

Gates rescues golf title at Can-Am Police Fire Games

Stouffville firefighter wants to play with pros in Bell Canadian Open

Extinguishing fires and playing golf aren't exactly professions that are closely related.

But Greg Gates has managed to find a fine balance between the two occupations.

When the 45-year-old Stouffville resident isn't on duty as a platoon chief with Markham Fire and Emergency Services, a position he's held for the last nine years, he can most likely be found on the golf course.

And whenever Gates takes to the fairways he plays a pretty good game.

NORTH AMERICAN EVENT

At the Can-Am Police Fire Games in London, which saw more than 1,000 athletes from law enforcement, fire service and emergency service personnel from Canada and the United States take part in various sports, Gates captured the gold medal in the Open Men's A Division and team event.

Over the three-day event played at three courses, Gates carded a 221 total (82-71-78).



GREG GATES: Firefighter with Markham department teaches golf and plays dates on regional professional tour.

Entering the competition, Gates thought he would be in contention.

He made an auspicious debut at the World Firefighters Games in Edmonton in 1996 by winning the gold medal in the golf event.

If that wasn't enough, he also made his presence felt at the Ballantrae Golf and Country Club last year by firing a course record 64 that still stands.

"I felt confident I could win as long as

I played half decent," he said. "To win anything like that is satisfying, even though the field wasn't as big and the competition wasn't as strong as at the World Firefighters Games."

Introduced to the game through his father when he was 11 years old while growing up in Uxbridge, Gates developed a love for the game, which remains as strong now as it did in his youth.

"Golf is a game where you're never satisfied. You feel you can always improve and be better. That's the side of the game that I enjoy."

In explaining the success Gates says it all boils down to practice.

"I like to practice and strive to be better. It's easy to get turned around when you have a couple of bad shots, but when you practise and play it helps you

stay focused," he suggested.

When Gates isn't playing the game, he assists others in fighting their slices and hooks as a golf instructor at Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville. He's taught since 2000 when he earned his CPGA teaching card.

Balancing two jobs can be tough, he acknowledged. But he said the people at Angus Glen have allowed him to work around his regular full-time position.

PLAYS ON PRO TOUR

He's also in his second season playing some events on the Great Lakes Tour. His ultimate goal is to play in the Bell Canadian Open.

"I've tried to qualify for the Canadian Open in the last couple of years and I've fallen just a bit short," he said. "I'm trying to take my game to the next level."

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