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Optimist Junior Golf Announces Members of 2011 All-Scholastic Team

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – Optimist Junior Golf recently announced the junior golfers who will make up the 2011 Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team. The team recognizes junior golfers who excel not only on the golf course but also in the classroom. After reviewing the qualifications of a number of impressive applicants, the Optimist Junior Golf Committee selected five exceptional student athletes for the team.

Optimist Junior Golf bestowed the 2011 All-Scholastic Team honor on Will Davenport of Palm City, Fla.; Forrest Gamble of Birmingham, Ala.; Haley King of Elkhart, Ind.; Caroline Rouse of St. Louis; and David Sargent of Davidson, N.C. Rouse is also recipient of the “Bringing Out the Best in Kids” Community Service Award.

The members of the 2011 Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team will receive automatic exemptions into the 2011 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships July 26 through 31 at PGA National Resort and Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. In addition, the members of the scholastic team will have their registration fee for the tournament waived. All of this year’s honorees will also be recognized for their accomplishments at the tournament’s opening ceremonies on July 27.

“This year’s group of applicants would impress anyone watching them on the course, but their outstanding accomplishments in the classroom, their involvement in extracurricular activities and their dedication to helping others make them truly exceptional individuals,” said Mike Woodward, chairman of the Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Team Committee. “We are proud to name these five young golfers as this year’s All-Scholastic Team.”

Applicants were required to be 16 to 18 years old and past participants of the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships, Optimist International Tournament of Champions or Optimist District qualifiers. Those making the team exemplified an impressive balance of academics, golf and community service.

Will Davenport is finishing his senior year at Martin County High School, where he has maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA and is ranked 15th out of a class of 399. Davenport, who excelled on both the SAT and ACT, is a National Merit Qualifier and HP Scholastic Junior All-American. He is team captain for his school’s golf and tennis teams and was state runner-up in both sports. He will play men’s golf at Yale this fall. Davenport competed in the 2009 and 2010 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships and 2009 Optimist International Tournament of Champions. Last December, he took first place in the Junior Honda Classic. Davenport is an accomplished pianist and dedicates time to Soles for Souls, distributing shoes to underprivileged children.

Entering his senior year at Vestavia Hills High School, Forrest Gamble has a 4.677 GPA and is ranked second in his class of 408. He performed at a high level on both the ACT and SAT and placed first in the LSU Math Tournament. He has competed in a number of American Junior Golf Association and Southeastern Junior Golf Tour events, taking first place in the SJGT’s Ross Bridge tournament last July

and finishing third in the Brad Willis Memorial last August. He has also competed in the Optimist International Junior Golf Championships District Qualifier for Alabama-Louisiana-Mississippi. Gamble has devoted time volunteering at Birmingham First Tee and Relay for Life.

Haley King is at the top of her class as she finishes up her senior year at Elkhart Memorial High School. With a 4.5 GPA, King is a National Merit Commended Student, has received academic athlete awards all four years of high school and was named to the Academic All-State Teams for golf and basketball. She will play women's golf at Colorado State University in the fall. On the course, she competed in the 2010 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships and has placed first in Indiana High School Athletic Association sectional and regional tournaments. Her numerous volunteer activities include tutoring younger students and teaching middle school students about making healthy decisions.

Caroline Rouse will graduate this spring ranked first in her class of 134 at Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School. Rouse has maintained a 4.0 GPA and performed exceptionally on the ACT and SAT. She will play women's golf at Yale in the fall. Rouse competed in the 2010 Optimist International Junior Golf Championships and Optimist International Tournament of Champions. She has also finished first in a number of Missouri State High School Activities Association tournaments. As the founder of Mano a Corazón, she volunteers with children of Hispanic migrant farm workers, visiting migrant camps and distributing sporting equipment. She has also secured donations from Rawlings Inc. for the project. Because of her volunteer efforts, Rouse has been named this year's recipient of the "Bringing Out the Best in Kids" Community Service Award.

David Sargent is completing his junior year at William A. Hough High School. He is currently ranked ninth in his class of 425 students, maintains a 4.725 GPA and received strong scores on the SAT. Sargent took first in two Optimist District Qualifiers in 2010 and competed at last summer's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships. He more recently tied for first at the National Junior Golf Tour's College Prep Rock Barn in March and took first place in April at the North Carolina Qualifier for the Callaway Junior World. Off the course, Sargent was selected to compete in the National DECA Competition. He dedicates free time as a ball boy for the Davidson College men's basketball team and participates in a "Christmas Elves" package delivery service.

The All-Scholastic Team is named for Hugh Cranford, who served as executive director of Optimist International from 1967 to 1986. He was instrumental in starting the Optimist Junior Golf program and in 1978 led the efforts to co-sponsor the Optimist Junior World Golf Championships in San Diego, the forerunner to today's Optimist International Junior Golf Championships. Cranford served as chairman of the Optimist Junior Golf Committee and is an emeritus member of the committee.

Optimist International is one of the world's largest service club organizations with nearly 100,000 adult and youth members in 3,400 clubs in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Mexico and throughout the world. Carrying the motto "Bringing Out the Best in Kids," Optimists conduct positive service projects that reach more than six million young people each year. The Optimist Junior Golf program is one of the organization's most prominent projects. For information visit www.optimist.org.

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