

Mustafa Koç and Passion for Golf

Our magazine's founder Hüseyin Kaplan made an interview in 2003 about both the tournament and golf with Mustafa Koç during seventh Beko Pro-Am, which is an important event that takes an important place in Turkish golf. We wanted to share Mustafa Koç's story on how he started golf, his passion and his goals with you once again. Let's see what Mustafa Koç told us during this special interview.

What would you like to say about Beko and golf?

Today, Beko and golf are associated and related with each other in a very pleasant, good way. Beko became the sponsor every year between 1996 to an event among the Senior Tour. This tournament, which the seventh is being held, has a great deal of contribution to Turkish golf.

So, how did Mustafa Koç start golf?

In 1995, we went to Antalya for a vendor assembly. Back then, National Golf Club was just opened and Uğur Ekşioğlu was present there. He said "Let me take you to golf, maybe you would like to play." I played it one or two years ago. I took my clubs, went there and I met Tony Martin while I was there. He took me to the range. Apart from us, there were couple of people present there. Ever since I realized that I could do it, I'm playing it.

After you became the captain of National Golf Club, you became the president of Istanbul Golf Club. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

For six years, I have been the head of Istanbul Golf Club. Before that, I served as a member of the board of directors for a while. We did pretty valuable things for the club, which I am proud of. However, these things still work with the people. It's hard to fit a system. However, it is important for someone to step up and take the lead of that job. We have lots of friends around us and with their valuable contribution we accomplished an amazing job. As you know, the club house has changed, the range became really good. Our greenkeepers work really well too. Therefore, we live in an oasis in the center of Istanbul.

Do you remember the first cup you won in Golf?

Yes, Scandinavian, which was held by Kemer Golf Club in 1996.

In your opinion, which cup that you have won was the most meaningful?

Good question... I won both Kaptan Cup and President Cup which was held in Antalya in 1997. I think those cups were the meaningful ones.

You are a low handicap player for now. What are your goals in golf?

My current goal is to save the handicap that I currently have. It's hard to get below this. I play with 7 handicaps now. It goes between 7-8 and it's not easy for a businessman to hold his handicap. I don't play every day. Therefore, my goal is to protect and maintain this.

You work with a very intensive tempo because of your businessman label, how do you spare time for golf?

There isn't a thing where a busy businessman can't spare time for things he/she love. It is not a matter of discussion. Besides, it is also important for the mental health. Therefore, I try to spare some time for golf in this system somehow. I also have a putting green at my house. If I can't go to the club, I

practice at home for about half hour. Or I come to the club at noon and play for about 30-45 minutes. I try, manage to keep this up this way. In Summer, if I can come after 18:00, for 2-3 days in a week that would be marvelous.

There are lots of people who want to play golf but somehow fail to start. What is your advice for them?

They should come to IGK, take a club in their hands and see if they can play? If they can, they should keep it up. It becomes apparent in usually 2-3 weeks. Sometimes people can just look around and go. We had a lot of friends like that too. Or they come with a huge enthusiasm and if you get this venom into you, it doesn't come out so easily you know...

Anything you would like to say about golf?

Turkish golf is advancing in a good path. The head of the federation takes this thing seriously. I predict that we will be seeing the benefits of this in about 5-10 years and good players will represent us in Europe and the World.

Do you have any special projects or thoughts about golf?

I am actively lobbying to open a golf course in Ankara so seriously. Because it's a shame that a place like Ankara doesn't have a golf course.

Thank you so much for this enjoyable interview.