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**No.9**

# Golf News For Carolina Golfers

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## **National Signing Day** *But Carolina and Clemson will have to wait for these two*



**Dawson Szabo**  
picks South Carolina



**Bennett Scaletta**  
Picks Clemson



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**Whose driving the BMW?**



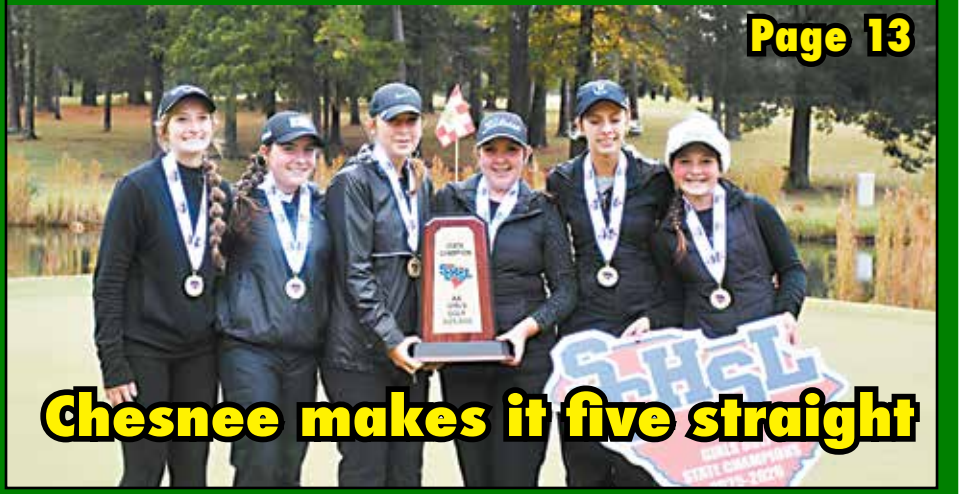
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**Trojans close fall with momentum**



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**Hanna repeats as 5A DII champions**



**Page 13**

**Chesnee makes it five straight**



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**Prescott and League win team title**

**Upstate golfers win the senior title at SCGA-WSCGA event**

Pam Prescott and David League claimed top honors in the senior division of the SCGA & WSCGA Mixed Team championship played at the Ocean Point Course at Fripp Island.

The two upstate golfers finished with a tournament total of three under par 141 for the championship.

Finishing in solo second place was the team of Lea Venable and Shawn Venable with a tournament total of one over par 145.



**The Golf Club is off till Spring of 2026**

We're not really taking time off—but the press gets a rest until spring

Between now and then, we'll stay busy online at [www.scgolfclub.com](http://www.scgolfclub.com) and on Facebook, X, Instagram, and (coming soon) TikTok, keeping you informed and entertained as we do in the golf season.

When I started The Golf Club all those years ago, skeptics wondered how a golf newspaper could possibly work.

"Where are you going to find enough golf news to fill a paper?"

In 34 years, that has never been a problem. The challenge has been just the opposite—how to fit all the golf news worth sharing into a few pages.

There's never a shortage of great stories to tell, wonderful events to cover, and important causes to support.

Golf has changed, and the way it's covered has to change with it. We'll be looking at every option going forward.

My playing days are well behind me—and that's probably for the best. If anyone saw me swing a club today, they might not believe a word I write. But watching and reporting on your game brings just as much joy as the occasional good shot used to.

Thanks for reading, supporting, and sharing this journey. Enjoy the holidays, keep it in the fairway, and we'll see you in the spring. Stan Olenik, Editor-Publisher.



**Greenville Juniors win Vieth Four-Ball**

Karsen Wilkins & Reid Allison were tied atop the leaderboard following round one, firing a four-under-par round (68). By day end Sunday, Wilkins/Allison would find themselves alone atop the leaderboard, firing a second-round score of three-under-par (69) and tournament total of seven under-par to claim victory at The Fort,

**Valkyries McGowan honored by LPGA**

The LPGA professionals membership has selected the recipients of the annual section awards

Converse University head Golf Coach Patti McGowan was named the Southeast Section Coach of the Year.



McGowan, a Spartanburg native, returned to the Upstate to coach the Converse program in the Spring of 2015, under her tutelage the Valkyries have had success both on and off the course

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After winning four SCGA Senior Player of the Year award Hargett finally captured the Senior Championship. (SCGAPhoto)



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# Martin helped grow turf and golf in the Carolinas

**During his 30 year career at Clemson Bruce Martin was a golf superintendents best friend**

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

What do cotton, peanuts and turfgrass have in common?

A little more than 30 years ago, the answer was simple — Bruce Martin.

Martin joined the Clemson University staff as a plant pathologist working to support South Carolina's agricultural industries.

But as golf exploded across the Carolinas in the late 1980s and early '90s, superintendents found themselves needing his expertise more than farmers did.

Don Garrett, longtime superintendent at Clemson's Walker Course, was among those who helped convince the university—and eventually the state legislature—to fund a full-time turf position.

"We needed Bruce full-time for golf," Garrett recalled. "With courses popping up all over, we needed him here to help us."

The timing was perfect. New courses like Thornblade, The Cliffs, Willow Creek, Woodfin Ridge, in the upstate were mirrored all over the Palmetto State, and Martin's research quickly became indispensable.

### A calm voice when greens turned brown

Maybe millions of golfers have benefited from Bruce Martin's life's work without ever knowing his name.

But the people who knew him best understood how valuable he was — a calm voice of reason with the right answers when the Carolina summer heat wore down both the greens and the patience of greens committees.

When turf failed, so did tempers. Club boards — often made up of doctors, lawyers, and bankers who knew more about playing bentgrass than growing it — could quickly lose confidence in their superintendent.

Martin often joined those meetings himself, translating the science and helping everyone take a breath.

"They could beat up their superintendent," one superintendent said, "but they usually had the good sense to listen to Bruce."

### Science with common sense

Not every problem on a green could be fixed out of the tip of a sprayer.



Martin understood budgets and limitations, but he was a stickler for cultural practices—the daily, physical work that truly determined turf health.

If a green needed more sunlight, he said, cut the trees. If roots weren't breathing, drill the holes deeper.

If heavy morning dew flashed a warning sign for disease, his solution wasn't chemical—it was mechanical.

"Fans are the best fungicide ever invented," he liked to say.

He urged superintendents to install the enormous fans that circulate air around greens, keeping moisture from becoming an infection rather than an inconvenience.

He believed air movement was the most natural disinfectant there was.

"Spraying can buy you some time," he told students, "but air, drainage, and light will keep you alive."

That practicality—pairing scientific precision with everyday realism—made Martin a trusted ally across the industry.

He became famous for developing fungicide rotation programs that balanced cost and effectiveness through the worst of the southern summer, but he never let technology replace understanding.

### A teacher in the field

Even in the classroom, Martin kept his lessons grounded. Each May, after finals, he loaded a couple of

vans with turf-management students and spent a week driving across the state.

They visited research plots in Florence, golf courses from Clemson to Hilton Head, and saw first-hand how diseases looked outside a textbook.

"He didn't have to do that," Garrett said, "but he believed they needed that experience, and he gave up a week of his life every year to make it happen."

### From Clemson to Rio

Martin's reputation eventually reached far beyond the Carolinas. He was called to Hawaii to diagnose an unfamiliar turf disease.

In 2016, he traveled with fellow Clemson professor Dr. Bert McCarty to Rio de Janeiro when the Olympic golf course was struck by a mysterious fungus only weeks before the Games.

"It turned out to be Mini Ring disease," McCarty said. "Few people outside South Carolina knew how to treat it. Bruce recognized it immediately, we developed a management plan, and the course was ready in time for the Olympics."

That trip cemented his status as one of the world's foremost turf pathologists — a Clemson man who quietly helped save Olympic golf.

### Always within reach

Even after retirement, Martin remained a phone call away. Samples still arrived in Florence, and responses still went out quickly.

"If you sent something Friday morning, you'd know what it was by lunch," said Willow Creek superintendent Kylie Traynham.

Martin passed away recently at 71, leaving behind not only research papers and awards but thousands of acres of living, breathing proof of his life's work.

Among his many honors were the Carolinas GCSA Distinguished Service Award, the GCSAA Col. John Morley Award, the Clemson Alumni Award for Distinguished Public Service, and recognition by the South Carolina Golf Course Ratings Panel as one of the 10 Most Influential People in South Carolina Golf.

