

KEY INFORMATION FOR ASPIRING COLLEGIATE GOLFERS



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RCGA National Men's Coach

Date: February 2006

There are an incredible number of talented junior golfers performing at a high level in Canada. The quality of play and the scores posted in tournaments across the country is very impressive and exciting. The vast majority of these athletes aspire to compete in the future as collegiate players and later on as PGA Tour Professionals. For many, this is their chief goal and ambition; however, most are not completely versed on the process of becoming a successful university competitor or the realities of obtaining a PGA Tour Card in the future.

The mission of the RCGA Player Development Program is to develop "Champions" both on and off the course. There is considerable widespread misinformation, myths and misconceptions regarding collegiate golf. Aspiring golfers are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the key information regarding collegiate golf. Be aware of the many issues, challenges, and possibilities that exist. Make your choices wisely based on the many factors that come into consideration.

One of the goals of the RCGA Player Development Program is to inspire and assist aspiring collegiate golfers to reach their goals. This is a crucial stage in the development of adolescents. The choices made by individuals at this juncture of their lives are likely to have long-term ramifications on their future performance as both an athlete and a human being. To this end, it is our intention to provide objective information to athletes, parents, and coaches as it relates to collegiate golf so that they can discover the best post-secondary school opportunities available to them and make informed and prudent decisions.

There are three possible choices:

- 1) US Collegiate golf,
- 2) Canadian Collegiate golf and
- 3) Alternative Options

- The following three options outlined represent possible choices for aspiring golfers.
- None of these choices is necessarily better or worse for a player. They are all different.
- Athletes and their parents and coaches are encouraged make informed decisions after they become versed on the pros and cons of each possibility.

US Collegiate Golf - NCAA Division I, II, III or NAIA Programs

- The vast majority of high-level Canadian junior golfers are highly interested in enrolling in a collegiate golf program in the United States.
- Many US collegiate golf programs present tremendous opportunities to qualified student-athletes.
- US collegiate golf programs do not necessarily present the best possibility for all aspiring junior golfers.
- Athletes, parents, and coaches are encouraged to be aware of the following information regarding college golf programs in the United States.

The Purpose of NCAA Golf Programs

- Universities are in the business of educating and enriching the lives of students and preparing them for success in the future.
- They are not, by design, institutions mandated to train and develop professional golfers.
- The vast majority of NCAA golf programs will never produce a PGA Tour Player.
- Far less than 1% of NCAA golfers will ever realize a career as a PGA Tour Player.
- Be ever aware that NCAA golf programs exist to provide student athletes (high level golfers) with the opportunity to grow and compete as golfers while they earn their degrees in a chosen field of study.
- NCAA golfers are student athletes. Academics come first. Athletics are a distant second.
- It is imperative for aspiring junior golfers that their performance in academics and golf remain top priorities throughout their high school years if they desire to play collegiate golf in the future.

Scholarships

- Athletic “scholarships” are essentially financial assistance “grants”. They are not scholarships in the purest sense of the word. They are based primarily on athletic prowess.
- Student athletes with high academic standing are encouraged to apply for any academic scholarships for which they may be eligible.
- NCAA men’s golf programs have a maximum of 4.5 scholarships per team to award in total.
- Women’s programs have as many as 6 scholarships to grant per team (Title IX).
- There are generally 8 - 12 players on each squad. Five players make the “travelling team” for each tournament.
- Outstanding collegiate recruits – top ranked Canadian players are generally offered 50% - 75% scholarships as freshmen. Very few players ever receive a “full ride” (100% scholarship).
- Many players receive no scholarship money.

Cost of Enrolling in an NCAA University

- Most top ranked junior golfers from Canada can anticipate a scholarship (financial aid) offer of approximately 50% if recruited.
- Therefore, they will need to pay approximately \$7,500 US to \$15,000 US per year in addition to the “scholarship” that they may be awarded.
- Be aware that due to the tremendous demands placed upon an NCAA student athlete that it often takes many players more than four years to graduate.
- It is not uncommon for a golfer with a “scholarship” to have accumulated a total of \$50,000 - \$75,000 (CDN) of student loan debt in order to earn a four year degree.
- This is a significant financial commitment that not every family or athlete is prepared to make for a variety of reasons.

