

Hopes for golf scholarship

Golfer shines in Michigan Amateur tourney

By TOM BAER

John Van Vleck, a 20-year-old amateur golfer from Farmington Hills, has been making a good name for himself this summer with impressive finishes in several name tournaments — and he hopes his accomplishments will help him land a golf scholarship at a major university next fall.

Van Vleck, who has two seasons of college eligibility left after starring for coach Pin Ryan's Oakland Community College team for two years, did a lot for his golf reputation last month at the prestigious Michigan Amateur Golf Tournament in Charlevoix.

Van Vleck shot rounds of 72, 71, 72, 71 and 73 over the Belvedere Golf Club and made the tournament semifinals before losing to Mark Spiekerman of Saginaw, 4-3, in match play. Dan Pohl of Mt. Pleasant was the eventual tournament winner, defeating Spiekerman, 4-2.

Van Vleck admitted that his high finish in the state Amateur was the highlight of his brief career, but he had another big thrill last April when he made the "Sweet 16" of the North-South Invitation Golf Tournament at Pinehurst Country Club in Pinehurst, N.C.

Several important tournaments are coming up for Van Vleck. He'll be in Milwaukee for the National Public

Tournament July 7-11 at Brown Deer Country Club, and he plans to play in the Michigan Match Play tourney at Lowell, Mich. later this month.

WITH HIS reputation building, Van Vleck hopes the college golf coaches and athletic directors are taking notice. He said that several schools, including the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and a couple of Southern colleges, have shown some interest.

"I'm trying to find a school down South," Van Vleck said. "The truth is that none of the offers look too good right now. If I stay up in Michigan, I'll be facing the cold weather. And what's the use of going to a place in Tennessee (where one of the offers came from)? They have lots of cold weather down there, too."

But Van Vleck is confident that he'll be playing golf at a warm-weather college next fall.

"Some people may take it the wrong way, but you have to have confidence in yourself — and I have it," he said. "I guarantee you that I'll have a full ride to a decent school. I mean, you go to the Sweet 16 in the North-South, qualify for the National Public for two years in a row, and then make the semis of the state Amateur — somebody's going to want you."



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(F7A)

In the meantime, Van Vleck is putting in some long hours with his clubs, which includes a new set of irons and a 1953 Tony Penn three wood, trying to improve his game. He spends six or seven hours each day hitting practice shots and playing practice rounds.

"I figure if I put in the time now, I'll make at least \$3,000 in scholarship money for next year," Van Vleck said. "It's not the most fun thing in the world to go out there and just pound golf balls. There's nobody there to tell you to keep going. But it's an inner drive with me. I guess."

"They say that nothing good comes easy, and I believe that's true. If you want to be good, you just get the sticks and go practice."

VAN VLECK has developed a philosophy about the practice rounds. "I like to shoot pretty well, but I don't like to shoot really well and turn up

the course," he said. "The next day, you'll start to compare your score to the previous day. If it's too low, say 66 or 67, you'll never be able to top it and you'll get kind of depressed. On the other hand, if you don't shoot so well, you'll know there's room for improvement."

Last summer, Van Vleck worked in the pro shop at the Royal Oak Golf Club. This year he helps out occasionally at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills, but most of his time is spent in practice. He wants it that way.

"Every golf pro in the state will tell you the same thing. If you want to play golf, don't get into the golf business," he said. "Bill Combs, the pro at Glen Oaks, gets up at 4:30 every morning and doesn't get home until around 10 or 11 at night. I don't want that kind of life. I'd rather be playing or practicing."



John Van Vleck practices chip shots at Glen Oaks Country Club. Van Vleck of Farmington Hills hopes his high finish in the recent Michigan Amateur Golf Tournament will help him land a college scholarship. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Women bicycle racers a rarity

By STEVE KAPLAN

Madison Velodrome, Inc. which is sponsoring a series of indoor bicycle races in Southfield this summer, may have its first woman rider in 18-year-old Allison Cohen, an experienced racer who is considering having a go at the steeply-banked wooden track in the Civic Center Arena.

But don't look for a wholesale invasion of the male-dominated sport by women, even experienced ones. A healthy fear of that track, which is banked at 30 degrees on the curves and 20 degrees on the straightaways, and of the speeds involved will keep most of the girls on the sidelines, according to Cohen.

Cohen, a native of Bethesda, Md., has been trying to organize a women's team to participate in the Southfield racing series, which continued last Friday with the state Madison championships. So far, her efforts at convincing women riders into trying the Southfield track haven't been successful. But they've also been unsuccessful.

"There's been a general reluctance by the majority of women to ride the Southfield track," said Cohen, who won a state bike racing championship in Maryland last year.

"Each person I've talked to has had a different excuse," she said. "However, I feel it comes down to one thing — fear."

The Civic Center Arena track itself may be one reason why the women hesitate. It's 30 degrees steeper than any other track around, according to Cohen.

"They just haven't gotten their butts down here to ride," she said. "It's as simple as that. Madison Velodrome has been very encouraging and has offered to help me bring the women here. They've even given us a special race, but we just haven't got the riders."

Cohen, who considers herself in "average rider" status, said she is willing to ride in the men's races, even though, in her own words, she'll "probably get smacked."

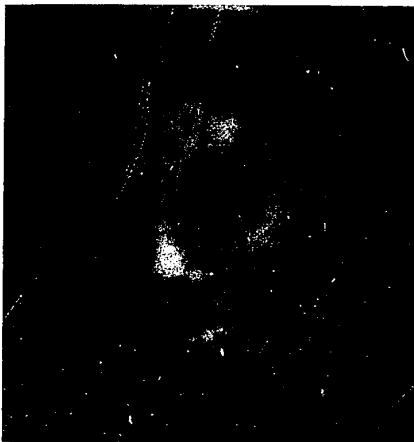
"I do it (ride in the men's races) just for the experience, the exposure and the hope that some other woman will follow me and ride the track," he said.

Cohen, who rides about 200 miles a week in practice, said that working with the men riders gives her an added thrill to a sport which has become her main interest in life. "I push myself even harder when I work with them," she said. "And the men are so much more organized with their training as compared to the women."

Cohen added: "The guys have done everything I could ask of them. It's now up to the women to come out and ride. I really love this sport, and I'll continue to even if I am the only woman participating in a men's sport."

Women in bicycle racing may be as inevitable as was the first woman

driver in the Indianapolis 500 automobile race. However, with the situation in Southfield, it's going to be some



Allison Cohen is one of the few indoor bicycle racers in the area. (Photo by Jack Margolis)

COHEN, a member of the United States Cycling Federation's Midwest Committee, said she's tried without success to interest qualified women riders in her committee to try the Southfield track this summer.



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