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LONG DRIVERS SWING INTO LAUGHLIN RANCH FOR GOLF COMPETITION

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John Daly awes 'em.

His "every-man" style of play and demeanor may attract fans but that's not what "awes 'em." No, that response is elicited by monster drives...usually close to 400 yards down the narrowest fairways on some of the toughest courses in the world.

The long drive has always fascinated golfers. The old saying about "drive for show, putt for dough" has its believers (though it doesn't ring true as the best rated putters in the game aren't among the highest money winners), but the "show" part of the equation is what is becoming increasingly popular in the world of golf. Both for viewers and players alike.

Long Drivers of America (LDA) picked up on this fascination the public holds for the power golf drive and began holding competitions to see who could hit the ball the farthest. These competitions have gone well...but something was missing.

Accuracy.

Now, LDA has come up with a competition that showcases the long drive-and more importantly, the long drive with accuracy.

The first ever such competition takes place at Laughlin Ranch Golf Club in Laughlin from Wednesday, November 9, through Saturday, November 12, and is called the 2005 Pinnacle



Exceptional Driver Championship (PEDC). It will be taped by ESPN for broadcast on Thanksgiving weekend. The event is sponsored by the Laughlin Tourism Committee.

“We're excited about bringing this event to the Laughlin area,” states Art Sellinger, CEO of Long Drivers of America (and pictured on our cover and at left). “It's spectator-friendly and made for TV. Laughlin and Laughlin Ranch have been great hosts. Southern Nevada and Northwestern Arizona is key for this championship. We will be showcasing the area as well as the golf.”

The qualifying rounds for the championship began last March and took place at golf courses throughout the U.S. The 128 finalists from those competitions will be at the Laughlin Ranch Golf Club for the championship rounds which take place on Thursday through Saturday. The public is invited to view the competition which will take place at the 18th hole of the course (a special tee box will be constructed near the 18th green with the golfers hitting their long balls up the fairway).

There will also be other bonus events planned for the three days of the PEDC. There is no admission charge to come out and take part in the activities and view the competition.

“There should be plenty of seating around the 18th green - some bleacher seating, and seating on the range where people can watch the players warm up,” explained Steve Wiley, director of marketing of Long Drivers of America. “People also can bring blankets for lawn seating if they wish. There will be huge jumbo-tron screens set up for Saturday's finals.”

One of the bonuses of the event will be the presence of the Cobra Tech Van .

“This is a high-tech van that is not only a presentation in itself with leather seating and flat-screen monitors that give golfers a chance to view the latest in Cobra Tech speed drivers, but has the capability to build custom drivers for golfers right on the spot,” Wiley said.

Free Pinnacle Exceptional golf balls will be given to the first 1,000 spectators who appear for the Saturday night events (beginning at 5 p.m. NV; 6 p.m. AZ).

Additional attractions include:

- * Pinnacle Distance Team members will perform trick shots and golf skits during exhibition shows during the event;
- * A fireworks display will take place Saturday evening after the finals at the event site; and
- * additional prize giveaways will take place and tours of the newly finished Laughlin Ranch Golf Club House will be given.

The PEDC finals will be taped for broadcast by ESPN and will air Friday, November 25 at 3:30 p.m. on ESPN 2; and Sunday, November 27 at 2:30 p.m. on ESPN.

THE COMPETITION ITSELF

The point of the competition is both length and accuracy off the golf tee. Competitors attain points by driving golf balls long and straight into a championship grid that measures 40 yards in width. There is an “Exceptional Zone” on the grid within which golfers achieve maximum points for accuracy (within 10 yards left or right of center). Distance points increase at intervals of 10 yards, beginning at a minimum of 200 yards and up to a maximum of 320 yards.

The maximum score attainable during a five-ball set is 70 points. However, any competitor who places all five drives in the competition grid earns a bonus sixth ball allowing for scores to exceed 70 points. The competitor who amasses the highest point total wins. In case of ties, playoffs will be used to determine a winner.

The winner of the championship will receive \$50,000 plus a convertible Honda S2000. The second-place winner receives \$22,000. Prize money earned by other top finishers is: \$12,000 for third place; \$6,000 for fourth place; \$4,000 for fifth place; \$3,000 for sixth place; \$2,000 for seventh place; and \$1,000 for eighth place.

Players will be using USPGA approved golf equipment (their own if so approved) and hitting Pinnacle Exception balls. The competition was open to any amateur golfer, male or female, adult or junior. Everyone who entered this championship competed in the same division.

For information on golf at Laughlin Ranch Golf Club, call 928-754-1243 or 1-866-684-GOLF.

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