Spencer Williams' Mid-Am Performance For the Ages

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The MSGA Competitions Committee voted to adjust the Mid-Amateur age limit from 30 to 25 years of age. This switch does two things. It aligns with the USGA's age requirement and, hopefully, will attract additional entries.

The Mid-Am's age limit was enacted to provide some distance between the exceptional high school and collegiate talent, as well as those recently out of college, and provide another major tournament that those who may not have been in non-stop competition could enter and compete in.

Spencer Williams, originally of Great Falls, and currently of Helena, would welcome all challengers, regardless of age, after he turned in a performance for the ages at Bozeman's Riverside Country Club.

Williams' final-round 63 (-8) not only tied the course record at Riverside, but also helped him break 200 for the three-day event, with a total of 199 (-14).

Billings golfer, Jerry Pearsall, led the tournament going into Saturday's final round by one shot, but Williams would manage to birdie an amazing 10 holes, to go along with seven pars and the lone blemish, a double-bogey on the par-3 sixth hole. Williams did not go two holes without a birdie in his final round.

The 6,327-yard Riverside Country Club was in excellent shape and yielded some low scores, including a first-round, back nine, of 28 by Pearsall who made seven birdies in nine holes (par 35).

Williams margin of victory was 10 shots and his 199 total was the lowest ever in the near half-century of the MSGA Mid-Amateur.

Pearsall and former professional Kyle Cianflone, of Hamilton, tied for second place at 209 and were the only other players under par for the tournament. Finishing in fourth...Continued on the next page
was Mark Houser of Bozeman at 213 (even par). Four shots back, in a tie for fifth, were Chris Haas of Bozeman and Chris Hunter of Billings at 217.

Bill Roberts Golf Course of Helena retained the Cook Cup with Williams and last year’s Mid-Amateur Champion, Parker Heller, having the combined low scores for a given club.

Next August, the Mid-Amateur will be hosted at Polson Bay Golf Course.

Williams’ Outstanding Achievements

George Geise, MSGA Board Member

When Spencer Williams fired an 8-under-par 63 at Riverside Country Club in Bozeman in the final round of the State Mid-Amateur Tournament on August 16th, it was the lowest 18-hole round ever shot at the 47-year-old event.

But it wasn’t the lowest round – relative to par – that Williams has produced in his outstanding career. “I’ve had about five 63s, including a 9-under-par round here at Bill Roberts,” Williams said from Helena, where he now lives after growing up in Great Falls.

Williams established a new Mid-Am tournament record with his 54-hole total of 199. The previous record was 200, a total posted by Air Force pilot Ben Leestma at Meadow Lark CC in Great Falls back in 2011. That was one year before Williams won his first State Mid-Amateur in Missoula.

After earning 150 points for his Mid-Am victory, Williams now ranks fourth on the MSGA points list, with 245 points. He trails leader Ryan Porch of Kalispell (585), young Ryggs Johnston of Libby (425), and veteran Craig Hurlbert of Hamilton (257.5). The top three in the points standings as of Aug. 1, 2016, are eligible to represent Montana at the USGA Team Championships, to be played in Indiana in September 2016.

Williams plans to play one more event on the MSGA points circuit this year when he returns to Bozeman for the Gallatin Valley Open, to be played September 12-13 at Cottonwood Hills Golf Course. That’s the same weekend that the Montana Open will be contested at Larchmont Golf Course in Missoula.

Williams’s second Mid-Amateur victory also qualified him for induction into the MSGA Hall of Fame in 2016. Also being inducted next year will be Brandon McIver of Billings, a University of Oregon golfer who won State Amateur championships in 2013 and 2014.

Geise is a retired Great Falls Tribune sports editor who writes a weekly column during the golf season. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Montana State Golf Association, and contributes columns for this newsletter. He can be reached at ggeise14@gmail.com.
What Do The Letters Mean?
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

Have you ever wondered just what those letters mean on your score record or next to your handicap? Here’s a quick review:

**SCORE RECORD**
If you are looking at your score record (online, course kiosk, or smartphone app), you will see a letter on the right side of each score line. These indicate either the score type or method posted.

- **H** = Home score
- **A** = Away score (score played on a course other than your own)
- **I** = Internet score (posted online)
- **AI** = Away score, posted online
- **C** = Combined score (two 9-hole scores)
- **CI** = Combined score, posted online
- **T** = Tournament score
- **TI** = Tournament score, posted online
- **P** = Penalty score (posted by the handicap committee)

**HANDICAP INDEX or TREND HANDICAP**
Sometimes you will see a letter next to your Handicap Index or Trend Handicap. This could indicate that your handicap is restricted in some way.

