

Celebs practice before teeing off in ACC



Mark Mulder watches son Dax, as his other children Xander, 7, and Tatym, 5, look on. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – The next generation of celebrity golfers was on the links at Edgewood Tahoe on Wednesday.

Mark Mulder – a two-time All Star pitcher with the Oakland A's and current ESPN analyst, made July 15's practice round a family event. After the adults took their turn on the 17th hole it was time for 7-year-old Xander to tee off. Following him was little brother Dax. The 3-year-old took two tries with his pint-sized club before he whacked it straight down the fairway.



Former Kansas City Chief's head coach Herm Edwards, left, gets advice from Edgewood Tahoe pro Ron Blum. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

The annual American Century Championship is a mix of frivolity and serious golf. Some of the 92 celebrities are there to have fun, while others are competing for a chunk of the \$600,000 purse. The three-day tournament starts Friday.

Musician and sometimes actor Justin Timberlake, who is playing in the event for the first time, drew a sizeable crowd Wednesday that was several people deep. At the driving range he was getting advice from Jack Wagoner.



Tennis player James Blake is back playing the sport that made him famous, at least in exhibition matches. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

Wagoner, a two-winner of this event, was looking sharp.

The sports book at Harrah's-Harveys has four-time champion Billy Joe Tolliver at 7:2 odds to beat defending champ Mark Rypien. Rypien is at 5:1 to win it, Timerlake is 40:1. In the cellar is Charles Barkley with 5,000:1 odds to win the 26th annual tournament. Barkley is a crowd favorite. He likes this event so much he postponed hip surgery so he could play here.



Ex-49er QB Steve Young signs autographs; including the jersey of Mason Saso, right. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

The fans, well, they appreciate the antics – especially on hole 17 – as well as the competition. Mostly they come to see Hollywood stars and athletes in person, with many seeking autographs and photos.

Twelve-year-old Mason Saso of Colusa was wearing a Steve Young jersey that looked more like a night shirt. And while he is clearly too young to have seen the former 49er quarterback in action, most of his family are fans of the team so that's how he got hooked.



Justin Timberlake is destined to be this year's gallery favorite. Photo/Carolyn E. Wright/Copyright

"He's a great football player," the youth said of Young. "He played for my favorite team." That alone was reason enough for him get the QB to sign the back of his jersey with big No. 8 on it.

This is the third year Sharon Cornelius of South Carolina has headed west for the tournament.

"I just love the camaraderie. Everyone is so nice," she said as she waited for players to come by.

Cornelius is on a quest over the next few days to get several

photos of her with the celebrities. She won't be alone.