

Weekly Golf Article – August 09, 2017
By Joe Tesori, PGA

Oh, what a great week! I am fortunate enough to be a spectator at this week's New York State Amateur at the iconic and venerable Bethpage Black. There is an eclectic group of amateurs ...teens...college players...insurance adjusters...lawyers...police officers...and even a few retired school teachers in the field of 140.

Last year's champion was none other than former Baldwinsville HS and St. John Fisher linkster Tyler McArdell, who because of turning pro recently cannot defend this coveted crown.

Walking around watching my own flesh and blood play is a father's dream, even when the bogiest sting and a bad bounce shatters the young fella's confidence. Having had my own dad suffer through watching me struggle in some 20 plus PGA Tour events, I know how difficult being an involved spectator can be.

However, I also realize the pride of watching your own compete... baring their proverbial souls and grinding for a par just to lower that total one more stroke. I am so proud of young Joe, and the man he has become, not to mention being a coach of this great game at Suny Cortland.

Someone will be the low scorer this week, yet all are champions in my book. Playing the game for trophies, golf balls and a shirt or two instead of cash is what amateurs do this week....play for the pure love of the game. Oh sure, several are on a journey toward professional golf, and that is perfectly okay. But for most, this week is the epitome of their competitive career, and I applaud the New York State Golf Association for bringing their crown jewel to this magnificent piece of real estate in Long Island. We are all glad to be here!!!

As so many here playing this week because of a PGA Pro giving them their start, their first lesson, their first caddy job, and their first taste of competition. As stewards of the game, as the on-site promoters of the game at our facilities, it is, in my opinion, our job, perhaps our most important job, to fuel and cultivate a junior's journey to the course and how to play the grand game.

As a PGA Golf Professional, we have a type of sworn duty to show the junior how to take the swing we are teaching them to the course and play with it. What better way than to play with a junior in our Section sponsored Pro- Junior event, held this past Monday at Marcellus CC. I remember some 25 plus years ago playing with my own children, both pre-teens, and in no way a threat to win, and in all honesty having a great time and for my part knowing the playing was not about the win, but about the experience.

The junior wants to play with "their pro", their golf role model, their teacher.....really...can it get any better than that? Can it? Apparently, only 16 golf professionals found it important enough to find their way to Marcellus and bring some juniors with them. Parent-child combinations found Mel and Spencer Baum and Alan Savage playing with sons Brent and Blake... good for you! Tournament Committee members Michelle Murphy, Sean Dadey and Dennis Colligan found it important enough to share their knowledge and time with some wide-eyed young golfers.

I know... some had outings, some had a doctor's appointment, some had a previous commitment (presumably dated more previously than January when our schedule came out!), and I am sure other commitments such as getting an oil change, extended line of credit, or new fishing pole kept deserving young golfers... yes the future of our game off the golf course last Monday.

Maybe I am being too sarcastic. Maybe too bombastic, maybe even too iconoclastic... but I believe a great disservice was done to our juniors. An assistant could have played if the head professional could not have, and if you are strictly an instructor or coach of the game, you should be ashamed to not have taken a day off and play with your little linksters.

Yes, Virginia, there is a State Amateur this week, a big deal to be sure. But, alas, an equally important event was held several days ago, and many of us who are commissioned to grow the game plain and simple, made a bad swing and scored a bad double bogey. Bad shots happen, but it should not be at the expense of our juniors.

Sorry, but part of our job is to be a positive influence and an on-course role model for the future of our game. We can do better....please.... you will be rewarded in ways that even I cannot put words to...