

# Chesterfield teen wins putters championship

By Lynn Warren

STAFF WRITER

There's more to 15-year-old Logan Whitton than meets the eye. Much more in fact.

For openers, the tall, reed-thin, bespectacled young man is a national champion. On July 29, he handily defeated defending national champion Tyler Lacey of Springfield, Ohio, and a field of 24 other top-ranked competitors to win the Junior Putters of America National Championships in Roanoke.

The rising sophomore at Manchester High School has participated in competitive putting since he was eight years old. Although he's competed in the national championships for the past six years, he did not enter this year's competition with a great deal of confidence, even after winning the state title just 10 days earlier. "I didn't go to Roanoke thinking I was good enough to beat last year's national champion," Whitton admitted.

He placed fifth behind Lacey in Louisville, Kentucky, last year.

But Whitton came off of the first tee smoking and at the end of the round led Lacey by four strokes and the field by one. He kept the lead in the second round, and then buried the field by playing the third round in 10 under par to push his lead to four strokes. All he had to do in the final round was not cave. As he neared victory, he gave one shot back to runner-up Ryan Carter, but his four round total of 112, an astounding 32 under par, made him a comfortable three-shot winner.

The game that most people play at birthday parties or on summer evenings with young friends has grown to a sport of national prominence and now has its own professional league with prize money exceeding \$7 million this year.

Whitton has reached the top of the amateur 9-15 age bracket, and will move on to the unlimited age bracket next year. Then, he may join the pro circuit.

He naturally attributes his success to "lots of practice," but also to good eye-hand coordination, patience and good mechanics anchored by "steady hands and proper positioning of my feet." His greatest strength is "being able to make those long putts," a testimony to his mental discipline.

Whitton is also an outstanding student, carrying a sturdy 4.93 GPA in the Specialty Mass Media program at Manchester. "I might be a news anchor someday, but the thing that most people don't know about me is that I am



Elli Morris/Chesterfield Observer

Fifteen-year-old Logan Whitton recently won the Junior Putters of America National Championships in Roanoke.

very competitive," said Whitton.

Although Whitton might not look like the stereotypical bulky athlete, he's actually quite a sports enthusiast. He has four years of competitive lacrosse under his not-very-large belt, playing the attack position for the Swift Creek Sports Club in both the spring and fall seasons.

He has also played organized football and baseball - a surprising feat since Whitton was born with a clubfoot. He's undergone three major surgeries to reposition his foot and rearrange the bones in both his foot and leg. He still walks with a limp, but has developed such outstanding agility that he was drafted to play on the over 19 (year old) lacrosse team at Swift Creek Sports Club.

"His doctor told him the only limitation he would have when it came to sports was how much pain he was willing to endure," said Whitton's father, Michael. "He has never complained or used his foot as an excuse for not achieving anything. He is a real inspiration to me. I admire him greatly."



Elli Morris/Chesterfield Observer

Nine-year-old Hannah Gohl, a member of the Hampton Park Swim Team, makes a strong push off the side of the pool while competing in a 50-yard backstroke race during the Chesterfield Aquatic League Championship Swim Meet. More than 1,600 kids, making up 17 teams from the region, competed at the swim meet held at Beulah Swim Center late last month.



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