

Laid-back start to annual celebrity golf tourney

By Austin Fay

STATELINE- – The first day of the American Century Celebrity Golf Tournament was a relatively sleepy one, with many of the invited players expected to arrive at the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course today and Thursday.

Blue skies, a chilly lake and the chance of spotting NHL legend Mario Lemieux brought Jeff and Genny Isaachsen 17 hours from Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The die-hard hockey fan couple has been planning the trip for months.



The view from Brooks Sports Bar is ideal.
Photos/Austin Fay

Only three days before the couple left for their trip, Lemieux canceled his invitation. But the couple is still determined to enjoy their stay in Tahoe.

The player list isn't final until it's final, but others expected to attend include: John Elway, Michael Jordan, Don Cheadle, Kevin Nealon, Marcus Allen, Dan Quinn, Jerry Rice, Ray Romano, Oscar de la Hoya, Rick Rhoden and Billy Joe Tolliver.

A few celebrities and athletes were in attendance Tuesday, namely Mike Shanahan, coach of the Washington Redskins and offensive coordinator for three Super Bowl wins.

“With the snow-capped mountains and you can hardly count the clouds in the sky, it’s one of the most beautiful places to be,” Shanahan said.



Brian Baumgartner, left, of NBC’s “The Office” talks with an Edgewood employee on July 13.

Emmy-award winning Brian Baumgartner of NBC’s “The Office” was stretching his shoulders on the driving range.

Only 50 miles away, the Reno-Tahoe Open at Montreux Golf Club is a sweltering 95 degrees. The British Open at St. Andrews is also on this weekend in Scotland.

But neither of those has Edgewood’s infamous 17th fairway, where sun burned lake-goers pull up their boats on the sand to catch glances of the celebrities or even catch a 50-yard bomb from NFL blow-in Matt Ryan.

Three boys from El Dorado Hills came to see Marcus Allen. Their parents and the young sports fans (two of them brothers) went to the 2007 U.S. Open to see Tiger Woods play. The boys

spent the day wandering around having their T-shirts scrawled on with Sharpies by the athletes.

“This one’s a baseball player,” one boy said, showing off the garbled lines on the shoulder of his white shirt. “It’s just a bunch of scribbles but they’re celebrities so”

Tahoe-Douglas Fire Protection District was also in attendance, standing by in case of health emergencies, or sometimes “golf-ball incidents.” Brandon Spry and Brian Zabel, two Tahoe-Douglas paramedics, remember two years ago when Sugar Ray Leonard hit a young spectator in the head at the tournament. Leonard signed the ball and gave the boy a hundred dollar bill.



Crowds are expected to increase starting today.

Altitude, medications and tourists standing in the heat all day make for a wicked environment to bring out health problems. Stay hydrated if you do head out to Edgewood this week.

It’s \$60 for the whole week, with Wednesday and Thursday admission \$15 a day. Friday, Saturday and Sunday when the actual tournament goes into full swing, the price jumps to \$25 and the athletes will mostly be unavailable for autographs and photos as the tournament will be under way.