



Greater Jacksonville Junior Championship

Timuquana Country Club

Sawgrass Country Club

July 17-18, 2017

Good job everyone, you gave it your all! That's all anyone can ever ask.

One of the hand full of events players wait for during the long NFJG TOUR season is the **Web.com Junior Players Tour – Greater Jacksonville Junior Championship**. In most city's it would be called the **City Championship**, but with Jacksonville being so wide spread and normally including all surrounding communities we decided at the inception of this event to name it the "GREATER Jacksonville Junior Championship".

Again another record setting event. Year by year all the events are growing. Keep spreading the word!

The Championship was once again sponsored by our friends at the **Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA)** and this year we had the largest field in the history of the event. Each year the event has grown. In past we had 47, 55 and 64 players competing and this year 77 was the number. For JAGA the number 77 seems to be the number of the week, as 77 top amateur players are also competing in the **JAGA Amateur at Jacksonville Golf and Country Club**. I'm thinking if there is a roulette table around 77 is a good number (if it goes that high). Good luck to our junior players who qualified for that event.

Many thanks to Fred Seely and his JAGA Directors for their assist with this year's event. JAGA had seven volunteers who spent the day with use helping with officiating and finding bad bounces and lost balls. They all did a wonderful job and we're blessed to have them.

Round one was played at gorgeous Timuquana Country Club. To express the comments made by many who came to talk to me at registration was "What a beautiful view and golf course!", so majestic! Indeed, Timuquana Country Club is a pretty special Donald Ross Golf Course which sits on the river overlooking the city. This course should be on everyone's bucket list of courses to play. Thank you Head Golf Professional Clint Avret and his Professional Staff for a wonderful day of golf.

The second round was played at the stunning Sawgrass Country Club. This year we utilized all three nines. The East, West and South thanks to the great planning of Head Golf Professional Mike Broderick. The Professional Staff at Sawgrass made sure every fine detail was tended to making our Championship the best ever.

As I prepare to head overseas to Scotland today with the NFJG TOUR Ryder Cup Team and with me running out of time to get this event documented and in the books I asked the NFJG Staff to tag team the "Tournament Story". So the following Staff wrote a piece of the story. The staff members who wrote articles was Kevin Glynn, Lynne Kirkpatrick, Mark Heeter and Mike Charrie and myself. Each Staffer was assigned a division.

If you played in this event and for a dozen Titleist PROV1's if you can guess who wrote what article I will give you one Dozen balls. You have to get them all right to get the dozen. I will give the balls to the first five winners. Just send your picks to me at jackaschenbach@pga.com. One entry per player.

Ok there is no doubt this event was another great event and I am proud of all the work folks do to make this happen. I am also proud of the many players who competed with passion, commitment and respect for other players on their way to playing their best golf as they become known as the Jacksonville area best golfer. It's a title our champions will carry for one full year. This year six outstanding champions played some AWESOME golf and deserved the right to hoist the champion's trophy.

One player in particular would do more hoisting than the other five champions. Why? Because our tournament overall champion needed to be determined and this year, it was determined by a sudden death playoff between our recent North Florida Amateur Champion James Ballato from Fernandina Beach and Green Coves Springs Arden Brake.

Ballato would wait patiently for the Boys 16-18 results for more than an hour to see if his win in the Elite Tour Boys Division with a score of two over par 146 would hold up as the overall tournament low score. When the results were in he would find out that he was tie at 146 and a Sudden Death Play-off would take place

Arden Brake a member since 2012 hadn't played much this year on the NFJG TOUR, but returned for a shot at the right to be call our cities best. His mission? To win the **Boys 16-18 Division** Title and that he did out scoring some fine players along the way.

The two courses played were demanding, longer than normal and required constant attention and Brake came prepared, but so did 19 other top contenders like Fleming Islands Drew Neilen, Green Coves Springs Eric Poehlman and Ponte Vedra's William Levinson. After round one these four players would be just one shot apart, with Brake, Neilen and Poehlman all tied at the top with a one over par round of 73 with Levinson just one back at 74. Seven other players would just be 2-4 shots back and still in contention.

During round one there wasn't really any spectacular play, just consistent controlled play managing the game which Timuquana requires you to do. Some fireworks did happen on the course though, as EAGLE MAN Drew Neilen eagled the par-5 15th hole and William Levinson eagled the par-5 12th. Only ten birdies in all would be posted by the top leaders as the course was set up tough for this city championship and rightfully so.

In round two, playing the West-South Courses at Sawgrass Country Club the battle would continue and by the seventh hole William Levinson would be the new leader in the Boys 16-18 Division. One under through seven and after a Brake bogey at the par-4 fourth and par-3 sixth holes Levinson would stand alone, but bogeys at the 8th and 9th holes would move Brake back in the lead at the turn. Both players would turn at 37.

Playing the South Course for the inward nine Brake would post up back-to-back birdies at the par-4 14th and par-5 15th holes to create a four shot swing and take the lead for good. Brakes one over par round of 73 would be good to be crowned Champion. Still to come would be the battle for the Runner-up spot and Tyler Broadus coming out of nowhere, would birdie three holes on the day to fire a one over par 73 to nip Levinson by one stroke. Levinson would bogey the 17th and 18th holes, but none the less should be very proud of his outstanding play capturing the third place trophy.

Brake named champion of the Boys 16-18 Division would now need to go back out to the course, as his total score of two over par 146 would tie that of Elite Tour Champions James Ballato. The sudden death would go to the West Course and would be short lived as Brake would make par for the win and rights to the coveted and beautiful Overall Champions trophy.