Academic Considerations

- NCAA golfers have very hectic schedules. Athletes need to exercise time management skills in order to succeed on and off the course.

- They generally attend classes in the mornings and play and train in the afternoon. Subsequently, these students must study in general programs. It is unlikely for these athletes to have the opportunity to study in specialized academic programs like engineering, kinesiology, or journalism etc.

Who Should Apply?

Perhaps it may be helpful to think of US collegiate golf as a potential job. Do you have what it takes to be “hired”? NCAA golf is quasi-professional sport. There is pressure to perform on all of those involved. Coaches will give players with the following credentials and background strong consideration for a “job”.

- Outstanding competitive golfers who have compiled a resume that demonstrates that they can qualify for and perform in top events at a 0 handicap level or better.
- Results. College coaches look primarily at AJGA, RCGA, USGA, and provincial golf association results. They study how players fare and compare against other potential collegiate players.
- Sound fundamentals and swing technique.
- “Pro” power and ball flight.
- Advanced mental skills and emotional control.
- Effective practice habits.
- Razor sharp short games.
- Competent students who have the academic background, study habits, and desire to succeed and earn a degree at the university level.
- Pleasant people with good attitudes and strong character.
- Players who have positive family support.
- Mature individuals who are capable of successfully making the transition from junior golf and high school to the life, responsibilities, and challenges presented to a collegiate athlete.

Education

- Education is the #1 factor in upward mobility in North American society.
- Studies show that the quality of the post–secondary education and training that you receive is directly correlated to the dollars that you will earn in the future, where you will live, whom you will marry, the vehicle that you will drive, and the quality of life that you will live.
- Selecting a college or university is one of the most important decisions that you will ever make. It will affect the rest of your life.

Academics

Admission Requirements

- Interested students should obtain the “NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete” (www.ncaa.org). This is a comprehensive guide that provides individuals with detailed information and a step-by-step approach to enrolling into post–secondary institutions in the USA.
- Admission requirements vary from school to school.
- Standards are increasing.
- Be aware of the criteria.
- Design your high school curriculum to meet entrance requirements.
- Combination of GPA and SAT score.

SAT Test

- The SAT Test is a prerequisite to registering for colleges and universities in the USA.
- Consult your high school guidance counselor for SAT prep info and resources as well as test registration information.
- Learn how to effectively write the test. There is an art to it. Talk to others who have written it.
- There are books, courses, and websites available to assist in preparation of writing the test.
- Interested students are encouraged to write the SAT in Grade 11. You may rewrite it if necessary.
- Your best results count.

Eligibility

- All prospective student athletes must register through the NCAA Clearinghouse. The NCAA Clearinghouse forms and information are included in the “NCAA Guide for College Bound Student Athletes”.

Post-Secondary Academics

- Student athletes need to have excellent time management and organizational skills.
- Student golfers have hectic schedules. They travel a lot and have tremendous time challenges.
- It is imperative that student athletes have excellent study habits. Otherwise, success on the course and in the classroom is unlikely.
- Plan on potentially taking five years to complete a four year degree.

Recruiting Rules and Protocol

- It is your responsibility to understand and follow the rules.
- The rules and protocol are outlined and explained in detail in the Ping College Golf Guide (www.collegegolf.com).
- Contact the RCGA directly (www.rcga.org) if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Rules of Amateur Status.

Golf Coaches

- Not all US Collegiate golf programs have professional level coaches.
- Many programs are led by sports administrators.
- Many teams encourage their players to continue with the coaching influence which helped them reach the collegiate level.
- Aspiring high performance golfers should have a coaching influence and a support team that is focused on facilitating skill development and personal growth.

Golf Resume

- Prospective athletes are requested to provide a detailed golf resume to collegiate coaches.
- Include major accomplishments such as tournament results and Order of Merit Ranking as well as other pertinent personal data.
- Be accurate. Coaches check.
- Be brief. Avoid cluttering your golf resume with irrelevant data.

- Remember the purpose of your resume is to highlight your qualifications as a student-athlete.
- See examples that follow.

