

Phelps a winner with fans; not on the links

STATELINE – Don't be surprised if Michael Phelps has a hard time holding a golf club today.

A spectator on Friday said he had been signing autographs for more than an hour.

While most of his peers had called it a day, Phelps was walking the long line that had formed outside the practice putting area. He signed whatever was put in front of him. He posed for pictures. He chatted a bit.



Michael Phelps – a fan favorite at the Tahoe celebrity golf tournament at Edgwood Tahoe. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Phelps even had a Douglas County sheriff's deputy keeping guard.

With the popularity of this swimming sensation, it may not matter that Michael Jordan skipped this year's American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament.

Phelps is one of four Olympians participating in this year's event. But he's the one who holds the record for most medals

won – 22.

However, even with a wingspan greater than an eagle and a flutter kick like a dolphin, the transition from water to land was not easy for him July 19. Out of the 85 players, Phelps was at 82 after the first of three days.

He spent some time practicing his putts after signing all the autographs. While he could sink a few 15-footers, he remarked that he couldn't do that earlier when it counted.

Asked what else he would be doing in Tahoe, Phelps said he didn't know – that he was pretty tired after playing 18 holes. He has 36 more to go.

Phelps will tee off Saturday at 9:45am with Emmitt Smith and Chipper Jones.

– *Kathryn Reed*