

OCC's Own 'Shaka for Paka'

By Jim Gaddis

Parker McLachlin will be the first to tell you he was thrilled to see the incredible and amazing success Tadd Fujikawa had at the 2007 Sony Open at Waialae Country Club. While Tadd's top 20 finish may well be Hawaii's Sport's Story-of-the-Year when 2007 wraps up, it's our hope at the Outrigger Canoe Club that perhaps the PGA Tour's big story for 2007 might be the Rookie-of-the-Year award for Parker McLachlin.

Tadd had enormous enthusiastic galleries over the weekend but on Thursday and Friday there were plenty of blue 'Shaka for Paka' shirts on the Waialae course following OCC's favorite PGA pro. Parker's wife Kristy had loads of company including Beth and Chris, Parker's kid brother, Spencer, Uncle Brian (from the mainland), Paul Johnstone, the Baldings, Robbie Ostrem, the Metzgers, the Corbelis, the Gaddis family, Lily Felton and her dad Rod, Leilani Marple and her dad Rob, Jeremy Kaimikaua and his dad Jimmy, and so many others. (Sorry if I left you out)

After finishing 16th at the Tour's 2006 qualifying school, Parker has earned the right to play inside the ropes with the big boys on tour. Parker will continue to strive to get better and better just as he has done the past few years. It's a process which should produce positive results and a successful career. Parker loves the support he receives from his fans, his family and the people of Hawaii.

PGA Senior Tour player Scott Simpson caddied for Parker for the second year in a row and had as much fun as Parker did back in 1994 when the 14-year-old, 125 pounder caddied for Scott in the United Airlines Hawaiian Open. Parker and I cleaned clubs together on the driving range with ice-cream-eating grins on our face. I caddied for Curt Byrum while Parker lugged Simpson's bag on his skinny little shoulders. We felt like we were the luckiest guys in the world being inside the ropes.

Parker fell one shot short of making the cut this year which was painful for all. He played extremely well but couldn't manage to find that bit of luck everyone needs now and then to get them going. The wind knocked down a few great iron shots turning possible birdies into trouble. If Parker keeps striking the ball the way he did at the Sony Open, he'll find success in 2007. Let's hope that as you read this Parker is doing well.

It was an added thrill for Parker to host the Golf Channel's *Inside the PGA Tour* the week following the Sony Open in Hawaii. Parker introduced viewers from around the globe to his favorite places to eat, Punahou School, his father, the Punahou trophy case, Waikiki, and of course, Parker's favorite beach and hangout, the Outrigger Canoe Club.

The show was shown at seven different time slots so it was hard to miss. It will be a thrill for all of us to follow Parker in 2007 playing on the elite PGA Tour. Let's hope there will be a gang of his OCC fans watching Parker on Sundays in the Koa Lanai on a regular basis trying to edge out names like Tiger, Ernie, Phil, Sergio and all the other great names in golf.

An added note: on January 25, Parker made his first career PGA Tour hole-in-one on the third hole at the South Course at Torrey Pines Golf Course at the Buick Open in San Diego. His biggest thrill, however, was hitting balls on the driving range two players down from Tiger Woods.