He is survived by his wife, Dr. Cindy Green, retired cotton geneticist for Monsanto.

For a generation of superintendents, Bruce Martin was more than a scientist — he was the first call when things went wrong and often the only call they needed to make.

"If Bruce was helping you," one superintendent said, "you didn't need to call anyone else."

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# First Tee Upstate's Cyder Cup raises \$48,000

## Spartanburg tops the Greenville team in a tourney with a purpose

What began more than two decades ago as a friendly golf showdown between Greenville and Spartanburg counties has grown into one of the Upstate's most spirited charity events. The Cyder Cup, a local nod to the Ryder Cup, now fuels a mission far larger than bragging rights — supporting First Tee — Upstate South Carolina.

The first Cyder Cup was held at River Falls Plantation in 2004, thanks to professional Terry Johnson and his wife Joy, whose enthusiasm gave early structure to the idea. Founders Taylor Hough, Mike Byce, and Fran Dunn of the First Tee of Spartanburg teamed with Robbie Gravley of the Greenville County Golf Association to field the inaugural teams and secure a trophy that looked just enough like the Ryder Cup to inspire the name.

From the start, the format mirrored golf's grandest team event — Greenville vs. Spartanburg in two days of foursomes, four-balls, and singles. Yet Spartanburg's side added a twist: players were asked to raise money for the First Tee program that teaches youth life skills through golf's values. A few years later, Greenville caught on, thanks largely to longtime participant Terry Willis, who took over as captain and helped build the fundraising culture that remains today.

On the Spartanburg side, captains such as Todd Whitehead and Brian Kennedy helped shepherd the event into its modern form. Kennedy — believed to be the only golfer to have participated either as a player or sponsor in all 21 Cyder Cups — has watched it evolve from a friendly compe-



Retired PGA Tour professional Dillard Pruitt did his part to try to get a win for Greenville in the annual Cyder Cup Matches to raise funds for the First Tee Upstate. Spartanburg Captain Todd Whitehead is presented the Cyder Cup from Greenville Captain Terry Willis after the Spartanburg team won the 2025 matches played at Carolina Country Club and Thornblade Club. Member of the winning Spartanburg team included Captain Todd Whitehead, Josh Gallman, Brad Thorne, Brad Sill, Reed Bentley, Rob Hrubala, Brian Kennedy, Max Fain, Carter Davis, Dustin Adair, Landon Hames, Zach Moran, Chad Coleman, Hunter Parks, Lee Bradford, Thomas Fraser. (First Tee Photos)



dition that raised a few thousand dollars into a community-wide drive generating tens of thousands annually.

"Once people understood it wasn't about teaching golf swings but teaching life skills," Kennedy said, "they wanted to be part of it."

When both Upstate chapters came together under Executive Director Michael Pius, a well-run volunteer organization



gained a professional leader. While the heavy lifting for the Cyder Cup fundraising was still done by the participants, having a dedicated professional organization in the community gave the event new visibility and credibility. The unification of the Greenville and Spartanburg programs into First Tee — Upstate South Carolina became a turning point for growth.

Since then, the event has soared — this

year alone raising more than \$48,000 from over 120 donors.

While no official "Most Valuable Golfer" award exists, Andy Mitchell of Greenville might have earned that title in 2025. He did his best on the course to help Greenville win, but he also led all fundraisers — personally bringing in over \$8,000

Cyder Cup...continued on P18

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# Nancy Smith Steps Back — But Not Away

**Volunteer chairman retires after 25 years with the BMW event**

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

For 25 years, Nancy Smith has been the smiling, steady presence behind the volunteer operations at the BMW Charity Pro-Am, the Korn Ferry Tour stop that's become one of the Upstate's signature events.

This fall, she made it official — retiring from her role as Director of Volunteer Services. But anyone who's been around the tournament knows that "retiring" for Nancy means she'll still be there — just not doing everything at once.

"I'm not going to walk away. You know how much I love the BMW Charity Pro-Am," she said. "I'm still going to be there with them. ."

Smith started with the event back when it was held at The Cliffs Valley, working cars and shuttles before moving through just about every job the tournament could throw at her. That hands-on experience became her trademark — she knew every task because she'd done it.

"That's why I know the committees so well," she said. "I'm not going to ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself."

It's a simple philosophy, but one that has quietly kept the volunteer force coming back year after year. Smith's most important task has often been serving as a buffer — balancing tournament management's theories on how volunteers should be used with her firsthand knowledge of how they actually keep the wheels turning so fans



Nancy Smith volunteered at the very first BMW Celebrity Pro-Am by moving cars around the parking lots at Cliffs Valley. Now after 25 years, many as the Volunteer Chairman, Smith is retiring from her leadership role, but will still be a volunteer at the tournament. (Photos from RingoFire)



can enjoy the event.

"The BMW is one of the top-three events on the Korn-Ferry Tour. We couldn't put on a tournament of this magnitude without volunteers," she said. "But they have to feel valued. That's something I've always tried to make sure of. You can't keep good

ones if they don't feel respected.

That line says everything. It is the equivalent of a finger pointing reminder to the event's board and management as to how important it is to continue Smith's legacy as an appreciation of the volunteers.

If anyone on the event's board of directors or management team ever wondered what Nancy Smith's contributions were worth in dollars, the BMW Charity Pro-Am may soon find out.

You may not be able to buy devotion, but in the future the BMW will almost certainly have to pay to replace the hundreds of volunteer hours Smith put into each of the 25 tournaments she helped staff.

The prospect of finding another volunteer chairman with Smith's skills — organizer, cheerleader, comforter, and, when

needed, the boss — will almost certainly come with a price tag and a new line in the event budget.

Replacing a quarter-century of experience, institutional memory and heart isn't just a personnel challenge — it's an expense.

When she announced her decision, her tournament family made sure to show their appreciation. Smith received a Tiffany pearl necklace, a fitting and elegant gesture for someone whose presence has been quietly indispensable for a quarter century.

"I spent a couple of weeks by myself, did a lot of crying and praying," she said. "But I decided this was the right time to let someone else take the lead — and for me to support whoever comes next."

Even as she steps back, she plans to keep a close eye on the volunteer program she built — not out of obligation, but pride.

"The tournament brought us together," she said, "but that's not what's going to keep us together. We're family now."

Smith still volunteers year-round for Euphoria Greenville, now in her 20th year there, and remains active with the Anderson Area Touchdown Club, where her love of high school athletics fits right in.

"I'll stay busy," she laughed. "But I do hope I finally get to see a golf tournament. I've never actually seen one at Thornblade!"

The truth is, she probably still won't get much time to watch. Because if something needs doing, Nancy Smith will still be there — smiling, steady, and reminding everyone what really makes the BMW Charity Pro-Am work.

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# BMW Drives Korn Ferry Kontroversy

## BMW's web banner did more talking than any tournament official

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

Without a press release, media advisory, or even a social post, the BMW Charity Pro-Am quietly slipped its 2026 edition from Carolina Country Club to The Country Club of Spartanburg.

The discovery didn't come from an announcement — it came from a website edit. Tucked inside the tournament's online schedule was a new course name and date, with no explanation or fanfare. One day it was Carolina. The next, Spartanburg.

That's how The Golf Club first learned the event was on the move again — not through official channels, but through a quiet digital breadcrumb that raised more questions than it answered.

### How We Found Out

The tournament's page briefly listed Spartanburg as the 2026 co-host. When we asked for confirmation, the listing vanished, replaced by a re-issued banner that again showed Carolina Country Club as the site.

By then, however, the PGA Tour's Korn Ferry office in Ponte Vedra had already notified Carolina that its contract had been canceled. The damage was done — and the story was out.

After several inquiries, the tournament's public-relations contact replied only with:

"The tournament will have news about the 2026 tournament when the schedule is released."

It was a non-answer to a straightforward question, and it revealed plenty about how disjointed communications had become.

### The Attempt to Duck It

The website edit and retraction would have gone unnoticed in a normal week. But in the structured world of PGA Tour communications, publishing an unapproved date is the golf equivalent of showing up in cut-offs and camo.

Someone clearly jumped the gun. The correction came fast, but it also created a mess — Carolina had been told it was out, yet the event's public pages suddenly suggested otherwise.

