

## 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship – Storylines

**July 20-25, 2015**

**Colleton River Plantation Club (Pete Dye Course)  
Bluffton, S.C.**

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**WHO'S HERE** – Among the 156 golfers in the 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur field, there are:

**Oldest Competitors:** Connor O'Brien (17, born 7-26-97), David Mackey (17, born 7-28-97), Jaxon Lynn (17, born 8-2-97), Michael Saccente (17, born 8-2-97), George Markham (17, born 8-5-97), Spencer Ralston (17, born 8-6-97)

**Youngest Competitors:** Isaiah Choi (14, born 3-21-01), Alvin Kwak (14, born 1-1-01), James Imai (14, born 12-12-00), Clay Seeber (14, born 10-3-00), Will Thomson (14, born 9-3-00)

**Average Age of Field:** 16.31

**U.S. States Represented** – There are 37 states represented in the 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur: California (20), Texas (14), North Carolina (8), Florida (7), Arizona (6), South Carolina (5), Tennessee (5), Georgia (4), Illinois (4), Maryland (4), New York (4), Pennsylvania (4), Alabama (3), Colorado (3), Indiana (3), Kentucky (3), Louisiana (3), Mississippi (3), New Jersey (3), Virginia (3), Connecticut (2), Iowa (2), Michigan (2), Minnesota (2), Missouri (2), Oklahoma (2), Washington (2), Hawaii (1), Idaho (1), Kansas (1), Massachusetts (1), New Hampshire (1), Ohio (1), South Dakota (1), Utah (1), Wisconsin (1) and Wyoming (1).

**International** – There are 13 countries represented in the 2015 U.S. Junior Amateur: United States (133), Canada (6), People's Republic of China (4), Republic of Korea (2), Norway (2), Thailand (2), Argentina (1), Australia (1), Chinese Taipei (1), Colombia (1), Japan (1), Philippines (1) and South Africa (1).

**USGA Champions:** None

**Players in Field with Most Junior Amateur Appearances (2015 included):** Brad Dalke (4), Andy Zhang (4), John Augenstein (3), Eric Bae (3), Wilson Furr (3), Josh Gliege (3), Cheng Jin (3), Easton Paxton (3), Spencer Ralston (3), Ivan Camilo Ramirez (3) and Sahith Theegala (3).

**Played in 2014 U.S. Junior Amateur:** 33 (John Augenstein, Eric Bae, Preston Ball, Phillip Barbaree, Billy Basham, Jake Chanen, Nick Costello, Brad Dalke, Cooper Dossey, John Felitto, Wilson Furr, Tony Gil, Joan Gillard, Josh Gliege, Noah Goodwin, Cheng Jin, Won Jun Lee, Thomas Longbella, Charlie Miller, John Pak, Easton Paxton, Spencer Ralston, Ivan Camilo Ramirez, Michael Saccente, Christian Salzer, Joshua Seden, Davis Shore, David Snyder, Spencer Soosman, Sahith Theegala, Frankie Thomas, Jack Trent, Andy Zhang)

**Played in 2013 U.S. Junior Amateur:** 11 (John Augenstein, Brad Dalke, Wilson Furr, Josh Gliege, Cheng Jin, Chris Navarro, Easton Paxton, Spencer Ralston, Ivan Camilo Ramirez, Sahith Theegala, Andy Zhang)

**Played in 2012 U.S. Junior Amateur:** 5 (Brad Dalke, Eddy Lai, Haoyuan Li, Rhett Rasmussen, Andy Zhang)

**Played in 2011 U.S. Junior Amateur:** 1 (Eric Bae)

**Played in 2015 U.S. Open:** 1 (Cole Hammer)

**Played in 2015 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball:** 3 (Ahmed Ali, Kyosuke Hara, Sahith Theegala)

**Played in 2014 U.S. Amateur:** 3 (Kyosuke Hara, Chris Navarro, Will Thomson)

**Played in 2014 U.S. Amateur Public Links:** 2 (Eric Ghim, Easton Paxton)

#### **PLAYER NOTES:**

**Ahmed Ali**, 15, of Palo Alto, Calif., was the youngest player in the 2015 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball field when he competed with his brother, Hussain. Ali will be a sophomore at Palo Alto High School. The left-hander tied for second in the AJGA Junior All-Star at Innisbrook last February and has two fifth-place finishes this season.

