

Lawsuit a threat to April tourney

By Randall Mell

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The [LPGA](#) and the owners of the Fairmont Turnberry Isle Resort & Club in Aventura face a legal challenge in their bid to bring a new [golf](#) tournament to South [Florida](#) next spring.

The organizers of a Passover holiday event for more than 500 Orthodox Jews filed a lawsuit Monday in [Miami-Dade County](#) Circuit Court asserting that the resort is breaking its contract with them to make room for an LPGA tournament that 'would be more lucrative.' The resort notified organizers in a letter last month that it was canceling the Passover holiday event contract but gave no explanation.

The lawsuit states that Presidential Holidays Southeast has a contract to host a Passover event at the resort from April 17-27 of next year, the fourth year of a five-year agreement. The dates conflict with the new LPGA event, which is scheduled to be played April 24-27.

Attorneys for Presidential Holidays Southeast say the complex nature of a Passover event that observes ancient rituals to the letter of Jewish law makes it nearly impossible to relocate with more than half of the 200 or so families from around the world who will attend having already booked reservations. The lawsuit seeks to compel the resort to honor the Passover holiday contract.

'The contract specifically states that they may not cancel us to take what they deem better business,' said attorney David Freedman, who's representing Presidential Holidays. 'There are strict Old Testament laws that must be adhered to, ritual meals where you can't cook dairy and meat in the same kitchen. It's impossible to move, but the resort's owners are saying we're out on the street because the LPGA is coming in.'

Donald Soffer, the founder of Turnberry Isle and managing partner of Turnberry Associates, is named as a defendant in the lawsuit. He couldn't be reached Monday for comment. Neither could Phil Goldfarb, the ownership group's president.

The LPGA is also named as a defendant, but an LPGA spokesman said the tour was unfamiliar with the lawsuit and couldn't yet comment.

Lynda Clare, who co-owns Presidential Holidays Southeast with her husband, Stuart Vidockler, said attempts to find alternative sites that meet special Orthodox requirements have failed since they learned of the cancellation last month.

The new celebrity pro-am tournament will seek to lure LPGA stars such as Lorena Ochoa, [Annika Sorenstam](#), Karrie Webb and Morgan Pressel.

Turnberry Associates has invested \$100 million in resort renovations over the last year, including a major redesign of the club's 18-hole golf courses.

'They want to be known as a premier golf destination, and this golf tournament is an opportunity to showcase their golf courses, but it doesn't give them the right to cancel our contract,' Clare said.

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