It left the appearance of a tournament trying to cover its tracks after prematurely revealing a decision that wasn't supposed



*BMW briefly replaced its 2026 tournament banner to list The Country Club of Spartanburg before switching back — and still hasn't explained why. (Banners from BMW website) to be public.*

### Carolina Out, Spartanburg Courted

Carolina Country Club had every reason to believe it would continue co-hosting the event after years of strong community support. Instead, its management learned through an abrupt cancellation notice that the BMW would be moving on.

The Country Club of Spartanburg,

In the early years, the BMW Pro-Am was a legitimate celebrity showcase.

Kevin Costner, John Elway, Wayne Gretzky, and Steve Spurrier gave it national shine.

Today, the "celebrity" field leans more toward TikTok personalities and influencers — a reflection of changing times and shrinking star power.

*The only thing truly certain about the BMW Charity Pro-Am is how carefully everyone has avoided saying what everyone already knows.*

meanwhile, confirmed that discussions were underway. Club president Alex Powell emailed members:

"At this time, we can confirm we are in discussions with the Korn Ferry Tour and South Carolina Charities about the possibility of hosting the tournament.

These negotiations are ongoing, and additional details are expected in the coming weeks."

That was as close to an admission as anyone was likely to get — polite, careful, and clearly constrained by circumstances beyond the club's control.

### A Tournament That Can't Sit Still

Since leaving The Cliffs courses nearly 25 years ago, the BMW Charity Pro-Am has bounced through nearly every top venue in the Upstate — Thornblade, Chanticleer, Furman, Green Valley, Verdae, and most recently Carolina Country Club.

The constant churn has become part of the event's lore — a tournament perpetually in search of the perfect setup.

### Spartanburg's Turn in the Spotlight

Spartanburg's club brings history and credibility. It has hosted state amateurs, junior championships, and the prestigious Bobby Chapman Invitational — whose winners include Lucas Glover, Carson Young, and Peter Uihlein.

The course recently reopened after a major renovation that rerouted several holes and upgraded facilities. At just over 6,700 yards, it's shorter than many Korn Ferry venues, but its tradition and membership commitment make it an ideal setting — provided the event's organizers can get their communications and planning in order.

### The Member Question

Powell's email led to predictable follow-ups from club members:

"If the BMW takes up a week and the State Junior follows right after, am I still paying full dues when I can't play my course?"

The answer, as always, is yes. Hosting

big events requires sacrifice, and Spartanburg's members have a long record of stepping up for the game.

### From Prestige to Potholes

The BMW Charity Pro-Am was once one of the Korn Ferry Tour's marquee stops — a blend of Southern charm, star power, and corporate polish. Lately, its management has looked careless, from the premature website update to the tone-deaf handling of Carolina's dismissal.

For a tournament built on goodwill and volunteer energy, communication missteps cut deep. Transparency matters in a community that has supported the event for a quarter-century.

### Taking a long view

Eventually, the PGA Tour will release its schedule, BMW will confirm Spartanburg as co-host, and the show will go on.

The bigger question is whether the people who run the tournament have learned anything from the confusion they created.

Until then, everyone is pretending not to know what everyone already knows.



## Carolina Country Club named SC Club of the Year by the SCGA

The South Carolina Golf Association has selected The Carolina Country Club as its 2024 Club of the Year.

SCGA Executive Director Biff Lathrop informed the club of the honor to be presented at South Carolina Golf Day next January at Forest Lake Club in Columbia.

"The Carolina Country Club truly embodies the values and spirit of the SCGA Club of the Year," Lathrop said in announcing the award. "With two major championships already on your calendar — the Trescott and Lathrop Cups — you and your team went above and beyond to accommodate our last-minute needs in hosting the Amateur Championship.

Throughout the event, your staff and membership showed unwavering support for our efforts and our mission to crown a deserving champion, creating an atmosphere that perfectly reflected the best of South Carolina golf."

The award also recognizes the club's long-standing commitment to supporting amateur and junior golf in the state.

# Reloading not rebuilding at Anderson

## Trojans win two in a row to close out the fall season ranked #3

The names have changed, but the results look awfully familiar for the Anderson University women's golf team.

A year after spending most of the season ranked No. 1 in NCAA Division II and falling heartbreakingly short of the national title because of the NCAA's scorecard tiebreaker format, the Trojans are already charging back toward the top.

Last spring's semifinal loss to Dallas Baptist came not on the course, but in a scorecard playoff — a procedural tiebreaker that left many questioning why championships can hinge on paperwork rather than playoff holes.

Head coach Denton Moore and his team didn't dwell on it for long.

Despite graduating two of the best players in program history, Kennedy McGaha and Zoey Iglesias, the Trojans have turned what could have been a rebuild into a reload.

### New lineup, same results

Anderson's deep roster has delivered fireworks throughout the fall. Sophomore Olivia Pellerin captured her first collegiate



Anderson freshman Olivia Roberts has had an immediate impact in Coach Denton Moore's lineup. Olivia Pellerin won her first college tournament and senior Aly Francis matched the Trojans lowest program round. As a team Anderson has won their last two events while newcomer Claudia Hastings eared her first win as a Trojan. (Anderson Photos)



victory at the LeeAnn Noble Memorial, firing a birdie on the final hole to finish 10-under — the first individual win of her career.

Senior Aly Francis matched the program's lowest round ever with a bogey-free 65 in the opening round, joining former standout Kennedy Gooding as one of only three Trojans to reach that mark.

Just weeks later, Claudia Hastings, a senior transfer from Limestone University, earned medalist honors at the Saint Leo Invitational in Florida.

Anderson ran away with the team title by 20 shots against an elite national field, finishing six-under par for the week.

Hastings led wire-to-wire at -7, while Pellerin added another top-three finish.

### Roberts leads next wave

Freshman Olivia Roberts (Chesnee, S.C.), last year's South Carolina High School Player of the Year, has also made an instant impact.

Roberts was the runner-up in the fall finale at the Ralph Hayes Toyota D2 Elite Invitational at Currahee Club and posted multiple top-10s in her debut semester.

Anderson topped the field by 10 shots in that event — its second straight team victory to close the semester.

"Olivia Roberts is the best freshman in the country and one of the best players, period," Moore said. "She's been awesome this semester. You just don't see freshmen play like this very often."

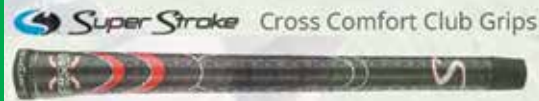
With Pellerin and Hastings each notching wins, Roberts stacking top finishes, and Francis providing steady senior leadership, Anderson closed the fall ranked No. 4 nationally and trending fast.

Moore, the reigning South Region Coach of the Year, again has a lineup capable of chasing championships — and perhaps rewriting how the next one is decided.

"There are just no weeks off with the schedule we play," Moore said. "But the girls were exceptional down the stretch. They've shown they can compete with anyone in the country. They've earned a little time to rest after the fall they've had."

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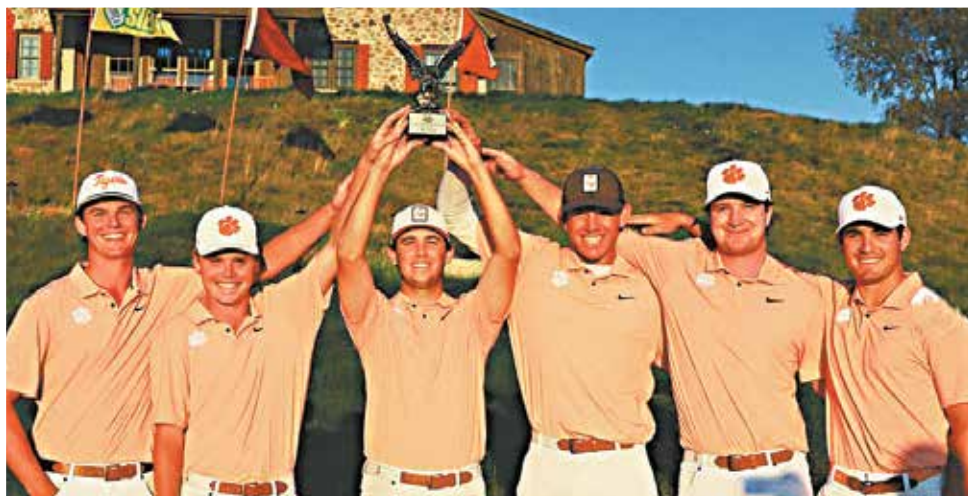
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After missing the NCAA post season last year both the Clemson men and women's teams have put themselves back in the post season picture with important wins during the fall. The Clemson men took the championship at the Marquette Invitational played on the Erin Hills course that has hosted two major USGA championships. The Clemson women's team added to their win in their own tournament with a victory at the Broad River Intercollegiate Invitational played at The Cliffs at Walnut Cove. Both wins give the Tigers the wins needed to avoid worrying about college golf's 500 rule. (Clemson Photos)

## Clemson men and women boost won loss record with tournament victories! Tigers put 500 rule in the rear view

Clemson's golf teams have started their new seasons with statement wins — and a sense of relief that the NCAA's .500 rule may not cast the same shadow this spring.

