



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PGA PROFESSIONAL JIM ESTES TO DOUBLE AS CLINICIAN AND
CONTESTANT IN 90th PGA CHAMPIONSHIP AT OAKLAND HILLS**

(Editor's Note: PGA Professional Jim Estes will lead a clinic "Making Golf Fun for People with Physical Limitations," Wednesday, Aug. 6, at 4 p.m., at the PGA Learning Center at Oakland Hills Country Club.)

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. – Jim Estes of Germantown, Md., makes his debut Thursday in the 90th PGA Championship at Oakland Hills Country Club, and it is safe to say that no contestant before him has ever prepared the same on the eve of a major championship.

The 43-year-old PGA director of instruction at Olney Golf Park in Olney, Md., Estes will lead a clinic, "Making Golf Fun for People with Physical Limitations," Wednesday at 4 p.m. at the PGA Learning Center, located near the second tee at Oakland Hills Country Club.

The clinic features two of Estes' many students at Olney Park, Army veterans David Cook and Ben Dellinger, who each lost a left leg in combat.

Estes was inspired in 2005 to serve America's veterans in an unprecedented program, and founded the Salute Military Golf Association (golfsalute.org), a non-profit organization that equips and encourages injured veterans to use golf as a means to overcome their physical limitations.

Conducting a clinic before playing in a major, Estes said, is actually a better preparation for him.

"For me to play well, I need to take the focus off myself," said Estes. "I'm a worrier, and my Dad (Dr. James Estes, a retired 82-year-old vascular surgeon) said that I'm a late bloomer and I've just tried too hard. He told me 'make your focus other than center' and then go on and perform well. I believe that my love for helping the veterans get enjoyment out of golf will keep me from putting too much pressure on myself."

One of 20 PGA club professionals in the 156-player field at Oakland Hills Country Club, Estes has competed in four U.S. Open Championships, but never in a PGA Championship. He had earned a berth in the fall of 1995, after tying for seventh in The PGA Professional National Championship. But, he chose to give Tour golf a shot the following year and won the Nike Inland Empire Open on the former Nike Tour.

"I'm excited about playing at Oakland Hills, and I believe that The PGA of America sets up a golf course that favors my game," said Estes. "A U.S. Open is more about scrambling than ball-striking. My experience is to not deal with a lot of expectations. I have a tendency to try too hard."

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Over the past two years, Estes has conducted a free golf clinic for the soldiers every Saturday morning in the spring. A section of the range at the 21-acre Olney Golf Park is cordoned off for use by the men and women who make the 30-minute trip from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Every week, in a more formal group session, Estes focuses on all aspects of the game of golf. He and other staff: professionals also offer individual instruction for anyone who asks.

“Our facility had begun to work with veterans under CEO Tim Landres,” said Bob Karnei, president of Westland Golf Maryland, LLP, which owns Olney Golf Park. “But it was Jim who took off and ran with the idea and has been doing such a wonderful job. They had a tournament for SMGA at the Army Navy Golf Club in Fairfax (Va.) that was sold out. This has gotten bigger and bigger, and Jim has proven what we all can do for the men and women in the armed services.”

Estes turned professional in 1991 and earned PGA membership in 1993. He was the 1995 PGA Professional Player of the Year, while serving at Evanston Golf Club in Skokie, Ill. Last June, he tied for eighth in the 41st PGA Professional National Championship to earn his berth at Oakland Hills. Earlier this season, Estes was runner-up in the Maryland State Open.

His Tour credentials include competing in 31 events from 1994-98, earning \$73,438, with best showing a T-16 in the 1998 Greater Greensboro Chrysler Classic. He competed in 133 events on the Nationwide Tour from 1990 through 2001, earning \$152,492.

But, it is Estes' time spent off the course and with his students that have given him more pleasure. While working with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Estes and his program were given support in acquiring golf equipment to train the veterans. During the past few years, Estes has witnessed the full spectrum of injuries to veterans, from the catastrophic to those that don't show outwardly any wounds, but carry them within – suffering from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder).

All students who have come into the program at Olney Golf Park, met Estes and his staff, have found their niche in some way on the practice range.

“You struggle to find ways to get people to play better golf,” said Estes. “The veterans we see have many of the physical attributes needed to play golf before they arrive. They have balance, mobility, good hand-eye coordination and can think under pressure. Above all, they are not afraid to fail. You hear how discipline breeds in the military. That transfers over when you are teaching them.”

Estes said that his father has used his medical knowledge to assist in a means of training tips for the wounded warriors.

“There are many things that my dad and I have discussed to help in instruction,” said Estes. “It is so rewarding for me to see golf play a vital role in their recovery. Overall, I think that this has been the best year of my PGA life.

“When you can do things for other people, it comes back for other people it comes back. We hope that what work we have been doing with the veterans will be replicated around the country. There are no limits to what golf can do when it comes to making these men and women find value in their lives.”

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