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Ryan Burnett - Campolindo Golfer on the way to North Carolina

By Jon Kingdon



Ryan Burnett tees off hole 9 at Chukyo Golf Club in Toyota-shi, Japan.

t the Campolindo High School time was also a milestone for Bur-Agraduation, they were short nett: "When I was 12 years old, I one student: Ryan Burnett. His played from one tee ahead of him absence was not due to a failing and I shot a 38 for nine holes and he grade or an overlooked term paper, shot a 40. It was a quiet ride home nor was it any type of silent protest but he was still filled with great on his part. Burnett was off on a pride." little golf outing, competing in the Toyota Junior Golf World Cup, school at Campolindo his talent only 5,293 miles away in Toyota was a revelation to the schools' golf coaches, Steve Robinson and Gary Shi, Japan.

This is a very prestigious tournament with 24 international teams competing. The teams came from the United States, Argentine, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain Sweden and Thailand. Besides Burnett, the United States team was made of three other players from time in his game: "After school, I Carolina.

golfers from different countries weights and rotation building exer-I played with in each of the four cises." rounds. After playing, we would hang out with the other teams. For on the course."

the participants to a middle school that Burnett found very interesting: "The kids were lined up holding all sword fighting and archery along sticking to it." with basketball."

the bad shots, which is the hardest Policy and Government and Ecoexperience."

baseball and swam competitively until the eighth grade, all of which Burnett enjoyed, particularly base- letic talent, Burnett had his choice ball: "Baseball really helped me with my hand-eye coordination," says Burnett. "That is the biggest part of golf and it is a strength of

Burnett would join his parents (Steve and Liz), who also play golf well, at the driving range and they soon joined the Round Hill Country Club to further allow him to develop his game.

that he had a special affinity for professional golf, but I know that golf: "I was 12 when I played in my first tournament and went on to win portunities my way regardless." 8 or 9 of the tournaments I played that year."

Beating his father for the first Burnett's choice of North Carolina:

"Ryan is an incredible young man that is determined and has an excellent work ethic which has turned him into one of the top juniors in the country. He has experience playing against the best junior golfers in the country and on some very difficult golf courses. Mentally, Rvan is very mature and steady. on and off the golf course, which is one of the many reasons he has performed well under bright lights as well as in the classroom."

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Burnett invests a great deal of Texas, South Carolina and North would go right to the golf course and practice from one to six hours. Burnett experienced more than I like to get up early in the summer golf at the tournament: "It was my and practice for a couple of hours first time in Japan and it was an and then play a round of golf. I amazing experience. There were also do a lot of stretching, lifting

When Burnett began high

O'Neal. Says O'Neal: "When

Steve and I saw Ryan hitting great

shot after great shot at the range, I

asked him if he had an index (golf

handicap). He said it was 0.8. We found a spot for him on the team.

Besides being an honor student,

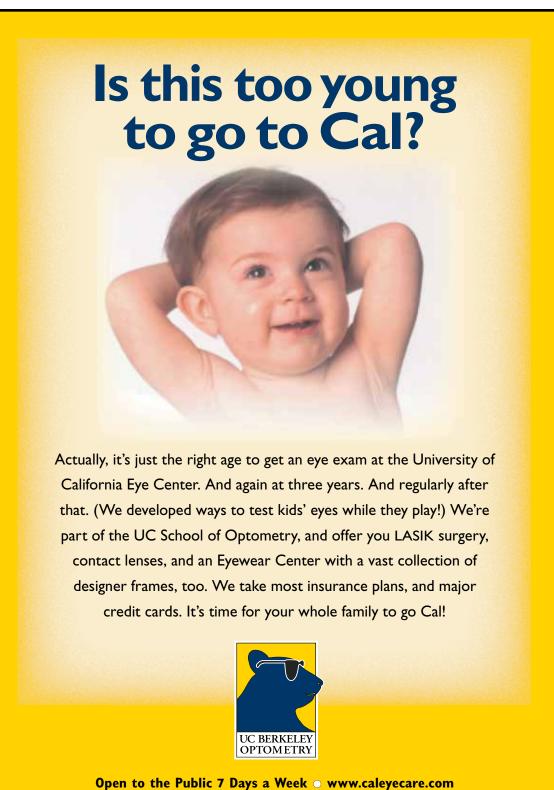
Ryan has a very strong work ethic."

Even with all of the time invested in golf, Burnett did not igthe most part, the only difference nore his studies at Campolindo: was that the Japanese and the Ko- 'I loved Campolindo and all the reans, though very respectful, were people there. I had a great group a lot more serious and businesslike of friends and the academics were fantastic. With all of my tourna-In addition to the golf, the ment play, I had to miss 35 days tournament organizers brought of school this year but my teachers were very supportive and helpful. The time demands of golf may be the biggest of any sport. It's all of the countries' flags. We saw a about time management and know-PE class where they were teaching ing what you needed to do and then

With too many teachers for The love of golf for Burnett Burnett to acknowledge, he did sinbegan at a young age, "when my gle out two for special commendauncle got me some plastic clubs. It tion: Trent Kauzer, his biology and was just fun to whack the ball. I AP Environmental Science teacher, got better and better at it and fortu- and Caron Brownlee, who taught nately I had the patience to accept Contemporary Issues and Public thing to handle when learning to nomics. Says Burnett appreciativeplay golf. It can be very frustrating ly: "They were always interested in what their students were doing, be-Burnett also played football, sides being awesome teachers and people."

With excellent grades and athof a number of top schools and the recruiting process began his sophomore year in high school. For Burnett, the school had to be strong in academics and golf. That institution turned out to be the University of North Carolina. Says Burnett: "I knew I wanted to study business and they have one of the best undergraduate business programs in the country in addition to an amaz-Burnett learned at an early age ing golf team. I hope to pursue North Carolina will bring good op-

> North Carolina's head coach Andrew DiBitetto is excited about



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