Last year both the men's and women's programs were left out of the postseason despite solid national rankings.

Under NCAA guidelines, a team must finish with at least a .500 record in Division I competition to qualify, regardless of ranking.

Early this season, both Tiger teams have already shown that problem may be behind them.

### Women Close Fall With Record Performance

The women made program history at the French Broad Collegiate Invitational at The Cliffs at Walnut Cove, where all five Tigers finished inside the top 10 for

the first time ever. Clemson's 36-hole total of 578 (+2) produced an 18-stroke victory and the largest margin of victory in team history.

Head coach Kelley Hester credited her players for treating the demanding layout as their true opponent.

"Anytime you can play well on a tough golf course, it means your focus is in the right place," Hester said. "The course was our main competition this week, and our team handled it beautifully."

Sophomore Juliette Demeaux opened with a tournament-low 67, senior Isabella Rawl added back-to-back 71s to finish -2 and second overall, and freshman Sarah Uebelhart closed with a 70 to place fourth. Aitana Tuesta and Sydney Roberts tied for seventh to complete the sweep.

The win was Clemson's second of the fall — the first time the women have posted

multiple victories in a single season — capping a schedule that included top-five finishes in four of five events.

### Men Win at Erin Hills

At nearly the same time, the men were conquering a championship course of their own. Clemson claimed the Marquette Intercollegiate at Erin Hills, home to past U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur championships, earning its first victory of the year and the fourth under head coach Jordan Byrd.

Junior Colin Salema shot 70 in the final round to finish third individually at +1 (217), leading the Tigers to a 20-over-par team total (892) and a three-shot win over San Diego State. Clemson also topped 10th-ranked Florida and 16th-ranked Texas A&M.

"We proved we can win on a tough golf course," Byrd said. "The guys accepted bogeys when they needed to, bounced

back with birdies, and played disciplined golf all week."

Rich Wills and Thomas Higgins joined Salema in the top 10, giving Clemson three finishers in that group for the second straight event — a level of depth that should keep the Tigers comfortably above the break-even line this season.

### A Stronger Foundation

The symmetry of the two victories — the women dominating at home and the men prevailing on a national-caliber course — gives Clemson golf a welcome reset after last year's postseason frustration.

This fall, the Tigers have replaced calculations and record-watching with simple momentum. Both programs head into winter confident that the next numbers worth tracking will be birdies and trophies, not win-loss percentages.

*\*Clemson Athletics provided information for this report.*

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FINAL ROUND		The Bobby Chapman JUNIOR INVITATIONAL		36 HOLE SUMMARY	
Country Club of Spartanburg - October 21 <sup>st</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup>					
144	MANESS	145	Lucas Glover 1995 CHAMPION	146	
149	THOMAS EKANUEL KING	151	KENNINGTON PETERSSON ROBINSON	147	
150		152	PARRISH SMITH JAMES VOLPITTO BLALOCK	148	LED FORD BYRD
156		153		149	
		154	ROOF McALLISTER SCURLOCK ALONZO	155	SANCHEZ SMITH THOMPSON



In the 31 year history of the Bobby Chapman Junior Invitational Chairman and Founder Doug Smith has presented the champion's trophy to some of the best Junior golfers of their day, Starting with the first Chapman champion Lucas Glover. Trent Phillips from nearby Boiling Springs was the champion in 2014 and Karl Villips was the top ranked Junior in the country when he won in 2018. (GolfClub Photos)

## The Chapman Legacy: Changing Times, Same Great Golf

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

Upstate New York junior Jackson Ormond looked right at home in upstate South Carolina as the future Florida Gator captured the Bobby Chapman Junior Invitational at the Country Club of Spartanburg — finishing on top of what tournament officials called the deepest field in years.

### A Win Built on Patience, Precision

Ormond's scorecard told a story of steady discipline: just 1-under on the front nine for two days, but a blistering 8-under on the back nine — the stretch that ultimately decided the championship. He capped it off with a conservative bogey on the 18th, protecting a four-shot lead.

"The whole thing was to just stay patient — the birdies are going to come," Ormond said. "You have to stay away from the bogeys. I just tried to hit as many greens as I could and be patient."

The patience paid off. After opening the final round with two bogeys, Ormond birdied four of his last seven holes — 12, 13, 15, and 17 — to finish with a 1-under-par 70, the best round of the day and good for a four-shot victory. It marked his first win in nearly two years and served as a reminder of how difficult it is to win any elite junior event, much less one like the Chapman.

"This is big — it's really big," Ormond said. "It has been a year or two since I last had a win. This is good for me going forward, knowing I can play under pressure."

### Competition Defines the Chapman

Even as the faces change, the spirit re-



Future Florida Gator golfer Jackson Ormond made four birdies in his last nine holes to pull away from the field and win the Bobby Chapman Junior Invitational. (Golf Club Photo)

mains. Slater Meade of North Wilkesboro and Penson Badgett of Pilot Mountain, N.C., shared second place after matching Ormond's closing 70. Eight South Carolinians were among the 60-player field this year, led by Conner Wolfe of Columbia, who opened with three straight birdies on his way to an opening-round 68, and Bennett Scaletta of Belton, who tied for 13th at even par.

### From Greenville to Global

When Lucas Glover won the inaugural Chapman in 1995, he drove up from Greenville and won by three shots over another South Carolinian, Jonathan Byrd. Both went on to PGA Tour victories,

Glover eventually winning the 2009 U.S. Open — a legacy that continues to define the Chapman's impact.

Thirty-one years later, the same event now draws juniors from Washington, California, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, and Idaho — along with six players who reportedly arrived on private jets. That evolution tells its own story about the modern junior-golf landscape: talented players, ambitious parents, and professional entourages that would make Vinnie Chase's posse look small.

### Junior Golf Has Changed

The Bobby Chapman has always been about opportunity — but opportunity today

looks very different. In the early years, entry was by invitation and reputation; now, it's shaped by ranking systems, recruiting algorithms, and NIL projections. The American Junior Golf Association's original spirit has evolved into an ecosystem of measurement and access — where a good ranking can determine a young golfer's future.

Tournament insiders have heard wild stories: families flying in uninvited, waiting in the parking lot in case someone withdrew. Whether the stories are true or not, they underscore the enormous pressure surrounding elite junior golf — not just to play well, but to get into the right events.

### A Legacy That Still Matters

Through it all, the Chapman name continues to stand for excellence. The event is played each year to honor the legacy of its namesake Bobby Chapman.

To golfers today Chapman is a black and white picture in the program, but in his day he was a passionate supporter of junior golf and a pillar of amateur competition throughout the Carolinas. His legacy still anchors the event today.

Yes, the Chapman has changed — as it should. The travel, technology, and expectations are all bigger now. But the essence of the game, and the championship that bears Chapman's name, remain the same.

Whether the trophy leaves Spartanburg in the back seat of a car or the cabin of a private jet, the Chapman title is still earned the same way Lucas Glover won it in 1995 — on the golf course.



Two of the top juniors in South Carolina will not be signing to play college golf this month. Dawson Szabo and Bennett Scaletta both have made commitments to South Carolina and Clemson respectively a year before they can sign. Each player will have this year to continue to build their outstanding junior resumes which already include for Szabo the South Carolina Junior championship and for Scaletta being the youngest winner of the Jay Haas Junior Player of the Year Award. (Golf Club Photos)

## Signing Day is Here! Bennett Scaletta and Dawson Szabo have made their college decisions but Clemson and Carolina will have to wait

While high school seniors across the country make their college commitments official this month, two of South Carolina's brightest young golfers won't be doing the usual recruiting "hat dance." Instead, they can enjoy the day knowing their decisions are already made.