**John Augenstein**, 16, of Owensboro, Ky., is competing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur. He was a semifinalist in 2013 and reached the Round of 32 in 2014. He won the 2014 KHSAA state championship by carding a pair of 69s for a three-stroke victory last fall. Augenstein, who just completed his junior season at Owensboro Catholic High, tied for 19th in the 2013 state championship.

**Eric Bae**, 17, of Pinehurst, N.C., led Pinecrest High School to the 2015 Class 4A state championship by winning the individual title with a pair of 70s. Bae, who was born in the Republic of Korea, is competing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur and reached the Round of 32 last year. His sister, Sarah, is a member of the North Carolina State University team and is a three-time state junior player of the year.

**Christian Baliker**, 17, of Simpsonville, S.C., is competing in his first USGA championship after earning co-medalist honors in the Santee, S.C., sectional qualifier. Baliker, a rising senior at St. Joseph's School, was the 2015 Class A state runner-up after losing to Pierce Fox in a playoff. He tied for fourth at the 2015 Junior North & South Amateur, conducted at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club. In the 2013 Tom Fazio Junior Masters, he recorded a double eagle on the par-5 16th while playing in a driving rainstorm.

**Philip Barbaree**, 17, of Shreveport, La., advanced to the Round of 32 in last year's U.S. Junior Amateur. He won the 2015 AJGA Rolex Tournament of Champions by 14 strokes. Barbaree won his second consecutive LHSAA Division I state individual championship in leading C.E. Byrd High to the team title. Barbaree was the medalist by seven strokes this year after winning the previous year in a playoff. He finished second to Colin Morikawa at the 112th Trans-Mississippi Amateur on July 9.

**Alec Bard**, 17, of New Hartford, N.Y., is the younger brother of Derek Bard, who plays at the University of Virginia and has reached the Round of 32 twice in the U.S. Junior Amateur. Alec won medalist honors by five strokes (71-69) in the Voorheesville, N.Y., sectional qualifier. He has twice claimed the NYSGA Junior Boys championship (2011, 2012) and was second in this year's NYSPHSAA state championship. Alec has also earned All-Section III honors twice in ice hockey at New Hartford High.

**Charles-Eric Belanger**, 16, of Canada, won the Keene, N.H., sectional qualifier by nine strokes with rounds of 66 and 67 for a 36-hole total of 11-under 133 at Bretwood Golf Course's North Course. He helped Team Quebec capture the 2014 Williamson Cup and twice won the Quebec City Junior Amateur (2013, 2014). Belanger started the 2015 campaign by winning the Golf Quebec Junior Springs with rounds of 72 and 71.

**Davis Bryant**, 15, of Aurora, Colo., made a 10-foot birdie putt on the third playoff hole in the Longmont, Colo., sectional qualifier on June 29 to advance to his first USGA championship. He was asked to represent his home state in the 43rd Junior America's Cup the following day. Finally on July 1, Bryant completed an impressive three-day span when he was chosen to play in the Champions Tour's 2015 Nature Valley First Tee Open at Pebble Beach.

**Isaiah Choi**, 14, of San Ramon, Calif., is the youngest player in the U.S. Junior Amateur field and is competing in his first USGA championship. Choi won last year's Sacramento City Junior Easter title and the IBA Sacramento Junior Golf Classic, contested at Del Paso Country Club, the site of the 2015 U.S. Senior Open. Choi makes electronic music, including several original compositions, and plays piano and drums with his church youth group.

**Parker Coody**, 15, of Plano, Texas, is the grandson of 1971 Masters champion Charles Coody, who played in 18 U.S. Opens. Parker won the 2014 Texas State Junior (14 under) with a final-round 65, including a 5-foot birdie putt on the 36th hole. He and his twin brother, Pierceson, helped Plano West High finished third in the 2015 Texas Class 6A state championship.

