

Mulder makes history at ACC with three-peat



Mark Mulder is the first person in the 28-year history of the ACC to win the tournament three years in a row. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Susan Wood

STATELINE – Despite winning the American Century Championship

golf tourney an unprecedented three consecutive times Sunday, former A's pitcher Mark Mulder insisted he's not necessarily ready to compete with the pros.

When asked if Mulder was ready to take his game to the U.S. Open, the family man got understandably humble.

"I understand the big difference between their game and my game. I know what it took to get to the top of baseball," he told *Lake Tahoe News* after the win July 16, adding another major consideration. "I know my wife wouldn't like it."

Think "Tin Cup" – the movie about an amateur qualifying for the famed U.S. Open. It stars Kevin Costner, who also played in the celebrity golf tournament years ago – but with results not even close to being on par with Mulder's.

The Major League Baseball pitcher racked up 73 points in the three-day tournament, which also broke a record of its own in attendance with 55,801 people. That's a 16 percent increase over last year's record-breaking attendance.

Of his historic win, Mulder told *Lake Tahoe News*: "Records are meant to be broken."

Oh, what to do with a \$125,000 windfall? To that, his 7-year-old daughter, Tatym, helped him out during the press conference by whispering ideas in his ear. She later told *LTN* the siblings would love a go-kart – perhaps for their home in Flagstaff where he golfs in high altitude. Mulder reserved comment on the go-kart idea.



Mardy Fish finishes the celebrity golf tournament July 16 tied for second. Photo/Susan Wood

Instead, he did indicate how the family's trip to Lake Tahoe has become a special vacation, one he'd like to extend each year. The clan plans to raft the Truckee River, among other activities that make Tahoe an outdoor paradise.

"My three kids think this is the tournament where they get to run on the green," he said. And they did as dad laid in the last putt.

It was a picture-perfect Sunday at Lake Tahoe – one that tourism officials salivate over when images are broadcast to millions on NBC Sports.

Throngs of fans crowded around NBA champion Steph Curry of the Golden State Warriors, who provided the best single-day performance of 28 points to place him at fourth in the

tournament with 60. (The ACC uses the Stableford format for scoring.)

Curry played with singer Justin Timberlake and retired quarterback Tony Romo, a fan-favorite trio.

Mulder teed up with former pitcher Derek Lowe – who played on a Boston Red Sox World Series team – and ex-tennis player Mardy Fish, a trio that seemed to quietly slip behind the frenzied trio in front of them. They provided stellar performances minus a few mishaps.



Mark Mulder's three kids are eager to congratulate him on his win July 16. Photo/Susan Wood

Some missed short putts were disappointing to Mulder, but were countered with “one of the best birdies” in the tournament. They’re all just a part of the up-and-down nature of golf as a humbling sport – much like a pitcher’s ERA.

As for the unexpected, Mulder admitted having to nurse his hand on the 17th hole because he pinched his finger between the basketball hoop rim and the ball set up to please the party people lined up on the beach. Mulder handed the bloodied towel to Fish.

Fun and games are all part of the celebrity golf scene every year, along with the camaraderie of playing with other sports stars. This year was no exception.

The three leaders come across as genuinely liking each other, despite the keen competition.

When push comes to shove, some bring their game more than others – with apologies to former NBA star and television commentator Charles Barkley. Mulder, Fish and Lowe are all contenders in a pool of at least 15 who could excel and win the American Century Championship.

We “just fell a little short,” Fish explained – although his long drives were commendable. He and Lowe tied for second with 62 points.

“The tennis player outdrives the two baseball pitchers. Must be that smooth tennis swing,” one man yelled from the ropes on the 18th.

It’s not the first year Fish was close to winning on the same day his tennis counterpart, Swiss legend Roger Federer, racked up an eighth Wimbledon title.

When *LTN* asked Fish if he saw Federer’s performance as the U.S. tennis star approached the 18th, he replied: “Yes, have you?”

Fish later complimented Federer for being on top of his game.