Financing

- Understand any offer in its entirety.
- Ask for a detailed written breakdown.
- How much will you be responsible to pay to attend the school?
- Ask about any “hidden” costs.
- Will you need to have a car when you are at school?
- Remember to budget for trips home at Christmas break and US Thanksgiving if possible.
- Inquire about academic aid if you potentially may qualify for such assistance.
- Don't forget that all expenses are in US funds.

Marketing

- Marketing is creating consumer demand for your service.
- In this case, the “service” being marketed to college coaches (consumers) is your ability to perform as a high-level golfer and student.
- Interested individuals need to demonstrate appropriate aptitude and performance in order to be considered.
- You are in essence asking to be “paid” with financial assistance (scholarship \$) for your “service” – golf skill combined with academic ability.
- Be honest with yourself and others. Make certain that you have the skills, results, and background to be considered for scholarship assistance.
- It is recommended that you start at least two years before you intend to enrol.
- As “foreign” students, many Canadian players need to make prospective coaches aware of them. They need to know that you exist and are qualified for a position in their program.

- Very few US Coaches actively scout Canadian events.
- Use the internet to send letters and resumes to coaches.
- Coaches visit and study the results from major tournaments.
- You can market yourself if you so choose by using the Ping College Guide, the internet, sending swing videos, resumes, and letters.
- Seek advice from Canadian PGA Coaches and college players.
- Follow-up and make notes.
- This is often a long and arduous process.
- Be persistent.
- You are likely to hear a lot of “no's” before you hear a “yes”.

Recruiting Services

- Some services are better than others.
- This can be very expensive. It generally costs between \$1,000 and \$2,500 for these firms to market you to US schools.
- There are no guarantees.
- Not all of these services have expertise in US collegiate golf.
- Many US collegiate coaches do not look favourably upon recruiting services.

Canadian Universities and Colleges

- In many cases, the best possibility available to promising young Canadian players is to take advantage of studying and competing in Canada.
- It is important that junior golfers and their families understand that US college golf is not the only avenue for high level athletes to grow and succeed. It is one of several.
- Making a choice to study and compete in Canada as a collegiate level golfer should not be looked upon as “failure” or “second rate” but rather as choosing a different possibility for athletic and personal development.
- There are many excellent opportunities available in Canada to golfers who want to combine academics and competitive golf.
- There are numerous Canadian Universities and community colleges that field golf teams. Simon Fraser, University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, University of Calgary, Ottawa University, Carleton University, University of Manitoba, and Université de Laval all compete in some NCAA or NAIA competitions. See the RCGA web site for a complete listing of programs and contact information.
- The inaugural Canadian University/College Championship conducted by the RCGA was held in May 2003 and is now one of the premier amateur events in Canada.
- The top players in the Canadian University/College Championship qualify to represent Canada in the World University Games.
- There can be some distinct advantages for some athletes to opt to attend post-secondary institutions in Canada: cost, academic programs, proximity to family, job obligations and length of summer break.
- Student athletes who choose to attend Canadian universities can enroll in specialized programs such as journalism, engineering, or kinesiology if they so desire.
- At present, Canadian college and university golf programs do not have comparable budgets of their NCAA counterparts.

- Two of Canada's top players studied and developed their golf skills in Canada. LPGA Tour star Lorie Kane is a graduate of Acadia University and Wes Heffernan of Calgary, AB is a former University of Calgary student. Wes was the 1999 Canadian Am finalist and Canada's low individual in the 2000 World Am in Germany. Wes is now a Canadian Tour Professional with tremendous promise looking to advance his career to the PGA Tour in the future.

Application Process for Canadian Colleges and University Golf Programs

- Interested student athletes should contact the golf coach directly at any institution by email or telephone to learn about the specifics of the golf program.
- Consult the website of any college or university of interest for complete information.
- Athletes must apply to any institution of interest in the same manner as all other students.
- High school guidance counselors can counsel and provide resource information in this regard.
- Financial assistance (scholarship \$) does exist in some programs.
- The Royal Canadian Golf Foundation (CGF.org) and many provincial golf associations also offer scholarship and bursary opportunities.
- Be aware that there is considerable competition for spots on Canadian college and university golf teams.
- Don't assume anything.

