

# American Century Championship

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Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

**Gary Quinn**

**John Stark**

**Kevin Millar**

**Mark Killen**

**Mayor Cody Bass**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: This is an announcement about a dear friend to the tournament and the American Century Championship family.

Last year, we lost Tim Wakefield to cancer at age 57. He was a Red Sox pitcher for 17 years, two-time World Series champion and All-Star, and he played the American Century Championship for 11 straight years.

This is where he shared his friendship, personality and love of life with all of us. If you didn't like Tim Wakefield, something was definitely wrong with you, I can tell you that.

Adding to the heartache, Tim's wife, Stacy, also passed from cancer just five months after Tim did. They leave behind two children, Trevor and Brianna, and countless cherished memories to all who knew them.

Today, NBC is launching long-term charitable in their names to recognize the couple's legacy of philanthropy as well as their association with the tournament and through it the South Lake Tahoe community.

To tell you more about Kevin and Stacy and details on this new program, we have with us today a number of special guests I'd like to introduce right now:

Gary Quinn, NBC Sports Vice President of Programming and General Manager of Owned Properties; Kevin Millar, former Boston Red Sox teammate and very dear family friend; Mark Killen, Senior Vice President, International and Senior Corporate Managing Director for American Century Investments.



We have Cody Bass, the mayor of the city of South Lake Tahoe with us. Also John Stark, the director of the parks and recreation department, City of South Lake Tahoe.

I'd like to kick it off with Gary Quinn of NBC, a close friend of Tim's through the years, and a person who created this program to provide an overview.

GARY QUINN: I don't know if you folks have ever been to a press conference and seen three grown men cry, but you might have the opportunity to do so in a couple of minutes here.

But can't thank you enough for coming, to see so many familiar faces, and I think that's kind of the most meaningful part of the longevity of the 35 years of the relationships we've been able to build.

It's not just a relationship with Kev as a celebrity, but his family. My wife and his wife are friends. I live vicariously through him now because his boys are playing baseball. I was a baseball coach. He sends me highlights.

Mark and I have been like brothers for over 20 years. I've watched his family grow up, and he just told me last night that he's going to be a grandfather for the first time in November.

There's a real connection. As I look out, I see all the familiar faces here, whether it's Dan or Denise, or Jeff, or Dave, for the last 30 years, you come back and it's like summer camp. It's like a family reunion of reconnecting.

I know it means a lot to the three of us to be able to reconnect because we don't get to see each other as much as we'd like, but this is a week that we really relish and having the time to catch up on how the families are doing.

I don't think that there's any greater thing that could come out of this than lifelong friendships, and that's what this event has provided for us.

With Tim and Stacy -- Mark introduced us and he would have us over before one of the welcome parties and one of



the concerts in a suite at Harveys and we'd have so much fun and that's where the bond started.

But obviously you can imagine during this week how many hands are out, people asking for things, and their first instinct is what's in it for me. With Tim and Stacy, it was always "What can I do for you?" That's the kind of people that they were.

In my heart, I wanted to have the ability for Brianna and Trevor to know that they are always welcome here. They're a part of our family and that their mom and dad's legacy of philanthropy, which was really significant, will always be remembered for as long as this event is here in this community.

They loved being here. They were a huge part of this event, but they loved the Lake Tahoe community, and we're just really proud that their legacy is going to be honored for many years to come in a way that John and the mayor are going to be able to do that with the special event center.

THE MODERATOR: Kevin, you were close friends. Played ball with the Sox, won a World Series with him. Tell us some of your thoughts on the Wakefields.

KEVIN MILLAR: Everybody in this room has probably been touched by Tim Wakefield at some point. Death is obviously a very strange thing for all of us to deal with. We've all dealt with it with family and friends.

When you deal with it suddenly -- Tim Wakefield and all of us -- we're golfing. Couple months later, you get a call, had a headache, forgot where he went. Home, mother-in-law called Stacy.

But let me tell you, it happened quick. Wife, Stacy, was dealt with pancreatic cancer. He was already dealing with this. It's basically like a death sentence. Worst cancer you could get.

Last year, we were videoing, he wanted a video of him and Stacy dancing. This is before he was sick here at the event. He's going to pass; he wants the memories.

We take this video, and then a few months later he's diagnosed with a brain cancer, and the worst kind you can get. So that news is sudden.