St. Augustine's Jonathan Lumley would have the cleanest scorecard of the day. One lone bogey at the par-4 7th hole, an EAGLE at the par-5 15th hole would place him at one under par for the day. A go for broke moment at the reachable par-5 18th hole would be a "Go BIG or stay at home" moment, but a quadruple bogey at the risk-reward hole would cost him dearly.

In the **Girls 13-18 Division**, what a great victory for Olivia Whitten today at the Greater Jacksonville Junior Championship. Entering today's round at Sawgrass CC Whitten was one stroke back from our first round leader Julia Wallace (76). Olivia's second round (73) at Sawgrass was flawless except for a triple bogey seven on hole #5 on the West Course which was Olivia's 15th hole. She finished with 150 total for the Tournament.

Second place was decided by a match of cards. Julia Wallace came back after a difficult front side at Sawgrass East Course and finished with an 88 for a Tournament total of 164. Her first round total of 76 at Timuquana was her first NFJG Tournament round under 80 and would leave her tied with Kayleigh Baker at 164. Wallace would win a scorecard playoff for the Runner-up spot.

Kayleigh Baker finished in third place who also ended up with a Tournament total score of 164 (82-82).

In the **Elite Tour Boys 13-15 Division**, don't call it a comeback, because on the first day of competition at Timuquana Country Club, James Ballato posted the division's low round of the day of 74 (+2) which gave him a four-stroke lead over the nearest competitor. But that wouldn't be the low round of the event. Ballato would keep a firm grip on his lead, and eventual title, by besting his first day score by two and firing an impressive 72 (E) on the final day of competition at Sawgrass Country Club leaving the competition in the rear-view mirror to earn the win by a commanding thirteen strokes overall!

While Ballato ran away with this one, the rest of the division was a strong competition the entire way with six of the remaining eight players on day one within two strokes of each other, and a mere ten strokes separating second place from ninth overall at the close of competition! Three players ended in a tie behind Ballato with a total score of 159, Ford Chandler, Ober Theam, and Carter Lewis. Chandler (last nine of 40) edged out Theam (last nine of 42) for second place, while Theam (last nine of 42, last 6 of 28) edged out Lewis (last nine of 42, last six of 30) for third place in a scorecard playoff.

Enroute to Ballato's fourth consecutive victory in which he's competed with NFJG, he carded five birdies, twenty-five pars, and a mere six holes with a score of bogey or worse (only one was higher than bogey at double). Consistency with few up and down swings on holes is a huge part of being a successful golfer, and Ballato proved just that with that steady scorecard.

With the Web.com Junior Tour Championship coming up on July 31-August 1, Ballato is already registered and looking to make it five straight. Will he be able to pull off this unprecedented run in the division, or will someone be able to dethrone King James...?

Andrew Davis put together two consistent rounds of 77-76=153 to claim victory in the **Rising Tour Boys 13-15**. Trailing by 3 entering the final round, Davis shot 37 on the Sawgrass Country Club West course, his first nine, to cruise to victory by 4 over Logan Flores. First round leader Jonathan Greco, who made an eagle 2 on his first hole of the tournament Monday at Timuquana, finished third. After a disappointing finish at last week's North Florida Amateur, Davis played the par 5's in one under par for the tournament, which proved to be the difference. Flores continues his hot play this summer as he finishes runner-up for a second straight week. He won the Gordon Ira earlier in June and leads the summer point series narrowly over Greco. The final event of the year, The Tour Championship, will decide who wins the summer series in this age group.

During the first round at Timuquana Country Club, not only was the weather hot, but a group of 10-12 year old Boys were heating up the course with sub 80 rounds. Chase Carroll started off with a tough front 9 shooting 41 but with one bogey and two birdies on the back he ended up in the lead with a 76.

Not to be outdone, Brody Stevenson and Cam Goldknopf both shot admirable rounds of 77 to put them in a close race against Carroll. Nolan Harper also made himself heard in the first round firing a 78, which included three nice birdies on a tough track.

Day two brought another hot day, another beautiful course, and more hot rounds to this age division. Brody Stevenson and Nolan Harper both shot 79's to put them in contention for top spots. Brody put up four great birdies in his first nine but filled the scorecard with a few fumbles to log his 79. Nolan put a couple of doubles and a few bogies to post his 79.

One player stayed cool in the heat. Chase Carroll played a fine round. Dropping four strong birdies, two bogies, and only one double in that final round, he carded an even par 72 to take top honors.

Nice round Chase!

In our **Foundation Division** eight boys and three girls would take the challenge and play two wonderful golf courses and all would have a great time doing especially Champion Tyler Mawhinney. Mawhinney made golf look easy as he navigated the two tough courses. The young player, new to the NFJG TOUR just two months ago would win for the fourth straight time. He would open is tournament with a one over par 37 at Timuquana Country Club with a birdie at the ninth hole and a score of five over par 41 for round two and a total 78.

Richard Hayden Ruth would be the closest competitor at 85. Ruth would earn the Runner up spot and Emmet Kuhlenkamp and Dad would create the drama of the day. Thinking the second round was played at Timuquana Country Club the duo, player and caddie would arrive at a course finding no tour set up. A quick phone call and he would find out he had gone to the wrong course. In the middle of peak traffic and less than 40 minutes to his tee time, it would be close. With three minutes to tee time the call was received and the tandum was one mile out. The tee time had passed, but luckily by rule you have five minutes after your tee time to report to the teeing ground. With 30 seconds to spare the car door opened just short of the tee box and Kuhlenkamp ran to the tee, teed it up and swung away. **He would birdie the first hole.** With a two stroke penalty Kuhlenkamp would shoot 46 and claim the rights to the third place trophy with a final score of 92, tied with Matthew French winning the scorecard playoff.

Next up the final event of the year: THE TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

