dollars to charity---half to the LPGA-USGA Girls Golf Program and the other half to the top-10 finisher's chosen charities. Kari Webb won \$200,000 to be split between the Christopher Reeve Foundation and the relief efforts in Japan.



## **Part II:**

Right when I thought my weekend was complete and I had learned so much about the LPGA history, I had the unique opportunity to play the Wildfire course set up exactly how the LPGA teed it up. A few friends and I

went out to the mixed course (Palmer and Faldo) on the Wednesday following the tournament. I was more than a little nervous. Currently I'm a 14 handicap and have been struggling to break 90 on various 5400-5600yd courses in the valley. The LPGA tee boxes were set up at 6613yds!

What an experience! After a handicap-adjusted round of 103 and a record-breaking over-usage of my 5 wood, I have a new found respect for the accuracy of the LPGA players. There is something to be said for "greens in regulation". I played more of a "greenside bunker in regulation" game that day.

The week's festivities were divine. Keep it up ladies! You deserve to be where you are. I, on the other hand, will not be quitting my day job anytime soon.



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*WILDFIRE GOLF COURSE, PHX, AZ MARCH 23, 2011*