So now you have this age that we all enter in, whether it's the 40s, the 50s, the 60s, whatever that is. Now you have friends and family that are dealing with this terrible disease, which is cancer.

Tim ultimately loses his life and it's shocked everybody that had a chance to be around Timmy. Why, is the first question. How does a high school senior, his daughter, Brianna, lose mom and dad within a six-month span?

Trevor, severe autism, wonderful child, loses mom and dad. What's next?

We have our 20-year anniversary for the 2004 World Series in April. We meet there. Brianna and Trevor show up. And Trot Nixon gave an unbelievable speech with the Players Only Meeting. He basically said this: "You have 17 to 20 dads, uncles in this room. You call me. If I don't answer, you call Mike Timlin, David Ortiz, Kevin Millar," he went down the list. That's the only way we can look at and deal with this kind of stuff when you're talking about the children's side and the family side, what's next for them.

What do you do? Stacy was at our house this New Year's. Her last trip before she passed. And we sat there -- and Tim did everything. They had memberships to golf courses she had no idea -- Old Sandwich, he had fishing poles, hunting guns, he had all this stuff. They were building a house in the Bahamas. How do you handle all this? The real life stuff.

And we're sitting there, and I'm like, yeah, she's fighting for every day that she has, wasn't even supposed to come out there for New Year's Eve.

And that was her last trip because Brianna wanted to go out there and spend it with us, and 18th birthday. She's like, "How do I handle all that stuff?" Real life stuff.

Tim Wakefield, Stacy Wakefield, two of the greatest people you'd ever meet. Cared about people. Tim gave up his time every single day. He did it while he was a big leaguer. Tremendous teammate. Always on the bench. Gave you high five if you doubled in the fourth inning. Most pitchers, not always on the bench.

Timmy cared about people, cared about his teammates. Was a first baseman for the Pirates. Position player. Maybe that's why I liked him so much. He had that position player mentality, but he had to transform his life and spent close to 20-plus years in the big leagues throwing a knuckle ball that's 68 miles an hour against the mighty Yankees in a 1-0 game, pressure under everything.

And he dominated life. He was a scratch golfer. It didn't make sense to me. He'd get over that ball, hit it right down the middle about 275 yards with a little bit of a draw. Chips and putts. Always dressed perfect. Read this book that I'm still trying to read. He'd sit there and do math. Have these things open. You know when they do that you don't

want to bet with those guys.

But tremendous dude. Taught me how to play the guitar. Every night on the road, we'd bring our guitars. Bronson Arroyo and Tim and myself, I'd learn the D and C and G and A Minor. They'd be able to play Metallica, "Nothing Else Matters," the cool stuff by the bonfire, from Toby Keith, to Alice in Chains.

But a great human being, a great man, more than a friend, family, and definitely a tough punch to the stomach.

But these two gentlemen to my right, Gary and Mark, have been unbelievable in this situation because we all know there's no perfect book on how to handle this stuff. But it's done with love and support with all of us, and I think that's the biggest things, like Gary said, the relationships that we meet here for life. Thank you all for being here.

THE MODERATOR: Mark, a few comments from you as far as your relationship with the Wakefields.

MARK KILLEN: I just feel so blessed to know him and to know Stacy. To Gary's point, you'll see three grown men here cry. But you can't find nicer humans. You just can not.

You have people that are so successful, so prominent, but so humble and so kind and so loving. It's just unbelievable.

I met him with my wife, Ann, 11 years ago, and they were our favorites to be around at every Tahoe tournament. We vacationed together. Just spent time with him, and I was just humbled by what a wonderful person he is, as Kevin and Gary have said.

It's amazing to see somebody that's that successful turn it all around and give it back to people. Reminds me of our founder, Jim Stowers, he did the same thing. He was very wealthy, turned around, gave it back, created an institute to find a cure for cancer.

I feel just so grateful that Tim and Stacy actually had time to sit down and talk with some of the scientists there when Stacy was diagnosed about her care, what would be the right path, could there be any help, and that was also wonderful. I feel so proud to work at a company that has that heritage.

I wanted to just read one thing. This was part of something that Stacy found after Tim passed, and I think it really speaks to him.

