

# From Caddying to Scholarships

## Junior Golf in Alberta



Junior golf in Alberta had a slow start, not receiving recognition as a serious competition until after World War II, and very few records were kept until the 1950's.

The first national junior boys championship, for instance, wasn't played until just before the war, in 1938, and was won by the pride of the Jasper Park Lodge, Jimmy Hogan.

All Canadian championships were cancelled during WWII but some provincial events continued with Glenn Gray of Drumheller making his mark with three junior titles.

Even after the war, juniors were rarely given course times and played primarily when the adults weren't around. One of the reasons for the slow emergence of the juniors was that so few juniors golfed, preferring the more accessible, popular and affordable sports such as baseball. Tournaments often attracted less than a dozen participants.

Many of Alberta – and Canada's best – such as Vulcan's Keith Alexander and Edmonton's Henry Martell never started playing competitively until their late teens.

Caddying was, for many juniors, their first introduction to golf as they were permitted to play in off-times and compete at a club's annual 'Caddy Tournament.'

With little junior-sized equipment available, juniors often cut down adult-sized clubs. Rae Milligan, a multiple Alberta ladies and junior champion of the 1950's, learned to play at the Jasper Park Lodge using a cutdown brassie as her only club.

Junior coaching was almost non-existent, unless a junior attracted the special interest of a club pro. Provincial open and amateur champion Bill Tait was permitted to play with the adults as a junior, and learned much from them.

Post-war junior golf in Alberta gained attention when Hall of Famer Doug Silverberg started his golf career

with three consecutive provincial junior titles from 1949 to 1951, and the national title in 1950.

"Back in those days you played for your life," Silverberg recalled in a 1994 *Alberta Golfer* article.

"You didn't dare lose because there was one spot, one trip to the Canadian Junior. You either came first or you stayed home."

Today, many clubs offer golf programs for children as young as five with lessons – including golf etiquette – leading up to a Certificate of Achievement.

### Getting an Education – and Golfing

While there are hundreds of competitive opportunities for junior golfers in Alberta today ranging from club to provincial tournaments, the biggest change since the pre-war days is the many educational opportunities that golf now provides for juniors.

Matt Rollins, in a 2006 article for *The Alberta Golfer*, pointed out that "Today golf scholarships are very accessible for young golfers."

As Alberta Golf's Player Development Manager, Matt outlined the scholarship seminars and materials provided by Alberta Golf to help juniors "on their road to a post-secondary education."

Ideally, he said, families should be attending these seminars when their children are 12 to 15 years old.

### Charles C. Reid Memorial Scholarships

In 1989, Alberta Golf introduced a scholarship program supported by the estate of a Banff golf enthusiast, Charles C. Reid, offering ten \$1000 annual scholarships for study in three categories: Amateur Golf Performance, Turfgrass Management, and Golf Course Management. In 1994, the Alberta Golf Association Foundation was established as a registered charity to grow scholarship funds. By 2012, the program had expanded to provide over 20 scholarships valued up to \$3000 each.

These scholarships and the others available are good examples of, as Matt Rollins titled his article: "How to get an education while playing the game you love."



A team of young Albertans is ready to represent their province after making a Provincial Junior Interprovincial Team in the 1980s.