

OPTIMIST LINKS

A newsletter for Optimist Golf District Chairs

December 2008

Greetings,

Happy Holidays from the Optimist Junior Golf Program! Please see below for the December 2008 issue of the Optimist Links newsletter.

FOUR JUNIOR GOLFERS CROWNED CHAMPIONS OF THE OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

Four junior golfers walked away with title of champion of the 2008 Optimist International Tournament of Champions. On a windy and cool November day in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 90 golfers from 20 states, three Canadian provinces and seven other countries took on PGA National Resort and Spa's Champion course, home of the PGA TOUR's Honda Classic. After an unseasonably warm day during round 1, a cold front pushed through South Florida and temperatures dipped into the low 50s at the start of play. But the temperatures rebounded into the 70s and so did the junior golfers' play on "The Champ."



In the Boys 16-18 division, a fantastic finish by Andrew Cho of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida, helped him recover to take the title with 72-74-146 (+2) total. Just as he had done in the first round, Cho started his second round with a birdie on the back nine's opening hole. Cho followed up the great start with six pars in a row until stumbling with an equal number of bogeys on holes eight through 13. The string of consecutive bogeys dropped him out of the lead. But a stellar finish on the front nine, including birdies on six, eight and nine, vaulted him back to the top of the leaderboard. Cho outlasted Daniel Berger (Jupiter, Florida) and Nicolas Reach (Moscow, Pennsylvania) who finished second and third at +4 and +6, respectively.

The Girls 14-18 division included a trio of talented junior golfers taking on the difficult Champion course. Starting three back of Suzie Lee of East Northport, New York, another New York native, Annie Park, knew what she needed to do. Park, of Levittown, started her round with a birdie on the first hole and added three more to offset three bogeys on each side. She finished the tournament at 77-74-151 (+7), one ahead of Stephanie Meadow of Jordanstown, Ireland (+8), and two in front of round-one leader Lee (+9).

In the Boys 14-15 division, Quinlan Prchal of Glenview, Illinois, and Clancy Waugh of North Palm Beach, Florida, battled the back nine of the Champion course, but the tournament could not be decided without going to extra holes. Waugh put together a solid even-par back nine, including a birdie on the difficult par-four 16th. But Prchal, who struggled early on the back nine, finished with four straight pars to stay even with Waugh. The sudden-death playoff took four extra holes to decide with both players

making pars on 10, 17 and 18. Prchal broke through on the par-five 10th by sinking a five foot birdie putt to take the Boys 14-15 title. Both players finished the Tournament of Champions at +6 while Lucas Kim (Toronto, Ontario) finished three back at +9.

Katlyn Kennedy of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, improved 15 shots from round 1 to finish 96-81-177 in the Girls 13 & Under division. Samantha Spencer (Georgetown, Ontario) finished in second with a 94-93-187.

For complete tournaments results, [click here](#).

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

Some comments received from Tournament of Champions golfers and parents...

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to participate in the Optimist Junior Golf Tournament of Champions last week. The experience was exceptional and I will carry the memories for a long time. Thank you so much for your efforts which allow so many junior golfers to take part in such a wonderful event.

--Jocelyn Thompson (girls 14-18 division)

Thank you for putting on such a well run event. The number of volunteers helping with the tournament was very impressive. The event was well organized and run efficiently.

--Keith Kennerly (parent)

Thank you and all of the Optimist members for taking the time to put on such a great tournament. The Optimist tournament, to me, is my favorite and I always look forward in competing and, hopefully, winning one year. The one thing that stands out is how nice all of the Optimist members and I hope to one day to give back. Thanks again. I look forward to seeing you in the summer.

--Gabriella DiMarco (girls 14-18 division)

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to you for affording both our children, Mandela and Monifa Sealy, the opportunity to play in the Optimist Tournament of Champions. The challenges posed by the tough and prestigious Champions Course will no doubt be a plus in their golf development. We also wish to thank all committee members and volunteers who made us feel most welcome during the event. Best of luck to Optimist International in the future. Kindest regards.

--The Sealy Family (boys 16-18 and girls 14-18 divisions)

2008-09 JUNIOR GOLF COMMITTEE

The 2008-09 Committee for the Optimist Junior Golf Program has been named. Optimist International President Don Sievers has appointed former Optimist International Vice President Wes Norris (Bonita Springs, Florida) as Chairman. The three other members of the Committee are Judy Morris (Derby, Kansas), John Reel (Plainfield, Indiana) and J.C. St-Onge (St-Jerome, Québec). Hugh Cranford (Charlotte, NC) continues his role as Committee Member Emeritus.

The Optimist Junior Golf Committee is responsible for the overall coordination and operation of Optimist Junior Golf international events in addition to setting all policies

and procedures for the Optimist Junior Golf Program.

TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS TO MOVE TO NEW HOME IN 2009

Optimist International is moving the Tournament of Champions to a new venue in 2009. [Orange County National Golf Center & Lodge](#) in Winter Garden, Florida (Orlando area) will host the 5th Annual Optimist International Tournament of Champions, November 7-8, 2009. Orange County National has two of the finest championship courses in Orlando.