Bennett Scaletta of T.L. Hanna and Dawson Szabo of Blue Ridge already know their next destinations — Scaletta will play for Clemson, Szabo for South Carolina. Both are still juniors, with another full year of high-school and junior competition before they can officially sign.

For the state's golf community, that's good news. The Palmetto State's best young players will spend one more season competing head-to-head on home turf before carrying their games — and the Clemson-Carolina rivalry — to the college stage.

### A Quiet Rivalry With Statewide Attention

Golf isn't a sport that encourages trash talk or cheers for missed putts. Rivals settle things with birdies, not boasts. Emotion shows in a well-timed fist pump, never at an opponent — unless it's the Ryder Cup.

But whenever Szabo and Scaletta appear in the same field, phones light up with the live-scoring app. No matter who's leading or which parent is watching their own junior, everyone wants to know what those two are doing.

Their matchups have been friendly but fierce, and the contrast in their games makes it fun — Szabo's fearless closing runs versus Scaletta's steady precision. Both have represented their schools and the state with class, turning what began as a junior rivalry into something fans will soon follow at the college level.

### Defining Moments and Distinct Paths

Their most memorable duel came last summer at the South Carolina Golf Association Junior Championship at Forest Lake. Szabo had a one-shot lead after finishing his final hole. Scaletta, playing in the last group, could tie — and Szabo couldn't watch.

Head buried in the grass beside the green, he only looked up when the gallery groaned: Scaletta's birdie putt slid past the cup. Szabo had his championship — a breakthrough win that added a Junior Championship to career defining wins at The Blade, the Harvey Brock Orange Jacket Classic, and the Southern Cross.

"It was just the process for me," Szabo said. "You're going to make bad swings, that's golf, but it's about limiting mistakes and not letting one bad swing affect the rest of the round."

Scaletta's résumé is built on relentless consistency — three straight high-school state championships with Hanna, four runner-up finishes in major junior tournaments

this season, and the distinction of being the youngest Jay Haas Junior Player of the Year in state history.

"I've been a top player in the state since 2023, and the coaches recognized that," Scaletta said. "Clemson was there from the very start. They believed in me when I was 13, and I wanted to reward their loyalty."

### Commitments Made — Futures Aligned

Scaletta made his verbal commitment to Clemson during a campus visit, playing a practice round with future teammates Tip Price and Jackson Byrd before heading to a football game in Death Valley.

"They told me how much they wanted me at Clemson," he said. "I told my dad the night before this is probably what I want, and the next day I made it official. I'm ready to be a Tiger."

Szabo chose South Carolina after narrowing his list late in the summer.

"South Carolina just felt like the right place," he said. "Coach Bradley is super genuine, and he coaches a lot like Chip Ridley (Szabo's mentor/advisor) — more about course management and the mental side, not just technique. He lets me play my game and helps me score better."

The decision created some lighthearted family tension — Szabo's father is a Clemson graduate.

"He's having a little bit of a rough time

adjusting," Szabo joked. "But he's coming around."

### Room to Grow — and One More Season to Share

With commitments in place, both players have put recruiting pressure behind them. Scaletta feels freer to compete without needing to "shoot 68 every time to prove something." Szabo, meanwhile, is fine-tuning his swing with instructor Tim Cook to meet the speed and strength demands of college golf.

They'll return to their high-school teams this spring — Szabo leading Blue Ridge, fresh off a team championship, and Scaletta anchoring Hanna in pursuit of a fourth straight crown.

### A Rivalry Worth Watching

For South Carolina golf fans, the best part of this signing-day season isn't who's signing — it's who's waiting one more year.

Two home-grown stars, one bound for Clemson and one for Carolina, will keep adding chapters to a rivalry that stretches well beyond football.

It's not Hogan vs. Nelson or Arnie vs. Jack or even Tiger vs. everybody — it's Clemson vs. Carolina, and soon enough, it will be Scaletta vs. Szabo again. Seeing the two at the next level will be worth the wait.

# Hanna beats the weather and the field

## Yellow Jackets win a second straight 5A DII state championship

Conway — Expectations can be tougher than any opponent. For the defending state-champion T.L. Hanna Yellow Jackets, those expectations followed them to the Hackler Course at Coastal Carolina University — and for a while, it looked as if they might be catching up to the team from Anderson.

### A slow start against a hot Chapin team

After the opening round of the South Carolina 5A Division II girls championship, Hanna found itself five shots behind a red-hot Chapin team that “couldn’t miss anything.”

“They played a phenomenal round one,” coach Gabby Kitts said. “We just weren’t really on our A-game that first day. We knew we had more to give.”

The Jackets also knew the weather could shorten the tournament to one day, so their slow start might have been costly if heavy rain had canceled the second round.

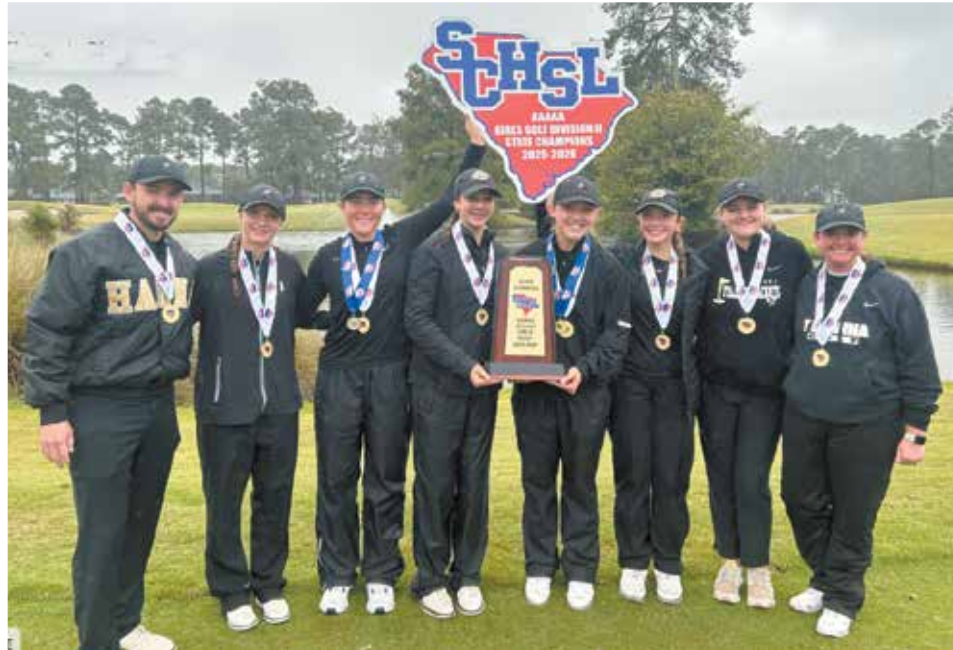
“Before the tournament we were told because of the weather it might end after one round,” Kitts said. “That was a wake-up call — you’d better be ready right away.”

Fortunately, a second round did happen — and that’s when Hanna turned the corner.

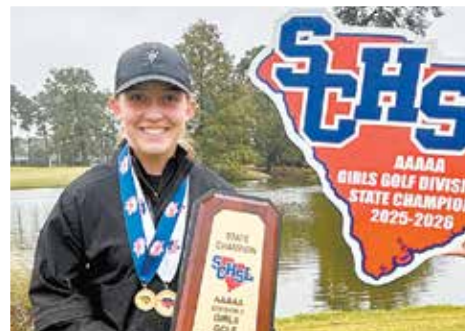
### Weather, grit, and one spark

Tuesday brought rain, wind, and the kind of sloppy conditions that test every golfer’s patience. Clubs slipped from wet hands, shots flew unpredictably, and composure became as important as skill.

Even so, Hanna clawed its way back into contention until senior Marisa Scaletta



*The defending South Carolina High School League 5A D2 champs did it again with a strong second round TL Hanna High School from Anderson won the championship and Marissa Scaletta was the medalist. The championship team included Assistant Coach Eli Roland, Sierra Schulze, Serra Erlenkeuser, Hanna Erlenkeuser, Marissa Scaletta, Hayden Bell, Reagan Joseph, Head Coach Gabby Kitts. (Below) Marissa Scaletta won medalist honors at the 5A DII championship. The Hanna senior joins her brother Bennett as a winner of an individual state championship. (Hanna Photos)*



delivered the moment that changed everything — an eagle 3 on the par-5 sixth hole.