- **L** = Local Use Only – All Trend Handicaps will have an “L” next to them, because they are not an official handicap until the next revision. The MSGA revisions are calculated the 1st and 15th of each month. Sometimes you will see an “L” next to an official Handicap Index. This is usually because it exceeds the maximum USGA Handicap Index of 36.4 for Men or 40.4 for Women. Anything over this can only be used at your Home course, and only if allowed.

- **SL** = Short Course, Local Use Only – Per USGA guidelines, handicaps calculated using Par 3 scores cannot be mixed with handicaps calculated using regular course scores. This is because a Par 3 handicap is calculated using a different USGA formula. It’s like comparing apples to oranges. For this reason, a Short Course handicap is NOT portable and can only be used at the home course, or at another Par 3 course.

- **R** = Restriction – A Handicap Index is displayed with an “R” (ex: 10.4R) because two or more tournament scores are affecting the handicap calculation. Tournament Scores (T-Scores) are kept for a minimum of one calendar year from when they are posted, or longer if they are still within a player’s current 20-score history. At each handicap revision the most recent 20 scores are weighed against the average of the two best T-Score differentials, and if the difference of both T-Score differentials is at least three strokes lower than the Handicap Index, the player is eligible for a reduction. A reduction (if necessary) is an automatic calculation based on a sliding table, taking into account the total number of eligible tournament scores. For more information, see section 10-3 of the USGA Handicap Manual.

- **M** = Modified – The Handicap Committee of a player’s home course has the authority to modify the handicap, if they feel it is not reflecting the player’s potential ability. The committee must first give the player the opportunity to explain his or her circumstances before making a modification.

You can contact Emily at golf@montana.net if you need help or have questions.
Girls Junior America’s Cup Team Honored
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

The 2015 Girl’s Junior America’s Cup was held July 27-30 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. There were 18 teams of 4, representing 18 states/areas of our region. The Montana girls were Hayden Flohr, Coral Schulz, Teigan Avery, and Morgan O’Neil. Full results can be found at www.msgagolf.org/tournaments/2015-tournament-results.

Though Montana did not score at the top of the Leaderboard, they did win a high honor: The 2nd Annual Joan Teats Inspirational Award.

This award is named for the founder of the GJAC, who established it in 1978 from the state of Washington. It is chosen by an anonymous committee of rules officials and volunteers. The award embodies what this tournament stands for: integrity, sportsmanship, friendship, and honesty. We are very proud of Team Montana!

The Boy’s Junior America’s Cup was played in Flagstaff, Arizona, July 26-30. Playing for Montana were Jonny Cielak, Ryggs Johnston, Caleb Stetzner, and Joey Moore.

Libby’s Ryggs Johnston Represents Montana at U.S. Amateur
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

While there is no exemption for states to have representation in the national top amateur event, the USGA’s U.S. Amateur, Montana has had qualifiers the past two years. Last year, Billings’ Brandon McIver qualified and advanced to stroke play. This year, Libby’s young gun Ryggs Johnston qualified.

Johnston, 15, was the fourth youngest competitor in the field at Olympia Fields Country Club in Illinois. By virtue of an impressive 11-under-par score in the 36-hole Amateur Qualifier held at the Ranch Club in Missoula, Johnston bested collegiate phenoms Tom Swanson and Brandon McIver for the coveted entry into the U.S. Amateur. Fellow Libby standout and MSGA Tournament veteran, Joe Cielak, was on the bag for Johnston at Olympia Fields.

This has been a banner summer for Johnston. In addition to qualifying for the U.S. Amateur, he won his second consecutive MSGA Junior Championship (ages 14-15) in June and was the medalist in the 2015 Rocky Mountain Junior Golf Tour Elite. Johnston also picked up a second place medal at the U.S. Kids Teen World Championship and, after leading going into the final round, finished third at the Trusted Choice Big “I” National Championship.

Up next, Johnston is beginning his high school golfing career at Libby High School. It cannot be questioned that his tournament experience entering the Montana High School golf scene will be second to none, and more than likely his scoring will reflect this.
Montana juniors recently competed in the Montana-Alberta Junior Ryder Cup at Lethbridge Country Club in Lethbridge, Canada (August 9-11). Montana boys in the competition included Jonny Cielak, Caleb Stetzner, Schafer Paladichuk, Joseph Potkanjak, Ryggs Johnston, and Joey Moore. The girls representing Montana were Teigan Avery, Hayden Flohr, Catrina Babinecz, Hannah Rosanova, Tricia Joyce, and Kaelyn Volk. To qualify for the event, they competed in the Montana State Juniors Tournament and placed in the top two for 15, 16, and 17 year-olds.