As host site of the 2009 PGA TOUR's Q-School Finals a few weeks after the Tournament of Champions, Orange County National will be in ideal condition. The Tournament of Champions will take place on the Crooked Cat course.

Participants and guests will have the opportunity to stay in the on-site lodge, just footsteps away from the clubhouse, golf courses and one of the largest practice facilities in the world. Three age divisions will be offered: Boys 16-18, Boys 14-15 and Girls 14-18. A golfer's division will be based on his/her age as of November 7, 2009).

Stay tuned for more information.

DON'T FORGET TO SUBMIT YOUR TOURNAMENT LOGISTICS FORM

The deadline to submit 2009 District tournament information to Optimist International is January 30. Please make sure we have the most up-to-date information on record about your District tournament. To download a copy of the District Tournament Logistics Form, [click here](#).

If you do not submit your 2009 tournament information by January 30, your District will be classified as an "At Large" District. This means junior golfers who live in your District will be required to travel to another District's qualifier (ages 14-15 & 16-18) or will be able to apply for the championships through the "At Large" application process (ages 10-11 & 12-13).

Thank you to all District Chairs who have already submitted their tournament information.

THE INAUGURAL OPTIMIST GOLF PARENT-CHILD CLASSIC

Optimist International is pleased to announce the inaugural Optimist Golf Parent-Child Classic, a fun new Optimist Golf event for two-player teams consisting of a junior golfer and his/her parent, grand parent, or uncle/aunt. The event, scheduled for December 5-6, 2009, will be open to Parent/Child teams in three separate age divisions: 16-18, 14-15 and 13 & under. [Disney's Lake Buena Vista Golf Course](#) will serve as the host venue. Discounted hotel offers at *Walt Disney World*® Resort will be available.



This 36-hole event will utilize one day of "best ball" play and one day of "modified alternate shot" play. Yardages will be adjusted by age and gender. Parents and children of all abilities will be invited to come together to

celebrate their relationship while competing in this unique new event on the junior golf circuit. The tournament will be promoted to junior golfers who have participated in past Optimist Junior Golf events, but will also be open to the general public.

Stay tuned for more information.

QUALIFYING METHOD REMINDER

By now, you should be familiar with the qualifying method that began in 2008. The method provides Districts with a set number of qualifying spots for each of the age divisions offered in its qualifier. The number of qualifying spots are determined in advance based on the number of junior golfers who participated in that District's qualifier in the summer prior. If you have not already done so, please read through the 2009 District Manual and other information sent to you earlier this year.

Based on comments from District Chairs, we are not including the number of qualifying spots on the qualifier entry forms or website this year. Please be prepared to provide this information when golfers and parents contact you. We are also including standard statements about the qualifying method, out-of-District golfers and financial assistance provided on all District qualifier web pages and entry forms. These statements will read as follows:

A limited number of golfers in each division will advance to the international championships provided they shoot the minimum qualifying score. Please check with the District Chair for details.

A maximum of one (1) golfer from outside of the District is permitted to qualify per division. If a golfer who lives outside of the District qualifies, his/her participation will not eliminate a District resident from qualifying.

Optimist Districts and Clubs provide financial support for winners to attend the international championships. The amount of financial support provided and the age divisions covered varies by District. Please check with the District Chair for details. There is no guarantee that financial support will be provided to golfers who travel outside of their home District.

If you have questions about the qualifying method, please contact the Optimist Junior Golf office at golf@optimist.org or 800-500-8130, ext. 209.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Congratulations to all of you who were involved in making the 2008 Tournament of Champions a success!

We always get plenty of feedback from the participants and their families and this year was no exception. Players continue to compliment us on all the great work that the volunteers do both on and off the golf course. The Tournament of Champions, while small in comparison to the summer championships, continues to get great support from our membership. Thanks again for all you do for the program.

Moving forward to next summer, we have found a good formula to help ensure that everyone stays onsite and we get all of the rounds started in the morning. For those of you who have attended the championships during some of the rainy summers, I know you will agree that this was an excellent change for everyone involved. None of us like to shorten the championships because of weather. With the new qualifying method and the cooperation of our District Chairs, we are able to complete all tournament rounds before the typical South Florida afternoon thunderstorms.

The Junior Golf Committee and staff are always looking for ways to create a better experience for the players and their families. This past summer, we brought in USGA rules officials to work directly with our volunteer marshals. The program worked very well! It allowed us to have a very good group of rules officials that not only made rulings but also held a couple of rules clinics for our marshals and got them directly involved with on-course rulings.

I had a chance to visit some other junior golf tournaments in the past few months. It is always good to see how other organizations run their events, but I also think they learn from us! I visited with some parents of junior golfers who have played in Optimist events in the past and they were very complimentary of the Optimist Golf program, especially the tireless work of our volunteers.

The summer event continues to grow in popularity around the globe. We continue to get new countries applying for spots in the event. We are networking ourselves around the world to make sure that kids everywhere have an opportunity to participate at the local level.

The Optimist Junior Golf staff and Committee certainly appreciate all that you do for the program. Please mark your calendars for the championships at PGA National this summer, July 23-August 2. We will need more Optimist volunteers than ever to continue to make the Optimist Golf program one of the best in junior golf!

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Andy Hudson, Director
Optimist Junior Golf Program