“That was the jolt we needed,” Kitts

said. “You could see the confidence — it lifted everyone.”

For Scaletta, it erased a shaky start that included three bogeys. “I had about 78 yards, used my 56-degree, and I saw it go in,” she said. “After that I started checking the scoreboard after every hole. I could see the girls in front of me playing some of the tougher holes, and their lead was shrinking. It seemed like after every hole I gained another shot.”

She added a birdie on 14 and then parred her final holes to seal both the team and individual titles — a perfect send-off

as she prepares to continue her golf career at Western Carolina University next year.

### A runaway finish

From Scaletta’s eagle spark, the Jackets played like champions again. They tightened their execution, stayed patient in worsening weather, and steadily pulled clear of the field.

“At that point we didn’t have to do anything crazy,” Kitts said. “Just play smart, safe golf — and they did.”

By day’s end, Hanna had turned a five-shot deficit into a 12-shot victory, posting a 642 total to beat Conway (654), West Florence (660), Chapin (661), and St. James (680).

Scaletta’s 1-under-par 71 gave her a five-shot individual win over Cassie Peters of St. James and teammate Serra Erlenkeuser. Serra Schulze joined them in the top five, giving Hanna three players among the state’s elite.

### A family tradition continues

Marisa Scaletta joined her brother Bennett, the 2023 boys medalist, in the record books — becoming the third brother-sister duo in South Carolina history to win state golf titles. The others were Michael and Anne Maness (Aynor) and Keenan and Victory Huskey (Greenville).

### Looking ahead

With the girls’ trophy secure, attention now shifts to the Hanna boys, who will try to defend their own 5A-II crown next spring and keep all the championship hardware in Anderson.

“We started the year a little slow with a few second- and third-place finishes,” Kitts said, “but after that we were winning everything. We knew it was going to be tough to win again, but they played their A-game and got it done.”

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# The Eagles have landed - a fifth state title

## Chesnee freshman's clutch shot on final hole wins state title

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

Chesnee High School has built its girls golf dynasty on experience and excellence — four straight state championships powered by players who earned All-Conference, Player of the Year, and All-State honors. The Eagles didn't just show up at the state tournament each fall — they arrived expecting to win.

But the fifth championship was different.

This time, the moment belonged not to a senior with a résumé full of awards, but to a 14-year-old freshman in her first varsity season — a player suddenly carrying the team's fate on her shoulders.

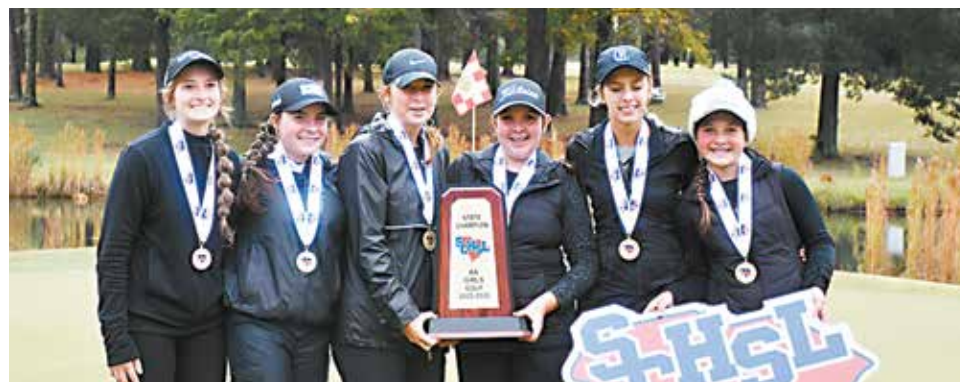
The setting was the final hole at the Chester Country Club. On this day, it did the opposite.

With Chesnee and Atlantic Collegiate tied for the team lead, freshman Amelia Shields faced a long forced carry over the water, the state championship hanging in the balance. She pulled a five-wood, struck it pure, and sent it soaring safely onto the green — the biggest shot of her young life. Moments later, she two-putted for par, sealing Chesnee's fifth consecutive state title.

The Eagles had trailed by 14 shots entering the back nine but clawed back with their trademark grit. Senior Jada Flynn led the charge with a career-best



Amelia Shields is the center of the Chesnee celebration after the freshman parred her last hole to help the Eagles win their 5th straight championship. The championship Eagles team included Alaina Littlejohn, Katie Hawk, Abigail Watson, Abby Herrington, Jada Flynn and Amelia Shields (Chesnee Photo)



71, while Abby Hampton and Shields delivered clutch pars down the stretch to pull Chesnee even. Flynn finished second

individually, earning All-State honors alongside Hampton and Shields.

"They buy into grinding and giving

their best on every shot," said Coach Kyle Scruggs. "They really want to win for each other. This bunch has heart."

The victory extends what has become a mini-dynasty for Chesnee, one rooted in standards as much as skill. Over the past five years, Scruggs' program has sent six players on to college golf and consistently reloaded rather than rebuilt.

"It's their work ethic," Scruggs said. "We've lost six players in the last two years, but the next group just steps in. They've been around good golfers and they When the team bus rolled back into the Chesnee lot that evening, families and community members were waiting, greeting the champions with cheers, hugs, and photos.

Scruggs also praised Atlantic's players for their sportsmanship and faith.

"They're a great group," he said. "They even came over and did a Bible study with our kids before the tournament. It was a classy competition all the way around." Chesnee wins know the path to get there."

Shields, whose older sister Olivia played collegiately at USC Upstate, is the latest in a line of family names to contribute to Chesnee's success — proof that the Eagles' golf culture continues to grow from within. Next season brings uncertainty but also optimism.

"Atlantic's returning just about everybody," Scruggs said, "and we've got a lot of young talent. We'll give it our best shot again."

Given Chesnee's history, no one will bet against them.

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# From a chance to a championship

## Lexington slips by Dorman for AAAAA DI state championship

When Lexington golf coach Brandon Smith was asked how his Wildcats would do this year, he knew more than his answer would suggest.

Smith simply said, "We have a chance."

At The Carolina Country Club, Smith and his Wildcats turned that chance into a championship.

Lexington held off defending champion Dorman and Columbia-area rival River Bluff to win the 15th state championship in school history.

Smith knew after his team's third-place finish last year that he was leading a determined group of golfers.

"We pretty much had just about everybody back," Smith said. "We talked about it — we're good enough to be in that scene right now. We'll work harder than all those other girls so that we'd have a chance to be here. We have a chance."

After a season-long tug-of-war among the state's top three 5A Division I programs, the 36-hole championship was cut to one round after heavy rain washed out Monday's play.

Course crews worked miracles to make the shortened event possible, and the soggy fairways set up a tense finish no team could pull away from.

### Down to the Final Hole

Each of the top three teams had their moments. The Cavaliers, Gators, and Wildcats all placed golfers in the top 10.



Coach Brandon Smith and the Lexington Wildcats won the SCHSL 5A DI Championship at the Carolina Country Club in Spartanburg. Taryn Smoak, Lyles Herritage, Claire Kim, Giovanna Martusciello, Dailie Gibson. (GolfClub Photo)



Coach Stephanie Johnson, Elin Sarstrand, Marlee Metcalf, Ava Romansky, AC Peake, Addie Cox, Payton O'Neill, Coach Arista Edwards, Coach Laura Maurer

Dorman's season-long leader Ava Romansky posted a top-10 score along with River Bluff's Mingle Huang and Lexington's Lyles Heritage.

A new scoring app kept coaches, fans, and players updated hole-by-hole and set the stage for the final hole to determine the state champion.

In the final group on the course, on their final hole, Dorman sophomore AC Peake needed a birdie to force a tie, while Lexington senior Giovanna Martusciello needed a par for the win.

Peake's birdie putt came up short. Martusciello lagged her first putt close and tapped in to clinch the win for the Wildcats — their 15th state title and first since 2020.

"It was just the girls believing," said Smith. "We peaked at the right time. We won our final three tournaments and carried that confidence with us into the state championship."

### Smith was quick to deflect credit.

"It's the girls who hit the shots that brought the title back to Lexington," he said. "We've got a good nucleus coming back, but that's a long way off. Let's enjoy this one first."

Dorman coach Laura Maurer praised her team for its four-year run of excellence.