"Never forget where you came from. Be a mentor to others. You didn't get to where you are today by yourself,

and no matter what status you accomplish in life, you should assume the responsibility to help those who are less fortunate than you."

That's Tim and Stacy Wakefield. Just wonderful people, caring, loving people.

THE MODERATOR: And Gary to that point, why don't we talk a little bit about the program that NBC came up with. This was your concept as far as an annual donation, and tell us a little bit about that and then we'll talk about the program itself.

GARY QUINN: I mean, look, the event is 35 years old and primarily because of this community and what this community, how the community's embraced us. You can't ask for a nicer backdrop and a nicer setting, and people, obviously, it's one of the major reasons people love coming here.

But we feel we have to give back to the community the way they've given to us, and I think that you and I had talked -- and Carol Chaplin had talked -- what's the best use of an annual contribution? So I think that collaboration came back to the special recreation center.

I think the great thing is that Tim and Stacy can smile down knowing that it's going to be the centerpiece for the community. It's going to be a rallying point for people to come and enjoy themselves, and their name is going to be adorned in the lobby on a plaque there for as long as that center is there.

So, again, it's just we want to be able to give back to the community in a way that, with the contributions that come each year, we'll continue to do that. I think we're up to about \$8 million in contributions.

But I think that we just wanted to honor Tim and Stacy and the legacy of their philanthropy and that this was the best way to do it.

THE MODERATOR: Cody Bass, let us know what you're thinking as far as what this means to the city of South Lake Tahoe.

CODY BASS: The city of South Lake Tahoe and our residents are incredibly grateful for this ongoing commitment to support our recreation. It's truly the health and wellness of our community.

Our city really does need to support more things that are revolving around recreation. In the wintertime, we're a snow community, and this is really going to allow us to have pitching machines for our residents and really support

baseball as a whole.

But I can't tell you how our residents and our city is so grateful for the 30 years of commitments that have continued to support South Lake Tahoe. And American Century has done so much here, and this is just another ongoing commitment.

We will absolutely continue to honor them for the ongoing future of South Lake Tahoe.

THE MODERATOR: John Stark, director of parks and recreation, tell us a little bit about the center itself, where it's at right now, when it opens and what it's going to include.

JOHN STARK: Thanks so much for this generous donation. It means so much to our community. This recreation center is really going to be the focal point of the city of South Lake Tahoe.

We're in the middle of construction right now. We're set to open doors in January of 2026. And as Mayor Bass mentioned, we're a winter community. This building's going to provide for year-round recreation and access to programs.

And we recently published a community survey, and wouldn't you know it, one of the top things that came out of it was indoor batting cages and a space to be able to play baseball year-round.

So the donation of these pitching machines, it just couldn't be a better fit for the community.

THE MODERATOR: We think it's a pretty good fit for Tim Wakefield, being a former pitcher so it's nice to have that.

**Q. Mayor and John, is there any plan at this point to honor Tim and Stacy at the site, some sort of plaque or anything along those lines?**

JOHN STARK: I think at this time we plan to honor Tim Wakefield and Stacy both with a plaque that would be in the lobby of the new rec center.

GARY QUINN: So everybody knows what's going on this week, we have a player meeting tonight where John will outline everything that we're doing, that we're talking about today, but what we'll do this week, all the tournament hats the players will wear will have the number 49 logo on the side. We're going to have the number 49 stenciled 49 yards off the 18th tee box which will make air.

Jimmy Roberts is going to do a feature on Tim and Stacy

that will air on Sunday. And the 18th pin flag will have the number 49 logo on it as well.

**Q. Gary, you mentioned that this was going to be a \$10,000 donation on a regular basis. So over the years, \$10,000 going to the recreation center for other activities as well. There could be need for a golf simulator from what I understand.**

(Laughter)

GARY QUINN: Look, you always hear we're donating money to this X charity. Important to us that it be to something tangible. The pitching machines is first step. We've done that, what's next? It's not just that we're throwing money at something. I'd like it to have a tangible meaning. If that's a golf simulator, that's perfect.

With each year, hopefully it will be something different that will help the rec center and populate the rec center so that the community can enjoy it.

