Hedge Claims Fourth State Title With Mid-Am Victory

The 2019 Montana State Mid-Amateur Championship was played at The Briarwood Golf Club in Billings. Josh Hedge overcame a five stroke deficit on the final nine holes to defeat Missoula’s Bill Dunn and win in his hometown.

Hedge, who played collegiately at Xavier University, and won three consecutive Montana State Amateur titles from 2005-2007, has played less competitively over the past decade, focusing on family and his career. Hedge proved that he still had the competitive juices at the ready to regain victory status.

Another former state champion, Dunn, the 2009 State Amateur Victor, began the final round with a four-shot advantage. He played a bogey-free front nine that included a birdie on hole four, to go out in 35 (-1), as Hedge shot even-par 36. Both players made par on the 10th hole. On the 11th, Hedge gained a stroke on the lead, thanks to a birdie, and narrowed the gap on hole 12. Dunn bogeyed and Hedge again birdied to pick up two shots and shrink the lead to two. Dunn bogeyed the 14th and double-bogeyed the 15th hole, as Hedge was steady, making pars on holes 13-16 to take a one-shot lead. Hedge made a birdie on hole 17 to extend his lead to two shots coming into the 18th hole as rain began to fall.

Dunn reached the par-five 18th in two and stood over an eagle putt, with Hedge reaching the green in regulation and left with a slick downhill birdie putt. Dunn ran his eagle attempt several feet by and Hedge left his downhill short. Dunn calmly made his comeback putt for birdie, forcing a must-make par putt for Hedge. With a little body English, his par putt found the side of the hole and dropped, giving Hedge the victory.

Hedge shot 69 (-3) in his final round for a 214 total (-2) and Dunn shot 73 (+1), to finish at 215 (-1) as runner up. Jerry Pearsall of Billings shot 72 for 224 and tied for third with fellow Billings golfer Jay Marschall, ...Continued on the next page
MID-AM ... from previous page

who shot 75 in his final round. Marcus Drange of Billings shot 75 to finish at 226 in fifth. Colin Gunstream of Helena was sixth, after shooting 78 and 230 for the tournament. Zach Brehm of Billings shot 75 to finish at 232 along with Chris Goldan of Bozeman, who played in the final group and shot 85 in his final round to tie for seventh. Parker Heller of Helena shot 75 and Robert Cline of Deer Lodge shot 83 to tie for ninth at 234.

The Gene Cook Cup was awarded to Hedge, Jay Marschall, and JimBob Coleman of Yellowstone Country Club for having the lowest two day total (two scores each day) of players competing from the same club.

Bill Dunn was awarded the Joe Tomes Trophy for the lowest scorer of age 50 and above. Dunn also won the Dick Pittman award for the low round of the tournament by virtue of his second round 68 (-4). He also pulled off a feat not known to Montana golf by making a hole-in-one in both the State Amateur and the Mid-Amateur. Dunn aced the 12th hole during the first round.

The Mid-Amateur is open to players age 25 and above with a handicap index maximum of 15. Thank you to the staff of The Briarwood Golf Club for hosting this year's tournament. The 2020 Mid-Amateur Championship will be held at Laurel Golf Club next year.

Complete hole-by-hole results can be found here.

Pearsall Wins 2019 Montana State Seniors Title
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The 2019 Montana State Seniors Championship was an allegorical story for golf and friendship. Billings’ Jerry Pearsall birdied the 17th hole at his home course of Yellowstone Country Club to help secure the 2019 Montana State Seniors Championship, wrapping up the title on the 54th hole alongside longtime friend Craig Hurlbert of Hamilton and Magnolia, Texas.

Pearsall and Hurlbert, both played junior and high school golf in Billings and estimate 45 years of competitive golf and friendship. The State Seniors is open to players age 55 and above, and 2019 marked the first year both players would be eligible. With the tournament being played on Pearsall’s home track, Hurlbert was welcomed as a guest at his friend’s home.

Pearsall had a seven-shot lead on Hurlbert when the final round began, but the lead dwindled and the pressure elevated. Hurlbert, the 2010 Mid-Amateur Champion, was 3-under and Pearsall 3-over on their rounds through 11 holes, and the lead was down to one.

