



# YOUNG & IN GOLF

## The New class:

## Jack and Barbara Nicklaus Foundation Supporting Junior Golf in Chicago

By Josh Gershenson

Here's a suggestion: Let's change the White Sox slogan to "The Kids Can Fight" in order to mesh with their new bad-boy image and give that innocent "The Kids Can Play" slogan to a group that doesn't want to beat the stuffing out of the Detroit Tigers. In fact, two Chicago youth golf programs, the 2000 Junior Golf Program and the Chicago Summer Tour 2000, are perfect recipients and should be nominated to receive the motto.

First, the 2000 Junior Golf Program, a joint activity of the Multicultural Golf Association of American (MGAA), and locally based University Golf Association (UGA), is designed to teach kids the basics of golf, but just as importantly, teaching them the value of leadership, self-development, and education in achieving success. Over an eight-week period, 60 boys and girls between the ages of seven and 16 will meet at the Family Golf Center at 221 N. Columbus Drive. The Family Golf Center is also making an impact by having it's professionals teach the program. The sessions are from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. each Monday and Tuesday starting May 1. At the end of the program, students will compete in the MGAA "Drive, Pitch & Putt Worldwide Competition."

This is the third year the MGAA, a New York based organization has provided golf tutoring for Chicago youngsters.

Family Golf professional Dan Palonis (foreground) and MGAA Executive Director John David demonstrates to the youngsters



Director of Golf Rick Johnson works with a young golfer

Established in 1991, the MGAA is national not-for-profit organization whose mission is to introduce golf and its attributes to youngsters from multicultural backgrounds. Together, the MGAA and the UGA have organized the 2000 Junior Golf Program, but two words make this program different than other local youth golf programs: Jack Nicklaus.

This year, the Jack & Barbara Nicklaus Foundation decided to fund the Junior Golf Program because the Foundation, "...supports junior golf programs around the country for children who otherwise might not be introduced to the game of golf and its attributes", said MGAA Executive Director, John David. Jack Nicklaus is also the honorary chairperson of the "Drive, Pitch & Putt Worldwide Competition" that will be held at the end of the program.

The Chicago Summer Golf Tour 2000 could be considered the perfecting launching pad for youngsters who already have some experience with golf. Starting June 20, Cook County junior golfers will compete against one another for prizes, trophies, and above all, the right to be called the Summer Tour Champion. Any Cook County boy or girl can compete in the qualifying rounds, but the Wednesday tournaments will be limited to twenty players each week. During the six-week competition, players will compete every Tuesday in a nine-hole qualifier at a designated golf course. If a player qualifies for the next round, he or she will play an eighteen-hole tournament the next day against the

nineteen other qualifiers. Players finishing in the top fourteen spots in a Wednesday tournament will be exempt from playing the following week's Tuesday qualifier. As a result, players in the weekly qualifying rounds will be competing for the remaining six tournament spots.

Although the Chicago Summer Tour 2000 introduces Chicago's youth to golf and its respective positive characteristics, this is true competition. Players pursuing the title of Summer Tour Champion compete for points in each weekly event. Points are only earned in the Wednesday tournaments with the winner of the Wednesday tournament receiving 20 points, the second place finisher receives 19 points, and so on until the last place finisher that earns one point. The winner of the overall Chicago Summer Tour 2000 will only be determined after the six-week competition is completed.

The Summer Tour 2000 is jointly sponsored and organized by the Chicago Public Schools, Park District, the Cook County Forest Preserve and Kemper Golf

Management.

Both youth golf programs are great opportunities for young people to enjoy the game of golf, but it is important to act quickly in order to get involved. The 2000 Junior Golf Program is limited on a first-come, first-served basis, while the Chicago Summer Tour 2000 qualifiers are open to all interested Cook County boys and girls 18 and under.

The Chicago Summer Tour 2000 and the 2000 Junior Golf Program are great opportunities for Chicago's youth to compete against one another and learn the basics of the game. Whether they're the next Tiger Woods or just learn golf for a lifetime of enjoyment these two programs will help carry the game to the next generation of golfers.



For more information on the Summer Tour 2000 contact Darrin Osborne at 773-535-0270. The University Golf Association can be reached at 312-957-0988