

Vega Prevails in \$50,000 Challenge

By TheGolfChannel.com Team – December 12, 2006

The Big Break VI Trump National

Editor's note: The Big Break VI featured nine men and nine women competing against each other in a variety of challenges that tested their skills and mental toughness for the right to compete in two Champions Tour and two LPGA Tour events, respectively. One female and one male were eliminated from the series each week, with the two standing being crowned Big Break VI: Trump National winners.

Bri Vega was one of the most unlikely contestants to emerge as the winner of The Big Break VI: Trump National. After all, wasn't she one of competitors nobody wanted as a teammate in the first episode?

"I'm like the kid not being picked in dodge ball," a dejected Vega explained when she was not picked as a partner and was forced to survive an elimination challenge to stay on the series. "No one wanted me as a partner."

Vega must feel like one of the hip kids now. The 24-year-old Duramed FUTURES Tour player became the ultimate winner in The Big Break VI: Trump National by defeating Denny Hepler in a nine-hole match at Trump National Golf Course, Los Angeles.

In what was billed as a battle of the sexes between the nine female and nine male contestants, Vega won the match to earn \$21,000 of the \$50,000 Donald Trump put up for the competition. In addition, she will travel to New York on a private plane supplied by NetJets to receive her winnings personally from Trump, along with the keys to a 2007 Chrysler Aspen.

The highlights of Bri's whirlwind tour of the Big Apple and visit to Trump Tower to collect her prizes directly from Trump will air in a bonus Big Break VI episode next Tuesday at 10 p.m. ET on the Golf Channel.

In the Big Break, friends become foes and adversaries can be recruited allies. That was the Trump-twist in the series finale as Vega was paired with a different female competitor on each of the first eight holes of the match. Hepler did the same with the remaining male competitors. At the ninth and final hole of the match, the two captains competed head-to-head as individuals without a partner.

Each hole was worth a set amount of money and the player with the most of Trump's cash at the end of the match was the winner. Via being the female and male champions, Hepler and Vega were the captains of the teams and were the only two who could win the trip and car. Their teammate, however, splits the total amount won on each hole.

Not that Hepler and Vega haven't already been handsomely rewarded. As the female champion, she received an exemption into the 2007 SBS Open at Turtle Bay and the 2007 Longs Drugs Challenge, as well as waived entry fees for the 2007 Duramed FUTURES Tour season. For his winning effort, he earned exemptions into the 2007 Turtle Bay Championship and the 2007 Bank of America Championship, as well as waived entry fees in six events on the 2007 Heartland Players Senior Tour.

"This twist was super," said the 51-year-old Hepler. "It got everyone back involved and a chance to win a little money. It also put them back on the hot seat."

Helper and an ensemble of teammates shut out the females on the first five holes to give him a \$9,000 lead. Vega responded with help from Ashley Gomes and Rachel Bailey to win Nos. 15 and 16 to earn \$7,000.

"I have never had a putt like that for that much money," Vega said of the \$4,000 birdie-putt she made on the 16th hole.

With the last two holes worth \$8,000 and \$10,000 respectively, the pressure was just beginning. Both teams made par on No. 17 to send the match to the final hole with a total of \$18,000 on the line.

After Helper pulled his tee shot into the left hazard, Vega found the fairway and hit her approach inside 10-feet. Helper attempting to play from the hazard but was ultimately forced to take a penalty drop. After he reached the green in four, Vega put an end to the competition by making her birdie putt.

Vega pocketed \$14,000 on the final hole with \$4,000 going to teammate Bridget Dwyer for her play on No. 17.

"I win \$21,000 and a new Chrysler Aspen," said Vega. "I'm going to get to fly on a private jet to New York to visit Mr. Trump at Trump Towers. I can't believe this is happening."

With the events of the day, and the series in general, you could say it was something similar as going to Disneyland.