

Saints golf boosters:

Another successful and fun golf season was recently completed. Both on and off the course, Saints golf team members were a presence on local driving ranges and golf courses around the county. Below are some of the highlights of the season, an update on alumni who continue to pursue tournament golf, and information about the upcoming 8th Annual Saints Golf Team fundraiser at Mt. Woodson Golf Course.

2019 season highlights

Junior varsity:

The junior varsity team ended up 11-4 in dual matches played throughout the season. Besides playing at our home courses Riverwalk and Miramar, the JV team was able to play other area courses such as Oaks North, Mission Trails, Steele Canyon, and Rancho Santa Fe Country Club (which is arguably the nicest course in San Diego County). The JV and Developmental teams allow players the opportunity to learn the proper etiquette on the golf course while improving their games so that golf will be a lifelong pursuit on a personal and professional basis. There are several examples of players from this year's varsity lettermen who started on the JV team and even on the Developmental team, using the opportunity to work their way up the ladder to become varsity golfers. Many of this year's JV team will need to step up their games in the coming eight months to have next year's varsity season go as well as it did in 2019.

Varsity:

The varsity team ended up with a record of 11 wins and 14 losses in dual matches. Within the very challenging Western League, Saints ended up in a tie for 2nd place with a record of 5-3, including a big win at Miramar Golf Course against La Jolla after losing a tight match to them at La Jolla Country Club. We had a very competitive schedule throughout the season and played several great courses as part of our 'away' matches: Admiral Baker, Balboa, Steele Canyon, Lomas Santa Fe CC, Eastlake, Bonita, Coronado, Encinitas Ranch, La Jolla Country Club, and Rancho Santa Fe Country Club. While those were all nine hole matches, the highlight of the season was hosting the San Diego Country Club High School Invitational for the 7th consecutive year. The 18 hole tournament features nine of the top high schools from San Diego and is played on a very difficult and beautiful golf course, followed by a nicely hosted banquet in the clubhouse. The team did accomplish one of our main goals by earning our way back to CIF San Diego at Admiral Baker after not making it as a team in 2018.

Team awards:

Player of the Year: 9th grader Jacob Paule

- Led Saints in scoring average, ending in 35th place overall in all of San Diego County and in 7th place amongst all 9th graders. Earned 2nd Team All-Western League and capped the season off with a victory in the City League Match Play tournament, the first Saintsman to win this event since Tyler Torano in 2010

Newcomer of the year: 11th grader Stuart Dempster

- In his first foray into playing golf competitively, Stuart ended up in the 12th position on the team ladder. He was an extremely positive and friendly member of the team throughout the season. His season was highlighted by scoring a 37 at Riverwalk in the next to last week of the season, showing the ability he can tap for next year as he pushes for a varsity letter

Best Teammate: 11th grader: Andres Garza

- Represents what hard work, positive attitude, and can-do spirit can accomplish. Andres is a coach's dream as he is a great role model for his teammates on the course and in the classroom, is willing to take on any role that is needed by the team, and continues to work hard at his game to improve.

Most Improved:

- 10th grader Nolan Steinbuch
 - o This is a first-time situation of a player earning most improved twice in his time with the golf team. Starting virtually as a beginner in 9th grade, Nolan earned his way onto the JV team last year showing amazing improvement. Improving gets harder after already going from beginner to 'good' but Nolan worked hard by continuing regular lessons throughout the year, allowing him to make another leap forward this year to nearly earning his varsity letter. If he earns a third award for most improved next year, the 2020 team will have a very successful season!
- 11th grader Diego Bremer
 - o An example of a player beginning on the Developmental Team in 9th grade and then becoming good enough to earn a varsity letter last season. It is hard to continue improving at that rate but Diego was able to knock four strokes off of his match scoring average from 2018. If he can again knock four strokes off by next year, the Saints team shouldn't miss a beat though we lose four varsity lettermen to graduation

Varsity letters:

- 12th grader Tim Feiner, 1st letter
- 12th grader Diego Gonzalez, 1st
- 12th grader Rodrigo Bremer, 2nd
- 12th grader Liam Hudson, 2nd
- 12th grader Brandon Toscano, 2nd
- 11th grader Andres Garza, 1st
- 11th grader Diego Bremer, 2nd
- 11th grader Anthony Konja 2nd
- 9th grader Jacob Paule 1st

2019 highlights from outside of competition

- The golf team again served as caddies for a day in November at San Diego Country Club. Besides getting the opportunity to see what being a member at one of the

finest country clubs in San Diego is all about, it allows the members to see what being a Saintsman is all about! We raised over \$350 that was donated to Saints Campus Ministry for the Tijuana Orphanage fund