"I'm so proud of the effort our team put in," Maurer said. "These girls built something special at Dorman."

The Cavaliers three state championships and regular season tournament wins set new school records.

The Cavalier girls have now won six state championships and only trail Lexington in the total number of titles.

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# Caroline Hawkins sets new state record

## Blythewood senior is first in SC to win 4 individual state titles

By Stan Olenik  
Editor-Publisher, The Golf Club

Individually, Carolina Hawkins of Blythewood etched her name into South Carolina golf history by winning her fourth consecutive 5A medalist title — the first golfer, boy or girl, ever to accomplish that feat in state high school competition.

The future Clemson Tiger surpassed the previous record of three held by Jacob Bridgeman (Chapman) and Jensen Castle (White Knoll).

Despite cool, wet conditions, Hawkins kept her composure to secure a one-shot victory over Julia Gressette of Cane Bay and reflected on her journey.

“I didn’t play my best today, but that’s golf,” she said. “Everyone — even Scotty Scheffler — has down days. You just have to stay thankful.”

Hawkins has been a golfer to watch since her name first appeared on a leaderboard years before she began winning state titles.

Once she had two championships under her belt, the idea of becoming the first four-time individual champion became a goal — but never an obsession.

“You’ve got to set your standards high and give it your 110 percent,” Hawkins said. “It’s not just about winning — it’s about feeling good about how you played. Golf’s a sport; it’s not life. You



*No other golfer in the history of the South Carolina High School League has any golfer, boy or girl, won four consecutive state championships or four state titles at any time in their high school career until Caroline Hawkins accomplished it this year. (GolfClub Photos)*

have to be thankful for where you’re at.”

While setting a record that will be hard to break by even an exceptional golfer, boy or girl, Hawkins had to pause to reflect on the end of one part of her golfing life.

“It is sad to know that my high school golf career is over, I’ve had so much fun and been so fortunate to be able to play,” she said.

Hawkins will play college golf at Clemson, she will sign with the Tigers in



November and while having most of her high school classes behind her will finish the spring semester at Blythewood.

I’m so thankful and I’m so blessed, God gave me a great opportunity, The coaches up there are amazing, The atmosphere and all of the girls are just great and Clemson is just gorgeous. I’m so excited,” concluded the new state individual championship record holder.

## Hilton Head Island wins SC AAAA title

Hilton Head Island High School captured the South Carolina AAAA championship in the tournament played at The Golf Club at Hilton Head Lakes.

The winning team shot a 616 total to run away with the championship,

May River was second at 646 with South Aiken in third at 671 and Fountain Inn was fourth with a 677 total.

Harper Hedden from Hilton Head Island finished at 2-under par to claim medalist honors by 3 shots over Hailey Zhao from May River.

## Barnett repeats as the SC AAA Medalist

Ella Kate Barnett from Aynor was a repeat winner of the individual state championship at the AAA tournament played at the Diamondback Golf Club in Loris.

Barnett finished the tournament at 6-over par to earn a four-shot victory over Emma Bulman from MVP.

## MVP claims second straight AAA title

MVP won the AAA championship for the second straight year The Stars posted a total of 73 over par 721 to finish in front of Aynor.

Greenville’s Christ Church was third with Southside Christian finishing fourth.

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# Upstate weekend winners

## Bentley and Sill win Fall 2 man team championship



The team of Brad Sill and Reed Bentley joined forces to shoot a 57 in the final round to win the Fall Two-Man team championship at Three Pines Country Club,

The winning team opened the tournament with a round of 66 and trailed two teams by a shot.

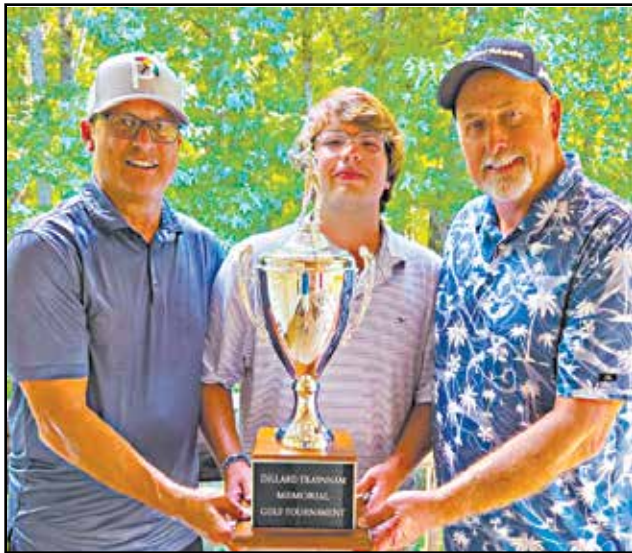
Brian Kennedy and Scott Smith along with Thomas Fraser and Austin Rupp had carded 65s in the opening round to hold the lead.

In the second round the winning team shot a 59, included a pair of eagles to make up the one stroke difference and go on to claim a four shot win.

The team of Will Woodard and Davis West carded a second round 60 to move past several teams and finish as the runner-up team.

The team of Hunter Parks and Davis Petty moved up to third place in the championship flight.

## Hall, Mantooth and Turner win Dillard Traynham tourney



The Paris Mountain Country Club hosted the 20th annual Dillard Traynham Memorial Tournament,

The three-man team event produced some amazing scores and spirited competition.

The team of Henry Hall, Jimmy Mantooth, and Kyle Turner won this year's tournament shooting 36 under with rounds of 54, 54.

The winning team held off a strong final round challenge from the team of Mark Torres, Brad Sill, and Brandon Masters.

Brooks Byce, Phil Genthner, and Rick Freeze won the 1st Flight shooting 27 under with rounds of 60, 57

Aaron Vanderpool, Daniel Honeycutt, and Glenn Burchfield won the 2nd Flight shooting 23 under.

## Neilsen brothers team up to win the Eddie Martin two-man



Saluda Valley held a Texas Two-Man in honor of long time pro and manager Eddie Martin.

The team of Jonathan and Thomas Nielsen finished with a two-day total of 121 to win the championship flight.

The team of Anthony Clark and Carson Benfield were second in the championship flight .

Flight winners in the tournament included - First Flight -Brandon Mattison and Jason Mitchell, Second Flight - Mark Rhodes and Todd Hiott, Third Flight - Jack Kauer and Mike Kelly, Fourth Flight - Robbie Roach and Neil Campbello



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# SC Seniors Capture Golfweek International Title

## Johnson, Berchiatti and Cloninger team up for Palmetto State win

South Carolina's senior golf depth was on display again when the team of Yancey Johnson, Geno Berchiatti, and Rick Cloninger won the Golfweek Senior National "International" Team Championship at Cartersville Country Club in Georgia.

The event, which drew state and international teams from as far away as Ireland, Scotland, England, and Denmark, combines both team and individual play over three days. The top two scores each day count toward the team total, while every player also competes individually for World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) points.

"It's a tournament within a tournament," said Johnson, the reigning South Carolina Senior Champion. "You play for your team, but every shot still matters for the individual side."

The South Carolina squad opened with a three-under-par team total, stayed near the top through the second round, and finished at six under to edge Utah by two shots. Johnson posted rounds of 71-70-70



Rick Cloninger, Yancey Johnson and Gene Berchiatti brought home the title from the Golfweek Senior National "International" championship played in Cartersville, Georgia. (Golfweek Photo)

for a five-under total, placing fourth individually, while Cloninger finished one under for the week.

"I didn't even know exactly where we stood coming down the stretch," Johnson said. "I birdied 18 after making a couple of tough pars to finish it off. We both birdied the last hole, which sealed it."

### A Strong Field and a Stronger Team

Cartersville Country Club impressed the field with firm, fast bent-grass greens and a layout that demanded every club in the bag. "It's one of those courses where you hit every shot you've got," Johnson said. "Long par fours, short ones, reachable par fives—it's a great test."

Golfweek organizes and sponsors the event with support from Georgia Pow-

er and other corporate partners, mixing community engagement with high-level competition. "They bring in local officials, business leaders, even some up-and-coming juniors for the practice round," Johnson said. "It's a fun touch—you meet people from all over."

For South Carolina, the lineup was as experienced as any in the field. Johnson's steady play anchored a team that also included Berchiatti, fresh off his North-South Super Senior victory at Pinehurst, and Cloninger, a multi-time Carolinas Senior champion.

