

Friday, December 11, 2009

A drink to the success of Gosling's

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The Gosling's Invitational might be considered a small event. In the Bermuda scheme of things, however, it is very much a big event as it represents one of the highlights of Bermuda's golfing calendar.

It was first played back in the mid 1970's. Wisely the event was played the week before the Goodwill and, as a result, became attractive to the professionals who were coming each year to the Goodwill.

If my memory is correct, this event was the brainchild of the Parker family who really are the founders of all that is good in Bermuda golf. When the Parkers bowed out some 20 years later, the event started to slide but, to Bermuda golf's benefit, the Gosling family resurrected it and it is once again Bermuda's most popular stroke play event.

The Bermuda weather at this time of year can be mixed, however, the Gosling's Invitational is often blessed with good weather. Perhaps it's the Dark 'n Stormies that somehow make everything look so much brighter than they otherwise might.

Whatever the reason, Day 1 was blessed with perfect weather, leaving Belmont Hills vulnerable to low scoring. Two visiting professionals took full advantage of the favourable conditions, shooting course-record 63's. Kirk Hanefeld, a regular on the Champions Tour, shot 64 with Brian McCann returning 66. The only Bermudian who managed to break par was Scott Roy, posting 68 on a day made for low scores.

In a tournament such as the Gosling's, where the depth of talent is shallower, separation of the field takes place earlier. Delroy Cambridge showed his experience on Day 2, posting an early 65 before the bad weather came in.

Kirk Hanefeld returned 69 to go with his 64 from Day 1, and Joe Horowitz backed up his 63 on Day 1 with a solid score of 70, even par. Two Bermudian professionals, Scott Roy and Dwayne Pearman, and two Bermudian amateurs, Daniel Augustus and Camiko Smith, suggested that they might be the Bermudians to watch over the final 36 holes.

The separation that began on Day 2 continued on Day 3 with Cambridge and Hanefeld showing their pedigrees, returning 66 and 67 respectively. Tim Conley, another tour player, showed his class with a fine 65 but it wasn't enough to offset his rather slow start. In the race for local honours, Dwayne Pearman emerged as the one to watch, with Paul Adams and Scott Roy nipping at his heels.

In the end, the separation that began on Day 2 proved to be sufficient. Kirk Hanefeld won the Open Professional division, Delroy Cambridge the Senior Professional division, Daniel Augustus the Open Amateur division and Jeffrey Lindo the Senior Amateur division.

The one twist in the tail was in the race for local honours which, in the end, went to Scott Roy following his fine 67 on Day 4.

Finally, though, a long, loud round of applause must go out to Goslings, for it is community support such as theirs that makes our island house a home.