

Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour comes to Caledon over holiday weekend

By Jake Courtepatte

Caledon Country Club near Inglewood was the site for the most recent stop on the Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour over Civic Holiday weekend.

Despite some inclement weather Saturday, 58 golfers aged 19 and younger competed for titles in eight divisions, coming from across Canada for the tournament.

A non-profit organization, MJT is run exclusively by PGA professionals. As Canada's most-played major junior golf tour, this was the fifth stop at Caledon CC over its 15-year history.

Mike Skimson, a PGA Canada professional and MJT tournament director in Ontario, said the Tour has always found the course in good shape.

"It's a great golf course," said Skimson. "The kids enjoy it, it always goes well in Caledon. We have a good relationship with the people up there, so we keep coming back."

Located along the Credit River, it is an 18-hole course made challenging by the rolling Caledon hills. Skimson said the course provides "a challenging test" for young golfers.

Light rain Saturday didn't stop Brad Hildebrandt of Ancaster, Ontario from taking home the low overall score, shooting 72 and 71 for one-under for the tournament. Vince Greco of Bolton represented local talent, shooting a 74 the second day to finish second in the bantam boys category.

Greco's come-from-behind success also earned him the Golf Town Comeback Award in his division.

New to MJT this year is the Mini Tour Series, available for golfers aged 12 and under. Caledon CC hosts one of only five Mini Tour events in Ontario.

"It's a brand new program, so we're still in the testing phase," said Skimson. "We're trying to see what kind of following we can get, and what kind of numbers we can produce."

Taking place as a one-day event Saturday, the course was modified to set up yardages based on the younger golfers' ages and skill levels.

The low round was an impressive five-over 77, shot by 12-year old Michael Ikejiani of Minesing, Ontario. Nine-year old Rozlyn Rooke led the pack in the girls division, putting together a score of 86.

The Tour hosts its own National Championship in Phoenix, Arizona, in November. In order to qualify, a golfer must compete in three season events.

The next opportunity for local golfers comes to Osprey Valley Golf Course in Alton Aug. 16 and 17.

For more information on the Tour or to register for a tournament, visit www.maplejt.com



Girls division winner Rayna Oosterhuis, Junior Boys division winner Brad Hildebrandt, Juvenile Boys division winner Justin Brazeau, and Bantam Boys division winner Ryan Trocchi.



Matthew Barnes of Waterloo teed off Saturday in the Boston Pizza-presented Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour at Caledon Country Club. Photo by Bill Rea