

Hot tourney



Duane Sherrill photo

A member of the AJGA field laces his tee shot downrange during competition at RiverWatch golf course this past week. The Junior tour enjoyed three days on the challenging course, fighting not just sand traps but the oppressive July heat.

High temperatures, low scores at RiverWatch

DUANE SHERRILL
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Firing two eagles in his final round, Carter Pendley of Dalton, Ga., soared to the championship of the American Junior Golf Association tournament at RiverWatch this past week, his first time hoisting a junior title.

He was joined on the podium by girls' champion SiQuin Yu of China, now residing in Bradenton, Fla., who led wire-to-wire, making 13 birdies on her way to claiming a third AJGA title.

Pendley, a commit to the golf program at Clemson University, shot nine-under-par 207 on the challenging RiverWatch course posting days of 71 and 70 before breaking through for a 66 on the final day of the three-round event. His eagles on three and 18 helped him hold off second-place Rafe Reynolds by three strokes. For Pendley, he finally broke through after having six top-20 finishes in his four years in national junior golf. Pendley finished third this past year in the Georgia state high school championships.

Things were not so dramatic for Yu who had the tournament in hand from the first tee. Her five-under-par score left her five strokes ahead of second-place Lexanne Halama of Knoxville, with Yu the only girl shooting under par. Lynn Lim of Gallatin was third shooting three-over-par. Yu was ranked third nationally in the junior division. The 16-year-old, in addition to her titles, has eight top-10 finishes.

The lone DeKalb County entry, Isaac Walker ended up shooting 13-over-par, 21 strokes off the lead after posting scores of 79, 78 and an even par 72 on the final day of competition leaving him in 29th place. Fellow Tennessean, Alex Cobb of Brentwood shot a one-under-par 215 after being boosted by a six-under-par 66 in the final round. He has signed a letter of intent to play golf at UT Chattanooga.

There were 78 players age 12-19 entered in the 54-hole tournament which is part of the AJGA tour, including 13 Tennessee youths, along with golfers from 16 states and three countries. This year marked the second year RiverWatch has hosted the AJGA Junior. The course, which was designed by PGA professional Peter Jacobsen and architect Jim Hardy, sits above Center Hill Lake in Middle Tennessee. Along with hosting the AJGA, the course is also home to the SNEDS Tour at RiverWatch.

Of the 11 players committed to colleges in the 2018 tournament field, three of them are committed to schools in Tennessee. In the boys division, Bryson Morrell of Knoxville is committed to the University of Tennessee at Martin. In the girls division, two Tennesseans, Jayna Choi of Collierville and Lynn Lim of Gallatin are both committed to Vanderbilt University.



SiQuinn Yu, right, claimed her third AJGA title while Carter Pendley notched his first during junior play this past week at RiverWatch.



Duane Sherrill photos

Matthew Sinclair smoked the field in the Fiddler 5K; the Smith County teen finishing in 19:35, besting the 387 runner field.

Sinclair runs away with Fiddler 5K

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Fleet footed Matthew Sinclair sped his way to the Fiddler 5K title, the 13-year-old Carthage youth finishing in 19:35 Saturday morning, topping 387 entries in the large field.

Sinclair, who runs cross country for Smith County Middle School, set a blistering pace of 6:19 per mile on the 3.2-mile undulating course that snaked from downtown toward the golf course and back to its completion in front of Love-Cantrell Funeral Home.

"I run a lot for sports," Sinclair said of his usually regimen when it comes to 5K training, noting he has won his age category before in the annual Fiddler run but this is the first time he has captured the overall title.

Jackie Dawson finished in second place, 17 seconds behind the teenager, Dawson being 43 years Sinclair's senior.

Given Sinclair's prowess as a competitive runner out of Smith County, his future district rival in cross country racing, Aaron Gottlied, 13, of Smithville was not far behind as he finished with a time of 20:18 and claimed fifth overall.

In the female division, Tracy Watson of Shelbyville took top honors, finishing in a time of 22:35 just ahead of Mya Ruch of Smithville who finished in 23:01.

The one-mile fun run was won by Gabe Taylor of Readyville, the 10-year-old finishing in a time of 7:57 in the course that winds around town. Second was fellow Readyville resident Diego Taylor, the 12-yaer-old finishing in 8:40. Sylvia Evans finished one-tenth of a second behind him in third, the 11-year-old Smithville girl taking third in the photo finish.

Money raised in the annual event will benefit Habitat for Humanity.



Gabe Taylor of Readyville won the one-mile division of the Fiddler 5K. The fun run circles downtown. He finished in 7:57.

Fall soccer sign-ups begin July 14



Duane Sherrill photo

Storm Trooper Eric Hernandez fends off an attack by Red Dragon Aiden Malone in the semi-finals of the Center Hill Youth Soccer League this past Saturday. Hernandez scored, helping boost his team to a 2-0 victory and into the finals against the Blue Raiders on July 14.

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Sign-ups for the Fall Center Hill Soccer Club will be held July 14 at the Northside fields from 8 a.m. to noon and then at the Community Complex from 5 to 7 p.m. July 17, 19 and 24 and 27. There will be another Saturday sign-up on July 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the complex. There will be a mandatory training day on July 28 from 9 a.m. to noon which will also serve as a last chance to sign up with trainings happening July 28 from 9 to 10 a.m. for under four, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. for under six, and 10 to 11 a.m. for under nine, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. for under 12 and 11 a.m. to noon for under 16. All players need soccer cleats and shin guards.