- The top 12 players on the team worked as instructors at Colina Park GC for an afternoon with the 8th grade class from St. Patrick's Elementary School (thanks again goes out to Saintsman Dan Morrin for sponsoring the event!).
- In January, our team competed against an alumni team at Mt. Woodson GC for the Purple Cup (made by alumnus and golf team coach Tom Graciano). The alumni won for the 5th year in a row, taking their overall lead in the series to 5-2, and all involved had a great time

Saints graduates golfing in college and beyond in tournament play outside of high school golf

- Luis Calderon (Saints 2014) completed his collegiate career by playing in all tournaments for California State, Northridge while on a golf scholarship
- Tyler Whittaker (Saints 2017) finished his 2nd season on the club team by competing in Nationals while playing for Grand Canyon University
- Andres Padilla (Saints 2018) played on the golf team at Cuyamaca College in 2019 after graduating from Saints last spring
- Rodrigo Bremer (Saints 2019) will compete on the golf team at Cuyamaca College starting in the fall
- Tyler Torano (Saints 2010, Loyola Marymount 2014) is continuing his professional golfing career by competing in events throughout the country and doing Monday qualifying for Web.com Tour events
- Armando Favela (Saints 2005, Loyola Chicago 2009) continues to have playing status on the Web.com Tour (the top feeder tour to the PGA). With a career scoring average on the Web.com of 72.4 and multiple top 20 finishes, as well as three victories on the PGA Latin American Tour, Armando is still pursuing the big breakthrough that gets him status on the PGA Tour. Armando was a major part of the 2005 State Championship team, the 1st Saints sports statewide title
- Don Eklund is a great example of how golf is truly a lifelong pursuit. Though golf wasn't his passion during in his time at Saints, Don has found the fountain of youth in his golf game through hard work and persistence. He has twice qualified for the USGA Senior Amateur which is the most prestigious tournament held in the world for players over the age of 55. He has also competed at the highest levels in

tournaments throughout California and continues to put his name high on the leaderboard!

Keep an eye on the Saintsman competing in the IMG Junior Worlds this July

July 9-12th is the annual IMG Junior World event which is held at various courses throughout San Diego. The highest level, for 15-18 year old players, is held at Torrey Pines Golf Course. For the first time in nine years, a Saintsman has qualified for this prestigious event: Jacob Paule earned his way into the event by qualifying through a series of local events against the best high school golfers in San Diego. Entry to watch the action at Torrey Pines is free so wear some purple and go out and support our Saintsman! This will be part of a very busy July for Jacob as he also qualified for the Optimist International event in Florida at Doral Golf Course which will be held July 23-26th.

8th Annual Saints golf team fundraiser at Mt. Woodson Golf Course on Sunday September 22nd with 12:00pm shotgun

We are set for the 8th annual golf team fundraiser. It will be very similar to the past seven years - \$125 per person (\$500 for a foursome). Note that one change is that the start time will move up by one hour: we will have our BBQ from 10:00-11:45pm. You can show up and have lunch with your team and other Saints boosters at your leisure prior to our 12:00pm shotgun start. We will keep things moving at a fairly quick pace of 4 ½ hours or less so that you are done by about 4:30pm. There is no commitment after the round is over except to pick up any raffle items or prizes your team won. This is our primary fundraiser and allows the team to play extra rounds of golf at our home courses and also use Saints golf balls during matches. With a total roster of about 30 players, Saints has the largest team in San Diego, resulting in a very large yearly greens fee charge to our budget. We also have committed to getting every player on the team a golf bag of their own to keep (cost of \$200 each) as it is a large part of the identity of being a golfer for Saints. The easiest way to support the team is come out to Mt. Woodson with us for the afternoon but if you have other commitments that day, we also have a raffle along with this event that has over 50 golf related items (you do not have to be present to win in the raffle). If you would like to reserve a foursome or have any other questions about the event, send me an email.

Final notes:

A Saints golf team tradition is to have a relatively recent golf team member be the featured speaker at the team banquet to give some perspective on their high school golf experience and the transition into the 'real world' after college. This year's speaker was Jamie Steckbeck, Saints 2014 and SDSU 2018. Currently working as an accountant for Ernst and Young, one of the world's four largest accounting firms, Jamie shared some great golf team memories as well as advice with the current team members and families (we had 105 total people at the banquet on June 6th). Among the things he expressed to the gathering:

- Golf is great preparation for life since it isn't always smooth sailing and how you recover from adversity is the true measure of success

- The relationships he has made and cultivated have been both fun and beneficial to his work career. Jamie also suggested to everyone present that joining the Purple Gang for a monthly round of golf is a great way to have a fun round of golf among friends

Thank you again for everyone involved in making the Saints golf team experience the best possible! Our coaches: Tom Isaak, Christian Da Luz, Bill Davis, Jess Wilson, and Tom Graciano, all feel fortunate to be involved with the program as we get to watch the development of young men both on the golf course and beyond!

See you at Mt. Woodson and on other area golf courses this summer!

Sincerely
Tom Isaak