

Cognizant Classic

Tuesday, February 27, 2024
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA
PGA National Champion Course

Craig Dolch

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us for this memorable announcement and presentation. I'm Ken Kenerly, the former executive director of what's now the Cognizant Classic. I know many of you in the room and it's great to be here.

Today we're here to present the 2024 Tim Rosaforte Distinguished Journalist Award. This award named after Rosy as we all know is such a special award. You're sitting in the Tim Rosaforte Media Center.

This was named after Tim in 2021 before he passed, and then of course we created the inaugural Tim Rosaforte Award in 2021, which of course suitably the person sitting on No. 1 position on the award of course is Tim himself.

What a tremendous personality Rosey was. For those of you who got to know him, he was all about -- talk about sunshine and a big smile, he always knew everything going on in this great game of golf. The world lost a great one in 2022, January 2022, after a lengthy battle.

We all kind of get choked up when we talk about our great friend. He was the man of everything. He was the global leader of golf, of reporting, journalism, obviously Golf Channel. He had a tremendous career with the Golf Channel, as well, Sports Illustrated, et cetera, et cetera.

Before we present the award, I do want to recognize a few people that are here today. His lovely widow Genevieve Rosaforte is here, and his daughter Molly is here; I know Genna is not here with us today, the number two daughter. But Genevieve, you know how much this means to us, and Molly, to remember your dad and your husband.

Rosey's name will never be forgotten. You're sitting here in this perpetual Tim Rosaforte Media Center we hope will continue for everyone and for everything and through the years as long as we have professional golf here in Palm Beach County.

When we think back about what Rosey represented and the integrity and the professionalism and his commitment



to not only the great game of golf but representing honesty and integrity and telling it as it is. In the media, it's what should be done.

I think everybody in the media and this room will agree with me that Tim was the finest in the game, in the world of sports journalism.

With that, I also want to recognize our committee that we get together annually and talk about Rosey and reminisce about some great times. Jack Druga, Jack formerly with Shinnecock is here in the middle part of the room. I will share quickly a little plug. Jack and team are putting together a great event at the Floridian on May 6th, so it's going to be a fundraiser to raise money for the Tim Rosaforte Scholarship, and also for the First Tee and Western Golf Association Evans Scholars.

Jack, you've taken the leadership on that, and I'm proud to be part of your committee, as well.

Joe Steranka is not here with us, but Joann Steranka better half with us today. Joann, as she reminded me outside, she also was a great friend of Rosey's, so welcome.

Julius Mason from the PGA of America, great friend of golf, probably one of the smoothest speakers in the game, so great to have you on your committee.

Jeff Lovestead, he's not here with us today, but Jeff is the director of the South Florida PGA. He's had a busy couple days.

Kevin Murphy from McArthur Golf Club. Kevin is not with us today but sends regards and congratulations to our recipient.

Bob Ford, sitting next to Jack down there. Bob, it's great to have you here. Always has time for Rosey. Always has time to talk about how do we remember this great man in golf that took care of literally all of us.

Then of course Craig Dolch, our phenomenal recipient today. Craig is a catalyst on this committee. Really



inspirational for us and inspired all of us along with Joe Steranka to create the Tim Rosaforte Media Center and to create this perpetual award, to recognize the finest of golf journalism.

I thank you guys for everything you've done to help me along the way. I'm just a pawn in the little game of life up here, and just honored to be able to put all this together as we were looking to recognize Rosey.

As you probably remember, as I said earlier, Tim won our first award in 2021. I'll never forget when Tim was talking down the hallway, I think it was well documented, Genevieve, on Golf Channel, coming down, he saw his name attached to the media center, and Tim was okay then but he was still maybe a little unsure as to what he was looking at, and he's like, what's that for, and I said, Tim, this is all for you.

This media center, there's no better person to acknowledge and remember in the golf media world, certainly in Palm Beach County, than Tim Rosaforte. That was such a special time for him.

In '22 Larry Dorman, many of you remember Larry, another pillar in the journalistic world from the New York Times and then later with Callaway and others. Larry was recipient No. 2.

Last year -- for those of you last year, Randy Mel. Randy was always a huge proponent of what was the Honda Classic, now the Cognizant Classic, and just a phenomenal recipient for those of you that were here.

Both Larry and Randy, very emotional as they accepted this great award to be on that plaque in perpetuity.

Again, just a tremendous, tremendous honor.

Before we get started here real quick, I just want to pivot here, in the back of the room is our new executive director of the Cognizant Classic, Todd Fleming. Todd, I look forward to getting to know you bigger and better certainly, and I hope all the media will get to know you, as well. Your reputation is impeccable from a lot of people that we know together, so I wish you the very best, and I think as you come to understanding this market and certainly understanding what the people that resonate well in this market, you're going to fit in beautifully because it's a great spot. Todd, welcome.

