



Bensel Prepares for Title Defense

Frank Bensel's experience is a huge factor as he seeks his second consecutive crown at the 35th Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championship

By Randy Stutzman

It's no easy task to win a National Championship, but when you already have the experience of 43-year-old Frank Bensel, you enter with a bit more confidence.

The PGA assistant professional at Century Country Club in Purchase, N.Y., has already competed in eight PGA Professional National Championships, three Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championships, 16 Metropolitan Section Championships, the 2004 PGA Championship and the 1984 Junior PGA Championship.

"I was able to learn so much from each of those major events and take those experiences with me," says Bensel. "When you are able to compete at a high level and play well it gives you the confidence and belief that you can win."

That experience, confidence and belief propelled him to a win at the 2010 Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championship. A final-round 3-under par-69 pushed him into the winner's circle to claim the title by two strokes over Travis Deibert of Jamison, Pa.

"I putted well all week and that was the difference," says Bensel, recalling his victory from last year. "It felt great, and to have my family there with me for that moment was awesome."

For the 16th consecutive year, Bensel and 126 PGA assistant professionals and apprentices will descend on PGA Golf Club in Port St. Lucie, Fla., Nov. 3-6, for the 35th playing of the Championship.

"We are very excited to host this National Championship at PGA Golf Club, and display the many

2011 Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championship

When: Nov. 3-6

Where: PGA Golf Club (Wanamaker Course), Port St. Lucie, Fla.



PGA
ASSISTANT CHAMPIONSHIP



Defending Champion: Frank Bensel, Purchase, N.Y.

Prize money and purse/method of play: A purse of \$100,000 will be distributed to the 2011 field of 126 competitors. The Champion will receive \$9,000. Following the first 36 holes, the field will be reduced to the lowest 70 players and ties. In the event of a tie for first place after 72 holes, there will be a hole-by-hole playoff.

changes that have taken place to make this a truly spectacular facility," says Mike Sizemore, the PGA director of operations at PGA Golf Club. "We want every PGA Professional in the country, including those in this Championship, to have a resounding sense of pride in PGA Golf Club."

Bensel is also looking to become just the third player in the 35-year history of the Championship to win back-to-back titles, following Jim Schuman of Verona, Wis., who accomplished the feat from 1996-97 and Oklahoman Kyle Flinton who did it in 2002 and '03. Flinton is also the only three-time winner of the Championship.

"I have been playing in professional events since 1992, so hopefully that experience as well as my familiarity with the golf course (the Wanamaker Course) will pay off again this year," says Bensel, who spends six months of the year in South Florida playing various professional events. "Last year it was my putting that was so good, but usually it's my ball-striking. If I can do both well, I have a great shot."

Also at stake, provided the Champion meets eligibility requirements, is a spot in the 45th PGA Professional National Championship, June 24-27, 2012 at Bayonet and Black Horse in Seaside, Calif.

The 2011 field will feature the top four finishers from last year's Championship as well as 122 players who advanced through their Section Championship.

Following the first 36 holes of play, the field for the final two rounds will be reduced to the low 70 scorers and ties.

Callaway Golf returns as the title sponsor for the third consecutive year.

For more than 30 years, the Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championship has produced outstanding PGA Professionals who have gone on to successful careers in teaching and administering the game, as well as competing at the highest level on the PGA and Champions Tour.

Past Champions include Fred Funk and Loren Roberts, 2002 PGA Champion Rich Beem finished in 3rd in 1998 and 2009 Assistant's Champion Tim Thelen is currently playing on the European Senior Tour.

The winner of the 2011 Callaway Golf PGA Assistant Championship will collect \$9,000 of the \$100,000 purse. ■

Defending Champion Frank Bensel has competed in eight PGA Professional National Championships and a PGA Championship.

MONTANA PRITCHARD/THE PGA OF AMERICA