September Tournaments

- **September 1**
  - Beat The Pro Two-Person Scramble
    - Missoula CC (Missoula)
  - Labor Day Red Ball
    - Livingston GC (Livingston)
  - PNW Senior PGA Championship
    - Tetherow GC (Bend, OR)

- **September 4-5**
  - Eaglesrocker Ladies Triad
  - Mulligans for Memories
    - Lake Hills (Billings)
  - Guys & Dolls
    - Old Works GC (Anaconda)

- **September 5**
  - NW Montana Stroke Play Champ.
    - Indian Springs Ranch GC (Eureka)
  - Fall Classic
    - Madison Meadows (Ennis)
  - Pepsi Gallatin Valley Open
    - Cottonwood Hills GC (Bozeman)

- **September 6**
  - The Elks
  - Polson Bay GC (Polson)
  - PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am
  - RMSPGA (YC) Pro Am
  - RMSPGA (YC) Ladies Pro Am

**Friends McIver and Hedge Share U.S. Open Experience**

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The Barnett Cup is awarded to the top two finishers at the Montana State Amateur every year. For the third consecutive year, Brandon McIver and Jake Hedge of Billings claimed the trophy. But, the highlight of the summer undoubtedly for these two longtime friends was a trip east to North Carolina and the historic Pinehurst Golf Course, as McIver competed in the U.S. Open, with Hedge as his caddie. The MSGA caught up with these two standout golfers and asked about their unique experience.

**On Brandon’s U.S. Open Experience:**

**BM:** It was kind of surreal to be inside the ropes and play with all those guys you see on TV. All those years of watching major championships and to be there as a part of it is something I’ll never forget.

**On Jake’s selection as caddie:**

**BM:** I knew that I had a local qualifier and if I progressed into sectionals I could play well. I didn’t accomplish the original goal, but I made it into the field in an odd fashion [as an alternate], and I told Jake that if I made it I wanted him to caddie.

**JH:** It was enjoyable; I was so excited for Brandon. You never dream you’ll be able to be there together at an event like the U.S. Open.

**On acting as a caddie:**

**JH:** It was nice for me as a competitive player to get experience in that atmosphere with him. I’m not the type of player he is from a talent perspective; I’m better off as a caddie. It was fun to watch him and the other guys and just take it all in from a caddie’s perspective.

**On assessing their teamwork:**

**JH:** I know Brandon’s game pretty well; we are best friends and have played more golf together than anybody. I hadn’t seen him play in a couple months, with him being in Oregon and me in Billings, but I do know the way he is as a person, what he wants to hear, what he doesn’t. It was more about being there for support and just talking through shots and taking everything into account like yardage, wind, and hole locations. What we learned about the U.S. Open is that it doesn’t take much to miss the cut; the margin is so small for error.

**On their tournament preparation and overall takeaways:**

**BM:** It was really nice to get basically 3-4 rounds in. The practice rounds were...Continued on the next page
INTERVIEW ...continued from previous page

some of the most fun I had all week. To play with guys like Jim Furyk, who’s been a tour veteran for twenty plus years is just incredible. Brandt Snedeker, Bill Haas, those guys are world-class players, and to see it up close was amazing. The difference in ability isn’t as much as some people think, they are just so refined in what they do and they are tremendously consistent. I thought it was kind of funny that you never really hit a shot where it’s totally quiet. There are always people moving and commotion; there are so many people there. You end up blocking it out, all the people and the movement was something I thought was cool and more fun; it was interesting to me that I felt that way about it.

JH: The whole production of the place was incredible. Two of the golf courses were just covered in media, trucks, and things… it was nuts.

On Nerves:
BM: Oddly, I felt fairly comfortable. I tried to act the part, which was sometimes tough, but I was surprised at how much it felt like another round of golf at the end of the day. It wasn’t the most nervous I’ve been on the golf course. I’ve had a lot of good tournament preparation leading up to it, with some of the college events that I competed in, like the Pac-12 Championships, NCAA Regionals and NCAA Championships. It’s a learning experience. You learn that every shot is the same and that there is no point in trying to make one shot any better or worse than another one. You learn to control your emotions, to not get too up or down, and take the good with the bad.

JH: In the first round [par 3, ninth hole], Brandon got so plugged into a bunker.
BM: I was literally under the lip.
JH: He couldn’t get both legs into the bunker. You couldn’t see the ball almost. I couldn’t have tried to make that a worse lie if I stepped on it. He was just trying to avoid the ball coming into his own footprint or splash mark. He made an attempt, and then, of course, he had to hit another from the bunker. He’s walking around, hits his next shot, and walks around some more. I bet I had to rake 30 square feet of bunker after that.
BM: I probably piled up eight feet of sand moving around to get my stance with my right foot.
JH: That hole was one time I felt like I had quite a job to do.
BM: He did great, it was awesome.

