

VGC PLAYER OF THE YEAR – ZACH MacDOUGALL

By George Aitken



July 6th, 2007 – The BC Junior Boy's Champion

[Photo courtesy of BCGA]

Virtually none of the members of our Club could dream about having the kind of year that young Zach MacDougall has just finished in 2007. Some of his achievements are listed below;-

- BCGA Junior Boys' Champion
- BCGA Junior Boys' Championship – Medallist
- BCGA Zone 4 Championship – 2nd
(formerly The Vancouver City Amateur Championship)
- BCGA Zone 4 Junior Boys' League ranking – 2nd
- RCGA Canadian Junior Boys' Amateur – 3rd
- RCGA Canadian Junior Boys' Championship – Medallist (unofficial)
- RCGA Inter-Provincial Team Champions
- RCGA Canadian Men's Amateur – Round of 16
- AJGA Pacific Northwest International Junior – T2nd
- Ranked #1 in BCGA Order of Merit for Junior Boys, and 9th for Men
- Ranked #7 in RCGA Order of Merit for Junior Boys, and 18th for Men
- BCGA Junior Boys' Player of the year
- PNGA Junior Boys' Player of the Year

Zach first appeared on our radar on May 14th, 2005, when he tied for 11th place in the BCGA Zone 4 Juniors Invitational at his home course. What is interesting is that among the other players who tied with him that day Richard Conlin and Thomas Petts would feature again in 2007 in quite a significant way (see later below).

By way of background Zach joined VGC aged 11, and by age 14 was sporting a 7-handicap. He's currently at Plus 2, having reached plus 3 during the season

The next focus of our attention came on Saturday, June 23rd, 2007 at “Kings Links” (formerly Boundary Shores Golf Course) in the first round of the BCGA Zone 4 Amateur (formerly known as the Vancouver City Amateur Championship).

On the first day there Zach shot a very tidy 70, to move on to the Vancouver Golf Club home turf the following day where an even par round of 72 placed him in second position, one shot ahead of club mate Adam Cornelson. The winner was Richard Conlin who had spread-eagled the field with a 66 the day before.

It was at the BC Junior Championship Tournament at Fairwinds Golf Club in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island, however, that Zach really displayed his true colours, opening with a six under par 65 followed by a two under par 69 to become the medallist. A third round 75, however, cut his lead back to only two over Jarron Sarai (whose brother Kyle had also tied Zach at VGC 2 years earlier).

A slow start on the final day - bogey, bogey, double-bogey - looked ominous. However, as Zach later stated, “I kick-started my run with a birdie at seven and almost made eagles at 9 and 13”. Sarai fell away to a 76, while Eugene Wong (former BC Junior Champion) and Darren Wallace (former Canadian Amateur Champion) were coming up close behind.

The round of the day, however, came from Thomas Petts who shot a 66, finishing birdie, eagle and a shot behind MacDougall, who needed to play the last hole in par to win, or at worst a bogey to tie and force a play-off.

Quoting Zach “I was in the fairway bunker about 60 yards out in two – I put it on the green to about 35 feet. In fact the ball landed very close to the hole but spun back almost off the green. That left me a tough putt over a ridge and back down a ridge – I left it about five feet short. It was pretty nerve racking to have a putt like that to win. It had a little bit of left to right break. I thought it was in as soon as I hit it, however”.

It must have been tough for, according to (the Vancouver Sun’s) Brad Ziemer, Zach told him “Thomas isn’t one to hide his emotions so I could kind of see him fist pumping every time he made birdie ... and at the last hole there was a big roar. I knew it wasn’t just a tap-in birdie, it must have been an eagle”.

Ziemer continued “MacDougall is something of a late bloomer in the Junior Golf scene, where it has become a regular occurrence for 14 and 15 year olds to break through and win. Wong, for example, won the 2005 BC Junior when he was 14. Wallace was 15 when he captured his

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prestigious Canadian Title in 2005. MacDougall’s game has been very good of late – he finished second at the Vancouver City Amateur late last month and last week placed second at an American Junior Golf Association event in Bremerton, Washington”.

Zach MacDougall is the first Vancouver Golf Club member to win the BC Junior title since Joe Limoli, who won in 1976 on home territory at the Vancouver Golf Club. Interestingly Limoli defeated two players whose names that are quite familiar to us now – Jim Rutledge (then of Uplands) who placed second in a tie with Dick Zokol (Marine Drive). Furthermore since 1946 (when the championship was initiated) Limoli and MacDougall are the only two VGC members to have won it. Limoli also placed second to Sandy Harper in 1974.

