

Who's the best among pro sports players at golf?

By Brian Nordli, Reno Gazette-Journal

STATELINE – Ask almost any athlete at the American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament which pro athletes are the best at golf, and they will say their own.

Except the basketball players.

On a court, basketball players are in full control of their long, gangly bodies. They make sprinting end-to-end and dunking look like a stroll in the park. But put them on the golf course, and well, just look at how Charles Barkley swings a golf club.

“You know, basketball to me, they're the best athletes in the world,” said John Smoltz, a former MLB pitcher with the fifth-highest odds to win the ACC, which formally begins Friday. “But the height is a little bit of an issue, I think.”

This week, current and former athletes in professional basketball, baseball, hockey and football gather to play on the Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. They are all-stars and champions, but on the course, which sport produces the best golfers is about as clear as where Barkley's next shot will land.

“The football players and baseball players seem to dominate this thing, and hockey, too,” said Deron Williams, a guard for the New Jersey Nets. “We got to change it, it isn't going to be me, but we have to change this thing.”

Hockey, baseball and football all have ACC winners in their ranks, as well as favorites to win this year's Stableford-format tournament.

Basketball has never won, and its best golfers, Michael Jordan and Ray Allen, are long shots at best.

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