Awesome was the main adjective used in describing the incredible journey to the U.S. Open for both Brandon McIver, as a competitor, and for Jake Hedge, as his caddie. But, just because it was an experience of a lifetime doesn’t mean it will be the experience of a golfing lifetime. Brandon and Jake both hope to get back to that special championship.

Going Forward:
Brandon competed in the U.S. Amateur and not only qualified, but advanced from Stroke Play to Match Play. During the Match Play portion of the tournament, Brandon picked up a victory in his first match before losing in match two. He heads back to Eugene in September for his junior year at the University of Oregon. The Fall’s slate of tournaments begins in mid-September.

Jake graduated from the University of Wyoming in Laramie. With one year of eligibility remaining, Jake is headed back to his hometown and will continue his college golf career at MSU-Billings.
The idea of an online tournament seems strange, I know. But, don't be scared away! There's really not much to it! Think of the vTour as a fun way to compete and a chance to win great prizes, courtesy of Sun Mountain Sports, regardless of how you play!

June's vTour champions (for Men and Women) each came away with a Rainflex Rainsuit, and July's champions both won a Three 5 Golf Bag! Seriously! And, four additional players were randomly drawn from each tournament for other great prizes, like shoe and valuables bags, just for participating!

There's no reason NOT to play... in fact, if you play golf at all during the next two weeks, why not give it a try? The final vTour for the season runs from August 17-31. You can register any time from now until the 30th, and make sure you post your score by the 31st. This month's prize is a Speed Cart IV Sport!! The playing field is evened by using the Net Score, so everyone has a chance to win...even the juniors!

Remember, to play, you FIRST need to Register on the vTour Home Page (http://msgavtour.golfnet.com/vtour/). The link can also be found on the MSGA website (www.msgagolf.org). You'll need your MSGA Member Login, the same one you use for the online handicap system or MSGA Smartphone App. If you don't know it, contact us at golf@montana.net and we'll set you up.

Once you register, all you have to do is play golf within the vTour dates, and be sure to post your score before the tournament ends. You post your score like you normally do, at either the Kiosk, the online handicap system, or the smartphone app. You can play as many times as you like, and vTour will use your best score...cool, huh? Full details and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the vTour website.

So, register today and spread the word to your friends! More support for this year's vTour series means more chances to play next season with more great prizes to be won! Most importantly, have fun... because that's what golf is all about, right?

Look for more tips and information each month! You can contact Emily at golf@montana.net.

Scan the QR Code or go to www.msgagolf.org

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Have You Tried the vTour Yet?
Emily Hulsey, MTS Services, Handicapping and Website Coordinator

Jasi Acharya Makes Montanans Proud
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

When Jasi Acharya teed it up in Pinehurst this past June, it marked not only a lifelong dream to compete in the U.S. Women’s Open, but also demonstrated that her hard work was paying off and she most certainly belongs on golf’s biggest stage.

“Being able to go to Pinehurst and experience the whole week there was just amazing. That was one of the coolest weeks of my life,” Acharya said. The 30-year old native of Columbus still calls Montana home when the starter announces her name in events on the Symetra Tour, even if her reality on the equivalent of the LPGA’s Minor Leagues consists of living out of a suitcase.

“I almost thought about not trying to qualify for the U.S. Open this year. My schedule was just so packed, I played 10 events in 10 weeks and trying to find a time to fit a qualifier in wasn’t easy,” Acharya said. Nothing about making a living on the professional golf circuit is easy. While the household names on the PGA, LPGA and Champions Tours appear to have it easy, the true life of a player grinding on the Symetra Tour (LPGA) and Web.com Tour (PGA) is challenging across the board.

...Continued on the next page
“I’ve learned a lot, every level you move up in, from high school to college then to pro, you learn more about what it takes; and while each step has taken longer for me to adjust then I might want, I’ve learned to enjoy the journey,” Acharya reflected.

Once Acharya secured her spot in the Open field, she was able to soak in not only the magnitude of the event, but the uniqueness of being able to play the same course that a week earlier showcased the U.S. Open (men’s field). “The course really reminded me of the course I grew up playing a lot, Laurel Country Club, so it made me feel comfortable and it showed in my play,” Acharya said. “It was just awesome. The USGA prepares so far in advance and they had the course in amazing shape. I think it was a really good idea to have the tournaments back-to-back. The setup was amazing. It was a smooth transition going from one tournament to another. Hopefully they will do it again, the estimates are that it was one of, if not the best, attendance at a Women’s Open.”

