

Sear shooting for NCAA scholarship

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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When Ben Sear prepared for the 2013 golf season, he was looking for improvement.

So the 16-year-old Stouffville resident made some technical adjustments to his game.

It's paying off.

He captured his first ever tournament title at the four-day Canadian Junior Golf Association Match Play Championships at St. Andrew's Valley Golf Club in Aurora last week.

Entered in the boys 15-19 division, Sear claimed top honours by defeating Hugh McLaren of Midhurst three-and-one in the championship match.

"It sure feels great to have a win under my belt," said the York Downs Golf and Country Club member. "I made some changes to my swing this season in terms of movement at the top and I changed my grip. It's taken me a while to really start hitting it well consistently. But I really hit it well this week."

Sear thanks pro Billy Walsh Jr. for the advice.

In reaching the final, Sear completed the two-round stroke play



BEN SEAR: Stouffville golfer hopes re-worked swing pays off with more championship rounds.

held earlier in the week by finishing in a two-way tie in eighth place after going six-over par at 150 (75-75). Sear then proceeded to the 16-player match play field by defeating ninth seed Brady Zordan of Midhurst five-and-three; 16th seed Thomas Brazil of Ajax four-and-three and fourth seed Paul Edgar of Kitchener two-and-one over the course of two days.

"I hoped that I would do well as you do entering any tournament," he said. "But I like match play, it seems to work well for my game."

"I just stuck with what I had to do and did not allow myself to get rattled," he said. "In the final I felt I was in control of the match."

He was introduced to the game by his father Mike when he was five years old.

Sear hopes that momentum gained from that outing will carry over into his next big event at the Golf Association of Ontario under-17 championships in Renfrew Aug. 20.

"That's the plan," he said with a smile.

Entering Grade 11 at Stouffville District Secondary School in September, he doesn't have any golfers on the PGA Tour he tries to emulate. Nor does he have any he looks up to for inspiration.

"I just try to do my own thing," he said.

However, he would like to parlay his skills on the links to bigger things down the road by attaining an athletic scholarship at an NCAA school south of the border.

Bobby Hughes has new home in ECHL

When Bobby Hughes takes to the ice for the upcoming East Coast Hockey League season he will be doing it in a new surrounding.

The 25-year-old Stouffville resident has been dealt by the Alaska Aces to the Fort Wayne Komets for future considerations. The Aces said Hughes requested a trade so it would enable him to be closer to Stouffville.

Last season, his first with the Aces, Hughes was their second-line centre and led the club in playoff scoring with nine goals and eight assists in 11 contests. During the regular season, Hughes amassed six goals and 11 assists in his first 32 games.

But he began to assert himself during the second half of the season, as he had nine goals and 13 assists in the club's final 27 regular season games.

Hughes was drafted by the Carolina Hurricanes 123rd overall in the 2006 NHL draft after starring with Kingston of the Ontario Hockey League.

The late Bob McNeil of Stouffville played in Fort Wayne in 1954-55.

Steinberg 4th at Ontario senior amateur tourney

Ivy Steinberg recorded a fourth-place finish at the Investors Group Ontario Senior Women's Amateur golf championships at the Stratford Country Club in Stratford Thursday.

Entering Thursday's final round in third place, the 56-year-old Stouffville resident and Granite Golf Club member recorded birdies on the fifth and 15th holes. But she double bogeyed the first and 11th holes and bogeyed the sixth, ninth, 12th, 16th, 17th and 18th holes to go eight-over par at 80.

Winning the 2008 and 2009 provincial senior women's championships, Steinberg concluded the gruelling three-round event at 10-over par at 226 (75-71-80).

Aurora's Mary Ann Hayward, 53, captured her third senior women's title after going seven-under par at 209 (68-70-71).

Spirit foursome gets call to new showcase

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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Four members of the Stouffville Spirit were chosen to play for one of two Ontario Junior Hockey League entries that will take to the ice at the Ontario Summer Select Showcase event in Cornwall Aug. 10 and 11.

Goalkeeper Daniel Mannella, defencemen Robert Powers and Josh Carrick and forward Peyton Backus were among the players selected to play in the event, bringing the top 19-and-under Jr. A players from the Central Canada Hockey League, Northern Ontario Junior Hockey League and OJHL together.

A committee of OJHL general managers made the selections during a conference call.

Powers was the Spirit's second-leading scorer last season with nine goals and 28 assists in 54 games. Backus followed with 15 goals and nine assists in 49 games, while Carrick had one goal and six assists in 51 tilts.

Acquired in a trade with the Georgetown Raiders part way through last season, Mannella logged time in 45 games with the two clubs and recorded a .904 save percentage, one shutout and a 3.00 goals against average.

Spirit co-owner and general manager Kenny Burrows thinks each player has the potential to make the jump to the next competitive level.

"They deserve a chance to be looked at. We'll see what happens," he said.

The Spirit is still seeking sponsors for its golf tournament at Cherry Downs Golf Club in Pickering Aug. 15. For more information, call Burrows at 416-990-2683 or Mike Humphreys at 416-577-2835.

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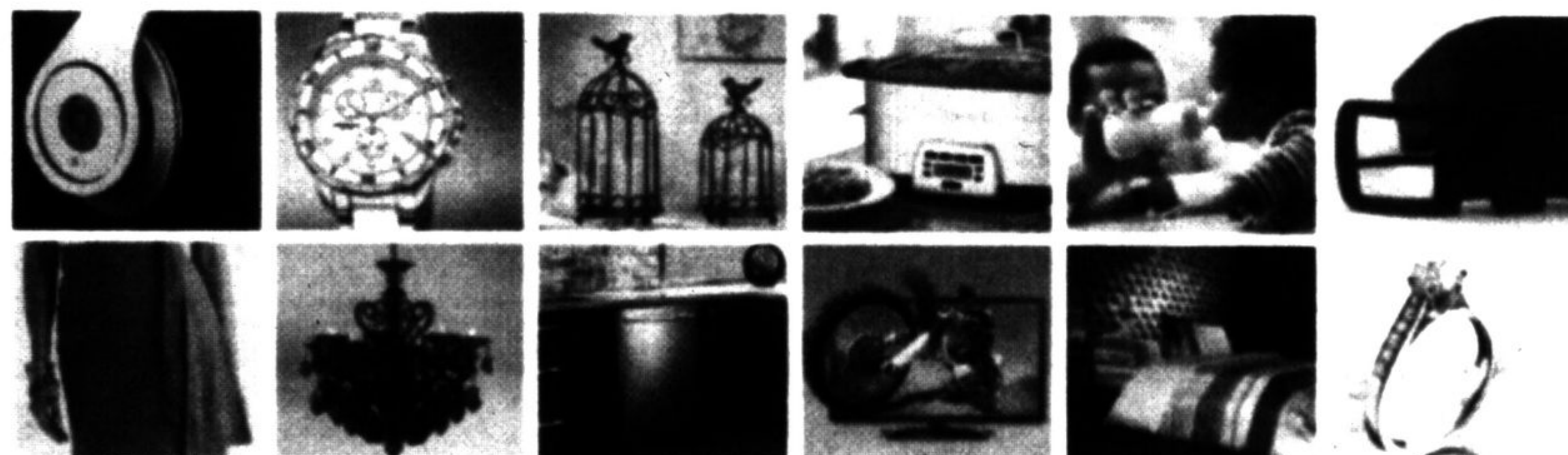
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