[Note: Sandy Harper won the RCGA Champion of Champions event on the Sunshine Coast earlier in 2007, but later went on to lose to Zach in the second round of match play in the Canadian Amateur Championship at the Riverside Country Club in Saskatoon, by a margin of one hole, at the 18th. The RCGA summary noted that “Harper has had a distinguished career as a professional golfer when he was younger. Harper was well known in the early 80s as one of the best golfers in Canada and was a highly respected player on the Australian Tour” – Harper was also named PNGA Senior of the Year for 2007 – so that was a big victory, Zach!].

In addition to all of the above, the BCGA Zone 4 committee operates a series of Junior Invitational Tournaments throughout the golf season and it would come as no great surprise to learn that Zach placed second in the overall standings behind Ren Han of Richmond (see table at end).



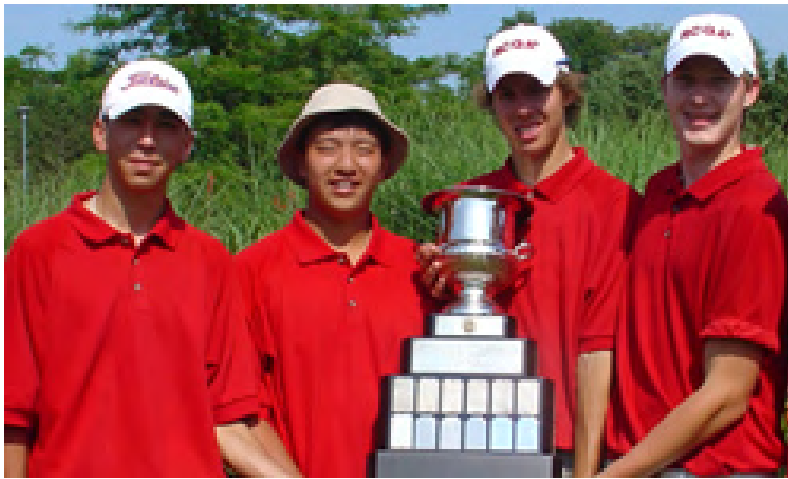
Sunday, June 24th, 2007 at VGC – The Zone 4 BCGA Men’s Team

[Photo Courtesy of BCGA]

On the basis of their performances in the City Amateur, however, MacDougall (centre left, overleaf) and Adam Cornelson (far left) were both named to the Zone 4 Amateur team, along with Richard Conlin (center right, the newly crowned City Amateur Champion), and Sean Jarvis (Norm's nephew).

The Canadian Junior Boys' Championship, Ile Bizard, Quebec

On the basis of his performance at the BC Junior Championship, Zach was named to the British Columbian Junior team to compete in the Inter-Provincial Championship at the Canadian Junior Boys' Championship, along with Eugene Wong, Darren Wallace, and Thomas Petts (pretty heavy-duty company). Not surprisingly this team (see photo below) won its fourth consecutive Inter-Provincial title in Ile Bizard in Quebec, where again Zach (centre right) was the (unofficial) medallist at a 6-under par 138 (69, 69) for the first two rounds. He eventually finished tied for third spot behind Graham Baillargeon and Matt Hill. MacDougall's four rounds placed him in top spot ahead of his three other BC colleagues.



[photo courtesy of RCGA]

The 2007 Inter-Provincial Junior Boys Champions

The following week at **the Canadian Amateur Championship** in Saskatoon, Zach tied with five others for twentieth spot at the end of medal play scoring 76,73=149 (+5), way ahead of some other notable BC names, including Craig Doell (Victoria) at 89-70=159 (+15), and Doug Roxburgh (fresh off his win in this year's Ogopogo Tournament in Kelowna) 77-83=160 (+16).

In the first round of match play Zach defeated Jonathan Kim of Toronto at the 19th hole and then moved on to dispose of Sandy Harper as mentioned above. His fine run, however, came to an end in the third matchplay round (last 16) at the hands of Graham Hill of Bright's Grove, Ontario.

Not surprisingly, as a result of his performance, the BCGA nominated him Junior Player of the Year, and arising from their nomination he was also proclaimed PNGA Junior Player of the Year.

Unfortunately he was unable to take part in the Club Championship at the Vancouver Golf Club since these other events took precedence, but it will be interesting to see how he fares in years to come. One match that would be of interest would be to see him paired against Adam Cornelson, two years older than he is, who himself has performed well throughout the year. Bryan Killins watch out, your crown is in danger!

Since the golf season finished here in Canada Zach was a member of Team Canada (Zach, Jonnie Motomichi, Hyung Keun Yim, Christina Wong and Annika Yoo), that took part in the Aaron Baddeley Junior golf event in China, getting to play 3 holes with Baddeley in the practice round, on a rotational basis.

He has secured a golf scholarship that is due to start in Eastern Michigan University in the fall of 2008, but in the meantime he is getting physically fit for another season that will include the City Amateur, and the BC and Canadian Amateur championships, while the rest of the season he will be focusing on the American golf scene, hopefully including the PNGA and The Sahalee Players Amateur (invitational), and possibly The Pacific Coast Amateur.

