

Zach Johnson shows funny side in C.R.

Written by Jim Ecker

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Zach Johnson is funny.

Who knew?

When Zach gives TV interviews he's kind of, well, dull. There's no other way to describe it.

But when Zach took the microphone Monday at Elmcrest Country Club in Cedar Rapids, he was downright funny. He had everyone laughing, despite the scorching heat and brilliant sun.

The occasion was the inaugural Zach Johnson Foundation Classic, a wonderful event that raised money to help local kids with unmet needs. "Kids on Course," he calls it.

The event took in an estimated \$500,000. Zach announced Monday that he will be donating another \$500,000 of his own money to make the amount raised \$1 million.

Zach was the star, main attraction and emcee for an informal clinic he conducted with fellow professional golfers before the pro-am, and he handled his duties with aplomb.

Zach is certainly an interesting guy. He does not look like a world-class athlete, but he is. He's not physically imposing at all, just a regular-looking guy in shorts with skinny legs, 5-foot-11 and 160 pounds.

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But he can swing a golf club, that's for sure. He's only 35 and already has pocketed \$21,375,615 in official earnings on the PGA tour with six titles, including the 2007 Masters. Not bad for an ordinary-looking guy from Cedar Rapids.

He can swing a club and can swing with a microphone, especially in an informal setting like Monday's charity event. Dull never entered the conversation.

"There's corporate Zach, and there's Zach as just one of the guys," one veteran Zach-watcher observed.

Zach got Davis Love III, Stewart Cink, Rickie Fowler, Jonathan Byrd and Kyle Stanley from the PGA circuit to sacrifice a rare day off and join him at Elmcrest on Monday. They're all buddies. He also got Taylor Leon, a talented golfer from the LPGA, to show up.

They participated in a 45-minute clinic and put on a good show for thousands of fans with their shot-making abilities and sense of humor, led by Zach himself.

Fowler is the young guy with longish hair that sprouts from under his cap. He was dressed in purple. "Unfortunately," said Zach, feigning to fear the competition, "he's young and he's really good."

Zach introduced all the pro golfers and saved Taylor Leon for last. "Taylor, obviously the best-looking and best-dressed golfer out here," he said of the slender blonde, "but Ricky might have longer hair."

When Zach introduced Jonathan Byrd, he kidded about how Byrd won a tournament in Las Vegas with a hole-in-one "on the 35th playoff hole, in the dark. And he kind of gave an aw-shucks look."

Kyle Stanley hit a drive during the clinic that sailed toward the clubhouse and out of sight. "That

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might be in Iowa City," Zach smartly observed.

There were some golf tips tossed into the clinic as well, mostly about working on rhythm, tempo, impact and fundamentals. Those comments were well-received by the fans.

"The best clinic in the history of the world," Zach concluded.

The clinic got things rolling, then all the golfers fanned onto the course for a shotgun start, with celebrities like Tom Davis, Kurt Warner, Mark Farley, Tim Dwight, Marv Cook, Bruce Kimm, Mike Boddicker, Bump Elliott and Ryan Bowen doing their part to make the day a big success.