Her U.S. Women’s Open experience began championship was concluding. Acharya balls and additionally, go inside the ropes Wednesday consisted of sticking to her notable LPGA stars such as Brittany Linci-the majority of my practicing earlier in the I get nervous for every event, but I could you get going in the round, it always calms with an arrival Sunday as the men’s was able to warm up, hit some practice for some spectating. Monday through general routine and practice rounds with come and Julieta Granada. “I tried to do week and then ease into the tournament. definitely notice it on Thursday. Once down,” Acharya mentioned.

Acharya’s parents Bharat and Linda and her twin brother, Akku, along with some family friends were in attendance. “Getting announced from Montana and having the important people in my life there was such a cool thing. I didn’t play as well as I would have liked, but it was an amazing experience,” Acharya reflects. Her first round 85 put her away from contention, but she persevered with a 10-stroke improvement on day two with a 75.

With six seasons on the Symetra Tour experience, Acharya’s next big challenge comes at the second stage of qualifying school in October. Four rounds of competition in Venice, Florida, will determine who makes it to the final stage of qualifying… another five rounds to determine who punches their ticket to the LPGA. “I’ve learned a lot every year I’ve been out here. My career has been a grind. I thought I would be able to progress more, but I have learned that you need to play your own game and focus on your strengths. Don’t concern yourself with what others are doing,” Acharya said.

When evaluating what it will take to move to the next level on her journey, Acharya knows that she has a solid fundamental background with a strong short game and describes putting as her strongest area. With some improvements in ball striking and continually gaining more comfort on the tour, she believes her game is trending in the right direction. While her tournament schedule is packed and her golf home base is in Phoenix, no matter which direction the road takes her, Jasi Acharya calls Montana home with pride. It is with mutual admiration and pride that the Big Sky State can claim a rising talent on the professional circuit as our own.

Good luck at Q-School Jasi, we’ll be rooting for you!
The Montana State Golf Association Board of Directors met in Butte recently and made some sweeping changes to its current process for awarding points to players who are eligible to compete at the USGA Team Championships.

Each state controls its own method of choosing three players to represent that state at the national tournament, which is held every two years in the Fall. About nine years ago, Montana adopted a system of awarding points to male amateurs at a series of statewide events. The three men who earn the most points at the end of the two-year cycle can represent the Treasure State at the next national team tourney. College and high school golfers from all states are not eligible for that tourney, however, because of eligibility issues.

Before our current system was adopted, the MSGA Executive Director simply picked three men based on their skill levels and availability. That’s how the Montana State Women’s Golf Association chooses its team. Over the years, the MSGA Competition Committee has added and subtracted tournaments to the series, and we have had 13 events the past few years. We divided those tournaments into Tier I, Tier II and Tier III events, and awarded more points to major competitions such as the State Amateur, that had stronger fields.

In brief, Tier I events awarded 150 points to the winner and paid 10 places in 10-point increments, meaning the 10th-place finisher would earn 60 points. Tier II events would pay eight places including 100 to the champion, and Tier III tourneys would pay five places, including 50 to the champion.

For the most part, our system has worked well in identifying our best amateur golfers and rewarding them for their accomplishments on the course. In particular, the points series has helped many smaller tournaments to attract stronger fields because the points are attractive.

In recent years, many top players have made suggestions to the Competition Committee with ways of improving the several of those ideas and will implement them in the new cycle, which began August 1, 2014 and will run through July 31, 2016. Here are some of the major changes that went into effect:

- The United States Amateur Qualifier was elevated from Tier II to Tier I status, with the Barnett Memorial and the State Match Play both moving from Tier III to Tier II.
- Only Montana residents can earn points, and those residents will be awarded points based on absolute finish. In past years, we paid first-place points to the best Montana finisher at a major event, even if he finished third or fourth.
- The winner of all tournaments will receive a 50 percent bonus. That means a Tier I champion will receive 225 points (150 plus 75); a Tier II winner will earn 150 points (100 plus 50), and a Tier III champ will get 75 points (50 plus 25).
- Montana golfers, who place high at USGA qualifiers in other states, such as the USGA Mid-Amateur Qualifier in Wyoming or Idaho, or any USGA Senior Qualifier, will earn the amount of points they would have received if those events were offered in Montana (currently, they are not). These kinds of “advancement points” also will be awarded to golfers who qualify for the U.S. Open or U.S. Amateur.