In conclusion, it is interesting to compare Zach's 2007 achievements to those in the early 1920s of the late **Freddy Wood**, who by coincidence was inducted into the BC Golf House Museum Hall of Fame in mid-October 2007. Wood began his illustrious career as a caddy at VGC under the watchful eye of Jimmy Huish, the old pro from Musselburgh, Scotland, becoming firstly the VGC caddy champion, and subsequently the Vancouver City caddy champion (that is the equivalent of winning the current day Zone 4 Junior championship, which this year was won by Ren Han). Wood then went onto a distinguished career, both as an amateur and later as a professional (see elsewhere under "Hall of Famers"). It is fair to point out however that the competition was much different in Wood's and also Limoli's days, than it is now. So, well done Zach, that was truly some year! Onward and Upward! Good Luck Zach, we'll be cheering for you.

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The BCGA ZONE 4 Junior Boys Invitational League Final Points Scores (Top placings only), courtesy of the BCGA.

	Cap	PG	BG	Shau	Quil	Van	Sq	Rich	Sey	Total		
1	Ren	Han	30	14	30	15.5	19	10	0	40	25	183.5
2	Zach	MacDougall	17.5	18	12.5	1.8	25	7	40	19	40	180.8
3	Adam	Svensson	14	0	17	25	30	25	30	19	16	176.0
4	Eugene	Wong	40	40	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	120.0
5	Thomas	Petts	17.5	27.5	17	0	0	15.5	0	14.5	25	117.0
6	Hyung Keun	Kim 1	0	0	0	40	16.5	15.5	14	14.5	12.5	113.0
7	Sean	Jarvis	0	11	40	0	40	19	0	0	0	110.0
8	Bryan	Lichimo	0	14	22.5	19	0	12	18	1	19	105.5
9	Kyle	Roszmann	20	27.5	0	0	0	0	8.5	30	8	94.0
10	Jerron	Sarai	2	7.5	8	30	16.5	1.33	22.5	0	0	87.8
11	Jonnie	Motomochi	0	7.5	0	1.8	20	25	22.5	0	0	76.8
12	Mark	McKenzie	14	0	0	0	12.5	18	14	5	12.5	76.0
13	Yuya	Kihara	0	0	0	0	16.5	12	14	19	10	71.5
14	Nick	McKnight*	10	1.5	5.5	15.5	6.5	25	4.5	0	0	68.5
15	Matt	Powell	0	14	14.5	0	1.125	7	18	0	12.5	67.1
16	Conrado	Paderes	0	11	8	15.5	16.5	0	0	0	16	67.0
17	Reed	Lamb*	14	0	0	15.5	0	0	18	14.5	5	67.0
18	Matthew	Steger	0	0	0	19	0	0	8.5	25	12.5	65.0

* Also VGC Members

Summary of Zach MacDougall’s “Summer of 2007” Tournaments

Dates	Tournament	Venue	Scores	vs Par	Place	Comments
June 15 - 17	AJGA Pacific Northwest Junior Invitational	Trophy Lake GC Bremerton	72, 75, 74 = 221	+ 4	T 2nd	
June 23-24	BCGA Zone 4 Amateur [Formerly The Vancouver City Amateur]	Kings Links And The Vancouver Golf Club	70, 72 = 142	- 2	2nd	Adam Cornelson 3rd
July 3-6	BC Junior Boys’ C’Ship	Fairwinds GC, Nanoose Bay	65, 69, 75, 73 = 281	- 3	1st	Also Medallist
July 17-20	BC Amateur C’Ship	Morningstar GC	73, 71, 74, 73	+ 3	T30	With Adam Cornelson
Aug 5-9	Canadian Junior Boys C’Ship	Elm Ridge CC Ile Bizard, Quebec	69, 69, 72, 77 = 287	- 1	T 3rd	Unofficial Medallist at -6
Aug 10-12	103 rd Canadian Amateur C’Ship	Riverside CC Saskatoon	76, 73 = 149	+ 5	T 20 In Medal play	Reached last 16 - Defeated Sandy Harper in rnd 2 Lost in rnd 3

Zach’s average score over 19 medal rounds was 72.21. In that time he showed remarkable consistency, constantly bettering and or defeating some of the best players in Canada and, all the more impressive, over a great variety of courses - the hallmark of a true champion.

When asked as to what did he attribute his remarkable consistency Zach replied that this year he has been focusing on hitting the centre of the fairway on his shots.

Since the 2006 Canadian Junior Championship Zach has been under the watchful eye of Philip Jonas, who, as many members will recall was affiliated with our club for several years while on the CPGA tour, and whose wife Patty (nee Grant) a two time BC Women’s Amateur champion was the first ever women professional at VGC in the 90s.

Of note Philip was voted BCPGA player of the year – Success, it appears, begets success!
