August Tournaments

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Eryn Ellis, Susan Court Claim State Amateur Titles

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Eryn Ellis, formerly of Rocky Mountain College, put together a record-setting tournament in Billings at The Briarwood Golf Club as she won the 102nd Montana State Women’s Amateur.

For the first time in the tournament’s history, the winner finished under par. Ellis began the tournament in impressive fashion, posting a three-under-par 71 in the opening round and then carding a blistering seven-under-par round two of 67, getting her to a double-digit under-par (-10) overnight lead. She was able to cruise to victory, letting off the gas a little bit in the final round as she managed a 79 (+5) to finish at 5-under par for the championship. Ellis won the tournament by eight strokes over Whitefish’s Coral Schulz. She has her sights set on qualifying for the LPGA Tour in the near future.

Schulz, a golfer at Montana State, who won the Fourth of July Tournament in Whitefish earlier this summer, finished second with an

Moore Wins Montana State Amateur Championship

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Billings’ Joey Moore claimed the 102nd Montana State Amateur Golf Tournament. Moore’s final round play wasn’t as sharp as his blistering first two rounds. The San Diego State golfer was 14-under-par heading into the final round and used his six-shot cushion to cruise to a three-shot victory. Moore shot a final-round 78 (+6) and was never in danger on the back nine, as he stepped to the 18th tee box five over second-place finisher Ryggs Johnston of Libby.

Johnston, the reigning champion, started strong with birdies on the third and fourth, and was two under and narrowing the lead to two as the final group made their way to the eighth hole. Moore found his drive nestled next to a tree trunk and went on to make double bogey on the eighth, while Johnston...
impressive performance of her own at 225 (+3) after rounds of 73-74-78. Butte's Tricia Joyce and MSU's Delaney Elliott tied for third at 228. Morgan O'Neil of Billings, another Rocky player, rounded out the top-five at 232.

Teigan Avery, a University of Montana and Kalispell product, was sixth at 233, followed by former Billings West star Carrie Carpenter, who finished seventh with 236. Kameryn Basye of Bozeman and Katy Peterson of Billings tied for eighth at 237, and incoming freshman at MSU and Bozeman native Annika Danenhauer rounded out the top-ten with 238.

The Women's Senior Amateur Championship was held concurrently at The Briarwood. Helena's Susan Court picked up her third championship as she pulled away from the field in the final round. Court, who entered the final round with a two-shot advantage over local Briarwood member Lisa Forsberg, increased her lead to seven shots after six holes and would not relent en route to the title. Court was victorious in 2010 and 2014, marking her third title in nine years. Court posted rounds of 82-86-87 for a 255 total, nine shots clear of Forsberg, who shot 84-87-93, and defending champion Jo Smith of Missoula, who tied for second at 264 with rounds of 90-85-89. Bobbie Lacklen of Libby was fourth at 266, followed by Carol Key of Missoula in fifth at 267. Seeley's Helene Michael posted 270 in sixth and Julie Embleton of Hamilton was seventh at 271. Carol Van Valkenburg of Missoula and Madeline Clegg of Deer Lodge tied for eighth at 276. Former champion Sue Matson of Laurel rounded out the top ten at 282.

The following awards were presented during the tournament: Julia Jones, MSGA Hall of Fame Award; Johnny Walker, MSGA Paul Allen Award (posthumously); and Tricia Joyce, Annika Danenhauer, Skyler Martin, and Katie Friez, MSGA Scholarships.

The 2020 Women's State Amateur and Senior Amateur will be held in Bozeman at Riverside Country Club. Full results can be found here for the amateur and here for the senior amateur.
MEN’S AMATEUR ... from page 1

parred to pull even with Moore. On the ninth, Moore two-putted for birdie and Johnston missed his birdie attempt. From there, Johnston would struggle on the back nine with bogeys on 11 a double on 13 and another bogey on 14. He closed in 41 for a 75 (+3) and finished at five-under for the championship, earning runner up status at 211.

University of Wyoming’s Liam Clancy was in the final group and the Laurel product had the best round of the group. He eagled the third hole, made five birdies getting to four under on the round, during difficult windy conditions, before finishing bogey, double bogey, for a final round 71 (-1) and solo third-place finish at 214 (-2).

MSU-Billings’ Garrett Woodin started hot with birdies on his first three holes. Woodin would go on to make six birdies en route to a final round 71 and fourth-place finish. Logan Lindholm of Kalispell made six birdies, including the 18th, to fire the low round of the day at 70, and finished tied for fifth at 218 with Hamilton’s Payton Taylor, who shot 74.

