

LATE CU COACH SIMPSON INDUCTED INTO COACHES HALL

NEW ORLEANS (January 12, 2005) — University of Colorado men's golf coach Mark Simpson was inducted into the Golf Coaches Association of America Hall of Fame, the first CU coach to earn the exclusive honor.

"I'm completely honored and humbled that the committee would consider my coaching career worthy of this honor," Simpson said in opening his induction speech. "I'd like to thank the person who nominated me, but I don't know who that is."

"About three months ago, I was having breakfast with a friend, and about three-fourths of the way through it he said, 'You know, Simpson, you have a great job.' I said, 'Yeah, I like it.' Then about two weeks later at lunch with another friend, he says to me, 'You really do have a dream job.'"

"I got to thinking and I truly realized that I do have a dream job," Simpson said. "One, I get the special privilege to work with young 17- and 18-year olds and help mold them as people and golfers; two, I love the University of Colorado and no matter what you've heard about CU these last months, ninety-eight percent of what some perceive about us just isn't true. It is truly a special place, and I'm fortunate enough to coach at my alma mater. And three, I get to coach and teach the game of golf."

"My dream job has lasted 29 years," he continued. "There is so much to be thankful for and people to thank. God. The University of Colorado, as (the athletic director) Eddie Crowder took a chance and named me as head coach when I was just 26 years old. All of the players who I've been blessed to coach and watch mature during my time at CU. My peers. The GCAA; I've been to Japan, Scotland, England, Ireland and all over the United States thanks to the GCAA."

Simpson closed by acknowledging that when he was a young coach, he would listen to advise of those who had been in the profession for a long time. He gave a bit of advice for younger coaches in the audience.

"If you want to be a great coach, one of the qualities you have to have is that you must relate to your players," he said. "Use relate as an acronym: the R is for respect; the E for edify, or to build up your players; the L for listen, as in truly listen to them; the A for authentic, be the real person you are; the T for time, and wisely spend the same amount of time with each of your players and in several areas; and the second E for expectations, for as a coach, it is extremely important to pass on your expectations of them."

"One of the quests we have is to prepare them for life, and the greatest thing I can hear is when they return years later and tell of the appreciation for what they learned from me, but more importantly, from their experiences at the University of Colorado."

In attendance at the event were members of Simpson's immediate family, his mother Martha, Anne Kelly, CU women's golf coach; Mark Crabtree, the head coach at Louisville who was one of Simpson's first players; and Eric Hoos, a former CU assistant and current head coach at Denver.

CU's Assistant Athletic Director for Media Relations, David Plati, a long-time friend and colleague of Simpson, presented him for induction. Some highlights of his presentation:

"I've been CU's SID since 1984; five years earlier, as a freshman in the office, I was handed the men's golf beat. After being named SID, I wasn't about to give it up, in part due to my love for the game as well as for the sheer enjoyment I have had working with Coach Simpson and

the golf team for what has now been almost 26 years. I'm probably the only SID he even remembers handling his sport..."

"Mark's induction is two-fold, one for his longevity as a respected coach, as well as for all the work he has done on behalf of college golf. He has truly thrived on being involved on the administrative side of things, and the game is better for his contributions."

"Mark is truly one of the good guys. Ask most everyone who has ever met him. I can say for fact that 'Stretch,' one of his nicknames, is truly one of the all-time most popular figures both at the University of Colorado as well as in Colorado golf circles, which honored him last September with the Colorado Golf Hall of Fame's Lifetime Achievement Award."

"Mark has all the qualities one seeks in a college coach, some of which include:

"Humility. Mark has never been above learning and evolving as a coach. He will tell you that when he started out, he wanted all his players to like him. After a few years, he learned they didn't want a friend; they wanted to be coached and to be mentored."

"Disciplinarian. After all, we are talking about a man who left Jonathan Kaye home from the 1993 Central Regional. To this day, he will tell you it was one of, if not the, toughest decisions he has ever had to make."

"Compassion: A freshman, Charlie Luther, hit his first collegiate drive off the then-called women's tee markers with the ball landing several feet behind the tee box. The poor kid was even holding his pose, having no idea where the ball went until he heard the thud behind him. 'Sims' comforted him with the line, 'Don't worry Charlie, even Bo Jackson lost yardage on his first college carry.'"

"But he also traveled the 14 hours both to and from Australia to help comfort one of his players after his father passed away. He was on hand when that player, Kane Webber, shot a 59 a day after the funeral in a family

tournament played to honor his dad."

"Part-Time Nutritionist. Mark has purchased over 10,000 bananas for players to snack on during their rounds... something about the potassium I believe. Mark also thrives on finding the best Mexican food restaurant in a town so he can showcase his knowledge of the Spanish language, and loves the Louisiana Classics as he has turned many a young meat-and-potatoes golfer on to crawfish."

"Respect. How many U.S. Open winners openly thank their college golf coach publicly within minutes after victory? That's what Steve Jones did in 1996, as well as several more times in the days afterward."

"And Good Fortune. Mark offered the same Steve Jones, his first top recruit, a full ride back in the summer of 1977 after Jones shot a 72 after a morning 86 at one of Colorado's tougher courses, Hiwan in Evergreen. He would soon learn that a full scholarship back then was seldom ever offered and it ate up almost all of his allotted aid for the year. But it would be worth it."

"In a recent interview, Mark summed up what he thought was the best thing about the game of golf. He said, 'The greatest thing is that it teaches maturity in the sense that you can't blame anybody or anything for your failures, you can only point the finger at yourself.'"