Pearsall would go on to birdie the 12th hole, Hurlbert three-putted the 13th, and the lead moved back to three shots in favor of Pearsall. As the players came to the par-five 16th, Pearsall narrowly missed a birdie try and Hurlbert snuck in an eagle putt to close the lead back to one. ...Continued on the next page
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Trinity Lutheran</td>
<td>Pryor Creek GC (Huntley)</td>
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<td>PNWPGA (WMC) Championship</td>
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<td>Canyon River’s Toughest</td>
<td>Canyon River GC (Missoula)</td>
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<td>Red, White, and Blue Scramble</td>
<td>Bridger Creek GC (Bozeman)</td>
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**SENIORS ... from previous page**

Hurlbert then approached the par-three 17th and calmly hit a nice shot to 15 feet. With the pressure mounting, Pearsall brought his best with a crisp iron shot landing within six feet. Pearsall would go on to make, Hurlbert missed, and the two friends finished the 18th hole together. They finished with a hug and genuine appreciation for impressive golf, but more importantly, a friendship that has spanned four decades.

Pearsall finished the tournament five-under-par with a final round 73 (+1) for a 211 total. Hurlbert shot 68 (-4) for his final round and posted 213 for the week. Billings golfer and 2009 Mid-Amateur Champion, Dave Eames, finished third at even par for the three-day event, winning the Sophomore Flight for players ages 63-69. Missoula’s Joe Hill won the Junior Flight (70-77) at 239 (+23), while Wilsall’s Chuck Berdette won the Senior Flight (78+) at 248.

The tournament, which attracts over 330 golfers, is played over three days at three courses. This year, Lake Hills Golf Club, Laurel Golf Club, and Yellowstone Country Club played hosts. Full Results can be found here.

**NEW RAFFLE Trips for 2019-2020 - Junior Benefit**

A new Trip-of-the-Month Raffle season is upon us! In its 4th year, the Raffle offers 12 new trip prizes, along with 12 $200 second place prizes. Trips include: Cabo San Lucas-Mexico, Universal Studios-Florida, Rome-Italy, Las Vegas-Nevada, Denver Broncos football, and more!

Raffle proceeds are exclusively used to help fund the MSGA Junior Grant Program. And, this year, 16 junior golf programs around the state received assistance: Baker, Bozeman, Broadus, Butte, Dillon, Eureka, Fairfield, Forsyth, Lewistown, Malta, Missoula (2), Scobey, Seeley Lake, St. Ignatius, and St. Regis. For more information about how to apply for a Junior Grant, please visit http://www.msgagolf.org/junior-program-grants. For feedback from previous Grant recipients, visit http://www.msgagolf.org/grant-program-feedback.

With only 300 tickets sold, and 2 winners a month, your chances are good for a return on the cost of the ticket. Don’t want to go it alone? Share a ticket with a friend, or have a mini-raffle with your golfing buddies. Ultimately, the Raffle goes toward a great cause... our kids, the future golfers of Montana. Please download an application at www.msgagolf.org/raffle-fundraiser and get your ticket today! The first drawing will be held at the end of September. Thanks again for all of your support!
In the annual Montana/Alberta Junior Ryder Cup, Team Montana swept the competition with victories in both the girls and boys competitions between juniors from the Treasure State and our provincial neighbors to the north.

The Ryder Cup-style competition featured team and individual matches conducted over two days at Picture Butte Golf and Winter Club in Lethbridge, Alberta. Day one competition included 18-hole matches of Four Ball and Foursomes (alternate shot) and the second day featured singles matches.

Team Montana’s girls squad was especially impressive as the girls secured 29 points to Alberta’s 7. Haylee Adams of Laurel and Kadenz Fischer of Billings both swept their singles matches, earning three points each in the 15-year-old matches.

Cora Rosanova of Bozeman also swept her individual match and Marcella Mercer of Bigfork split her match to earn 1.5 points in the 16-year-old matches. Ashlyn Swigart of Miles City earned 1 point in her match and Carrie Carpenter secured 2.5 points in the 17-year-old competition. The girls entered day two with a 15-3 advantage and picked up 14 more points in singles play en route to their decisive 29-7 win.

On the boys’ side, the competition was tighter. After day one, the Montana contingent led 12.5 to 5.5. Twins Justus and Jordan Verge of Bozeman picked up four combined points, with Justus sweeping his match and earning 3 points and Jordan securing one in the 15-year-old matches.

Jarek Shepard of Conrad swept his singles match earning what would prove to be the match-winning 3 points. Cameron Kahle of Whitefish was swept in his matchup in the 16-year-old matches. Kaven Noctor of Butte and Ryan Harvey of Missoula were both swept in the 17-year old matches, but the day-one lead was too much for Alberta to overcome, as Team Montana came through with a 19.5 to 16.5 victory.

Next year’s matches will be held at Whitefish Lake Golf Club. Congratulations to all the participants. Thank you for representing Montana!

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**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!