Helena’s Spencer Williams came in seventh after a final-round 73 for a 219 total. Colton Hudson of Billings was eighth, after shooting 77 for a 220 total. Ben Kaul of Great Falls was the low finisher from the Electric City. Kaul shot an under-par 71 for a 221 total. Marcus Drange of Billings shot 76 and Brady Kirkeby of Helena shot 78. Drange and Kirkeby rounded out the top ten tying for tenth at 224.

Matt Hobbs from Polson earned the Steve Schwartz Memorial Trophy for low junior. Hobbs shot 77-79-75, for a 231 total, and was tied for 19th overall. The tournament saw two holes-in-one, both coming from Missoula golfers. Former champion (2009) Bill Dunn aced the 191-yard 16th hole during round two, and Sentinel High School golfer, Joe Opitz, made his ace on the 135-yard fourth hole during round one. The annual Barnett Cup, which is awarded to the two low scorers from the same golf club through two rounds, was claimed by Cabinet View Golf Club’s Ryggs Johnston and Jonny Cielak, who posted a combined 287 (-1).

The following awards were presented during the tournament: Steve Williamson, MSGA Hall of Fame Award; and Tyson St. John, Gavin Anderson, Paul O’Neil, and Daniel "Bucky" Crippen, MSGA Scholarships.

Meadow Lark Country Club graciously hosted the championship for the second time in five years. This year, the club is celebrating its centennial anniversary. 135 players from around the state competed in the MSGA’s signature tournament of the year. Next year’s tournament will be played in Billings at Yellowstone Country Club. Full results can be found here.
Drive, Chip, & Putt Competitors Advance

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

In 2013, the USGA, in partnership with the Masters Tournament and the PGA of America, created the Drive, Chip, & Putt junior golf development competition that aims to grow the game.

Missoula’s Canyon River Golf Club has become a consistent host of a local qualifier, and again welcomed juniors ages 7-15. Players attempt three drives, three chips, and three putts to accumulate as many points as possible. Four age groups for girls and boys saw participants from Montana and surrounding geography competing at the beautiful venue in East Missoula.

In the girls competition, five Montana competitors qualified. In the 7-9 age group, Charlotte Dale and Mckinley Steffanson, both of Missoula, Maloree Salmonson of Missoula in the 10-11 age group, Katie Lewis of Missoula in the 12-13 age group, and Emma Woods of Fairfield in the 14-15 age group.

In the boys competition, five more Montanans qualified. Warren Cain of Missoula from the 7-9 age group, Maxwell Milton of Polson in the 10-11 age group, Kade Mcdonough of Missoula in the 12-13 age group, and Eli Groshelle of Great Falls and Chase Irwin of Missoula from the 14-15 age group.

Qualifiers heading to the subregional will travel to The Highlands Golf Course in Post Falls, Idaho, on August 9th. Those who are successful at that stage will move on to the regional site at Chambers Bay in University Place, Washington, a month later. The national finals are held at Augusta National the Sunday preceding the Masters Tournament in 2020. Know of an interested junior for next year’s competition? Learn more here.

Handicapping FAQs

Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

How Do I Post A Friend's Score In The Smartphone App?

A feature on the menu of the MSGA Smartphone App is to "Post a Friend's Score". This is a convenient way to post your friends' scores when you regularly play together, especially if they do not have a smartphone or the app loaded. To use this feature, you must first add people to your Friends List.

To edit your Friends List, log in online at www.msgagolf.org/login. From the top menu, click MESSAGE CENTER, then MY PLAYER LIST. If you have any friends added, they will display here. You can add friends by clicking on "Add Player". You can delete them from your list by clicking on the "X" to the right of their name.

Back in the App, you will need to refresh your Friends screen by going back to Home, then again to menu, and "Post a Friend’s Score.” You will see the updated list. Click on the person’s name to post a score, and proceed as usual. Please note: When you post scores for your friends, they will display in your score posting history (app only), highlighted in Blue, noting it was for a Friend, and the friend’s name.

Have a handicap question? CLICK HERE for help.
Montana was represented in the annual Junior America’s Cup by both girls and boys teams. In the GIRLS JUNIOR AMERICA’S CUP, played at Bear Creek Golf Club in Murietta, California, Carrie Carpenter of Billings was joined by Annika Danenhauer, Laurel Ward, and Cora Rosanova of Bozeman making up the girls’ squad. Over three rounds, Team Montana posted 232-241-248 for a tournament total of 721, good for 13th overall.