**Brad Dalke**, 17, of Hobart, Okla., is playing in his fourth U.S. Junior Amateur and has advanced to match play in his three previous appearances. He is the youngest of seven children and comes from an athletic family. His mother, Kay (Pryor), played on the first University of Oklahoma women's golf team. His father, Bill, was a linebacker on Oklahoma's 1975 national championship team. His grandfather, Ken (Pryor), played on the school's basketball and baseball teams. Dalke, who will attend Oklahoma in the fall, won the 2014 Class 2A state high school championship.

**Jake DeZoort**, 17, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., is competing in his first USGA championship. DeZoort, who was born in Columbia, S.C., once caddied for PGA Tour player Mark Wilson in a tournament that raised funds to help his hometown recover from a devastating 2012 tornado. His father is a professor at the university of Alabama and his mother is a retired teacher.

**Cooper Dossey**, 17, of Austin, Texas, was the medalist in the Kerrville, Texas, sectional qualifier and set a course record in the first round with a 10-under 62, with his brother, Luke, on the bag. Dossey was the runner-up in the 2015 Class 5A state championship and led Vandegrift High to the state crown. His grandparents, Nub and Carolyn Donaldson, are USGA Rules officials.

**Wilson Furr**, 17, of Jackson, Miss., is competing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur. Furr, who reached the Round of 32 in 2013, became the youngest winner of the Mississippi State Amateur last month and won by eight strokes. Furr founded a non-profit organization with his younger sister, Hartwell, seven years ago in an effort to raise awareness of importance of activity and play for children's health. "Just Have A Ball" addresses the epidemic of childhood obesity in Furr's home state.

**Josh Gliege**, 16, of Eagle, Idaho, is playing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur. He won the 2015 IDHSAA Class 5A state championship by seven strokes and led Eagle High to its sixth consecutive state crown. Gliege has also competed in football, basketball and baseball at the high school level. Gliege's father, grandfather and uncle are all pilots.

**Cole Hammer**, 15, of Houston, Texas, is the third-youngest player to compete in the U.S. Open after playing at Chambers Bay last month. The 15-year-old is a freshman on the Kincaid School golf team. He earned All-Southwest Preparatory Conference recognition and helped his squad tie for eighth in the 2015 conference championship. Hammer, who plans to attend the University of Texas in 2018, shot 64 and 68 in the Dallas U.S. Open sectional qualifier on June 8.

**Viktor Hovland**, 17, of Norway, is competing in his first USGA championship after earning an exemption from sectional qualifying due to his top-400 status in the WAGR, as of June 24. He won the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup as a member of the Norwegian team. Hovland, who has a Taekwondo black belt, attends Wang Athletics School.

**Kyosuke Hara**, 16, of Honolulu, Hawaii, partnered with Kyle Suppa to form the youngest team in the 2015 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship at The Olympic Club. The duo reached the Round of 32. Hara, who qualified for last year's U.S. Amateur and is competing in his first Junior Amateur, is a member of the Monanalua High School team. He has studied karate for seven years and has advanced to black belt.

**James Imai**, 14, of Brookline, Mass., is a Japanese American who is the third-youngest player in the U.S. Junior Amateur field. He states 12 is his lucky number because he was born on Dec. 12 at 5:34 a.m. (adds up to 12). He was born in the 12th year of the current emperor's reign and when he qualified for this year's Junior Amateur, he used golf balls with the No. 12 labeled on them.

**Cheng Jin**, 17, of the People's Republic of China, is competing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur and he advanced to match play the previous two years. Jin won the 2014 Volvo China Junior Match Play and played in the 2013 USA-China Youth Match. His teammates included Guan Tianlang, who played in the 2013 Masters and Zecheng Dou, who competed in three Junior Amateurs.

**Pete Kuhl**, 17, of Morton, Ill., has been a Special Olympics basketball and track coach since 2012 and has been involved with his school's special education department since junior high. Kuhl helped lead his Morton High team to last fall's Illinois Class 2A state championship. He earned medalist honors in the Jackson, Mich., sectional qualifier with rounds of 64 and 75 to advance to his first U.S. Junior Amateur.

