



2005 JUNIOR PGA CHAMPIONSHIP Executive Summary Case History

Publicity, Media Relations and Special Events Campaign
Developed & Executed by
SWEENEY

SITUATION

The 2005 Westfield Junior PGA Championship was held at Westfield Group Country Club (WGCC) in Westfield Center, Ohio, July 13-16. The national amateur tournament featured an elite field of more than 100 boy and girl golfers. The 2005 event was the 30th annual National Championship and marked the fifth consecutive year with Westfield Insurance and Westfield Group Foundation as host and title sponsor.

OBJECTIVES

Every year, hundreds upon hundreds of professional men and women golf tournaments in the U.S. and around the world vie for the attention of players, fans, sponsors and the media. Additionally, hundreds more local, regional, national and international amateur events – for men and women as well as boys and girls – compete for the same fans, sponsors and media attention. As a result, the Westfield Junior PGA Championship must fight through the crowd to get noticed and achieve awareness as one of the most prestigious amateur golf events.

The 2005 public relations campaign focused on establishing the Westfield Junior PGA Championship as *the* premier junior golf event of the year and enhancing both the quantity and quality of media coverage to be on par with that of professional tour events.

Specific objectives were to:

1. Attain expanded **local and regional coverage**, specifically in The Plain Dealer and Akron Beacon Journal, before, during and after the 4-day event
2. Secure **national media exposure** for the Championship
3. Increase **attendance** to all four days of the Championship
4. Support the retention and acquisition of **corporate sponsors**.

STRATEGIES

The cornerstone of the 2005 Championship campaign involved convincing the media – sports reporters in general and golf writers in particular – that the Westfield Junior PGA Championship was more than an amateur event, but rather a highly competitive competition that offered a “first-glimpse” of the stars of tomorrow. To this end, the campaign focused on five primary strategies:

1. **Plan, schedule and participate in media golf outings** on the Westfield Championship course –pairing target media with Westfield executives – to demonstrate firsthand the quality and difficulty of the course.

2. **Pitch personal-interest feature stories** that focus on the level of talent and play of past and present Junior PGA Championship golfers like Michele Wie, Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods. Demonstrate to local, regional and national media that every year the Junior PGA Championship hosts a future star of golf.
3. **Schedule on-air media interviews** with Westfield spokespersons (on- and off-site) leading up to the Championship to promote the event and encourage attendance.
4. **Use publicity** (news releases, player bios, scores, photos and video footage) before the event to promote the 41 PGA Section events, during the event to demonstrate the exciting level of play and promote attendance, and after the event to build momentum for next year's event.
5. **Conduct on-site media relations** throughout Championship week – pitching and coordinating broadcast and print interviews with players, player family members, PGA officials and Westfield Insurance spokespersons.

RESULTS

The 2005 Westfield Junior PGA Championship media relations and publicity campaign was **hailed as the most comprehensive and effective to date**, resulting in media coverage that far surpassed previous benchmarks, both in terms of quantity and quality.

- **14 media golf outings were conducted** at the Westfield Group Country Club with company representatives, and **included 23 primary media contacts from 10 print and broadcast outlets.**
- **More than a dozen media outlets assigned reporters on-site during the four-day Championship**, including all four major television networks in Northeast Ohio and three primary daily newspapers – Akron Beacon Journal, Medina Gazette and The Plain Dealer.
- The 2005 Championship **produced more than 500 placements** in print, broadcast and online outlets throughout the United States, **exceeding 41 million impressions – an increase of more than 80 percent** over the 2003 campaign.
- **More than 7,500 spectators** attended the event over four days despite rainy conditions.

BEST HIT

In keeping with the campaign's priority objective to raise the level and quality of coverage, particularly with The Plain Dealer, the campaign BEST HIT involved daily coverage – before and after the Championship – under the “WESTFIELD JUNIOR PGA” column header.



THE PLAIN DEALER

[479,131 Impressions]

Cleveland, OH

July 17, 2005

Header: WESTFIELD JUNIOR PGA | BOYS

Headline: "V Is For Victory"

Subhead: Volenhein ekes out grueling showdown

Reporter: Tim Rogers

Abstract: A shootout is what everyone expected, and a shootout is what everyone got. With the equally anticipated inclement weather dancing around the golf course instead of pounding it, Kentuckian Alex Volpenhein and Virginian Joe Monte turned the 30th annual Westfield Junior PGA Championship into a match-play event that left both the winner and runner-up physically and emotionally spent. Separated by no more than one stroke over the final, gut-wrenching 18 holes, Volpenhein and Monte put on arguably the best final-round duel since the tournament moved to the Westfield Country Club's South Course five years ago.