

Marshaus Recalls Working Palmer's Golf Camp In 1968

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By Scott Kindberg (skindberg@post-journal.com) , Post-Journal

The last time Stan Marshaus saw Arnold Palmer was six months ago. The occasion was the invitational that bears the legendary golfer's name in Bay Hill, Florida.

"(I had) tickets to the hospitality suite and (he) was there," said Marshaus, the former pro and director of golf at Chautauqua Golf Club on Tuesday. "He looked pretty frail."

But even though Marshaus' head was telling him one thing about his golfing hero, his heart was hoping for something else.



Stan Marshaus, left, is pictured with Arnold Palmer during the summer of 1968 in Vail, Colorado. Submitted photo

"I always felt he was bigger than life," Marshaus said. "I thought he would live forever."

Sunday night, the man known as "The King" died at 87.

"His memory will live forever," Marshaus said.

So, too, will the memories that Palmer helped recreate for the Chautauqua Shores resident.

Not quite 50 years ago, Marshaus was a 20-something math department chairman, who also served as the golf coach, assistant basketball coach, athletic director and class adviser, at Thomas W. Harvey High School in Painesville, Ohio.

Late one night, he turned on his television and watched as Palmer, sitting on a couch on The Tonight Show stage, had a conversation with host Johnny Carson. During their by-play, Palmer talked about the golf academy he had formed in Vail, Colorado.

"I'm watching it," Marshaus recalled, "and saying to myself, 'That would be a great place to work in the summer.'"

So he penned a letter to Palmer, indicating his interest in spending his 1968 summer vacation at the Arnold Palmer Academy.

"I never heard anything," Marshaus said. "A month later, I wrote another letter."

And the waiting game began. In the meantime, he agreed to take a summer job with the Painesville City Rec Department and was fully expecting to fill that position until his phone rang one night in May 1968.

"I was throwing a party for all the (Painesville High School) coaches and I get a phone call," Marshaus said. "It was from Arnold Palmer. He said, 'I just had to talk to this guy who does everything in Painesville, Ohio. We've got an offer for you.'"

Although he had already agreed to the recreation department job, Marshaus was able to wiggle his way out of that commitment and head to Vail, site of the Arnold Palmer Golf Academy.

"I got there a week early and the place was really not ready," Marshaus said. "We (were going to have) three sessions, 300 kids in each session, they were (going to be) there for a three-week period and this (place) was a field."

In a week's time, however, Marshaus and the rest of the staff were able to sod the practice range and the teeing area, and also get the greens in decent shape. One of five instructors - the other four were college golf coaches - Marshaus called the summer in the Rockies "the best experience of my life."

Among the highlights were appearances by PGA members Byron Nelson, Bob Toski and Shelley Mayfield, and, of course, Palmer.

"(Palmer) flew in (one day) and was at camp all day," Marshaus recalled. "He met every kid, put on an exhibition and hit shots."

After the day was over, Marshaus and staff were gathered for a meeting when Palmer appeared.

"We're all sitting in this room," Marshaus said, "and Arnold walks in and says, 'OK, I've taken care of the kids. What can I do for you guys?'"

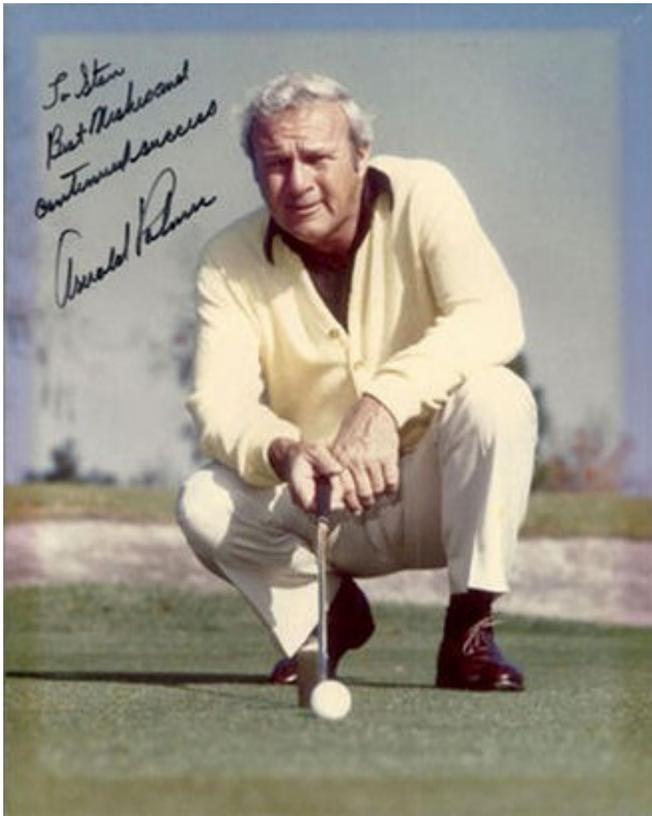
Stunned, the guys in the room were quiet until Marshaus piped up and asked the legendary golfer to autograph a couple of photos and two books that Palmer had authored. Soon, Palmer joined the staff at a nearby watering hole. When Marshaus brought up the subject of how important Palmer was in so many areas, inside and outside the game, the response resonated.

"He said, 'Son, it's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice,'" Marshaus recalled. "I've never forgotten that."

The next morning, Marshaus went for a walk where he was joined by Palmer. For the next half-hour, the young man from northeastern Ohio was walking side-by-side with the "King" of golf.

"I grew up in Cleveland and he spent a lot of time in Cleveland while he was in the Coast Guard and he played golf at Pine Ridge Country Club in Wickliffe, Ohio," Marshaus said. "We chatted about that and chatted about Cleveland."

It wouldn't be the last time they would chat.



Above is an autographed photo from Arnold Palmer given to Stan Marshaus. Submitted photo

By 1978, Marshaus was working at Chautauqua GC when one of its members asked him if he would like to play at Ligonier Country Club in the Laurel Highlands. The foursome complete, the men ended up playing in the group behind, you guessed it, Palmer, who was in the midst of a promotional appearance with eight other golfers.

"About the fourth hole, he comes back to one of the guys in our group and says, 'We're kind of slow, do you want to go through?' Of course we said, 'No'" Marshaus recalled.

After the round was complete, Marshaus and his golfing buddies were in the country club's grill room. After some coaxing, the former was convinced to greet Palmer, who was sitting across the room with his group.

"I go over and say, 'Mr. Palmer, I'm Stan Marshaus and I worked at your Golf Academy in Vail, Colorado.' He looked up at me and said, 'Yeah, you were from Cleveland, weren't you?'"

Years later, Marshaus is still amazed that Palmer remembered him.

"What a phenomenal person," he said.

Marshaus' accomplishments in golf are almost too many to list. His personal highlights, among others, include: PGA Western New York Section Professional of the Year in 1994; district director to the National PGA Board from 1996-99; and the PGA Championship worker in 1997-99. He also has played golf with President Bill Clinton and gave golf lessons to Olympic gold medal-winning pole vaulter Jenn Suhr.

But for all those successes, Marshaus considers his summer job in 1968 as his No. 1 thrill in the game.

"Arnold Palmer was the consummate gentleman, as far as I was concerned," said Marshaus, who was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 2006. "He cared about other people. ... He was nice to everybody. It didn't matter if a guy washed dishes or was the president of U.S. Steel, Arnold Palmer treated everybody the same."