

Tourney will bring many to Sisters

Not long ago, the Central Oregon Shootout was a small tournament that was barely a blip on the Central Oregon golf radar.

Fourteen years and a lot of hard work by the three participating golf facilities, including Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters, and the 54-hole tournament has formed into a prized tradition and the second-largest golf tournament in Central Oregon.

The Central Oregon Shootout will tee off again April 21-24, in what will again be a full field of more than 300 golfers.

The two-golfer team tournament features one round of scramble, one round of best ball and a final-round Chapman spread over three weekend days. The tournament also includes one gross division, four net divisions and ladies net and gross payouts. And each round is played at a different course: Aspen Lakes, Black Butte Ranch's Big Meadow course, and Eagle Crest Resort.

This unique team format has helped turn the tournament into a success, Rob Malone, Aspen Lakes' director of golf said. Groups of teams, representing Oregon cities such as Astoria, La Grande, and Portland, as well as Seattle, travel to Central Oregon each year to participate in the tournament.

"It really is about the

camaraderie," Malone said. "We have a number of groups that come from different cities and come with a lot of teams. For them, the tournament is a chance for a group of buddies to come and enjoy the team format. It really is about the camaraderie and the fun that they have golfing together."

The character of the tournament has evolved in its 14 years. For instance, the tournament has hosted an increasing number of mixed-gender teams, including married couples playing together.

Otherwise, not much has changed in recent years.

"The players enjoy the way the tournament is, and we've been told by those players to not make any significant changes because we might mess it up," Malone said.

The Central Oregon Shootout has proven to be a boon for the economy of Sisters and the surrounding area. The tournament attracts between 320 and 340 players each year, and about 85 percent travel from outside Central Oregon.

According to an annual players survey, each participant spends on average nearly \$1,000 on lodging, entertainment, food and more. That figure does not include the tournament's \$300 entry fee.

"It was designed to be a season-opening tournament that will bring in a number

of players during what would typically be a slow time: the shoulder season between winter sports and summer sports," Malone said. "And it has been a shot in the arm for the golf courses, the restaurants and the area hotels during the early part of the spring."

For a \$300-per-player entry fee, each competitor plays three rounds of golf with cart at three of Central Oregon's most coveted golf courses. The entry fee also includes tee prizes, merchandise, as well as continental breakfast and lunch each day. The prize payout is expected to be more than \$20,000 in kind, meaning a third of the field can expect cash after the tournament.

The deadline to enter is April 16, if space remains available. Already more than 120 teams have signed up. All entrants need is an official handicap (maximum of 36 for men, 42 for women) and a maximum six-stroke differential between partners.

For more information or to register, download the information flyer and registration form at www.aspenlakes.com

Central Oregon author wins award

Rick Steber's book "A Better Man" has been selected as the winner of the Best Regional Non-Fiction Award for 2015 in the Beverly Hills Book Awards.

The award is part of an international competition open to all English-language books. In selecting winners, a panel of judges from all aspects of the book industry — publishers, writers, editors and copywriters — considered a wide range of criteria including the quality of writing, content, cover design and aesthetic components.

In addition to winning this prestigious award, "A Better Man" was also chosen as a finalist for the 2015 USA Best Book Award in the category of Health: Addiction & Recovery.

Dave Franke might have been content to lead the life of a simple cowboy. But he believed in the American Dream, and he burned with ambition to make his mark in the world. He parlayed building a single home in Central Oregon into owning and operating the largest construction

company in Oregon with a payroll exceeding \$1 million a month. When the Great Recession devastated the building industry, Dave turned to alcohol. It was alcohol that ruled his life, until one day out on the broad sweep of the desert, God and Satan had a fist-fight over his alcoholic soul.

This is a powerful story of profit and loss, of weakness and of strength, a story of failure, and deliverance, and redemption. This is the inspiring true story of one man's incredible journey.

Rick Steber is an Eastern Oregon writer and an engaging Western personality with more than 40 titles under his belt and over a million books in print. Rick is the only Oregon author to have won the prestigious Western Writers of America Spur Award — Best Western Novel. He is a keen observer of the changing American West and he articulates these changes in prose that is boldly descriptive, invigorating and creative. For more information visit www.ricksteber.com.

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