Chad Eskro, 8/30/19, Meadow Lark CC, Hole #4, 128 yds, Pitching Wedge
Hayes DeLisle, 8/30/19, Meadow Lark CC, Hole #12, 175 yds, 6 Iron
Joey Wark, 8/29/19, Missoula CC, Hole #12, 134 yds, 9 Iron
Bill Boettcher, 8/26/19, Polson Bay GC, Hole #17, 152 yds, 9 Wood
Mike Oehlerich, 8/23/19, Whitefish Lake GC (North), Hole #4, 135 yds, 8 Iron
Kimberly Wright, 8/17/19, Lake Hills GC, Hole #7, 137 yds, 5 Wood
Bill Dunn, 8/15/19, The Briarwood GC, Hole #12, 190 yds, 7 Iron
Harley DeCarlo, 8/7/19, Glacier Park Lodge GC, Hole #4, 163 yds, 4 Wood
Shelly Carlson, 8/4/19, Pryor Creek GC (Link), Hole #12, 110 yds, 9 Iron
Wayne Little, 8/3/19, Pine Meadows GC, Hole #15, 148 yds, Gap Wedge
Tony Moretti, 8/1/19, Canyon River GC, Hole #12, 137 yds, 9 Iron
Neil Huether, 7/29/19, Whitefish Lake GC (South), Hole #7, 134 yds, 9 Iron
Kyler Elliott, 7/19/19, Madison Meadows GC, Hole #3, 150 yds, Gap Wedge
Bill Boettcher, 7/19/19, Polson Bay GC, Hole #17, 141 yds, 9 Wood

Kim Wright from Red Lodge got a Hole-in-one on the 137 yard hole #7 using her 5 wood while playing at the Lake Hills Ladies Pronghorn on August 17th.

The hole was sponsored by Western Security Bank and she won a set of Callaway golf irons (pictured with Renzi Lee). Congratulations Kim!
Kelbi Lee, PGA Head Professional at Black Bull in Bozeman, closed out the 2019 Rocky Mountain Section PGA Championship with an even-par final round of 72. He finished one shot ahead of Zach Abels, PGA Head Professional at Canyon Springs Golf Course in Twin Falls, Idaho, and won the section title.

Lee’s two-day total of 143, 1-under-par, was impressive as the course and greens played fast at Teton Springs Resort & Club in Victor, Idaho. Three shots off the pace was John Van Vleet, PGA General Manager at Preston Golf Country & Club in Idaho. Ben Bryson, PGA Director of Golf at Banbury Golf Course in Eagle, Idaho, earned the 4th qualifying spot in the 2020 PGA Professional Championship.

Fifty-six Rocky Mountain Section PGA Professionals competed for four qualifying spots in the 2020 PGA Professional Championship, which will be contested April 26-29, 2020, at Omni Barton Creek in Austin, Texas.

Lee, a native of Billings, played collegiately at Rocky Mountain College before transferring to Ferris State, where he completed a successful playing career with a runner-up finish at the NCAA Division II Championships in 2009.

He returned to Montana and interned at Black Bull before becoming a PGA Member in 2011 as an assistant pro at The Briarwood Golf Club in Billings. He would go on to become head professional in 2013. Lee moved to Bozeman in 2017 to assume the head professional duties at Black Bull.

Handicapping FAQs
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

WHY IS THE WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM SO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE ARE CURRENTLY USING?

Many things are changing on the Golf Handicap scene starting on January 1, 2020, so it’s good to take notice! The current USGA Handicap System is being replaced by the World Handicap System, which will be used worldwide with one set of handicapping rules for all golfers.

A number of things are changing, which include: A new maximum handicap index, a Playing Conditions Calculation, Net Double Bogey as the maximum hole score, daily revisions, new safeguards for bad rounds, new handicap formula, and more. **Starting in November, we will be going through the changes one by one in this newsletter,** to help prepare you for next season. The clubs will also be educated and supplied with educational materials to help you understand the changes.

In addition, also on January 1st, all golfers under the USGA umbrella will be linked under ONE network, even if using different handicap software to access it. This will make it easier to transfer and access records from other states. This network may at some point be extended beyond the USGA. Exciting changes are coming that will affect your game for the better! Stay tuned as more information becomes available!
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

Delaney Elliott of Superior, Colorado, is heading into her senior season at Montana State. Elliott will be in great form as the Bobcats begin the fall season since she competed in the U.S. Women’s Amateur at Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point, Mississippi. Elliott posted rounds of 85-83 for a 168 total (+24), missing the cut line of 147. Elliott qualified by earning medalist honors at the Sectional Qualifier in Aurora, Colorado.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS

Avery Gill, the 2019 Northwest Athletic Conference Women’s Golf Player of the Year, is transferring to Montana State University Billings for the upcoming 2019-20 season. During her freshman season at Southwestern Oregon Community College in 2018-19, Gill led her team to the NWAC title. She set school season and career records with four victories along the way and, not surprisingly, Gill was named the conference player of the year.

