

The Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro is home to the Wyndham Championship, held each August.

A crowd gathers at the then-final hole at Sedgefield in 1950 to witness Sam Snead win one of his eight titles in the Triad.

# A regional affair

## Wyndham Championship unites, revitalizes region

by W. Dunlop White III

Photo: Carol W. Martin/Greensboro Historical Museum Collection

photo: The Wyndham Championship

It's only been three years since The Wyndham Championship returned home to Sedgefield's restored Donald Ross masterpiece, and ticket and hospitality sales already have skyrocketed. For the second year in a row — before this year's tournament, which was held Aug. 16-22 — the Wyndham Championship sold out of tickets at 25,000 per day. The tournament also sold out of corporate hospitality for the third straight year.

"Most of the tournament's patronage and support historically has come from within Greensboro's city limits," says Mark Brazil, tournament director.

In 2007, when the tournament was held at Forest Oaks Country Club on the southeast side of town, 90 percent of sponsorships were composed of Greensboro-based businesses. But since the Wyndham Championship returned home to Donald Ross's stomping grounds, Brazil has been able

to summon 60 percent of its sponsors from neighboring communities as well.

Sedgefield's location, which is conveniently positioned in the central Piedmont Triad, has lured residents from surrounding communities to take a greater ownership stake in its success. In return, tournament organizers of The Piedmont Triad Charitable Foundation are committed to use tournament proceeds as a delivery system to fund charitable needs and economic development initiatives both within and beyond Greensboro.

"By supporting today's Wyndham Championship, you're really making an investment in your own community no matter where you live in the Triad," Brazil says.

The FedEx Hub's Aerotropolis Distribution Complex in Greensboro, Piedmont Triad Medical Research Park for Regenerative Medicine in Winston-Salem

and High Point's globalized furnishings markets are three of the targeted beneficiaries; all are vital components to the region's economic outlook. As a result, Sedgefield's Wyndham Championship now operates as a powerful economic engine for the entire region.

Robert "Bobby" Long, tournament chairman, believes that it's a key linchpin that can help unite the entire business region.

"I've always thought of golf as a way of bringing people together," he says. "If we can make this thing work in golf, then we can carry it over to other platforms as well."

Today it's clear that the region has rallied around the Wyndham Championship. And in turn, the Wyndham Championship has rallied around the region. ❁

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