The MSGA will publish the new, amended rules on its website and will update the standings with a detailed breakdown so that golfers can see not only who has earned points, but also how they were earned.

The MSGA strives to serve its membership in many ways, but its most important function is to promote and grow the game of golf. We encourage all Montana golfers to support the sport by buying an MSGA-approved handicap, and by using other services available on our website. The future of junior golf, and indeed, the game of golf in our state, relies on the continued support of all men and women golfers.
Kyla Clancy prevailed by one shot over Dorsey Addicks in the Women’s State Amateur held at Yellowstone Country Club. Clancy, who plays her golf at Rocky Mountain College, was able to hang on despite some strong finishes from Addicks, Great Falls’ Cathie Williamson who finished five shots back, and Hanna Zwemke of Billings, who took fourth.

Brandon McIver successfully defended his Title. The current University of Oregon standout and U.S. Open /Amateur Qualifier bested the field by eight shots at Whitefish Lake Golf’s North Course. McIver improved by one shot each round en route to shooting 12 under for the three-day event.

University of Michigan Golfer Tom Swanson and University of Idaho golfer Ryan Porch tied at -4, with Billings’ Marcus Drange finishing at -3. Jake Hedge of Billings rounded out the top-five with an even par effort for the tournament.

Susan Court of Helena claimed her second Women’s Senior Amateur Title in a run-away. Court’s nine shot victory was aided by a strong first two days where she built a solid double-digit cushion. Sue Matson of Laurel finished in second, followed by Fay Ferraro of Glendive, and Sue Peterson of Glendive.

Montana Girls win 20-16
Boys lose 14-22

With a chance to play host again, the Montana girls held off a strong effort from their Canadian neighbors to win the 21st annual Montana-Alberta Junior Ryder Cup at Whitefish Golf Club.
RESULTS...cont. from previous page
Whitefish Lake Golf Club's South Course.

The girls held on the second day, with Whitefish's Coral Schulz splitting her match with Innisfail's Courtney Dickson in the 16-year-old age group. Butte's Shealyn Hafer, Billings' Kortney McNeil and Great Falls' Catrinia Babinecz all took 2 1/2 of three points to clinch the win 20-16 for Montana. Kalispell's Teigan Avery scored 1/2 in her individual match.

The boys fell to Alberta 22-14, despite a strong performance by their 17's. Cody Babinecz of Great Falls and Austin Walter of Billings each took 2 of 3 points, but the Montanans lost in every other individual matchup.

Montana Team Members Included:
Boys
17's
Cody Babinecz, Great Falls
Austin Walter, Billings
16's
Caleb Stetzner, Anaconda
Payton Stott, Billings
15's
Byggs Johnston, Libby
Caleb Trost, Billings
Girls
17's
Shealyn Hafer, Butte
Kortney McNeil, Billings
16's
Teigan Avery, Kalispell
Coral Schulz, Whitefish
15's
Casey Babinecz, Great Falls
Catrinia Babinecz, Great Falls

Men's Mid Amateur
August 14-16, 2014
Butte Country Club

1 Parker Heller 66-71-74 211
T2 Spencer Williams 77-71-67 215
T2 Jim Coleman 76-67-72 215
T4 Drew Vanyo 75-74-68 217
T5 Craig Hurlbert 72-72-74 218
T5 Michael Williams 72-69-77 218
T7 Dan Mulholland 72-74-73 219
T7 Logan Lindholm 73-71-75 219
T7 Bennett MacIntyre 75-71-73 219
10 Ross Bartell 72-72-76 220

Despite Butte Country Club's lack of length, the course defended itself well as no players shot under par for the event. Helena's Parker Heller claimed the championship with a one-over par 211 effort, claiming victory by four shots over East Helena's Spencer Williams. The two golfers from Helena's Bill Roberts Golf Course claimed the Gene Cook Trophy awarded to the club with the lowest scorers in aggregate over three days.

Jim Coleman of Billings tied for second with Williams, followed by Drew Vanyo of Big Sky, who came in fourth, followed by Craig Hurlbert of Hamilton and Michael Williams of Helena who tied for fifth. Hurlbert earned the Joe Tomes trophy for best finish of a player over 50 years of age.

Support Junior Golf!
Proceeds from MSGA Specialty Plates are used to help support Junior Golf Programs and Tournaments in Montana.

Do you want something in the newsletter?
Contact Nick Dietzen at: ndietzen@gmail.com (406) 459-3459

Full detail of tournament results can be found at www.msgagolf.org.