

*The*



*Open*

*Tournament Story*

*Laurel Island Links Golf Club  
Kingsland, Georgia*

***Happy Holidays everyone and may your upcoming days be filled with joy and happiness!***

The comfortable and easy ride north to **Laurel Island Links Golf Club** this past weekend to play in the “**Georgia Peach Open**” was one of the least stressful drives all season. Hit the interstate, cross the Florida-Georgia line and BAM! You're there. I personally hadn't been to this course in over 20 years. I played it when it first opened up back in 1996 and I remember having a blast playing it. When I arrived at the golf course and took the tour, I then realized why I had such a good time at this Davis Love III designed golf course. Awesome golf course, great layout and the people were as friendly as you'll ever meet. The club, recently purchased by now owner and operator Ron Tyre was a failing program, but with a little love Ron said he and his Head Professional Benny Alvarez are whipping it back into shape.

The course is filled with picturesque views of marshy areas and woods and a challenge for any and all players. The greens can be pretty torturous, but they were pretty friendly for us. I know I will return to this course to see the progress made and to play it. For sure our “Georgia Peach Open” will be placed on next season's schedule, so put it on your bucket list.

To kick things off at Laurel Island Links Beatrice Dietz playing in the **Girls 13-18 Division** would post her lowest round in 50 NFJG TOUR events to claim rights to her first ever NFJG TOUR Champions medal. Dietz's lowest round ever of 77 is a huge accomplishment on this very difficult and intimidating golf course. The 77 would turn out to be the low round of the day as she joins the ranks of TOUR CHAMPION. SWEET GEORGIA, Awesome Stuff! Tylar Ann Whiting and Taylor Holwell would tie five strokes back at 82. Whiting would be presented the Silver Medal winning in a scorecard playoff. Holwell would receive the Bronze Medal.

Campbell Kennedy, recently advanced to the **Elite Tour Boys 13-15 Division** would take home his first Gold Medal on the Elite Tour adding to his Rising Tour Gold Medal collection for his third win of the season. Campbell shot a very nice score of 78 to outshine Jack Barned and Andrew Davis by four strokes at 82 each. Barned would take the Runner up spot via the scorecard playoff.

Mathew French now five tournaments into the **Boys 10-12 Division** would secure his first championship medal. French tied with Emmet Kuhlenskamp at 87 after regulation play. Newcomer Kyle Nelson would shake off the first tournament jitters posting a score of 115 to capture third place. French and Kuhlenskamp headed to the 10<sup>th</sup> tee, a sporty straight

away par-4. French would tap in for a two putt bogey and Kuhlenskamp would three putt to give French the rights to his first win.

Another first would come from the outstanding play from one of our fine young female players in the **Foundation Elite Division**. Alyzabeth Morgan. Morgan would become the first four time champion of the 2017-2018 NFJG TOUR season. Morgan would lap the field by more than 10 strokes with an inspiring 84 to claim victory. Smiling Ryan Houck and Trevor Challice would tie at 94 with Houck winning the tie breaker for the Runner up position.

For the **Foundation Rising Division**, only Greyson Meeker would dare travel north to the land of unknown. He would post up a nice 62 and spread great Christmas Cheer with his supporting cast of family members (Grandma "Nama", Mom Ashley, Dad Gordon and two little sisters Declan and Kinley. A priceless moment and the cameras would not stop for more than 10 minutes as he showcased his gold. This victory is surely documented in the history books.

In the **Boys 16-18 Division**, Alexander Whitmore and Jake Johnson battled it out head-to-head, each taking their share of birdies and others. The difficult finishing hole would be the story teller in this battle. Both would make a mess of the hole, but Whitmore's mess would be two strokes less than Johnson's and Whitmore would take control earning the first place award, posting a winning score of 85.

Here's another first, four of our NFJG TOUR Players will tee it up next week at the World Golf Village – Slammer and Squire in the **WORLD JUNIOR TOUR's "American Junior"**. Exemptions earned for past outstanding play on the NFJG TOUR.

And finally coming up at the FIRST of the NEW YEAR is the **"Ponte Vedra Invitational"** being played on the Ocean and Lagoon Course at Ponte Vedra Inn and Club. Our goal is to make this event the BIGGEST and BADDEST event of North Florida. We hope to see you there. It's the final event of the Fall Tournament Series and will be the deciding factor for the Player of the Series Award.

Many thanks to the Professional Staff at Laurel Island Links and to Owner Ron Tyre for his awesome welcome and the fond farewell by Head Pro Benny Alveraz.

See you on the Links!

Jack Aschenbach, PGA