**Alvin Kwak**, 14, of Mukileto, Wash., is the second-youngest player in the U.S. Junior Amateur field. Kwak, who just completed ninth grade at Harbour Pointe Middle School, was born in Los Angeles but moved to Korea for eight years until returning to the U.S. In 2013, Kwak won the WJGA boys' state championship (ages 12-13) and followed by capturing the 2014 U.S. Kids Golf Worlds, winning on the second playoff hole at Pinehurst No. 9. He will represent Washington in the 43rd Junior America's Cup.

**Eddy Lai**, 16, of San Jose, Calif., was the medalist in the Stanford, Calif., sectional qualifier with a pair of 68s. Lai, who is playing in his second U.S. Junior Amateur, was the 2015 NCGA-CIF NorCal champion in leading Bellarmine Prep to the team title. Lai, who speaks Chinese and Sichuan, made a double eagle on the par-5 16th at Legacy Golf Links when he won the 2010 U.S. Kids Golf Worlds at age 11.

**Won Jun Lee**, 17, of Republic of Korea, advanced to the Round of 32 in the 2014 U.S. Junior Amateur. He has placed second twice on the AJGA circuit this year, including the Puerto Rico Junior Open and FJ Invitational. Lee, a rising junior at Saddlebrook Prep School in Florida, has five top-10 AJGA finishes.

**Kaiwen Liu**, 15, of People's Republic of China, is playing in his first USGA championship. Liu, a rising sophomore at Torrey Pines High School and who lives in San Diego, Calif., competed in U.S. Open sectional qualifying on June 8. He helped his high school team finish second in the 2015 California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) state championship and tied for fourth individually. Liu was runner-up in both the 2015 Rolex Tournament of Champions and the 2014 Callaway Junior Worlds (age 13-14).

**Thomas Longbella**, 17, of Chippewa Falls, Wis., is known as "Longsocks Longbella" because he wears long socks with shorts. He was the medalist by five strokes in the Watertown, Wis., sectional qualifier. Longbella, a rising senior at McDonnell Central High, won the 2014 WIAA Division III state championship and the 2014 Wisconsin PGA Junior. His father, Chris, is his high school coach, and his brother, Andrew, won a NCAA Division III national team championship at St. John's (Minn.) University.

**Brandon Mancheno**, 15, of Jacksonville, Fla., has six top-three finishes on the Florida Junior Tour this year, including winning the Orange County National. Mancheno, who is a right-hander but plays left-handed, tied for ninth in the 2014 FHSA Class 3A state championship as a sophomore at Mandarin High. He has twice placed among the top 15 in the FSGA Boys' Junior (2013, T-15) and 2014 (2014, T-8).

**Marcos Montenegro**, 17, of Argentina, was the medalist in the Boynton Beach, Fla., sectional qualifier by four strokes with rounds of 65 (career-low) and 69. Montenegro traveled more than 30 miles by bus every day from his hometown of Loberio, in the Buenos Aires Province, to practice at Necochea Golf Club. Montenegro, who now attends Montverde Academy near Orlando, competed in 2015 U.S. Open sectional qualifying, where he carded a 69 and survived a 4-for-3 playoff in the Sarasota, Fla., qualifier on May 11.

**Andrew Orischak**, 16, of Hilton Head Island, S.C., is playing in his first U.S. Junior Amateur. He finished second in this year's Sea Pines Junior Heritage and sixth in the Azalea Invitational. He attends Hilton Head High School and was the 2014 Class 3A state runner-up.

**Jack Parrott**, 16, of Columbia, S.C., was the co-medalist in the Santee, S.C., sectional qualifier. Parrott was the runner-up in this year's South Carolina Golf Association Junior Amateur. He won the 2014 title when he got up and down from a greenside bunker for a birdie on the first playoff hole. Parrott, who attends Heathwood Hall Episcopal, chipped in for eagle on the 54th hole to force extra holes.

