

Community notes



Brian Layne of Grafton shows off his trophy after winning the B flight at the American Golf Tour Nationals.

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Amateur golfer beats long odds

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With 154 players in his flight, **Brian Layne** of Grafton figured the odds of winning at the American Golf Tour Nationals were out of sight.

Fortunately, he was wrong. The 48-year-old golfer won the B Flight to become the first player from the Tidewater Amateur Golf Tour to bring home a national championship.

The B Flight was for players with handicaps of 11 to 15. He took an 11-handicap into the recent two-day tournament at Hilton Head, S.C., but didn't play like a 11-handicapper.

He shot rounds of 81-78 to tie for first place, then won a sudden-death playoff on the third extra hole for the title.

His only birdie came on his final hole of regulation, putting him in the playoff.

"I've shot better, but considering the pressure of playing in the nationals, the final round was probably the best I've played this year," Layne said. "Usually, I shoot around 84 or 85."

Layne was only part of the story of a history-making week for the Tidewater Amateur Tour team.

It began with the tour's first Louisiana-Virginia Challenge Cup victory and ended with Tidewater winning its first national team championship.

Both were dramatic wins, with Tidewater edging Charlotte's six-time national championship team 1,270 to 1,271, and Tidewater gaining revenge against Louisiana by a 31-29 margin.

"It was a great week," Tidewater tour director **Lyle Joyner** said. "We hadn't won in our five tries at nationals and in a matter of five days our guys had been a part of two championships."

As for the team title, Joyner said the key was "having some great play from across all flights each day."

He lauded the performance of Layne, who only began playing golf three years ago after feeling he was getting too old for softball.

"He has improved his game over the last three years and won the tour's Most Improved Player Award last year," Joyner said.

At the recent tour awards banquet, **Jim Gallagher** of Yorktown came out a double winner, taking Rookie of the Year honors and Best Tour Round with a 68 at Riverfront.

Overall, the tour enjoyed its best year ever, going over 200 members for the first time and averaging 107 players per tournament.