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NEWS

Teen golfer rallies on back nine to win historic Kawartha Invitational

Anthony Asta's eagle on 13 fuelled two-stroke victory over two-time winner Mark MacKay.

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Anthony Asta watches his shot on Monday during the final round of the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament at Kawartha Golf Club. Asta went on to win the tournament.

Harrison Perkins

By Mike Davies Examiner Sports Director

It's hard to believe Anthony Asta only started playing golf during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 19-year-old joined an exclusive list of golfers to win the Kawartha Golf Club men's title and in the same year followed it up by winning the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament on the same course.

The tournament celebrated its 80th anniversary and unveiled "Legends Row" on the weekend with plaques commemorating seven men who have won the tournament three or more times. They include three-time winners Nick Weslock, Bob Epashnik, Moe Norman, Gerry Kesselring, Mark Brewer four-time winner Bruce Brewer, Mark's father, and five-time champion Paul Davis.

Mark MacKay, a two-time winner, held a two-stroke lead entering the back nine of Monday's third and final round but Asta charged from behind to overtake him and win by two strokes.

Asta (75-69-68—212) was three-under on the back nine including birdies on 11 and 12 and an eagle on 13 to surge past MacKay (70-72-72—214) who parred the final nine. Jake Shaughnessy (74-74-70—218) placed third overall and Tyler Savard (73-77-71—221) was fourth.

It was just Asta's third time competing in the event. A win at the City and District Championship next month would put him in elite company as only Roger Self and Steve Fredericks have completed the grand slam of a club, invitational and regional championship in the same year.



Two-time winner Mark MacKay watches his shot on Monday during the final round of the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament at Kawartha Golf Club. Anthony Asta went on to win the tournament.

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“Coming down the stretch it started to feel pretty nerve-racking. It started to feel pretty surreal,” said Asta, who finished in front of several hundred



Anthony Asta lines up a putt on Monday during the final round of the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament at Kawartha Golf Club. Asta went on to win the tournament.

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spectators. “It means my game is coming along getting ready for the college season. To win out here means a lot against all these good players.”

Asta is coming off his first collegiate season where he won three events competing for NCAA Division III Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio. He is transferring this fall to Division II Cal State Dominguez Hills in Carson, California.

“I want to see how my game compares at a higher level,” said Asta.



Anthony Asta waits to play during the final round of the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament at Kawartha Golf Club in Peterborough on Monday. Asta went on to win the tournament.

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MacKay will have to wait another day to add his name to Legends Row.

“It’s a cool new initiative for the event,” said MacKay. “There are a lot of legendary players who have played this, first and foremost Moe Norman. It was cool to have a shot at doing that in the first year. We’ll come back next

year and give it another shot.”

He commended Asta.

“We had a really good battle today, maybe, the best one I’ve had at this tournament,” said the 40-year-old MacKay, who first golfed the event at 16. “Anthony played absolutely spectacular on the back nine. He made a fantastic eagle with a perfect drive on 13, the old 17, and chipped in from there. That was really the catalyst for him.”



Two-time Kawartha Invitational winner Mark MacKay watches Anthony Asta line up his putt on Monday during the final round at Kawartha Golf Club. Asta went on to win the tournament.

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Leading by one, Asta survived a shaky moment on the par-three 18 when his tee shot went wide right into the rough. He recovered with a 20-plus yard chip shot that stopped just short of the cup allowing for a tap-in for par and the victory.

“It wasn’t the greatest tee shot but I ended up with a pretty good lie and I chipped it close,” said Asta.

Tournament chair Mike Self said superintendent Jennifer Pendrith and her staff deserved credit for having the course ready Monday after 41.66 millimetres of rain fell Sunday drenching many of the 208 competitors.

“It isn’t until you play on the golf course on a day like (Sunday) with all that rain that you can appreciate all the hard work Jenn and her staff do,” said Self. “The drainage work and drill and fill and hard work they do day-in and day-out, you don’t truly see until you have a heavy rainfall and the course rebounds and stays playable.”

Peterborough Petes alumnus and Seattle Kraken prospect J.R. Avon started the day in the lead group three shots off the pace and ended up winning the Second Flight with a 72-73-77—222. Sam Meek won the third flight with a total of 226.



Golfers watch as Kevin Carter putts during the final round of the Kawartha Invitational Men's Golf Tournament at Kawartha Golf Club. Anthony Asta, right, went on to win the tournament.

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Jayden Smith and Len Sheehan tied for the Fourth Flight title at 231. Another Petes alumnus Brett Ormond won the Fifth Flight carding 237. Tony DeCarlo won the Sixth Flight scoring 257. The Seventh Flight winner was James Wishart with a net score of 213.

Notes

- Jared Hoyle won Friday night's Story Teller Longest Drive Competition with a drive of 284 yards.

- The Sandbagger Shootout winner with closest-to-the-pin on the 14th hole on Saturday was Ryan Reeson.



Mike Davies is a sports director and reporter at the Peterborough Examiner.

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