Alternative Options - Train and Compete Full-Time

Some players may choose the option to forgo becoming a student athlete at a post-secondary institution and instead train and compete as full-time competitive golfers.

- This approach enables the athlete to focus on developing athletic expertise without the distraction of academic pressures and challenges.
- This is the path that many current world class players chose to follow. Examples of players who followed this strategy include: Aaron Baddeley, Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Bernhard Langer, and Greg Norman.
- Be aware that the odds are strongly skewed against top ranking players making it to the world class level.
- Those who choose this course of action are strongly encouraged to prepare an “exit strategy” so that they have a plan to channel their experiences as an athlete into a positive direction for their lives once they decide to move away from full-time competitive golf.
- Athletes who decide to choose this path may opt to return to a post-secondary institution at a later date or a golf management program leading to employment in the golf industry.

Next Steps

Collegiate golf is serious business; both in the classroom and on the course. It is critical for top-level junior golfers who have the goal of playing collegiate golf to plan early for this possibility. Be prudent and realistic. Gather all of the objective data that you can. The decisions that you make in regard to post-secondary education are likely to have far reaching ramifications for the rest of your life. Don't be blinded by the romanticism that collegiate golf can present. Approach things with a cautious optimism.

It is highly recommended that aspiring juniors and parents align themselves with a professional golf coach who specializes in developing high performance athletes. There are RCGA Regional Coaches across Canada who are trained to serve such athletes. Consult RCGA.org and your provincial golf association for further information.

The opportunity to combine post secondary education with inter-collegiate golf is extremely exciting to deserving athletes. Train and prepare yourself as best you can. Set your sights high.

“If you work hard enough, sacrifice enough, then you will win. That’s what many coaches teach. Or should we say preach? It might be honest and healthier to say that if you work very hard, you will become excellent, and because of that excellence, you may do great deeds and win great prizes. Unless, of course, you don’t. In which case, you simply have to be satisfied with your excellence and the dignity of your effort.”

- Boswell, T. (1992). “Game Day”. New York: Penguin.

February 3, 2005

Coach Jones
Head Golf Coach
University of Big Sky

Dear Coach Jones,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jim Smith and I am very interested in the University of Big Sky as a student and a prospect golfer. I am currently a senior at Riverdale Secondary School in Bright's Cove, Nova Scotia, Canada. I will be graduated high school in January 2006. I am a highly accomplished golfer who is planning a high level schedule in the upcoming season. This schedule includes both the US Junior Amateur and the Canadian Junior. I am in search of a school with a strong academic program and a highly competitive golf team. I am a 0 handicap now, and I hope to bring it into the +'s in the upcoming season. I have written the SAT test once and I am rewriting it again on Jan 25/06. I have a strong commitment to excellence, and a passion to compete at the NCAA level.

What first sparked my interest in the University of Big Sky was a conversation with my golf coach Henry Brunton. Henry had nothing but good things to say about your school. Henry Brunton is the RCGA National Golf Coach, and he also works with Canada's elite amateurs and some touring professionals. Henry Brunton can be contacted at 416-579-6170 or E-Mail: hbruntoncdngolf@hotmail.com He will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

The most recent major tournaments that I have played in include; The 2004 Canadian Junior Championship, The 2004 Canadian Men's Club Champion of Champions, The 2003 Nova Scotia Amateur Championship, The 2004 Nova Scotia Junior Amateur Championship. Here are a few of the major tournaments I plan to play in, in the upcoming season; The Nova Scotia Amateur Championship, Canadian Champ of Champions, Canadian Amateur Championship, Canadian Junior Championship, Nova Scotia Junior Championship, U.S. Junior Amateur, AJGA Future Links events. Please see my playing resume attached.

I can be reached at jsmith@yahoo.com or 902-221-1235. Any information about your school or golf program that you could send me would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Henry Brunton
RCGA Men's National Team Head Coach

October 14, 2005

To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure and pride that I provide Jim Smith with a personal reference. I have the privilege of coaching Jim. He is an outstanding young man who has all of the necessary attributes and work ethic to become a successful student athlete at the NCAA level.

