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By Richard Skelly
For New Jersey Golf News

Amaateur Alan Martin of East Windsor recently had his 15 minutes of fame when he appeared, albeit very briefly, on the Golf Channel's "Fore Inventors Only" program. The program airs Tuesday nights at 10 p.m., and Martin's segment aired July 17.

Martin, a past club champion at Springdale Golf Club, has spent years perfecting his "Thumbs Down Method," and Martin was featured on in-house promo spots leading up to the show's premiere on July 10. Judges for the show, hosted by Vince Cellino, include PGA Tour pro Fulton Allem, golf instructor Bill Harmon and "Golf For Women" senior editor Stina Sternberg.

In the end, while many fans of Martin's "Thumbs Down Method" instruction booklet were left disappointed he didn't get more airtime than he did on July 17, Martin himself looks at his Golf Channel appearance as a beginning, not an end. Martin sells his instruction booklet, also a marketing device with space on the back cover for advertisers, from his website, www.golfinstructionmadesimple.com. Martins sells his easy to understand instruction booklet off his website at \$9.95 per booklet.

He had no expectations going in to audition for the program, which drew more than 1,200 inventor-applicants from around the U.S., Canada and Europe.

"Realistically, I was thrilled just to have been selected," said Martin in mid-July on the porch at Springdale Golf Club.

"The outcome, what we heard on TV, was that Bill Harmon said nothing but positive things about it. About 30 seconds into my presentation, the panel of judges said, 'I've got no problem with this, but what's new about it?'"

Once he was challenged during the taping,

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Martin said he wishes he had defended his position a little bit better, but such is life in the spotlight.

"The biggest mistake I made at that point was not saying, 'Who calls it 'Thumbs Down.?' he said, in response to questions from the judges about what's new about his golf invention.

"I predicted 10 years ago, when I first came up with this method, that golf professionals would knock this, because it just doesn't fit the criteria that it's new."

Martin made it through the initial screening on March 25 with a producer and camera man from the Golf Channel at the Newark Airport Marriott. He was invited to the Golf Channel's Orlando studios [albeit at his own expense] to try out for a second round before a panel of judges. Martins was selected from a pool of 1,200 applicants from around the country, who demonstrated some pretty ridiculous golf-related inventions. One applicant on "Fore Inventors Only" on July 17,

even performed a golf song.

What did Martin do consciously to set himself apart from other applicants, initially?

"I knew my product was unique, in and of itself, so I didn't copy anything, it was strictly an instruction method I developed myself," he said, adding, "the invention part of it was the method, which I call 'Thumbs Down.' The whole concept of turning it into an instruction booklet and marketing device for companies came about afterwards."

Martin was spurred on by his disgust with 90 percent of golf instruction as it is conveyed or performed in magazines, books and on videos.

"One or two swing thoughts can actually get the job done," Martin said, "except, today's golf lessons are taught the other way around, with phrases like 'Let impact happen naturally,' and all this other stuff. At that point, I used to yell at the TV set."

To pass his initial audition in Newark back in March, Martin wasn't sure what buttons to push to appeal to the producer from the Golf

Channel, so he just read his introduction from his instruction booklet: 'Get ready for some outside the box thinking for improving your golf game.'

Martin noted he has shown people the method and sold the books to people all over the U.S., "but, I'm not a professional golf teacher, and I've seen it work very quickly with some very good golfers as well as some not-so-good golfers."

The reality is, he added, "I've seen this method work enough times with people other than myself, and I have a lot of conviction that what I have done for people is a good thing."

Martin argued that his short appearance on "Fore Inventors Only" validated the instruction method he's been pushing, in essence, to concentrate on keeping the thumbs down at the moment of impact.

To his taping at the Golf Channel's Orlando studios, Martin brought a swing jacket, 'Pro-Aim' Glasses that he said Harmon sells, and a wrist guard device to show that all of these things aren't really

necessary if you just follow the simple how-to in his instruction booklet.

"Here are all these gadgets worth about \$300, and I can demonstrate thumbs up- thumbs down, and I sell the book for \$10," he said. "I made it into a swing thought that somebody could take out to the driving range or the golf course and remember."

Asked about his plans for the future of his internet-based marketing business, Martin said people are buying the e-book online from his website and looking into the possibility of demonstrating the method remotely, from one computer to another, via the internet.

"Now I'm also seeking to take advantage of this whole business and golf relationship," he added, noting he's seeking out potential corporate sponsors, who could then hand out the books at golf outings and use it as an advertising/ good-will vehicle.

"To take it to the next level, I'm looking for somebody to understand that there's a real business value here," he said.



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