

GOLFERS HONOR LPGA'S JAMESON

Cynthia Thuma Special Correspondent

South Florida Sun - Sentinel. Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Aug 22, 2004. pg. 26

Betty Jameson's friends wanted to say thanks in a big way. They turned the weekend of Aug. 13-14 into a gala occasion to honor Jameson, a legend in women's golf.

A native of Oklahoma who turned pro in 1952, Jameson was one of the founders of the Ladies Professional Golf Association and donor of the Vare Trophy that honors the LPGA player with the best scoring average of the year. She named it in honor of one of her childhood heroes, Glenna Collett Vare, who won six U.S. Amateur titles between 1922 and 1933.

The weekend's activities started off with a Friday cocktail reception and auction at Deerfield Country Club in Deerfield Beach. On Saturday the action moved to the Delray Beach Golf Course for the inaugural Jameson Classic.

The tournament boasted a full field of 144, including a host of LPGA pros such as Beth Daniel, JoAnn Carner, Mindy Moore, Judy Dickinson and Jane Crafter. Meg Mallon showed up for lunch, but Hurricane Charley stayed away.

"We didn't have a drop of rain all day," said Sandra Eriksson, director of instruction at the course. "Angels watched over us."

"I'm on cloud nine. It was the most beautiful, joyous occasion in the world," Jameson said. "I'm the most blessed person in the world."

Jameson, 85, said she enjoyed having the chance to meet all the golfers who came to play and support the event.

"The lovely thing is we rode around in a golf cart and I got to have my picture taken with every foursome," she said. "I can't tell you how much fun I had."

Jameson, who resides in Boynton Beach, used to live near the Delray Beach course and visited often, spending time chipping, putting and chatting with some of the LPGA's current stars, such as Daniel and Mallon, who operate golf clinics with Eriksson there. Even with the move to Boynton Beach, she still visits the club often.

"It's only about a 10-minute drive," she said. "With all the work they've done on it, it's like being at a private country club we can all be members of."

During her professional years, Jameson won 12 tournaments, including the 1947 U.S. Women's Open, where she shot a 295 at the Starmont Forest Country Club in Greensboro, N.C. Her feat marked the first time a female golfer broke the 300-stroke threshold in a 72-hole tournament. She was one of four original inductees into the LPGA Hall of Fame and in 1999 was named to the Women's Sports Foundation Hall of Fame.