Jim is a well-rounded individual with strong character, a positive attitude, tremendous interpersonal skills, and a pleasant disposition. As well, he has excellent family support. Jim is committed to developing into a champion both on and off the course.

In 2005, Jim made phenomenal strides with his golf. He worked diligently to hone his swing technique, short game, and mental skills. He has developed into an honest scratch player in competition at present. As a result of all of his efforts, Jim has posted some very impressive tournament results.

He has demonstrated that he is a national level competitor with the ability to break seventy on championship layouts.

Jim Smith is a first class person and a very talented golfer. There is no question that he will be a credit to any institution and golf team with which he is associated. Any consideration that you may give him for your program is certainly deserved. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly by telephone: (416) 579-6170 or email: hbruntoncd-golf@hotmail.com if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Henry Brunton, BPE; CPGA
RCGA Men's National Team Head Coach

Jim Smith - Playing Resume

122 Tiny Beaches Rd. S,
Someplace, Nova Scotia, BON 0L0
(705) 123-4567

Birthdate: January 1, 1984
SIN#: 000-000-000
Height: 5' 10"
Weight: 149lbs
Name of School: Riverdale Secondary
Graduation Date: June 2003

Other sports: Hockey, Curling, Basketball,
Volleyball,
Badminton and Biking

Extracurricular activities: Student Council, Mock Trial
Law Team

COMPETITION RESULTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

2003 (first year for golf competitions)

Pepsi Tour Events

-1st place, Juvenile Division at Wild Woods G.C.
-2nd place, Juvenile Division at High River G.C.

2004

Provincial Events

Nova Scotia Amateur Championship:

June 4 -T3, Nova Scotia Amateur Qualifying shot 74 at
Wolf Mountain G.C.
July 10-13 -T49, Nova Scotia Amateur Championship at
Riverbend G.C.
Scores: 75-76-80-78 (youngest player to make the cut)

Nova Scotia Junior Matchplay Championship:

Qualifying Round, placed 3rd, Shot 70 at Brooksville G.C.
July 31- Aug. 3 - First round: Defeated Bill Jones (25),
2&1
Second round: Defeated Fred Robertson (8), 4& 2
Third round: Defeated by Ralph Freedman(9), 2&1

Pepsi Tour Events

-1st place (three-way playoff), Juvenile Division at Wolf
Mountain G. C.
Shot 74

Other Accomplishments

- 1st place in Men's Club Championship at Wild Woods G.
C. 74-68 (Heavy Rain)-79—221
- 1st Place in Junior Club Championship at Wild Woods
G. C.

2005

Pepsi Tour Events

-1st place overall at Rock Springs G. C. shot 67
-2nd place overall at Rolling Green G. C.

Provincial events

Nova Scotia Junior Tournament of Champions

May 5 - T2 Jr. Tournament of Champions Qualifying round
shot 73 at Mountainview GC
May 18-20 finished T28 Nova Scotia Junior Tournament of
Champions at Black Bear GC.
Rounds: 80-80-82 (zero degree weather with wind rain
and wet snow for all three rounds)

Nova Scotia Men's Champion of Champions

June 10- T16 shot 75 at Wild Meadows G. C.

Nova Scotia Junior Championship

July 2- T4 Nova Scotia Junior championships Qualifier
shot 74
July 16-19 T28 Nova Scotia Junior Championships at
Halifax Municipal GC
Rounds:75-73-74-79—301

National Championships

Canadian Club Champion of Champions Championship
June 28-July 3—Tournament was held at The Whistler GC
in Whistler, BC
Shot 75-75-73-76

Canadian Junior Championship

Aug 6-9—T54 Canadian Junior Championship in
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Rounds:75-77-71-76—299 (rain and wind 2nd and 4th
rounds)
Really fun tournament on a great course with long rough
and great conditioned, fast greens

Other Accomplishments

2002 Black Brook GC Invitational- 1st place overall shot 73

CONTACT	INSTITUTION	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL	INSTITUTION	CONTACT	EMAIL	PHONE
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