

As you may know my nephew has been out in USA doing a Green Keeping Internship, which was about to be completed at the end of March. He has spent the last six months at Bay Hill preparing for the Arnold Palmer Invitational and I was looking for ways to go out and see him and take advantage of the opportunity before he came home.

Quite by accident, looking at the Website for the tournament I came across 'Volunteers'. I was curious to find out what they were looking for so decided to go through the registration form. I wasn't able to continue through each page of the form unless I completed the questions, so I did. I thought I would be able to either submit or abort once completed but that didn't happen, it automatically submitted after completion of the last question and I received a message thanking me for my application and informing me I would be contacted if I was successful.

I actually received three requests in total. The first two were for the whole week doing either gate duties or refilling duties and I declined those. Then I received a request to get involved with Shotlink for the PGA which involved online training, quite mind boggling, that you had to pass and then on course training on the Wednesday before the event and then straight in on the Thursday for the full four days.

Needless to say, this sounded very attractive, I was very interested and the rest is history. I had to pay \$100 to confirm my registration and this entitled me to \$75 worth of food vouchers, \$15 per day, breakfasts each day which were taken in the volunteer tent, two polo shirts, a cap and other freebies which were very useful, including a PGA tour bottle and sunscreen from the Orlando Hospital. As we know this Tournament is in aid of the local Women, Children and Baby Hospital.

Once I began my duties I was positioned on the 3rd Green for the whole of the tournament, which wasn't a problem seeing all the players come through and being up close and personal and inside the ropes! I had a tablet with a plan of the green and surrounding area and once the ball came to rest I had to place it on the map within 10 seconds and submit back to the Truck, that's what they called it. The cameras picked up the ball and then my partner had to confirm placement. A team effort. A bit daunting at the beginning but I got the hang of it by the last day!?!?!? Just joking, we were overseen by the PGA for the first couple of shots then it was plain sailing, although there were a few scary moments when no one had seen the ball and we didn't know where it was.

All in all it was one of the best experiences, I had to keep pinching myself to believe I was really there doing what I was doing. I met so many people who I can call friends who have already been in touch and I've had offers of accommodation and lifts for next year. Everyone was so friendly and helpful I'm working out how I can get back. Having done it once I will have automatic first refusal for next year. The biggest disappointment is not being able to take up the offer of the free round of golf. This is planned for volunteers to play on one day in either May or September and lots of the volunteers get together again. I was

up at 4.30am for the first two mornings and 5.45am for the last two mornings so it was full on but didn't seem like hard work at all, just very exciting.

Obviously I went out primarily to see my nephew but being on my own it gave me a purpose and kept me busy and in touch with people whilst I was there. Ryan wasn't supposed to finish until today but with the present circumstances they sent him home early and he arrived home last Monday morning otherwise he would have been stuck out there. Also had this tournament been a week later it would have been a disaster for me too, as it would have been cancelled and Disney would have been closed so it would have really been a waste of time. I was extremely lucky.

The photos are what they are called, the Volunteer Tent pics were where we went for our breakfast with Dunkin Donuts and Bagels, think I put weight on while I was there! The API TV3 pic is of me on the tele on the last day with Tyrell Hatton, the winner! I was on the tele around five times in total but hard to spot. The last photo is of my appreciation badges, proudly displayed on my golf bag.

Sorry this seems like a thesis but have so much to tell and did try to keep it short but failed.

Kind regards

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