About our recipient, Craig Dolch. What can you say? A 40-year friend of Rosey's. You're going to hear from Craig here in a little bit. Wrote for the Palm Beach Post 1986 to 2008. He's been a freelance writer since. He's written

over 5,000 articles in the game of golf, on the game of golf.

Again, like Rosey, very transparent, telling it as it is. Just a phenomenal representative of the journalism world. A member of the Palm Beach County sports Hall of Fame. I was honored to be at that induction with Craig.

Craig started the Eric Dolch foundation, which is the name of his son Eric. By the way, Alex, his lovely daughter is here with us today. Congratulations, Alex, to you.

When Eric was in 2005, I believe, diagnosed with encephalitis, Craig was at the U.S. Open as you have read in many stories. Craig came back, obviously cares for his son as I know Alex does to her brother each and every day, and Rosey was there from the beginning. Rosey helped Craig start the Eric Dolch Foundation, ran the inaugural event to help raise money for the foundation.

Without further ado, it's honestly my honor to represent to you the 2024 Tim Rosaforte Distinguished Journalist Award winner to a great friend of golf and certainly a great friend of Rosey's and a great friend of everybody in this building.

Please welcome Craig Dolch.

Craig, as we get started, this is your takeaway here. Recognizing you as the 2024 recipient of the Tim Rosaforte distinguished journalist award. I'm going to leave you up here by yourself for a little bit because you deserve it.

CRAIG DOLCH: Ken, thank you very much. I'd like to thank quite a few people, all the people on the committee. Ken for starting the award. You were really the impetus to get this thing done. I thank Todd Fleming and Joie Chitwood from the Cognizant Classic for keeping Tim's media room still here, keeping the award alive.

Also I want to thank my family, my daughter Alex. One thing, we get to do an awful lot of fun things in our jobs, but our families pay a price for it sometimes. The U.S. Open always finishes on the final day of Father's Day, so I really went years and years without being able to visit with my kids on Father's Day, and so they put up with an awful lot for us to chase our dreams and do what we enjoy. Thank you, everyone.

When Ken first called and told me that I'd gotten the award it took my breath away, and it still does.

To be able to receive an award named after your best friend is something that it's hard to describe. I am just -- I can't tell you how proud it makes me, how thrilled it makes

me, and I also want to thank Gen and Molly and her family, because you guys have been able to let me be a part of your family.

You were very open about Tim's situation, kind of like what Tim was, very open, very honest, and it's just something that -- it's definitely, and I'm sure that Larry and Randy would concur with this, this is the highlight of our careers, to be able to be associated with an award named after Tim Rosaforte.

It's very fitting it happens this week, not only because this is happening in the Tim Rosaforte media room but a little background, I met Tim briefly in early '81 when I had just moved down to Tampa to start after college, and Tim was the guy who was moving out of there.

I kind of met him a little bit. He wanted to borrow my van, so we got to know him for a little bit.

Then I came down here and started working for the Evening Times in late 1982. I was at the Senior PGA Championship, and it's probably not more than maybe a 20-second walk where I ran into Tim standing behind the green. I'm like, I remember you, because back then he still had hair.

So we kind of just, wow, this is kind of neat. Don January won that championship, but I really felt like I was one of the biggest winners that day because that started a 40-year friendship that I was very blessed to have. Anybody that knows Tim in here, and I'm sure everybody does, knows the type of person he was.

I would walk in here with him occasionally through the lobby, and everybody would start going, Tim, Tim, Tim, and everybody knew him. He knew everybody. I would say, Tim, how do you remember everybody's names. He said, look, if you're like a club professional and that door opens at 7:30 in the morning, you need to know who the members are. You need to know who people are.

I can't tell you how many of my friends marvel at his ability to remember and stay in touch with him. That was one of the really sad things about the disease that he went through was it robbed him of one of the things that he really was great at in remembering everybody.

He would walk up to somebody he might not have seen for a year or two, and he would say, great job on that story last month, just to build people up.

In this society these days where everybody is tearing each other down, Tim spent most of his life building people up. He was a model and a mentor that every time I try and do

something these days, a lot of times I think about what would Tim do, how would Tim deal with this, how would he write this story, how would he deal with this controversy.

To be able to call him up and talk to him and get that kind of guidance is something that we all miss. I know you guys miss it more than anybody. But the friendship that we had, it was just something that I was very blessed to be around Tim, as you guys were, too.