The boys had a very successful week in Alberta. The first round was highlighted by Joey Moore and Ryggs Johnston, who won all three potential points in the morning four ball format. The remaining teams of Jonny Cielak/Caleb Stetzner and Schafer Paladichuk/Joseph Potkonjak each scored two-and-a-half points in their matches. The Montana team jumped to an early 8-1 lead after the morning four ball.

Johnston and Moore continued their hot play in the afternoon capturing all three points in the chapman format, as well. In the singles’ matches, Jonny Cielak, Caleb Stetzner, and Joseph Potkonjak were the stars of the Montana team, capturing eight of the potential nine points in their matches. Joey Moore also scored two-and-a-half points and Ryggs Johnston scored one point. The Montana boys cruised to victory, beating the Alberta team by a score of 22.5 to 13.5.

Although the Montana girls did not win, coaches Joe Rossman and Sparkey McLean note that they played well. The ladies struggled in the first round, and found themselves trailing 8.5 to 0.5 after the morning four ball. Teigan Avery and Hayden Flohr captured the sole half point for the girls. The ladies bounced back in round two, however, and won the afternoon chapman 5.5 against Alberta’s 3.5. The 12-6 deficit after day one proved to be insurmountable for them, however. They won 8.5 points in the singles matches to 9.5 by the Albertan team. Teigan Avery and Hayden Flohr won all three points in their singles matches, while Tricia Joyce captured two points, and Kaelyn Volk earned a half point. The Alberta team won the girls’ division by a total of 21.5 to 14.5.

Congratulations to our newest Ace Club Members!

Did you get a hole-in-one? Go to www.msgagolf.org to see how to get your MSGA Hole-in-One Certificate!

Jody Fee, 8/26/15, Whitefish Lake GC, Hole #15/North, 125 yds, 6 Wood
Kathy Bailey, 8/25/15, Whitefish Lake GC, Hole #11/North, 160 yds, 5 Wood
Mark Castor, 8/24/15, Village Greens GC, Hole #16, 176 yds, 9 Iron
Ike Kaufman, 8/23/15, Meadow Lark CC, Hole #16, 155 yds, 5 Wood
John Cox, 7/24/15, Cottonwood Hills GC, Hole #14, 150 yds, 6 Iron
Shawn Patrick Bleile, 4/29/15, Bridger Creek GC, Hole #17, 115 yds, 52 D.

Support Junior Golf!
Proceeds from MSGA Specialty Plates are used to help support Junior Golf Programs and Tournaments in Montana.
2015 WALKER CUP TEAM ANNOUNCED

The 10-man squad of the 2015 United States Walker Cup Team for the 45th Match against Great Britain and Ireland is complete.

Scott Harvey, 37, of Greensboro, NC; Denny McCarthy, 22, of Rockville, MD; Mike McCoy, 52, of Des Moines, IA; Jordan Niebrugge, 22, of Mequon, WI; and Robby Shelton, 19, of Wilmer, AL, round out the 10-player team that will represent the United States Team. It will be captained by John “Spider” Miller at Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club in Lancashire, England, September 12-13.

These five players chosen by the USGA’s International Team Selection Committee join those who were chosen on August 10th: 2015 U.S. Amateur champion Bryson DeChambeau, 21, of Clovis, CA; Beau Hossler, 20, of Mission Viejo, CA; Lee McCoy, 21, of Athens, GA; Maverick McNealy, 19, of Portola Valley, CA; and Hunter Stewart, 22, of Lexington, KY.

“The addition of these five outstanding gentlemen to the 2015 United States Walker Cup Team is a source of great pride for us,” said Diana M. Murphy, USGA vice president and chairman of the USGA’s Championship Committee. “We are confident that this group of 10 who will represent the USA will form a competitive and cohesive team in the true spirit of the Walker Cup and prove to be an amicable and formidable opponent for Great Britain and Ireland.”

“It is an honor to be the captain for this group of talented men as we represent our country in the Walker Cup Match,” said John “Spider” Miller, captain of the USA Team, who won two U.S. Mid-Amateur Championships and played on the 1999 United States Walker Cup Team. “They are all very team-oriented and also committed to the spirit and tradition of the Match. I believe they will compete to their maximum but also develop friendships that will last for their entire careers in golf.”

The alternates are Matt NeSmith, 21, of North Augusta, SC, and Scottie Scheffler, 19, of Dallas, TX.

