Monday, February 15, 2021 was a cold and cloudy Arizona day for the annual Cactus Classic Golf Tournament. The tournament was played on the Outlaw Course, with each group starting on Hole #11 – to provide ample social distancing and to keep everyone safe.

The Pinnacle Aviation Putting Challenge qualifier was set up on the practice green next to the starter’s shed before Hole #1. All 72 players and 18 club pros competing in the Cactus Classic participated in the Putting Challenge qualifier and raffle. As each group advanced from the 18th green to the No. 1 tee-box; they stopped at the practice green to take their best of 10 putts to qualify for the head-to-head putting competition. All participants received raffle tickets for each made putt. The grand raffle prize of a complimentary 30-minute helicopter tour of the city provided by H5 Helicopters, was won by Mr. Alton Jones! And the winner of the $500 gift certificate to Dominick’s Steak House went to Mr. John Wall! The top 8 scores from the day qualified for the Putting Championship – and the top 4 scores from the Professionals playing with each group qualified for the Pro Putting Championship. There were an additional 8 qualifiers who made their attempts at several prequalifying sites during the two weeks prior.

After the last group finished their round, the putting competition began on the practice green outside the Outlaw Clubhouse. The format was a head-to-head single putt elimination tournament for both the players and the Club Professionals. The competitor whose putt came to rest closest to the hole advanced to the next round.

The players competition began with a first-round putt of ~20-feet; the second-round putt was ~25-feet and the quarterfinal putt set up just outside of 30-feet. Mrs. Lauren Keomaka and Mr. David Mingo both advanced their way through their brackets to the final putt for the Championship set at ~35-feet.

Both players made excellent putts, with Mrs. Keomaka’s putt coming to rest just a few inches closer than Mr. Mingo’s putt, to win the title of 2021 Pinnacle Aviation Putting Challenge Champion!

The four club professionals then began their competition, and in the championship round for the pros, Kyle McNulty edged out Tanner Marlett for the win and title of 2021 Pinnacle Aviation Putting Challenge Champion of the Pro Division. Kyle and Tanner received a $300 gift card and $200 gift card, respectively, for dinner at Dominick’s or Ocean’s 44 in Scottsdale.
Mrs. Keomaka’s win included a $500 book credit in the Desert Mountain Golf Shop, along with a beautifully inscribed silver-platted Champion’s trophy.

She also won an attempt at the 50-foot putt to win a 4-day all-expense paid, luxury private jet trip for Eight (8) to Bandon Dunes including all golf, lodging and food & beverage – valued at over $50,000!

Mrs. Keomaka took her time and assessed the green between her ball and the hole. She was very deliberate in her set up. The spectators (including her husband, Ellison) grew quiet. Mrs. Keomaka put a confident stroke on the 50-footer. The putt had perfect speed, tracking directly toward the hole, the crowd began to cheer as the ball approached the cup and erupted in an electrifying “OHHHH!” as the ball grazed the right lip of the cup. It was an outstanding attempt at the grand prize!

Our enthusiastic congratulations to the 2021 Pinnacle Aviation Putting Champion - Mrs. Lauren Keomaka!

The 2021 Cactus Classic & PA Putting Challenge raised and donated $8,105 to the DMF scholarship fund.

Pictured left to right:
Orin Anderson (Pinnacle Aviation)
Sheila Seaton (DMF)
Karen Seduski (DMF)
Greg Caster (DMF & 2-time PAPC Champion)
Lauren Keomaka (2021 Putting Champion)
Brook Urban (DMF)
Peter Swanson (Head Professional - Outlaw)

The DMF established the Scholarship Fund in 2012 to provide support for eligible Desert Mountain employees, their spouses, and dependent children and grandchildren, as these individuals pursue their educational goals. The scholarship program is also open to employees of CCMC, the company that provides professional management to the Desert Mountain Homeowners Associations. Scholars are selected through an application process by a review panel that includes members of the DMF Advisory Board, Desert Mountain members, a local education expert, and Arizona Community Foundation Scholarship Office staff members. Selection is based on financial need, essays about future plans and goals, academic achievement, demonstrated community service, and relationship to a Desert Mountain employee in good standing.