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LITTLE WONDER – KYLE LOGRASSO AND FATHER, JEFF, SET IMPRESSIVE EXAMPLE FOR FAMILIES IN CELEBRATING FAMILY GOLF MONTH

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. – It all began with a family trip to Korea and a flick of the remote control. About one month before his second birthday, Kyle Lograsso stumbled upon his passion—golf—as he channel surfed in his parents' hotel room. Since then, he has developed quite a reputation on the links, not only for his amazing abilities as a golfer, but for the tremendous obstacles he has overcome at such a young age.

Now, joined by his father, Jeff, the Lograssos are lending their support to Play Golf America by promoting the program's family golf initiatives, such as Family Golf Month throughout July. It is the Lograsso's hope that more families will receive the benefits the game has provided and develop the bond the game has afforded them.

"Kyle and I can go to the golf course and be there for 10 hours and just have a great time," said Jeff Lograsso, who has recently moved his family to Murrieta, Calif. "It's helped us build a great relationship and, with everything we have been through, it has brought us closer together. I just love watching him enjoy himself and do what he what wants to do."

Just after watching Golf Channel for the first time, Kyle began fashioning golf clubs out of anything handy and practicing his swing. His family was amazed at how quickly the young boy picked up the game. However, just a short time later, two days after turning two, Kyle's mother, Regina, noticed an unusual glare in his eye and took him to the doctor. Before they knew it, the family was flying to Hawaii for further testing and then to Philadelphia, where they received the diagnosis—Trilateral retinoblastoma. An aggressive form of eye cancer, Kyle had to undergo an enucleation (eye removal) of his left eye as well as chemotherapy to treat the four tumors in his right eye. Just after his surgery, however, he was up and playing with his plastic golf clubs.

Golf became more than just a sport to the Lograsso family during this time. “No matter how bad he felt, he knew we could turn on Golf Channel,” said Jeff. “On the days that he had to receive chemo treatments, he knew that afterwards he could go home and play golf. What it comes down to is that golf helped save his life.”

Even after another scare in September 2004, when Kyle developed sepsis, a serious infection in the blood stream that can be fatal, he still persisted in his interest in golf. For two weeks, he was in the hospital receiving antibiotics and blood pressure medicine to fight the infection. By the last two days of his stay, he was once again swinging his plastic golf club.

Now, a healthy 7-year-old, Kyle, has been cancer-free since 2004 and has come a long way since his first set of golf clubs. Now swinging custom TaylorMade clubs, Kyle and his father make appearances at events such as the 2009 U.S. Women’s Open, where he entertained the crowd with a few long drives and impersonations of famous golfers, including Tiger Woods, Jim Furyk and Lorena Ochoa.

He also has made appearances on national programs such as *Good Morning America* and *Ellen* and was featured on *HBO Real Sports*. He even threw the first pitch at Yankee Stadium this past May.

“If you ask him about his experiences, he doesn’t talk about it. He doesn’t even tell his friends about it. In fact, none of his friends knew he played golf until they came to the house,” said Jeff. “To him, the attention is just not a big deal.”

Neither is it a big deal for Kyle to play alongside some of golf’s most reputable players. “He has never even asked for an autograph,” said Jeff. “I am the one who tells him to get them! At the U.S. Open, Fred Couples approached him. Now, Kyle is not big on conversation, but when he [Couples] picked up a club and hit a few balls with him, Kyle opened up. However, as soon as he set the club down, Kyle said ‘Goodbye Mr. Couples’ and he was back to work.”

Jeff has considered taking lessons, so that one day, he may actually post a better score than Kyle. “Right now though, I just want to make it fun for him,” he said.

Golf has been an ongoing passion for Kyle, except for a brief time, when his father, a gunnery sergeant with the United States Marine Corp., was deployed to Iraq. During that time, Kyle lost interest in golf and missed his father terribly. However, upon Jeff’s recent return, the young prodigy once again picked up his golf clubs and hit the links with his favorite caddie—his dad.

“Golf was the glue that kept their family together when Jeff went to Iraq,” said Will Reilly, the 2005 PGA Junior Golf Leader, a family friend and head PGA Professional at Twining Valley Golf and Fitness Club in Dresher, Pa. “The bond they share is unbelievable. I would call him [Kyle] and tell him we are going to play golf soon. The game gave him hope in terms of his dad coming home.”



Reilly met the Lograsso family when Kyle was five years old and has witnessed firsthand the benefits the game has brought to both Kyle and his family. "One of the things that just blows people away is the way Kyle presents himself," said Reilly. "Going through all of the adversity Kyle had to face at such a young age has made him really strong."

His father also supports his involvement in golf due to the life lessons learned on the course. "Golf is a game built on integrity. The lessons you learn on the golf course, you can carry with you forever," he said. "I am always impressed with the way my son handles himself. When he meets people, he takes his hat off, looks them in the eye and shakes their hand. He learned that through the game of golf, and that to me is better than any game he plays."

When he is not on the course or practicing in his back yard, Kyle is a typical 7-year-old boy, who enjoys terrorizing his older sisters and playing with his friends. "He loves basketball. He plays baseball in the cul de sac near our home. He loves to swim. He is a normal little boy with an extraordinary gift."

Looking back, Jeff is grateful for the game of golf and the strength it provided his son as he fought for his life. "I always tell him, 'you beat cancer' and that is bigger than any golfer or any golf course," said Jeff. "As long as he is happy, his mother and I will continue to support Kyle, and I will be on the course with him."