**Easton Paxton**, 16, Riverton, Wyo., advanced to match play in his second U.S. Junior Amateur last year. Paxton, who also reached the Round of 32 in the 2014 U.S. Amateur Public Links, captured the 37th Junior North & South Amateur with a 54-hole total of 6-under 208 on July 3. He won the 2014 Wyoming State Match Play Championship and is a two-time Wyoming Class 4A state high school champion. Paxton, who is inspired by his mother who passed away from brain cancer two years ago, won the 2012 Wyoming State Junior Amateur with an 18-foot eagle putt on the final hole.

**Cullen Plousha**, 16, of Carlsbad, Calif., is part of an athletic family. His father, Cullen, served in the U.S. Marines and played football at the University of Arizona, while his mother, Mary, won four varsity letters as a member of the Wildcats' basketball team. Cullen helped Carlsbad High win the 2015 CIF-San Diego sectional title and posted the lowest scoring average in San Diego County.

**Trent Phillips**, 15, of Inman, S.C., has won back-to-back South Carolina Class 4A state championships as an eighth-grader and high school freshman. He also led Boiling Springs High, with his older brother, Trevor, to a pair of state titles. Trent was named the 2014 Herald-Journal/GoUpstate Prep Golfer of the Year. Trevor, who is expected to caddie for Trent during this year's U.S. Junior Amateur, played in the 2013 Junior Amateur and advanced to the Round of 16.

**Ivan Camilo Ramirez**, 16, of Colombia, is competing in his third consecutive U.S. Junior Amateur. He represented his native country in the 2015 Latin America Amateur Championship and tied for 39th. Ramirez, who was nominated by Vanguardia Liberal for his country's top individual in amateur sports in 2012, was the runner-up in the 2014 IMG Academy Junior World Match Play (ages 16-18).

**Kristoffer Reitan**, 17, of Norway, is playing in his first USGA championship. He is 34th in the European Golf Rankings and tied for ninth in the Toyota Junior World Cup. Reitan finished as the runner-up in the 2014 Spanish Junior with a final-round 64 and tied for fourth in the Italian 16-under championship. Reitan was chosen 2014 Norwegian Junior Player of the Year.

**Rhett Rasmussen**, 17, of Draper, Utah, is competing in his second U.S. Junior Amateur and last played in 2012. He tied for second in the 2014 Class 4A state championship and led his Canyon Corner High School team to an eighth-place finish. Rasmussen, who was third in the state competition as a sophomore, was the second-youngest player (age 13) to qualify for the Utah State Amateur in 2011.

**Christian Salzer**, 16, of Sumter, S.C., led Wilson Hall High to the 2015 South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA) Class AAA state championship with a third-place finish. Salzer, who is competing in his first USGA championship, captured this year's South Carolina Golf Association Junior Amateur by one stroke with a final-round 69. He lost in a playoff in the SCGA Junior the previous year.

**Joshua Seden**, 17, of Roseville, Calif., was the runner-up in the 104th California State Amateur, losing to Shotaro Ban, 5 and 4, in the final on June 27. Seden, a rising senior at Del Oro High School, advanced to the Round of 32 in last year's U.S. Junior Amateur. Seden, whose family can trace its roots back to the original native Hawaiians, was a Drive, Chip & Putt national finalist in 2008 and 2010.

**Clay Seeber**, of Newport Beach, Calif., is one of five 14-year olds in the U.S. Junior Amateur field. Seeber, who will be a freshman at Corona del Mar High School in the fall, is competing in his first USGA championship. He finished sixth in the 2014 Callaway Junior Worlds (ages 13-14) and won the Stockton

CV&B Junior All-Star by firing a 29 on the inward nine for a two-stroke victory. Seeber also participates in baseball, basketball, football and soccer.

**Parker Sexton**, 17, of Germantown, Tenn., is playing in his first USGA championship. He shot rounds of 67, his lowest competitive round, and 72 to earn one of two spots from the Hot Springs, Ark., sectional qualifier. Sexton, who will be a senior at Memphis University School, returned in the spring from a back injury that sidelined him for 18 months. His father, Jimmy, is a sports agent and represents several college and professional coaches (Nick Saban, John Calipari, Rex Ryan) and players (Ndamukong Suh).