I could go on. The thing about Tim that really struck me is when people get to the success he had, sometimes you don't really -- it happens. Tim came from very humble beginnings. He was one of the first family members to go to college. You looked up near the end when he was doing all these things on NBC and Golf Channel and he was really golf's first insider, he was just -- he worked for this.

The number of times he drove to St. Augustine for the USA Network golf show, the number of times he drove to Orlando for The Golf Channel show. He earned everything he got. That is something that you can't help but be a better person by knowing that. He taught me the importance of reporting, to talk to all these extra people. Don't just talk to one person. He was right. The more you reported a story, the easier it was to write the story.

Our job sometimes is to write things that people aren't going to like. You have to do it. But the way to do it -- in Tim's case, he knew how to keep the relationship with someone.

If he wrote something people didn't like he would get in touch with him as soon as possible and say, do we have any problems here? If they did, they would work it out. That is the kind of thing that I wish everybody in our society would do these days, is try and work our problems out instead of screaming and yelling and then storming away.

THE MODERATOR: Craig, congratulations. If there are any questions, we'll certainly take them now. I have one quickly. You talk about the modesty of Rosey and the transparency of Rosey and the professionalism of Rosey, and you're right there with him, Craig. In today's world, there's no one more modest than you. We've known each other a long time. You write brilliant stories day in and day out. I love reading them. Tom DeAngelo who's here wrote a great story about you. What was that like talking to Tom helping him write this story about yourself. I know it's not always about you. Golf Father of the Year, Golfweek, several years ago, I was up there for that presentation, as well. Again, Tom, you wrote a great story on our recipient this year. Help us understand a little bit about that discussion, that topic, Craig, because I know you don't like to pat yourself on the back too often.

CRAIG DOLCH: Well, Tom, you did a great job on it. I know it's not easy to write about a colleague and a friend. The point was I have kind of made this somewhat of my passion the last few years, and certainly as Tim was starting to really struggle, to honor him and make sure that people knew -- they knew, but just to know what his situation was. The PGA of America made him the 12th honorary member. The Memorial Tournament gave him a journalism award. You had this, you had so many things that Tim did.

But to talk about it, it's not easy, because when people say as a journalist you can't put things into words, how are you going to do your job. It really was hard talking about him, and I tried to go back to the things that I learned from him.

You talk about he would give you as much encouragement as he could, but he also told you if you did something wrong. We would kid him and call him Arnold Palmer sometimes because if you showed up to a pressroom not dressed properly. If you had high socks on, basketball socks or whatever, he would say, dude, this is not what you need to be doing here.

I'm sure he's looking down right now and saying, Dolch, why aren't you wearing a tie today.

But the reality is I'm wearing this shirt because this is one of the shirts Tim gave me a few years ago, and I feel like the purple is the appropriate color, and it helps me feel even a little closer to Tim these days.

THE MODERATOR: Craig, it's been a great ride. One other quickie. You and many of the other great writers in this room, you're the voice of golf to our consumer, could our client. You all have been very supportive of the growth of this tournament over the last 18 years. Certainly we're looking forward to the next 18 years here in Palm Beach County.

Talk a little bit about the growth of the players that have moved into town here. It just seems like each and every day there's another player coming here. I know Rosey wrote that great story in Golf World where we had a map of all the great courses and everything else down here.

What is the attraction? We know the attraction, but from a writer's standpoint, as you try to explain this to the world, why are so many players coming down into this community?

CRAIG DOLCH: Well, I remember back 15, 20 years ago when we were covering the Honda Classic you couldn't give away tickets to this tournament. It did not have the

appeal. It was down in Broward County and then moved up here. A lot of people have moved here. I don't know how much of it is -- obviously a lot of it's because of the weather, having the chance to play against fellow professionals. That's the way they get better is playing against people their age.

But Tim moved up here pretty quickly, too, when he started working for the Palm Beach Post. It's just something that we look around and what the tournament has become, now the Cognizant Classic, where you hated to see Honda leave just because it's what everybody knew, but the important thing is the tournament stayed around here.

Tim was never a homer, but this was his hometown tournament, and he cared about it. We all tried to do what we can to focus on the positive and not just write about people who aren't here. Those are the things I kind of learned about Tim is there's a way to write it where you can get your message across and be positive and not be tearing people down.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely right. I see Carl Mistretta is here, our executive director of the First Tee. I know you've done a lot with the First Tee as well and we can't thank you enough.

This day is very special for all of us but me in particular, and I'm just so honored to be sitting up here next to you presenting you with the 2024 Tim Rosaforte distinguished journalist award.

(Applause).

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