

Volunteers help make tournament run smoothly

As big as the Toshiba Classic is, it couldn't survive without the hundreds of people who pay for the right to donate their time.

By **S.J. Cahn**
Daily Pilot

The numbers at the Toshiba Classic almost always are impressive.

There was Tom Purtzer's 60 in the first round of the 2004 tournament.

There was Hale Irwin's 196 — 17 under par — to win the 2002 event.

And there's the \$7.8 million the event has raised for charity — mainly Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian — during the past eight years.

A major reason for the tournament's fundraising success is due to another number: 1,000. That's about how many volunteers work the golf event each year.

"The economics of the PGA Tour don't work without the volunteers," said Ira Garbutt, the tournament's volunteer chairman.

Garbutt isn't kidding. As of mid-week, the classic had 901 volunteers already — 667 returning and 234 first-timers — and Garbutt expected last-minute additions would push that total near four figures.

The volunteers handle duties that include the nitty-gritty of administration; the juggling of sponsors and volunteers; the down and dirty of garbage pickup; and the sod and turf of course maintenance.

"They're out here at 4:30 in the morning, repairing divots and making sure the course is in terrific shape by the time the pros tee off," Garbutt said of the grounds-keeping volunteers.

In all, there are 34 volunteer committees that manage the gamut of activities that go on from set up, already well under way, to tear down after next Sunday's final round.

"There's a reputation in the professional golf community that the Toshiba is the best-run tournament on the Champions Tour, and one of the best on any tour," Garbutt said.

And a surprising fact is that the volunteers pay \$75 for the honor of donating their time. The money covers, among other benefits, the shirt, hat and jacket that all volunteers receive.

Two of the volunteers, husband and wife Harry and Sue Johnson, are typical of the experienced workers the tournament draws.

Sue Johnson, who leads the scoring volunteer corps, started working with golf tournaments in 1989 and has been with the Toshiba since the 1998 event. She's also handled scoring for U.S. Opens, U.S. Senior Opens and U.S. Women's Opens.

But her experience doesn't end there. She's also worked four Olympics as a scorer on synchronized swimming.

And her boss for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles? Harry, then four years removed from when they started dating and 12 years from when the two would get married.

Harry Johnson, who — like his wife — doesn't have an extensive golfing background, has been in charge of the walking volunteer scorers for four years, ever since his wife convinced him to



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Longtime Toshiba Classic volunteers Rich Oliver, left, Keith McGlothin, middle, and June O'Neil update a scoreboard.

DOING THE JOB

Volunteers at the Toshiba Classic handle a vast array of jobs. A partial list of the volunteer committees includes:

- Administration and coordination
- Course management
- Credentials
- Emergency services
- Finance
- Handicap verification (for pro-ams)
- Information booth committee
- Junior clinic
- Laser operations
- Leaderboard
- Marshals
- Operations management
- Players service
- Professional hospitality
- Scoring
- Sponsor services
- Uniform distribution



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Toshiba Classic volunteers Pat Mora, Nancy Jones, Andi Rohrer, Arden Flamson and Norman Loats greet an amateur golfer at last year's Monday Pro-Am.

come aboard.

"You don't have to know golf, you just have to be good with people," she said.

"I just like helping make events better," he added.

The Johnsons, like many of the volunteers, point to the tournament's support of Hoag Hospital as a central

reason for their annual commitment.

"It's just such an amazing tournament and it's one I wanted to stay involved with," Sue Johnson said. "The volunteers are treated super well."

Garbutt, who is in his first year as volunteer chairman, added that the

tournament's connection to Hoag tends to ensure that the volunteers work hard and treat guests and each other well.

"Their spirit revolves around two issues," he said. "There are a lot of

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people involved who love golf. There are a lot of people who come out who want to see these legends play.

"But I think the major reason is that Hoag is an entity that is unlike any other.

"We look for people who are from the local community who also have a connection to

Hoag," said Garbutt, who is among those who have had a serious operation at the hospital.

That connection and the volunteers' dedication have helped the tournament raise more than a \$1 million for six years running — including \$1.1 million last year when the rest of the Champions Tour stops averaged about \$300,000.

"They all do an absolutely fantastic job," Garbutt said. "It's just a major group of talented people."



SOMETHING FOR THEIR TROUBLES

Volunteers at the Toshiba Classic get a few perks for their efforts:

- A golf shirt with Toshiba Classic logo
- A jacket, with detachable sleeves, with logo
- Hat with logo for men; visor for

women

- Preferred parking while working
- Food vouchers
- A week-long pass for the tournament
- Two daily tickets
- An appreciation dinner
- A tournament newsletter