The Walker Cup Match is a biennial 10-man amateur team competition between the USA and a team composed of players from Great Britain and Ireland, selected by The R&A. It is played over two days with 18 singles matches and eight foursomes (alternate-shot) matches. The USA leads the overall series, 35-8-1, and earned a 17-9 victory in the 2013 Walker Cup Match at National Golf Links of America in Southampton, NY.

The first United States Walker Cup Team, which in 1922 defeated the GB&I side, 8-4, at the National Golf Links of America, is considered among the best teams ever and included Francis Ouimet, Bob Jones, Charles “Chick” Evans, and Jess Sweetser. Many of the game’s greatest players have competed in the Walker Cup, including U.S. Open champions Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, and Jordan Spieth, for the USA, and Graeme McDowell, Rory McIlroy, and Justin Rose, for Great Britain and Ireland.

BRYSON DECHAMBEAU CAPTURES U.S. AMATEUR TITLE

Southern Methodist University senior Bryson DeChambeau became the fifth player to win the NCAA championship and the U.S. Amateur Championship in the same year. He claimed the Havemeyer Trophy with a 7-and-6 decision over the University of Virginia’s Derek Bard at Olympia Fields Country Club.

“Having my name etched on this trophy with the great Bob Jones, as well as Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson... all those guys, it’s incredible,” said the 21-year-old from Clovis, CA, who wears a Ben Hogan-style cap. “I can't even imagine what I just did. It won’t sink in, I’m sure, for the next couple days. But I’m honored.”

DeChambeau, who was 2 down through seven holes, swung the match on the next hole, when he chipped in for a winning birdie from deep greenside rough to reduce his deficit to one hole. He followed that chip-in with ...Continued on the next page
O’SULLIVAN WINS 2015 U.S. WOMEN’S AMATEUR

Hannah O’Sullivan, 17, of Chandler, AZ, won the 2015 U.S. Women’s Amateur Championship at Portland Golf Club, earning a 3-and-2 victory over Sierra Brooks, 17, of Sorrento, FL. After trailing by three holes through 15, O’Sullivan steadily inched closer, cutting the deficit to 1 down at the 18-hole break, squaring the match through 23 holes, taking the lead on the 24th hole, and making a 4-foot par putt on the 34th green to seal the victory.

“I can’t really describe how good it feels,” said O’Sullivan, who also earned co-runner-up honors at the 2015 U.S. Women’s Amateur Four-Ball Championship. “It was just such a tough match today, and to be able to come out on top, it’s just incredible. I just feel so blessed.”

“I felt like I wasn’t playing very well at all the first 18, but I fought back and I still shot 1 under,” said O’Sullivan, who plans to join the University of Southern California golf team in the fall of 2016. “I knew the game was definitely there, and I had the opportunities.”

The match turned squarely in O’Sullivan’s favor on No. 30. Brooks’ 40-footer for birdie just missed to the left, and O’Sullivan dropped a 30-footer of her own for a 1-up lead. She went 2 up after Brooks failed to get up and down from a greenside bunker on No. 32, and gained the 3-up advantage by nailing a 7-foot birdie on the 33rd hole. “I knew if I was standing over that putt thinking about winning, probably the result wouldn’t be what I would have liked,” said O’Sullivan. “I just tried to push that aside and just stand over the putt, commit to it, and put a good stroke on it, and to see it go in was awesome.”

The 2015 U.S. Women’s Amateur Championship is open to female amateur golfers with a Handicap Index not exceeding 5.4. It is one of 13 national championships conducted annually by the USGA, 10 of which are strictly for amateurs.

DECHAMBEAU... from previous page

a win on the 10th hole to square the match. He then took Nos. 14, 15, and 16 (14 and 15 with birdies) for a 3-up lead. He double-bogeyed the 18th and held a 2-up lead through the lunch break of the 36-hole championship match at Olympia Fields’ North Course, host to two U.S. Open Championships.

Bard, who won this year’s Sunnehanna Amateur, had responded to DeChambeau’s 2-up lead after two holes, regrouping to win four of the next five holes. His stretch of good play was interrupted by a one-hour delay due to inclement weather, which dropped nearly a half inch of rain on the course.

“I felt that in the morning match, no matter where the match got to, I always felt like I was still in it, because we had 18 more holes to go in the afternoon,” said Bard, who won the 2014 U.S. Collegiate at Georgia Tech. “It’s such a long day and to get it back to 2-down after the morning was big. It gave me some momentum. I came out in the afternoon and won the first hole and then just kind of fell apart.”

The 2015 U.S. Amateur Championship consisted of 36 holes of stroke play (18 holes on each of Olympia Fields’ North and South Courses), followed by six rounds of match play (all on the North Course).