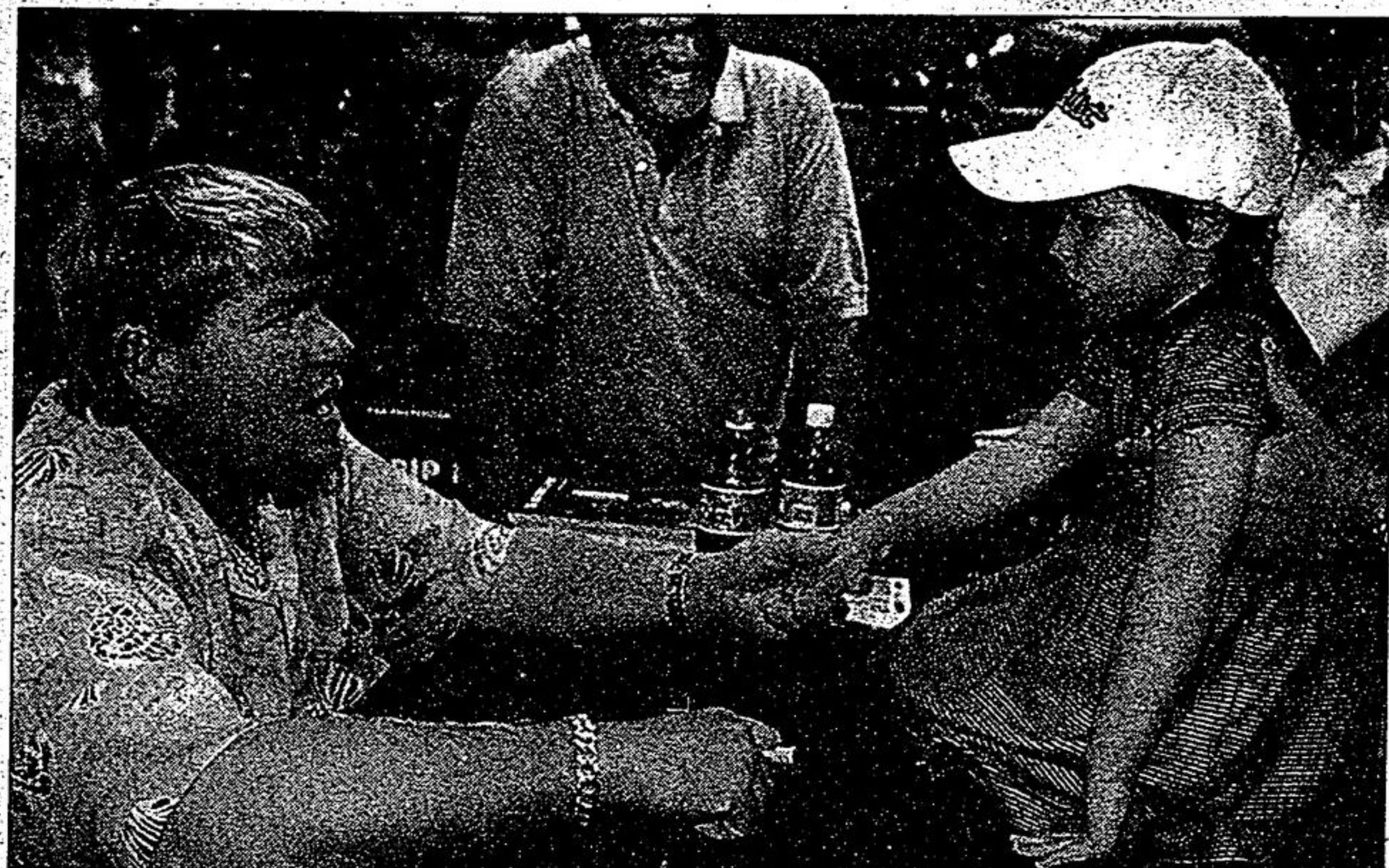


Golf star John Daly feeds off the fans in his 'second home'



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

PGA tour golfer John Daly is in Markham this week for the Bell Canadian Open at Angus Glen Golf Club. He was at the Markham Golf Town store Tuesday and met three-year-old Taylor Lawrence. Looking on is store vice president Murray Bozniak.

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

He's exhibited the weaknesses of every man and he's been known to live life large.

A cigarette smoker who has also downed a few drinks and wagered a bob or two, golfing great John Daly acknowledges he's had a few setbacks in his life.

But whenever the 36-year-old from Rogers, Ark., appears in the public spotlight, he continues to attract a large gathering.

Known for his ability to smash towering drives off the tee in a manner that defies the rudiments of the game, Daly came to Markham this week to compete in the Bell Canadian Open at the Angus Glen Golf Club.

Arriving jet-lagged late Monday, after finishing 10th in a European Tour event in

Germany last weekend, Daly says he feels fortunate that his supporters have stuck with him. Especially considering he has only four PGA victories to his credit, the last of which was the 1995 British Open, and is currently 63rd in the world rankings.

"The fans haven't given up on me and I haven't given up," said Daly, who signed autographs for his admirers at the Golf Town in Markham on Tuesday afternoon. "Things are starting to turn around for me. I've worked hard on my game. I have three greens around my house and I've worked hard on my short game," he said.

No stranger to York Region, Daly played Angus Glen's south course links at charity events in 1999 and 2000. Last year, Daly played the Magna Golf Club in Aurora with fel-

low Arkansas native and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Although he's familiar with Angus Glen's 7,372-yard, par 72 south course, which plays into Daly's hands because of its long fairways, he downplays that potential advantage.

"I played the course a couple of years ago and I don't remember too much about it except some of the holes are elevated," he said.

Daly also enters the event as the south course record holder after carding a 68 in a non-PGA event in 2000. Daly though, guarantees his mark will be eclipsed when the four-day event tees off today.

"It'll be beaten, trust me," he said. "I'm just going to go out there and play and enjoy it. I love being here in Canada. It's like a second home to me."



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