**Q. Kevin, I know we all just arrived, but what's been some of the conversations that you've had with some of your fellow athletes here about honoring Tim and the void that Tim is not here this week?**

KEVIN MILLAR: I think everybody -- I checked into my room yesterday and my wife, Jeana -- I mean, Stacy and her and Tim and I, you head down to go get something to eat. You know they're just there. You're with each other for the last 11 years here together, let alone spending the World Series championship together. So all of that stuff is strange because it still doesn't feel like it's real.

It's, like, we've sat there, we've mourned, but it doesn't feel like it's real because you saw Wakey coming down, he's got that knuckle ball walk.

(Laughter).

That's how he would cover first base. But we would just tell stories. You hit a ground ball, I'd go catch it, and you see Wakey go over there and that would be it, one out.

But all the players -- we were talking to Mike Vrabel yesterday. Former Titans head coach, we're out there sitting in the water. And he's, like, this is where Wake and I -- that's where he met Wakefield was at this event, and that relationship, and these are all the text messages that come.

And that's this is all about, this event, like Gary said is that. Mike Vrabel's and Tim's world came together, even though it's Patriots-Red Sox, even though Vrabel's stories about



the Red Sox always taking over every scene.

They've got two out of three Super Bowls and we're worried about if we're getting Alex Rodriguez in the next offseason. This is 24 hours later and the front page is the Red Sox.

That relationship -- Wakefield spoke his name, by everybody it's a short story.

And the last point I'll tell you is I played with a group yesterday. And a young man came up. He's in college, junior college right now. He said I got a chance to walk with Tim last year.

He's a pitcher. And he goes, "It was the best day I've ever had. Got to talk to a major league pitcher. And he told me some things that I still took into my season last year that I think about, and it helped me." And I immediately get chills right here on No. 9.

That's how you touched lives. This young man got to play with Tim Wakefield last year. A little kid, chasing his dream. Tim tells him something about loading or whatever it was mechanically, and that young man's telling me that he took that into his season, had a great year. That's the stuff that's awesome.

**Q. Shout-out to all of you who are carrying on this legacy of both Tim and Stacy. While there's a tangible building, you guys are athletes, what's the intangibles from a philanthropy point of view that Tim and Stacy would really be proud of while that humble legacy of philanthropy will carry on for the next generation, for generations to come? What would they feel?**

GARY QUINN: I think that over the 11 years that they were here, this place and the event became really, really special to them. So I think just knowing that they're going to have a part in it moving forward and contributing to the community -- which they loved it here -- and I think that's the biggest part that I can take from it, is that I know they're looking down, smiling, that we're giving them this recognition and that their names will be remembered.

I also do think it's important -- Brianna is only, I think she's 18 or 19 years old -- we want the family to come out -- this year it didn't work out -- but to have them feel like they're always welcome here, the entire family.

So hopefully next year we'll be able to get the grandmother and the aunt and Brianna and Trevor to come out just so they can be a part of this because I think it's special for them to be able to see how much their mom and dad meant, what they did when they were on this earth and just

what beautiful people they were. I think that reinforcement, I think, is a good thing and hopefully we can do that next year.

MARK KILLEN: I wanted to add, we've talked about this being a place for relationship. Not having Tim and Stacy here this year, and having that moment to try and process that also leads to contributions to other funds, Jimmy Fund. He was a huge supporter of the Jimmy Fund. There's a space camp in Florida that helps kids that he was part of, Tim and Stacy were part of.

I think this wonderful start that NBC is doing with Tahoe is going to just be the start, and it should be a catalyst for all of us to think about how can we honor Tim and Stacy and help other people because that's exactly what they did. That's what they did.

**Q. One thing I'm not sure I heard, where exactly in South Lake Tahoe will this facility be located?**

JOHN STARK: The new recreation and swim complex will be right across from the existing campground, Highway 50, so across from Lakeview Commons.

**Q. The city is looking for certain funds, how can people help? We hope it's going to inspire other people to step up and get involved. If people are out there, interested, tell us how they can help?**

JOHN STARK: For the new recreation and swim complex, we're looking to fundraise a million dollars as a starting point for equipment and to support programs that would be accessed for our local residents to be able to use the facility as well as our program.

So if you would like to contribute, you can visit our parks foundations website [southtahoeparksfoundation.org](http://southtahoeparksfoundation.org). Learn more about donation opportunities there. That's [southtahoeparksfoundation.org](http://southtahoeparksfoundation.org).

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