Carpenter and Danenhauer tied for low honors on the team as they both finished with totals of 235 (+19) and tying for 38th. Carpenter was consistent with rounds of 79-78-78 and Danenhauer posted 74-80-81 for her 235 total. Ward fired rounds of 79-83-89 for a 251 total, 60th overall. Rosanova shot 84-89-90 for a 263 total and 65th place finish.

Team Washington & Team Hawaii were the co-champions of the competition. Each team posted three-day scores of six-over par, 654. A single stroke separated the top four teams, providing significant drama down the stretch. The individual medalist was a tie between Lana Calibuso-Kwee of Team Hawaii and Cassie Kim of Team Washington. Both Kwee and Kim finished the tournament at seven-under par, 209. Team San Diego was awarded the Joan Teats Award, which is given to the team that best exemplifies the qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, honesty, friendship, and respect throughout the week. For full results, click here. Next year’s event will be hosted in Nevada.

Small had the best performance of the group with rounds of 74-78-79. His 231 total tied for 48th overall. Finn posted 79-76-81 for 236 and 54th place. Verge had the low round among the Montanans on day one with 73 and followed with 74-95 for 242 and T61. Noctor was consistent with 85-86-88 for 259 and 70th overall.

For the first time in over 20 years the Junior America’s Cup named two teams as Co-Champions of the event. Utah and San Diego matched first place scores of 4-over-par at the end of the 54-hole competition. On the individual side of the competition, Washington State’s Ian Siebers (Bellevue, WA) claimed the Sally Pini trophy for low individual at 6-under-par (207), following rounds of 65-67-75. Siebers claimed a 3-shot margin of victory over Utah’s Brandon Robison who finished at 3-under-par (210) for second place. Full results here. Next year’s event will be played in Idaho.
Anderson Qualifies for Senior PGA Championship

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Laurel head golf pro Tom Anderson used some home course knowledge, previous winning pedigree, and solid play to claim the Rocky Mountain Section Senior PGA Professional Championship at Laurel Golf Club. Anderson, no stranger to victory in the event, lifted the cup for the fifth time in his career.

Anderson will lead four Rocky Mountain Section PGA Professionals as they travel south October 3-6 for the 31st Senior PGA Professional Championship at Omni Barton Creek Resort and Spa in Austin, Texas.

Anderson posted a winning score of even-par 144, five shots clear of runner up John Graham of Idaho Falls at 149. Anderson and Graham will be joined by Ron Rawls and Jim Empey, both of Boise, Idaho, as representatives of the section in Texas.

The Senior PGA Professional Championship showcases a field of 264 professionals from the PGA of America’s 41 nationwide Sections. Competitors must be 50-and-older senior PGA Professionals who advance through 41 Section Championships between June and August. The top 35 finishers in the national championship earn a berth in the 81st Kitchen Aid Senior PGA Championship next May at Harbor Shores in Benton Harbor, Michigan. The top five finishers there earn an exemption into the final stage of the 2020 PGA Tour Champions National Finals in November 2019.
Delaney Elliott Qualifies for U.S. Women’s Amateur

Montana State senior golfer Delaney Elliott qualified for the U.S. Women’s Amateur after shooting a one-under-par 71 and earning medalist honors. She earned her spot in the top amateur tournament at Common Ground Golf Course in Aurora, Colorado. Elliott’s success was accentuated by a hole-in-one on the 168-yard par-3 12th.

The ace helped Elliott earn her way to Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point, Mississippi, August 5-11.

Mandell Bests Montanans For U.S. Amateur Berth

The Ranch Club of Missoula again hosted a U.S. Amateur qualifier with 35 players vying for one spot in the country’s most prestigious amateur event. Sixteen of the participants hailed from the Treasure State, but it was Washington resident, Nick Mandell of Kennewick who claimed medalist honors. Mandell edged out Billings’ Joey Moore during the 36-hole event with an eight-under-par score of 136 (67-69).

Moore, the newly minted State Amateur Champion and San Diego State golfer was runner up and earned first-alternate status for the event to be held August 12 at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Libby’s Ryggs Johnston, a four-time State A golf champion from Libby who is headed to Arizona State on a golf scholarship, pulled out with an injury after shooting a first-round 74. Bozeman professional Joey Lovell was tied with Mandell after the first 18 holes and finished in fifth at 139. Payton Taylor of Hamilton tied for sixth at 140.

