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Calgary's Steve Blake Receives Sponsor Exemption into 2018 Shaw Charity Classic

CALGARY—Calgarian Steve Blake has booked another date with the legends of golf after receiving a sponsor exemption to tee it up at home in the 2018 Shaw Charity Classic, August 27 – September 2.

The 50-year-old financial advisor, who lived out a dream earlier this summer after qualifying to play against his heroes of the game at the U.S. Senior Open, will be back under the ropes with many of the greatest names of the game – this time in front of a city full of supporters at Canyon Meadows Golf and Country Club.

“When I received the call that I was fortunate enough to receive an exemption, I started shaking and was a bit emotional,” said Blake, who is a member of the Hamptons Golf Club. “I was stunned, elated, humbled and I am so excited. I know there are many deserving applications, and these are not easy decisions, so I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity.”

Blake is certainly deserving after capturing the Canadian golf world’s attention by playing his way into the U.S. Senior Open in June at a qualifying event outside San Diego. Walking into a whole new arena alongside World Golf Hall of Fame Members including Vijay Singh, Davis Love III, Mark O’Meara, Bernhard Langer, and Colin Montgomerie – all of whom will be in Calgary this summer – the family man held his own despite missing the cut with rounds of 79-74.

“The U.S. Senior Open is arguably the biggest tournament on the PGA TOUR Champions schedule so it was like being thrown right into the deep end of the pool with the big boys,” said Blake. “I had so much nervous excitement running through me playing those first few holes that I couldn’t stop my hands from shaking, but as the day went on I was able to settle in, started to feel like I belonged and embraced the whole experience.”

Blake played the Canadian Tour in his twenties, trying to earn full-time status through Monday qualifiers. In an effort to secure a regular pay day, he turned his focus to instructing golf before entering the financial industry.

“It will be slightly different teeing up with so many people I know watching outside the ropes, but I will draw on that experience to try and get settled in right out of the blocks. Having the opportunity to play at this level alongside the legends of the game in front of my friends and family, in my own city, is going to be unbelievable. I hope I can put my best foot forward and make everyone proud.”

With record-setting crowds coming through the gates in each of the first five years of the award-winning tournament’s history, there is expected to be nearly 40,000 people rooting for the Canadian cowboy.

“The Patron group and Shaw brought this event to Calgary with the goal of having a positive impact on the people in our community. Giving one of Calgary’s top senior golfers the opportunity of a lifetime to play in a PGA TOUR Champions event in front of his friends and family is not only extremely rewarding, but supports this mission,” said Sean Van Kesteren, executive director, Shaw Charity Classic, who added the tournament hands out five exemptions to round out the 78-man field.

“Steve Blake is about as nice of a man as you are going to meet and will be a great ambassador for our city. He is deserving of his spot on the tee sheet and I know the entire city will be rooting for him.”

In addition to Blake, the atmosphere should be electric around the first tee at Canyon Meadows with World Golf Hall of Fame members, major champions, and fan-favourites including Miguel Angel Jimenez,



Darren Clarke, Rocco Mediate, Jose Maria-Olazabal, Chris DiMarco, Jesper Parnevik and defending champion Scott McCarron in this year's field.

Having raised more than \$22 million for Alberta children's charities in its first five years, the Shaw Charity Classic has set a fundraising goal of \$10 million for this year's tournament, which will support 182 children's charities across Alberta. This effort is made possible thanks to renewed support from Shaw Communications and AltaLink for Shaw Birdies for Kids, presented by AltaLink.

About the Shaw Charity Classic

The Shaw Charity Classic will host some of the greatest names in the game of golf in Calgary at the Canyon Meadows Golf and Country Club, August 27 – September 2, 2018. The field, which will consist of 78 stars on the PGA TOUR Champions, will compete for US \$2.35 million in a three-round, 54-hole stroke-play tournament. The winner will receive US \$352,500. The annual PGA TOUR Champions stop in Canada showcases Calgary to the world through its broadcast on the Golf Channel. Led by a philanthropic Patron Group including Tournament Chairman – Clay Riddell, Allan Markin, Keith MacPhail, Jim Riddell, Guy Turcotte, Gary Peddle, Mike Culbert and PGA Tour Professional – Stephen Ames, along with title sponsor, Shaw Communications Inc, the Shaw Charity Classic won the prestigious President's Award as the top event on the PGA TOUR Champions in 2017, 2015 and 2014. The Tournament has raised more than \$22.1 million in its first five years, with a PGA TOUR Champions record setting donation of \$8,391,413 raised in 2017 that was distributed amongst 159 youth-based charities in Alberta. For more information on the event, please visit www.shawcharityclassic.com. Follow the Shaw Charity Classic at facebook.com/shawcharityclassic and on Twitter @shawclassic.

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