

Nike Classic tees off at Prestonwood

By Tammy Hayes

Nike is well-known for encouraging its customers to "Just Do It" with the company's athletic shoes, clothing and other sporting paraphernalia.

And it isn't only the golfers "just doing it" at the Nike Carolina Classic, which started Monday with a junior pro-am event and continues through Sunday's championship round. More than 600 volunteers will be on the course and behind the scenes throughout the event as Prestonwood Country Club's Meadows course hosts the Nike tour for the second straight year.

"I think we're more prepared for it now," said tournament director Marymac Webb during a break in pre-tournament activities. "It's going smoother. Everyone has now experienced a year, so they all understand what happens."

Thanks to volunteer services, last year's tournament raised \$16,300 for the Wake County Boys and Girls Clubs — more than any other country club has raised in the first year of hosting a Nike tournament.

Part of the reason Prestonwood was able to raise so much money last year was due to the various organizations donating services. This year, Al Smith Buick of Raleigh and Classic Buick of Durham are providing 40 courtesy cars to be used by key sponsors during the tournament.

Preparation for the Classic, which last year drew 144 players and nearly 14,000 spectators, includes not only adjusting the course itself for the competition, but also involves training volunteers and marshals.

For faster and more challenging greens, the grass is mowed with a manual mower every morning for several days prior to the event.

Training for the tournament's volunteers and marshals began last year with weekly meetings. Most volunteers live in the Preston development, although many come from other parts of the area.

Volunteers do everything from taking admissions and picking up trash to caddying, reporting scores and even driving the golfers around town.

Finally, after closing all the golf courses last Wednesday and staking and roping the Meadows course, Prestonwood was ready to welcome the pros arriving in Cary.

About 80 percent of the 144 golfers expected to take part in the tournament drove from Ohio, the site of the most recent Nike Classic competition, Webb said. For those who flew, Prestonwood provided transportation from the airport to their temporary residences, she said.

Most of the golfers are staying at the Marriott in MacGregor Village while 30 families are hosting the pros in their homes.

Prestonwood Country Club has rented six vehicles to transport the golfers around town and four 15-passenger vans to transport the golfers on the course.

Every 10 minutes on Thursday and Friday, a van will leave from the club going to the 10th hole and back, transporting golfers to the halfway house as the earlier games are played in split shifts.

During the event, most of the club will be off limits to the general public. Members will be able to enter the club, but both the bar and locker room are closed to everyone but the pros.

And there's slim chance of anyone sneaking in, Webb noted. Twenty-four-hour security personnel will monitor access to the facilities and course, direct traffic and guard the \$200,000 tournament purse.

The top 10 money-winners on this year's Nike Tour will advance to the PGA tour in 1996. Last year's Carolina Classic winner, Skip Kendall, was one in last year's top 10 and therefore isn't back to defend his title.

Spectators who want a glimpse of rising PGA golfers may park off High House Road in the Food Lion parking lot. Free bus transportation is provided to the course.

On the course will be 150 marshals, quieting and controlling the crowds as well as spotting where balls land. Two Western Wake Medical Center ambulances and 10 emergency room nurses will be nearby in case of injury.

A balloon has been raised 130 feet above the clubhouse to allow clearer communications between

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