Gill’s success in her debut collegiate season was preceded by an impressive high school career at West Linn High School in Oregon. Gill helped the Lions to four straight district titles, and during her senior season, the team managed third place at the state championship tournament. Gill was named All-Three Rivers League as a senior, and posted a top-20 finish at the state championships individually. In the classroom, Gill also excelled and was an all-academic NWAC selection last year. Gill comes to Billings as the only addition to a strong roster that returns five key members. MSUB’s 2019-20 season begins in Billings as the Yellowjacket’s host their fall invitational at Lake Hills Golf Club.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Following a very successful 2018-19 season, both the Rocky Mountain College men’s and women’s golf teams are ranked in the 2019 NAIA Coaches’ Top 25 Preseason Polls. The Rocky men are ninth in the rankings after claiming the Frontier Conference and finishing seventh overall at the 2019 national championship, the highest finish in the program’s history. Mitchell Thiessen, who will be a junior this year, placed 29th on the individual leaderboard to lead the Battlin’ Bears.

The Rocky women are 18th in the preseason poll. The Battlin’ Bears won the Frontier Conference championship last season and just missed the cut at the national championship. The top 17 teams after the first two days advanced in the championship. Hayden Flohr and Morgan O’Neil both competed at the championship and return for another season in Billings. The Rocky golf teams first take the course this fall, September 9-10, at the University of Providence.

UNIVERSITY OF PROVIDENCE

The University of Providence men’s team made some late summer signings, as the Argos get ready to kick off the 2019 Fall Season at the Argo Invitational in Great Falls at Eagle Falls Golf Course. Colton Stodghill of Bigfork and Derek Wolff of Frenchtown join coach Spencer Williams team as the Argos add depth to a promising team. Stodghill played prep golf for Bigfork High School and attended the University of Montana. He is excited to resume his competitive playing career in the Frontier Conference. Wolff graduated from Frenchtown this past spring after a 10th-place finish at the Class A State Tournament.

MONTANA TECH

Montana Tech announced that interim golf coach Sean Ryan will take over the reigns of the men’s and women’s programs, as the Orediggers get set for the start of another Frontier Conference Season. Ryan came to Tech after a successful prep career at Great Falls Central. He was a four-time All-State selection and runner-up at the Class C State Tournament his senior year. Ryan competed for four seasons (2012-16) at Tech. During Ryan’s graduate studies, he traversed Montana and its golf courses. He played and documented his journey in a project known as Montana’s...Continued on the next page
USGA BOOSTS ITS SUPPORT OF FIRST TEE WITH $100,000 IN GRANT FUNDING

Thanks to a $100,000 donation from the USGA, First Tee chapters across the nation are receiving grants to further their efforts to introduce life skills and the game of golf to young people. The grants are a continuation of the support the USGA has provided to First Tee for more than 20 years, and one of a series of initiatives on which the organizations have collaborated in 2019. The grants are being dispersed to 25 chapters located in or around USGA championship locations and Allied Golf Associations as part of the organization’s strategy to leave a positive, lasting impact on local host communities.

The announcement was made at the USGA’s 119th U.S. Amateur Championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Participants from the First Tee of the Sandhills, one of the USGA grant recipients, were on hand with the chapter’s Executive Director Courtney Stiles to share the announcement alongside USGA CEO Mike Davis.

“We are so grateful to the USGA and organizations like this, as it is these partnerships that allow us to broaden our impact in communities across the country, engaging young people who we may not have otherwise reached,” said Greg McLaughlin, First Tee president. “Together, we will inspire youth for years to come, engaging them in the sport and helping them to become leaders in their communities.”

“We are proud to see our First Tee grant funding directly benefit those communities that welcome us throughout the year and embrace the spirit of what a USGA championship represents,” Davis added. “The USGA is committed to making a difference in our host communities, and we are excited to see the long-term impact these grants will have in welcoming more junior golfers to the game, and to inspire them to play it for a lifetime.”

The USGA has supported the First Tee since its inception in 1997, providing more than $26 million in grants to the organization. Their shared commitment to bringing more young people to the game was highlighted this past June during the 119th U.S. Open Championship at Pebble Beach, where the two organizations debuted the Junior Experience Featuring First Tee. The on-site interactive experience connected youths with the excitement and values associated with golf and First Tee programs offered throughout the country.

With the USGA’s support, First Tee chapters are reaching more than 136,000 young people annually at more than 1,200 program locations, with support from 25,000 volunteers. Additionally, First Tee has been introduced to more than 10,000 schools and youth centers reaching millions of additional kids through these programs.