



Member Profile

Grayson Giboney

Mill Creek, Wash., USA

Few there are of modern golfers who can say they have won 93 tournaments (and counting). And this particular golfer, at age 15, shows no signs of letting up. It all began with a plastic set of golf clubs from Walmart.

Grayson Giboney received those plastic weapons on his first birthday, as a gift from his father. They came with a little bag, three plastic clubs – driver, iron, and putter – and a couple of plastic golf balls.

“He took to the game immediately and by the age of 3 the plastic clubs were worn out and he received a cut-down 8 iron to hit shots with,” says his father, Brian Giboney.

The youngster enjoyed the sport, so from the age of three to seven he was a weekend warrior with his dad, playing courses throughout the state of Washington.

“At the age of 8 he started playing competitive golf tournaments with the Washington Junior Golf Association (WJGA) and in August of that season he won his first tournament at the Heron Links par 3 course at Willow’s Run Golf Complex, near the Microsoft campus in Redmond, Wash.,” Brian says.

By 10 Grayson had shot under par at a few par 3 courses and at 11 he shot under par on a difficult full-length golf course, in the process winning a WJGA qualifier by 7 shots with a one-under-par round. He also started winning golf tournaments in Canada and to date has won 10 times north of the U.S. border.

The wins continued but, at age 13, something new entered the picture – hickory golf.

“Grayson was out of town one weekend at a non-golf function and I had nothing better to do so I went to a hickory outing sponsored by Durel Billy and rented clubs and had fun,” Brian says. “I also bought a hickory club that day.”

Brian thought his son might enjoy swinging the old club and took him to the range to try it out.

“He was so intrigued that I took him to the next AP National Hickory Player tournament and he jumped into the deep end of the pool,” Brian says. “It has become a way for him to increase his golf knowledge and enjoy a new outlet of fun on the golf course as well as look at golf differently than other kids do.”

Later that year Grayson competed in the 2014 Washington State Hickory Open and won the state title with a round of 76. His favorite shots during that special hickory round were birdies on No. 10 and 11 – approach shots set up with an antique Hoylake mashie. The club has been replaced by another more suited to his game, but the old Hoylake mashie has a special spot on the wall.

Jeremy Moe and Brian Schuman invited Grayson to play in the 2015 World Hickory Match Play in Philadelphia where he finished 7th in the champions division.

“I really had a great time and met some amazing people,” Grayson says. “Especially Neil Day who has an amazing attitude and really loves the game.”

In 2015 the young star played in the U.S. Hickory Open at the Miami Valley Country Club in Dayton, Ohio. There, at age 14, he fired an opening round 75 to get into the final pairing and backed it up with another quality hickory round of 77 to earn a third-place bronze medal finish.

By the way, one Robert T. Jones Jr. played the same Donald Ross course in 1931 and also shot a 75.

Playing with golf professionals such as Moe, did not bother the young man. “I feel like I can win against anyone, if I play as good as I can,” he said. “And I really like playing with Jeremy.”

For his part, Moe, speaking of Grayson following last year’s USHO, said “The young man has grit and a strong heart and his tenacity will serve him well going forward.”

Grayson is a sophomore at King’s High School in Seattle where he set some records during his freshman season. He was medalist at three matches and won the prestigious Dolan Invitational held at Everett Country Club, which features a full field of 102 golfers from 22 different high schools. An even par 72 got him into a playoff with two seniors whom he promptly dispatched on the first hole, thus becoming the first freshman to win the championship.

In the post season his King’s High School Team won the 1A High School State Team Championship in Spokane by 1.5 points over a talented Seattle Academy golf team. Also on the high school team is Jack Ryan O’Neil, a nephew of pre-1900 golf expert Chris McIntyre.

Most recently Grayson has earned playing status with the American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) and is enjoying this new level of competitive golf.



PHOTO BY RICHARD GIBONEY

Grayson Giboney, center, enjoys a bit of leisure time at the World Hickory Match Play with fellow competitors Jeremy Moe, left, and Neil Day, right.

Grayson plays to a 1.3 modern handicap. Though he says he did not know, from those earlier experiences, that golf would play such a big role in his life, he is happy to have picked up the hickory game.

“It was tough and much different from modern golf,” he says. “Because it was tough I liked it because I like challenges.”

How often do you play hickories?

It was more often until high school golf and AJGA started up. But the month of September is “hickory month” for my dad and I. This September we are playing in the Washington State Hickory Open here and the U.S. Hickory Open in Wisconsin.

What’s in your play set?

I play mostly replica clubs. People sometimes ask me why I don’t play originals, but I broke several expensive original clubs when I was starting out. I’m a digger with the irons and my swing speed is over 110 mph with the driver and going higher. Plus, my dad and I don’t have time to work on clubs like we used to. At home I have a set of original McGregor OA’s stamped Dayton, Ohio, on the shafts. These include three original OA mashies plus an original OA putter. It’s fun to play the old clubs, but I don’t like breaking them.

Spalding Chicopee putter (antique)
Stewart Maiden Niblick
Star OA Mashie Niblick
Star OA Mashie
Star OA Jigger
Star OA Deep Face
Louisville Mid Iron
Louisville Spoon
Louisville Brassie

Favorite club?

I don’t have a favorite club, modern or hickory. Because good players don’t have favorite clubs, they hit all their clubs well.

What ball do you play?

I like the McIntyre Ouimet and the Classic, made by Brian Schuman. I like how the Ouimet flies and like how the Classic feels. Both are good balls.

Favorite course for hickories?

St. Martins Course at the Philadelphia Cricket Club.

Favorite hickory tournament?

The 2015 World Hickory Match Play was the best experience. Mr. (Brian) Schuman put on a great event. I also love match play.

Any particular player or aspect of golf history you especially enjoy?

Francis Ouimet at the 1913 U.S. Open because he won the major as an amateur and was a complete underdog and came back and won against the best player of that time – Harry Vardon.

Best thing about hickory golf?

Ability to relive the greats and what they did using the same equipment.

Ideas to promote hickory golf?

Start Pro Ams and have hickory majors on the Golf Channel.