

JUNIOR GOLF & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

JUNIOR GOLF HIGHLIGHTS

One of Fir State's original goals was to expand the game of golf in the minority community by stimulating interest and participation of young people in the game. To achieve that goal, the junior golf program was established under the initial direction of Bob Wright and Ruby Mason, both outstanding amateur golfers of their time. The program accommodates all levels of player, from beginning to advanced, ages 7-17. Each year, 50-125 junior golfers participate in the program.

These youngsters are provided with free instruction, buckets of practice balls, clubs, bags, greens fees, additional equipment, and subsidized tournament transportation. They also become eligible to participate in Western State Golf Association junior events.

Our juniors participate in the annual WSGA Junior Tournament, which draws youngsters from participating WSGA clubs. Fir State proudly hosted the 1995 WSGA Junior Tournament, which brought 150 junior golfers to Seattle for an exciting three-day event.

Fir Staters are always well-represented in the winner's circle at WSGA Junior Tournaments, often earning top three honors in several age groups. Tyson LaNore's victory in 1996 earned him a slot in the Maxfli PGA Junior Tournament at West Palm Beach, Florida where he competed against golfers from all over the country. Tyson has now completed the Golf Management Program at Walla Walla Community College. Former Fir State junior golfer Andia Winslow (who just graduated from Yale) also earned a place in the Maxfli Tournament. And in August 1997, junior golfer Bethiel Girma was selected as one of six golfers representing Seattle in the U.S. Youth Games held in New York. In addition, two Fir Staters have won the Seattle Metro high school golf championship.

Locally, our junior golfers have many competitive tournament opportunities. In 2004, for example, we are hosting a series of stroke-play tournaments, each of which will be named to honor a local person who has contributed to our community. Our young golfers will also participate in two "Home and Home" events against our sister club in Oregon.

Fir State is committed to giving every child the opportunity to golf.

We are proud that the USGA has recognized the value of our program with a one-year grant in the amount of \$20,300.

Our building development campaign will continue until we reach our goal of providing an adequate clubhouse to house our membership, and where juniors can find a safe place to relax, study, learn about golf and receive indoor instruction.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 1986, Landon Jackson and Jet Singh received the first full Southern University golfing scholarships awarded to Fir State by the National Minority Junior Golf Scholarship Association (NMJGSA). In 1990, another NMJGSA scholarship was awarded to Fir State junior golfer Cedric Davis.

Since the inception of the Fir State scholarship program, we have made awards to juniors who have pursued their higher education at institutions including Jackson State University, Seattle University, Seattle Central Community College, Santa Clara University, Xavier University, Walla Walla Community College, Yale University, Bellevue Community College, The Art Institute of Atlanta, and Tennessee State University.

Expansion of the scholarship program remains a high priority. In recent years, several scholarship funds have been established in the names of late Fir State Golf Club members.

The **Wilbert Ponder** Junior Golf fund was established by his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Ponder, for the specific purpose of assisting junior golfers. Mr. Ponder shared his love of golf with hundreds of children in the Fir State junior golf program for decades. He touched the lives of many young people, with genuine warmth, compassion, and true caring. As a volunteer instructor in the summer golf program, he taught not only the lessons of golf, but sportsmanship, confidence, self-esteem and leadership.

The **Blanche M. Whitney** fund, in honor of the former Fir State vice president, was established with donations from the Pacific Northwest Searchers Social and Charitable Club, and Atlantic Street Pizza. A \$500 stipend is awarded annually to a high school graduate who demonstrates an exceptional commitment to community service. Golfers and non-golfers are eligible for this award.