**Davis Shore**, 16, of Knoxville, Tenn., is playing in his first USGA championship. Shore, who started playing golf at age 2, won this year's AJGA Music City Junior by 11 strokes and was second to Marcus Kinhult by one stroke in the Junior Invitational at Sage Valley. He won the FCG World at age 13 and was presented his trophy by Al Geiberger, the 1954 U.S. Junior Amateur runner-up and the first PGA Tour player to post a score of 59 for a round.

**Spencer Soosman**, 17, of Westlake Village, Calif., is competing in his second consecutive U.S. Junior Amateur. Soosman tied for fourth in the 2015 California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) State Championship to lead Westlake High School to its second straight crown. He claimed the 2014 AJGA Polo Junior Golf Classic by winning the final in 20 holes and has won the Los Angeles City title twice.

**Marco Steyn**, 17, of South Africa, advanced to the quarterfinals in this year's South Africa Match Play and was a semifinalist in 2014. Steyn, who is No.2 in the South Africa Golf Association rankings, was the 2014 Northern Amateur Stroke-Play Champion. He has twice competed in the U.S. Kids Golf Worlds, held at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club. Steyn helped his country place eighth in last month's Toyota Junior World Golf Cup in Japan.

**Tyler Strafaci**, 16, of Davie, Fla., is the grandson of Frank Strafaci, who won the 1935 U.S. Amateur Public Links and went on to become the FSGA executive director and director of golf at Doral Country Club. Tyler's mother, Jill, was a senior vice president for the Miami Dolphins for more than 20 years and played golf at the University of Florida in the 1980s. Tyler, who will be a senior at American Heritage School, won the 2014 FSGA Boys' Junior (ages 13-15) with birdies on four of the last seven holes.

**Sahith Theegala**, 17, of Chino Hills, Calif., is playing in his third U.S. Junior Amateur, reaching the Round of 16 last year and the Round of 32 in 2013. He partnered with Ashwin Arasu in the 2015 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball, held at The Olympic Club in May. Theegala, who competed in the inaugural Drive, Chip & Putt Championship at Augusta National in April 2014, played at Diamond Bar High and will enroll at Pepperdine University in 2015-16. He is a three-time Callaway World Junior champion.

**Will Thomson**, 14, of Pittsford, N.Y., became the youngest competitor in U.S. Amateur history last year when he competed as a 13-year old. He is playing in his first U.S. Junior Amateur. Thomson, a ninth-grader at Barker Road Middle School, shot rounds of 73 and 71 to earn medalist honors in the Batavia, N.Y., sectional qualifier. Thomson, who plays on the Pittsford-Mendon High School team, has twice won the New York State Boys' Amateur (2013, 2014). He met Arnold Palmer two year ago in Latrobe, Pa., toured "The King's" office and barn, and sat on the famous Pennzoil tractor.

**Andrew Walker**, 16, of Battle Creek, Mich., was the fifth-youngest competitor (age 14) to qualify for the U.S. Amateur when he competed in 2013 at The Country Club, in Brookline, Mass. Walker, who wears a straw hat, won the 2015 MHSAA Division I state championship by two strokes after tying for ninth the previous year. Walker, who attends Lakeview Battle Creek High, was selected Mr. Golf as the state's top player by the Michigan Interscholastic Golf Coaches Association for the second consecutive year. Walker lived in South Africa (ages 2-5) where he studied karate (Goju-Ryu style) and now has a green belt.

**Chun An Yu**, 16, of Chinese Taipei, won the 98th Western Junior with a par on the first playoff hole on June 18. Yu claimed last year's Aaron Baddeley International Junior and was second in the Callaway Junior Worlds. He also captured the bronze medal in the 2014 Asian Games as his country took home the team golf medal. Yu is playing in his first USGA championship.

**Andy Zhang**, 17 of the People's Republic of China, is one of two players in the field making his fourth U.S. Junior Amateur appearance. He advanced to the quarterfinals in 2014 and reached the Round of 64 in each of the previous two years. In 2012, he became the youngest player (age 14) to play in the U.S. Open, held at The Olympic Club. He also competed in the U.S. Amateur and European Masters.

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