

# Ontario Order of Merit caps Gajan's junior golf career

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Gajan Sivabalasingham was looking to have some fun as he prepared to tee off his 2012 competitive golfing campaign.

When his season came to a close, the recently turned 19-year-old Ballantrae resident experienced just that, highlighted by winning the CN Future Links Prairie Championship in Manitoba and the Golf Association of Ontario junior boys' title.

Those accomplishments, plus other strong finishes, enabled Sivabalasingham to capture the Golf Association of Ontario's Craig Revell

Award.

That award, which is the prestigious Order of Merit, honours the top junior male golfer in Ontario. It is based on a points system that assigns a value based on the number of events that a competitor played in. Sivabalasingham took to the fairways in six events and amassed 955.00 points.

"It's good news for sure ... a good accomplishment, especially since this was my last year playing competitively at the junior level," he said.

In his second year attending the University of Waterloo where he is

co-captain of the men's golf team, Sivabalasingham said the honour caught him a bit off guard. Returning to his Ballantrae residence a couple of weekends ago, he was informed by his mother, Shirani, who originally received the good tidings in an e-mail.

Having won numerous events throughout his budding career on the links, Sivabalasingham said the recent accomplishment ranks right up there.

What makes the Royal Order of Merit honour extra special, he cited, is that it is generally based on a golfer experiencing a season of playing

on a fairly consistent level.

"It's awesome to see that I had a consistent, solid year, and I didn't play well just in one tournament. That's what I take from the award," he said.

In explaining what success he had this past season, Sivabalasingham said it wasn't so much any mechanical changes he made, rather taking a more positive approach to the game itself.

"I wanted to have more fun," he said. "Even when I was practising, I almost fell in love with the game and I spent more time in doing that."

"And I had fun playing in tourna-

ments. It was definitely more of a mental level thing where my game changed.

"Eventually it was up to me to put it to work."

Sivabalasingham also earned exemptions next season into some events when he begins his first in the men's amateur division.

"It's a good pickup for sure, definitely a confidence booster," he said.

Sivabalasingham will be given the award at the Golf Association of Ontario's Annual General Meeting at the Mississauga Golf and Country Club Jan. 26.

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Sun-Tribune