

The University of Florida Invitational

The Mark Bostic Golf Club

April 15, 2017

Next up: The Titleist Invitational – April 22 and 23

Three years ago the NFJG TOUR took a leap forward and added to the tournament schedule three ROAD trips of which one of the three added events was the ***University of Florida Invitational*** played at ***The Mark Bostic Golf Club*** in Gainesville, Florida. I can now say what a great move it was to include this great golf course and opportunity for junior players and family members to witness first hand this wonderful Donald Ross designed golf course. We hope you have the same feeling.

In our first two years 45 and 51 players participated in the previous events respectively and happily this year 84 players took the challenge and hit the road. When they arrived what did they find? They found a golf course with Augusta like quality. The golf course well-groomed with greens pure as a new carpet, flowers popping and trees blooming. It short it was a spectacular golf day, with spectacular weather to boot. Not to mention it was good to see so many smiling faces of parents and our junior tour players alike. It was also nice to see our past NFJG TOUR Players who are currently attending the university or who were supporting other players. Last year's scholarship award winner Ryan Ulmer blessed us with his presence and gave us an update on college life and his studies.



It seemed like there were Gators everywhere and this year the Gators were being chased by both Rules Officials and Gator Hunters. Yup, live action was taking place while the kids were teeing off to rid the golf course of some gator nuisance. One gator was doing a little too much hissing at fellow Gator's, so it got hog tied and dragged off to a safer place for all. Lynne Kirkpatrick was also taking on hazardous duty as she took on a small gator. It appears bunker ranks have many purposes.

Many of our parents and players wore their UF Colors to show their ownership of a college well attended along with those who have future desires to belong. All-in-all, I would tell you that this was the best event of the year so far.

Many thanks to Scott Hampton and his staff for a wonderful experience and guess what we are already booked for next year. If you couldn't make it this year. Write this one down. I'm thinking we will have 120 players.

Let me tell you this Donald Ross golf course is not an easy track, but for some of our players they made it look easy or they really just have great games. I think it's the latter as we all know there is nothing easy about the game of golf.

The mention of Top Honors goes to Amelia Williams from Gainesville who captured the Gator Award in the **Girls 13-18 Division**. Williams posted nines of 36-33 for a one under par round of 69 for her first win on the NFJG TOUR and the low round of the day. Williams posted one birdie on the front nine and three on the back nine with birdies on the 11th, 12th and 14th holes.

Four time champion Lisa Colee was this week's Runner-up with a fine score of 75.

The Tour welcomes back Tori Mouton, who was recovering from a lower back issue. Mouton finishing in the Bronze position tying Marissa Cardenas at 79 and winning in a scorecard playoff.

Our **Elite Tour Boys 13-15 Division** had a great field with 15 top players in the field. Welcome back Sam Nicholson. Returning in style, Nicholson would bring his "A" Game posting 14 pars, two birdies against just two bogeys on the day to fire a Gator quality even par round of 70, but at the end of 18 it would not be enough to secure a win. On his heels and playing in two groups behind would be Will McGriff and he was on fire coming out of the gates. Three under after four holes and two under at the turn would be some quality play as well. McGriff would add another birdie at the 10th to take it back to three under, but bogeys at the 10 and 11th holes would bring the lead back to just one. Another bogey at the drivable par-4 16th would bring the lead to all square and sudden death it would be. Nicholson would win the Gator Award in two additional holes. McGriff would win the Silver Medal for his well fought battle and Jacob Saarela (72) would earn the Bronze.

In our **Rising Tour Boys -13-15** Division Jack Barned came to the University of Florida with a great deal of confidence in his game after winning his first medal at the **NFJG TOUR Challenge** just two weeks prior. Barned would play some AWESOME golf as this young man posted his best round in his NFJG TOUR career, a 75. Barned posted 13 pars and five bogeys to claim his right to the Gator Trophy.

Alexander Whitmore also continues his outstanding play firing a nice 76 on the day to take home the Silver Medal and his fourth medal in the last five events.

Golden Ocala's Hunter Ditty tied Whitmore at 76, but would be defeated in a scorecard play-off. Ditty would win the Bronze.

Our **Boys 16-18 Division** would find another newcomer taking top honors. Welcome Seth Wright! Wright demonstrated his skill on the Donald Ross designed course by carving his way down the fairways and onto the greens. His round included 14 pars, one birdie and three bogeys on the demanding course.

Logan Neel shooting a 77 on the day would take the Runner up spot and Jay Adams and Gavin Szydlo would both shoot 79's. Szydlo would take the Bronze medal winning in a scorecard play-off.

The **Boys 10-12 Division**: Oh my! These Boys are good!! Last week I spoke at the San Jose Country Club's Champions Dinner and one of the things I commented on is "What defines a Champion?" and one

comment I made is a CHAMPION ALWAYS LOOKS FORWARD, they do not look back and they learn by their losses, plus other comments.

So this week at the University I decided that I would test the power of words and repeat those comments to our junior players. Did it have an effect? I think so, or maybe we could just ask Jackson Klauk who brought home the Gator Award for his first win of the 2016-2017 season. Klauk who double bogeyed the 9th hole to turn at 5 over par didn't look back, he looked forward. He parred the difficult par-4 10th hole and then birdied the 11th and parred out from there to come in with a perfect card on the back nine. When asked, how he turned it around, he said he got some great advice. Hint, hint. Don't look back.

If I could have, I would have presented two champion's trophies. Christopher Terzian played like a true champion this past weekend turning in his best score ever. Two under after three holes he must have been in high heaven. Tersian shooting a 74 on the day was the first group in for the division and would wait patiently, but with a smile from ear to ear waiting for the others to post their scores. After the scores were posted and two were tied at 74 a sudden death was imminent. The two leaders would head to the first tee. It was truly a champion moment watching the two prepare at the first tee in a battle for the Gator Award. Klauk would win the hole with a par and the Gator Award, but winners were decided will before.

Tersian would receive the Silver and Danny Erickson (76) would receive the Bronze for his fifth top five finish. Colton Swartz also shot a fine 76, but Erickson would win in a scorecard playoff.

Our **Foundation Boys** would have another good field with nine players. Aiden Clark would continue his dominance and fine play shooting a five over par 40 to take home his own Gator Award. This was Clarks eight top five finish in his last 12 events. Clark nipped seven times a Champion Richard Hayden Ruth by one stroke who shot 41 and the Silver Medal. Third place went to Chase Ricks who shot 46 to take home his first NFJG TOUR Medal, THE BRONZE! Great job boys!!

In the **Girls Foundation** four players would battle it out and Katelyn Huber would flex a little muscle as she outscored nine times a Champion Alyzabeth Morgan by just two strokes. Huber would shoot a nicely done 43 and Morgan a 45. Three pars and a birdie at the par-3 8th hole would be plenty to get the job done and earn the Foundation Gator Award.

Alyzabeth Morgan would win the Silver Medal and Candance Jackson playing in her first event would win the Bronze medal shooting a fine score of 49.

Keep looking forward and we'll see you on the links!!

Sincerely,

Jack Aschenbach, PGA