

**Ford**  
**SENIOR PLAYERS**  
**CHAMPIONSHIP**

# Crowds still follow favorites

By Terry Jacoby  
Sports Writer

"I can't believe this. I've got Arnold Palmer behind me and Jack Nicklaus in front of me. There may not be enough room for my gallery."  
— Dave Stockton on his first round tee time in last month's Bell Atlantic Classic.

Ford Senior Players Championship director Brian Goin reports that ticket sales are up for this week's stop on the Senior Tour at the TPC of Michigan in Dearborn. More people means larger galleries and you can be sure there will be a lot of folks following around the popular golfers. "We'll call these guys, 'the gallery boys,' who is actually in this elite group?"

Let's begin with a man who has his own battalion of fans—Arnold Palmer.

Palmer first joined the PGA Tour back in 1955. A native of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Palmer was liked immediately. He was handsome, polite and giving.

Twice named PGA player of the year, Palmer first won in 1955 when he finished first at the Canadian Open. His final PGA tour victory came in 1972 when he won the Bob Hope Desert Classic. In between, Palmer won 68 times for a total of 60 tour wins.

He has won 10 Senior Tour events since joining in 1980. His last came in 1988 when he won the Crestar Classic.

Although he has not won a tournament in five years, fans still chase Palmer around the golf course and around the tour. Known by name as "Arnold's Army," this large group of people still like to watch the 64-year-old Wake Forest University graduate stroll around a golf course. And it doesn't matter where he is on the leader board.

PALMER FINISHED tied for 35th place at last year's Senior Players Championship, and is looking forward to taking another swing at the very difficult TPC of Michigan course.

"Considering the importance of the tournament, the caliber of the golf course and the strength of the field, I have always considered my victories in the Senior Players Championship at Canterbury Golf Club as two of the most important in my senior career," Palmer said.

Other golfers, as well as his many fans, would like to see Palmer in the hunt for another title.

"I think it would be a great thing for the game and for the fans. But if Palmer won," said Stockton, this year's defending champion at the

TPC of Michigan. "He is one of those guys you always root for."

ANOTHER POPULAR member of the "gallery boys" is Chi Chi Rodriguez. A native of Bayamon, Puerto Rico, Rodriguez is as well known now for his great sense of humor and good nature as he is for his ability to make birdies.

When Rodriguez drills a putt it's a big deal. But when he drills a putt and then acts as if his putter is a sword, then it's a real big deal for the crowd. A regular sword-swinging soiree, if you will.

When Chi Chi is playing, the gallery is usually smiling. In part because he never takes the game too seriously.

"I still have a lot of fun out here," said Rodriguez as he put on his coat following an 18-hole pro-am in Malvern, Pennsylvania prior to last month's Bell Atlantic Classic.

"To win the Senior Players Championship, you've got to have a great deal of skill and intelligence," he said.

And what about the mental side of golf?

"I don't know anything about that. I just walk up and hit the ball and go find it and hit it again," he said, smiling. Rodriguez always seems to have

a good time.

HAVING A GOOD time is also the trademark of Lee Trevino, known as the "Merry Mex."

Like Palmer and Rodriguez, Trevino too has a large number of fans watching him do his thing. Trevino is one of the most recognizable figures in all of sports.

A great success on the PGA Tour, Trevino has been one of the Senior Tour's top players since he joined in 1980. For the second time in three years, Trevino was the top money winner on the tour in 1992.

Could this be his year?

"I feel like the TPC of Michigan is to my liking and I'm looking forward to this year's tournament," Trevino said.

HE REALIZES WITH success comes attention. And Lee Trevino receives plenty of attention.

"I'm fortunate in what I do," Trevino said prior to the start of last month's Bell Atlantic Classic. "If you ask any celebrity where they are most uncomfortable, it's signing autographs. The ones that annoy you are the ones with no pen and paper. But I don't mind. If they don't ask, that means I haven't accomplished anything."



Arnold's Army: The legendary Arnold Palmer remains a favorite among golf fans wherever he goes.

# Chi Chi, Senior Tour help needy kids smile

By Jeff Barr

What do you get when you mix a retired Texas dentist, some dedicated Senior Tour golfers, and needy children in metropolitan areas near all Senior Tour events?

How about a reason to smile? In fact, you get thousands of reasons — one for every smile that will receive free dental attention from the Senior Tour Children's Dental Clinic this year.

Dr. Richard Garza, a retired dentist who used to treat needy children in his Austin, Texas clinic, also had one very famous patient among his clientele.

His name was Chi Chi Rodriguez. Both Rodriguez and Garza were passionate in their efforts to help needy children, and Garza mentioned a dream he had.

His dream was to create a mobile dental clinic that would travel with the Senior Tour, providing free dental care to underprivileged children.

WELL, THAT 48-foot, state-of-the-art mobile clinic that will be in full operation at Southland Center in Taylor June 21, 22 and 23 is no dream.

The trailer began traveling with the Senior Tour last season, and it will be in town when the Senior Tour tournament Players Championship comes to the TPC of Michigan.

Eighteen area dentists have volunteered to work half-day shifts, providing free care for a projected 120 needy children in the Detroit Metropolitan area.

David Cobb, president-elect of the

Dearborn-Outer Drive Kiwanis, the group which coordinates the logistics of the mobile clinic's stop at Southland, hopes to reach as many children as possible.

"We helped 83 kids last year, and our goal is to reach 120 this year," Cobb said.

Besides lining up the 18 dentists to volunteer, the Kiwanis also helped find the patients. Children found by Head Start, the Boy Scouts, the Salvation Army, and an interdenominational church group will receive care when the mobile clinic stops Downriver.

DURING THE three days of each stop, dentists provide everything from checkups to oral surgery. Each child receives an exam, fluoride treatment, X-rays and whatever dental care is needed.

Corporate sponsors of the trailer include the Rouse Co., Proma Dental, Royal Chairs, Air Techniques, Kavo and others. Roadway Express donates its services by hauling the dental unit from place to place, storing it between clinics and even washing it.

There are small perks to being a volunteer, like free tickets to the golf tournament and golf shirts embroidered with the clinic's logo, but that isn't why the Kiwanis, the dentists or anyone else associated with the clinic donates their time.

"They come because they want to do their part to help kids," Cobb said.

"Finding volunteers is no problem at all.

"Sometimes finding the patients is more difficult than lining up volunteers."

GARZA TRAVELS with the clinic, but he relies on groups like the Kiwanis and local dentists to organize each stop.

Dr. Gary Zeraghen and Dr. Robert Cording are two of the area dentists who will make sure everything runs as smoothly as a shiny, clean tooth.

At the free clinics, Garza and the rest of the dentists are often looking into mouths which have never been examined by a dentist before.

"That's what makes this such a gratifying event," Cobb said. "These kids need the care, and the dentists make sure they have a positive experience."

Garza already has made his dream come true, but he's not done yet.

THERE ARE 18 clinics planned for 1993 and he hopes to eventually have a second trailer that will enable him to conduct 20-25 clinics a year.

Senior Tour players have become just as excited about the project as Garza is.

Some of the players involved include Rodriguez, Dave Stockton, Michigan native Mike Hill, George Archer, Al Gelberger, Jim Albus, Jim Ferree, Bob Murphy and others.

Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the dental clinic can send it to Christina's Smile Inc., 11010 Brookwood Road, Austin, Texas 78750.



Charitable cause: Chi Chi Rodriguez, a favorite among golf fans, will perform a clinic for benefit of the tour-sponsored children's dental program.

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