



Saint Viator Supporters Go the Distance With Golf Team Members

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Rocco Smeriglio of Arlington Heights tests his golf skills against Saint Viator golf team member Patrick Schuetz of Barrington.

At the Million Dollar Classic Golf outing last week --- an outing that raises money for Saint Viator athletic programs --- golfers got a real bang for their buck.

For starters, they got to play the Jack Nicklaus-designed course at Wynstone Golf Club in North Barrington. What's more, they traded shots with members of Saint Viator's three-time state champion golf team.

"It's amazing," said Pam Biasco of Mount Prospect, one of five women who played in the outing. "They can just crush the ball."

Golfers had a chance to try and beat the students, or better yet, they could choose to play the students' shots, typically driven a long way down the fairway setting up a picture perfect approach shot.

"This is a great way to help the school," said Bill Brandt of Arlington Heights and the father of triplet sophomores. "My kids are in a lot of sports, so I'm happy to help raise money for the programs."

Nearly 100 golfers participated in the outing, including parents, alumni and corporate supporters, as well as coaches and administration members.

One corporate team from Joe Caputo and Sons Fresh Market in Palatine, Algonquin and Des Plaines made a statement in their bright yellow team uniforms, complete with knickers and derby caps on their heads --- taking a cue from the late golf pro, Payne Stewart.

After the outing, golfers and their guests relaxed over dinner, where they had the chance to bid on sports memorabilia and entertainment packages, as well as school-related perks, including front row parking spots.

Guests watched a video that introduced them to the school's strength and conditioning coach, Matt Saey, and student-athletes who described how they had benefited from his program. During the fall season alone, he worked with up to 300 students a day in the Murphy Wellness Center.

"He's made a huge impact on the program," said Athletic Director Tim Carlson. "You see a lot more kids in the weight room, especially more female athletes, which is huge. Kids are just excited about being there.

"We're excited," he added, "because they're developing skills for lifelong fitness, in addition to those that will help their specific sport."

Last year, the same golf outing raised money toward hiring Saey, making Saint Viator one of the few schools in the area to hire a dedicated strength and conditioning coach.

This year, the paddle raise, a part of the live auction, raised money to enhance the fitness center where he meets with students from across the athletic program.

“We’ve seen a fantastic improvement,” Saey says. “Students are getting stronger, and they’re starting to realize the correlation between the things we’re doing in the weight room, and how they play out on the court or in the sports they play.”

Athletic officials hope to add up to 15 new pieces of equipment to the Murphy Wellness Center, from power racks and leg presses, to ground based stations and cable stations.

“It’s equipment that is just as versatile,” Saey says, “as we want our kids to be.”