World Handicap System Educational Videos

As part of the USGA’s continued education for the upcoming World Handicap System in 2020, here are links to the next 2 videos released in July. For a full archive of the videos, along with more information, go to www.msgagolf.org/whs and www.whs.com.

Video 6: Calculation of a Playing Handicap

Video 7: Net Double Bogey (Maximum Hole Score)

GOLFERS IN BIG SKY COUNTRY SAVOR SHORT SEASON

BY MIKE TROSTEL, USGA

Competitors gathered around the table, their gazes transfixed on the shiny silver object before them. “Is this the first time it’s been in Montana?” one asked. “This is so cool,” remarked another as he took a selfie in front of it. “My grandfather played a round with Bob Jones in Butte,” said a third as he admired the name engraved four times on the trophy between 1923 and 1930.

Yes, the U.S. Open Trophy had been to Montana before. Montana resident Steve Jones, the 1996 champion, had brought his trophy there on a victory lap for friends and family to see. But most of those playing in the 2017 Montana State Amateur at Missoula Country Club were seeing the trophy in person for the first time. “To have the U.S. Open Trophy at Montana’s biggest amateur championship is pretty special,” said Chris Nowlen, general manager...Continued on the next page
The State Amateur is conducted by the Montana State Golf Association (MSGA), which was founded in 1917 and recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. The MSGA has a staff of three, two of whom have had other jobs in addition to their roles with the association. Jim Opitz, the executive director of the MSGA since 2001, was also the activities director for Helena Public Schools (recently retired). He received the Ike Grainger Award in 2017, honoring his 25 years of service to the USGA as a volunteer. “We have a small, but dedicated, staff that is passionate about golf in Montana,” said Opitz, a life-long teacher, administrator, and coach in Helena. “This state has so much to offer, but golf has remained a consistent part of the outdoor activity scene for more than a century.”

Montana boasts some of the best places to fish, hike, and raft anywhere in the country. Each year, millions of tourists visit Glacier National Park, the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, and Yellowstone National Park. But while Montana is the fourth-largest state in terms of area – behind Alaska, Texas, and California – its total population just cracked the 1 million mark for the first time in 2012, and the state is 48th of 50 in terms of population density, with just seven people per square mile. Comparatively, New Jersey, the most densely populated state, has 1,210 people per square mile.

As a result of the population dispersion and weather limitations that bring snow and cold weather to Montana well into the spring, the state has only 110 golf courses. But while the golf season may be shorter than many of its neighbors to the south, what Montana lacks in quantity, it makes up for in the stunning beauty of its landscapes and the passion of its supporters. “We definitely don’t take anything for granted because we only get to play golf for about half the year out here,” said Opitz. “Once winter breaks, our players are chomping at the bit to get out on the course and tee it up.”

Montana produces fewer competitive golfers than sun-drenched states such as California or Florida. Mike Grob, of Billings, was a six-time winner on the Canadian Tour (now the Mackenzie Tour – PGA Tour Canada) between 1997 and 2009, while Edean (Anderson) Ihlanfeldt is the lone Montana resident to win a USGA championship: the 1982 U.S. Senior Women’s Amateur. Ihlanfeldt also founded and coached the University of Washington women’s golf program, and an invitational event there bears her name.

Interestingly, there were no national championships conducted in Montana for the first 99 years of the USGA’s existence, but the Treasure State hosted its first two the same week in July 1994: the U.S. Amateur Public Links at Eagle Bend Golf Club in Bigfork (won by Guy Yamamoto) and the U.S. Girls’ Junior at Meadow Lark Country Club in Great Falls (won by Kelli Kuehne). Because these national championships were the first in Montana’s history, the Great Falls Tribune wrote tips for gallery members who might not be familiar with golf etiquette. They asked fans not to “touch any golf ball on the course, walk in sand traps, or bring transistor radios or boomboxes that could distract the players.”

While music may not have accompanied the historic 1994 events, a hearty rendition of “Happy Birthday” was sung at Missoula Country Club as the MSGA celebrated its centennial in 2017. And while the gala featured a cake, the object of everyone’s affection was the silver trophy in the center of the room, inspiring a new generation of Montana golfers that anything is possible – even winning the U.S. Open.