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What In The World Is A Whampion?

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Shreveport LA - You won't find the word "Whampion" in spell check or even in the dictionary. If you search Whampion in Google, you will find a house for sale at 2960 Whampion Way in Tustin, California and then the listing for the Tournament of Whampions.

What is a Whampion? A Whampion is simply a cross between a "Wimp" and a "Champion" - thus Whampion. It's a unique name that few have used but back in 1981, a group of business professionals organized a golf tournament at Oak Tree Country Club in Edmund, Oklahoma, giving it the name Tournament of Whampions!

The original Whampions course was at Oak Tree, as well the second years course at the Woodlands in Houston, have both played host to US Open events and other PGA tournaments.

This group of businessmen has been getting together annually ever since that historic date at a designated golf course in the Southern Midwest. It's a guys weekend filled with comradery, laughs, and a hard core game of golf.

When the first tournament was organized in 1981, the hope was to design a weekend tournament that would be a fair competition between the "scratch" golfer and the 30 handicapper. The design was intended to deliver a fool proof system that everyone could be comfortable with, have fun, and compete.

For years, players have been coming from all directions and normally arrive on Thursday or Friday for their practice rounds of golf. The competition begins Friday evening with the annual Whampions Two Person Horse Race, a team oriented alternating shot competition. This is followed by two days of intense golf tournament play on Saturday and Sunday.

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The annual pilgrimage for a large group of Southeast Missouri friends occurred this past weekend as they traveled to the 32nd Annual Tournament of Whampions. Seventeen individuals from Dexter and the surrounding area converged on the 2012 tournament location in Shreveport, LA.

The event has been held in Hot Springs, Arkansas for the past 9 years, but got back on the traveling venue seeking a change in golf course challenge and scenery. The temperature did not vary as it remained the same - HOT.

With a longer travel for those in the Dexter area, the numbers were lower than normal. Typically, the Southeast Missouri group has anywhere from 25 to 30 people participating in the Whampions event.

The Tournament of Whampions began as a group of friends meeting up to simply enjoy the game of golf at different location and courses. The event has been hosted at great courses around the Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana areas such as The Woodlands, Rayburn Country Club in Houston TX, Stonebridge in Dallas and Waterwood in Huntsville TX, , before coming to rest at the Hot Springs Country Club the past 9 years.

With thirty-two events under their belt, you can guess that the age of participants has

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continued to increase. Even the shapes have changed on many Whampions. A younger group of Whampions has emerged, and many father-son groups have started to participate over the past several years.

The weekend began on Saturday with the recognition of one of the Greatest Whampions that went to be with the Lord this past Spring. Verlin "Demp" Holden began attending Whampion events in 1996 and was looking forward to this year's event at the age of 86. Demp's love and enthusiasm for his family and friends was greatly missed this year.

Demp was the glue that attracted both golf enthusiast and non- golfer to the event. He was truly a man of fun and good times, while holding his beliefs and strong faith in

check. Long time Whampion, Harold Badget, from the Dallas Texas area, presented a memory photo album to the Holden family.

Even though the weekend has a strong semblance of a family reunion and/or a high school class reunion, the real matter at hand was golf. It's a competitive spirit using the Modified Stableford scoring system as the format.

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Unlike traditional scoring methods, where the aim is to have the lowest score, under

Stableford rules, the objective is to have the highest score. The system awards points for your score on each hole of 8-points for an eagle, 4-points for a birdie, 2-points for a par and 1-point for a bogie. There is no reason to continue a hole if you find your score exceeding the bogie level, and players are encouraged to simply pick up and move on.

Each player has a quota developed by taking their own personal handicap and subtracting that from 36. As an example, a player with a 6 handicap would receive a quota of 30 points based on this format. That player would strive to get as many points as possible in a single round of golf.

The Golf Club at Stonebridge near Bossier City, Louisiana is an 18-hole Fred Couples / Gene Bates designed golf course that provided many challenges for the Whamps. With very narrow fairways, lots of bunkers and fast greens, it was certainly a challenge made for a Whampions event.

Keeping with the Whampion tradition, the course was set up to make it as difficult as possible. The course is played from the back tee box or "*From the Tips*". Many of the tee boxes required a minimum of a 200 yard shot over water, marsh, or grass areas just to reach a safe landing area - perfect for the long ball hitter.

At the end of Saturday's first round action, Terry Hill, Richard Beach, Harold Badget and Sam Fisher entered the clubhouse with the best scores. A fifty-percent adjustment is made to each player's quota either up or down, depending on your Saturday score. If you end up -2 on Saturday, your quote would be lowered by 1 point.

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So for all the marbles, Sunday begins early with 7:00 AM tee times. The added challenge of a long course was magnified by the heavy dew the night before. And when the "Heat Wave" cleared, Terry Hill was named the 32nd Annual Whampion Champion for 2012. Chance Holden finished 2nd with an incredible even par performance on Sunday to finish

+6 on the day and +4 for the tournament. Other top finishers from Dexter were Ryan Holden, Bruce Christian, Tim Holden and Jason Comfort.

Whampions is an annual event that all golfers with an established handicap are encouraged to attend. To participate, you must be invited by a past Whampion to the tournament, but invitations come pretty easily and the fun and comradery is certainly worth the long drive, the hot weather, and the challenging golf.

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