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Lake Nona Prevails

ERNIE ELS AND CO. FINALLY GET THE BEST OF RIVAL ISLEWORTH IN THE TAVISTOCK CUP

Up on the first tee box, Gary McCord had the microphone, and he was reminding those gathered round about the only thing that seemed to matter anymore at the Tavistock Cup.

"Five hundred thousand dollars," said McCord, a television golf analyst. He was introducing players to the first tee. "To the low round today. Five. Hundred. Thousand. Dollars."

Scott Hoch, taking some practice swings before his drive, turned around and said, "It doesn't look like we have much else to play for."

The Tavistock Cup wasn't officially over until a few minutes past 5 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, a 22-8 victory for team Lake Nona against its cross-town country-club rival Isleworth.

But it was in fact over the day before, when Lake Nona swept the five better-ball matches on its way to a 10-0 lead. That thorough beating Monday made Tuesday less interesting, at least until Tiger Woods realized he could earn a quick 500 grand.

Woods, the top-ranked player in the world, had pretty much sleepwalked like the rest of his Isleworth team during the first round and a half at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club. Then he birdied No. 8. and No. 9. And he kept the streak alive for five more holes. Somewhere along the way, he lost count.

"I have no idea," Woods said when asked whether he knew how long the streak lasted. "I just know I got to eight [under] somehow."

That's how Woods finished with an 8-under-par 64, two shots better than Lake Nona's Justin Rose. Woods may have earned the day's largest prize, that \$500,000 check, but his opposition

earned the right to brag and rag, finally.

During the first three years of the Tavistock Cup, Lake Nona never had won it. But its players lined up on the 18th green when it ended. They touched the cup, posed for pictures, victory at last.

"We kicked serious butt," said Ernie Els, the Lake Nona captain.

He was speaking moments after he and his teammates had 'chased each other around the green with bottles of champagne. What they didn't pour on the grass or in someone's hair, they chugged.

If it had been cans of beer instead of champagne, at least a couple of Lake Nona's 10 players, Justin Rose and Trevor Immelman might have looked like a bunch of frat boys after consuming a few rounds on the course.



"I guess I've got to go out and recruit some other top young players, like they have," said Mark O'Meara, who captained the elder Isleworth team.



For its victory, team Lake Nona received \$1 million in winnings and another \$1 million that will be divided among the 10 players and donated to the charity of their choice. The loser's share wasn't bad, either \$500,000 to Isleworth.

Of course, the Tavistock Cup is less about the actual on-course results and more about the spectacle of the event the small gallery, which allows for spectators practically to walk down the fairway with the players; the luxury accommodations.

Joe Lewis, the billionaire who founded the Tavistock Group and the man whose deep pockets enables the Tavistock Cup to exist, stood off the 18th green when it was over with an expression that conveyed his approval. Before him, there were grown men chasing each other around the green, proud to have beaten their rivals for once.

"It doesn't mean the world," Els said. "But it means for one year, we're the champion club in town."

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