

The Golf Buddies. The Philadelphia Section PGA still is going strong with the Golf Buddies Program, in which a member professional is paired with a special-needs child from Variety, the Children's Charity.

Geoff Surrette, the section's executive director, said about 30 pros currently are involved in the program, and they develop a mentoring relationship with the youths as well as provide golf instruction.

"People talk about the benefits the kids get but I think the professionals get more out of the relationship than the kids do," Surrette said. "You can see a special-needs child expanding his or her horizons, and see their self-confidence grow when they get a golf ball in the air."

An invitational field will participate Tuesday and Wednesday in the 34th annual Variety Tournament of Champions Pro-Am at Whitemarsh Valley Country Club in Lafayette Hill. A gala will be held the following week featuring emcee Russell Ohneck, one of the original Golf Buddies when the program began in 1993.