The original trio had been set a year earlier with current SCGA Senior champion Eddie Hargett, but he could not join the group this year so Berchiatti filled in. "Whether it was Geno or Eddie, we knew we had a strong team," Johnson said.

**Collecting Ranking Points** Johnson's individual finish added to his WAGR standing, keeping him in the mix for invitations to national and international senior events. "I don't chase the math too hard," he said with a laugh. "I just like to play golf. But those points do matter—sometimes they open doors to things like the U.S. or British Senior Amateur."

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In state team championship play girls teams from the Upstate captured all but one of the state championships at the end of the season and they wrapped up the year with an All-Star win, (GolfClub photo)

## North wins All-Star Match

### Senior golfers from the Upstate dominate at River Falls

The annual coaches All-Star North vs South Matches were played at River Falls Plantation,

It does not seem to matter where the matches are played, the North seems to always be a little ahead of the South All-Stars at the end of the two days of competition,

This year the North built up a lead in

the early rounds setting the tone for the competition with a 4-0 start in the Best Ball format.

The North went on to win by the score of 12 1/2 to 3 1/2..

Coaches Bryan Woody from Riverside and Laura Mauer from Dorman enjoyed coaching their All-Star which included Marissa Scaletta-Hanna, Merritt Barbrey-Flora, Katelyn Cox-Blue Ridge,

Kate Gunnels-BHP, Julia Conroy -, Jada Flynn-Chesnee, Ava Romansky-Dorman, Olivia Jones



This year's Greenville Coder Cup team included, Captain Terry Willis, Andy Mitchell, Chris Essay, Danny Brock, Nolan Marks, Yancey Johnson, Jose Alvarez, Dillard Pruitt, Cole Patterson, James Scott, Matt Hooper, Matt Mead, Justin Howell, Matt Wills, Henry Hall, Doug Appleby. (First Tee Upstate Photo)

## Cyder Cup...

continued from page 8

in sponsorships and donations. Together with Greenville teammate Matt Mead, the duo accounted for more than \$17,000 toward the total.

"It hits home," Mitchell said. "The First Tee sometimes gets a bad rap that there's not enough golf, but what it really supports is character and opportunity — lessons I want my own kids to grow up with."

In the team standings, Spartanburg surged on the final day's singles matches to secure a convincing 20-11 victory, regaining county bragging rights. But when the matches ended and the last check was counted, there were no losers — just hundreds of young lives benefiting from



Brian Kennedy is the only golfer to have participated in all 21 Cyder Cups. He captained the first Spartanburg teams and helped set the direction of the event to include fund raising for The First Tee.

another successful year of giving.

As Kennedy put it, "We started out raising enough to buy shirts. Now we're helping kids build futures. That's a cup worth playing for."


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## The 2026 Amateur Players Tour Has Started - Sign Up Today!

**GRAMBLING, S.C.** — The Upstate Amateur Players Tour (APT) kicked off its 2026 season in style Saturday with its season-opening tournament presented by Spring Park Driving Range at the historic Village Greens Golf Club in Gramling, South Carolina.

With crisp fall weather and stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains, golfers from across the Carolinas and Georgia teed it up to begin another exciting year of amateur competition.

Founded in 1969, Village Greens has long been a local favorite. Its story began when the Mountain Valley Development Company purchased more than 100 acres between Inman and Gramling to create a new public golf course.

The company hired local golf architect Russell Breden to design the layout, with construction led by L.L. Hyder Construction of Landrum.

Hundreds of trees were planted to shape the fairways, while careful attention was paid to preserving panoramic mountain views stretching from Glassy Mountain to Chimney Rock.

More than five decades later, the Gaines and Gramling families continue to own and operate the course, maintaining its welcoming atmosphere and commitment to affordable, high-quality golf.

On Saturday, that legacy provided the perfect backdrop for the Upstate APT's first



**2025 Fall Classic  
Village Greens GC (Inman, SC)  
Jody Clary (Shelby, NC)  
Division Champion**



**2025 Fall Classic  
Village Greens GC (Inman, SC)  
Gregg Pruitt (Roebuck, SC)  
Mid-Am Net Champion**

event of 2026 — a tour built by the players, for the players, offering competition across multiple divisions and skill levels with cash and VISA gift card prizes on the line.

The opening event featured fierce competition across five divisions, along with Mid-Am and Senior Net categories.

In **Division 1**, Jody Clary of Shelby, N.C., claimed the top spot with a steady round of 73. After two early bogeys, Clary birdied the par-five fifth hole and went on to post 13 straight pars, finishing strong with an even-par back nine. Shayne Burger led the division in birdies with four, posting 74 to finish second. Brad Johnson finished third with 78, while Dylan Lancaster and

Brandyn Norton tied for fifth at 79.

**Division 2** came down to a dramatic playoff, as Logan Pendergrass, Zack Boyd, and Eric Stanwick all carded rounds of 76. Pendergrass emerged victorious after sinking key birdies late in regulation and holding steady in extra holes. Boyd and Stanwick shared second, while AJ Lee and Chris Lombardoizzi tied for fourth with 78.

In **Division 3**, Ronnie Strange of Spartanburg took the win with a 79, highlighted by an eagle on the fifth hole and a birdie at No. 10. Kyle Ramsey finished one stroke back at 80, while Dylon Kelly, Eric Sage, and Gregg Pruitt tied for third at 81.

Division 4 saw David Croston of

Franklin, N.C., claim victory with a round of 83, his steady play and lone birdie on No. 13 edged Billy Trull (85) and Bruce Shively (86). Derrick Sage placed fourth with 87, while Djuan Johnson, Danny Sullivan, and Peter Fahey shared fifth with 89.

In **Division 5**, Bill Turner narrowly topped Rodney Ferrell by one stroke, shooting 91 to Ferrell's 92. Turner's consistency on the back nine proved decisive. Dick Jenkins, Michael Addison, Bruce Reeves, and Anna Cyphers-Smith tied for third with 97.

The **Mid-Am Net Division** was won by Gregg Pruitt, who shot a net 70 behind a back-nine surge. Weston Brown followed with 73, while AJ Lee, Derrick Sage, and Bruce Reeves rounded out the top five.

In the **Senior Net Division**, Ronnie Strange completed a memorable day by firing a net 69 to win the title. Bruce Shively finished close behind with 70, and a large group — including Eric Stanwick, Lyle Gumer, Eric Sage, Danny Sullivan, David Croston, Sam Burgess, and Rodney Ferrell — tied for third at 71.

The Upstate Amateur Players Tour now turns its attention to a packed 2026 schedule, with events set across South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. With a successful opener in the books, the season promises to deliver more great golf, camaraderie, and competition for amateur players throughout the region.

**WHY JOIN THE APT?**

- ✓ TOUR EXPERIENCE
- ✓ COMMUNITY
- ✓ PROFESSIONALLY RUN EVENTS
- ✓ DIVISIONS FOR EVERYONE
- ✓ PRIZES PAID IN VISA GIFT CARDS
- ✓ PLAY TOP-RATED COURSES

**2026 UPSTATE SC SCHEDULE**

- October 4, 2025- Village Greens GC
- October 18, 2025- Woodfin Ridge GC
- October 25, 2026- Etowah Valley CC
- November 1, 2025- Timberlake CC
- November 9, 2025- Fripp Island (Ocean Creek)
- November 15, 2025- Links O' Tryon
- November 22, 2025- Arrowhead Points
- December 7, 2025- Cobbs Glenn CC
- Dec 20, 2025- Southern Oaks GC
- December 27, 2025- Clemson Walker Course
- Jan 31-Feb 1, 2026- 2025 Icebreaker at Palmetto Dunes
- March 7, 2026- Cherokee Valley
- March 21, 2026- Creeper CC
- March 30, 2026- Springdale CC (Monday)
- April 4, 2026- Currahee GC
- April 18, 2026- Catawchee CC
- May 2, 2026- Conestee Falls CC
- May 16, 2026- Oconee Country Club
- June 1, 2026- Champions Retreat
- June 6, 2026- Monticello GC
- June 20, 2026- Riverbend CC
- June 27, 2026- Cherokee National GC
- July 6, 2026- Kenmore CC (Monday)
- July 25-26, 2026- Southern Regional at Rumbling Bald Resort
- August 3, 2026- Brights Creek CC (Monday)
- August 8, 2026- Deerbrook GC



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