

Orangeville's Marchand shooting for LPGA



By Mike Pickford

2017 has been a big year for Brittany Marchand.

The Orangeville native has been turning heads on the women's professional golf circuit ever since her big debut last year. Competing primarily on the Symetra Tour, a qualifying bracket for the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), Ms. Marchand has her eyes firmly set on breaking into the big time.

Taking up golf at a young age, Ms. Marchand has been perfecting her swing since the tender age of seven. Honing her skills at the Shelburne Golf and Country Club as a teenager, Brittany was a highly touted prospect during her years at Orangeville District Secondary School. Coached by local teacher Ian Budgell, Brittany would become the youngest player to claim the Ontario Women's Champion of Champions title as a 15-year-old in 2008.

Before turning 20, Ms. Marchand had the honour of representing her nation, competing at the Guatemala Junior Championship while a member of the Golf Association of Ontario's under-19 excellence team for the 2009-10 season.

After graduating from high school, her growing reputation landed her a spot on the North Carolina State University golfing team. Majoring in chemical engineering, Brittany set the bar as a student athlete during her four-year stay south of the border. She made the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) honour role in three of her four years and was named ACC Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2014. In total, Brittany managed three wins in collegiate competition in the U.S. and was also afforded the opportunity to compete in the 2011 U.S. Women's Open.

Upon completing her degree, Brittany refused to simply give up on her dream of becoming a professional golfer. Rather than enter the work force she focused her attention on the Symetra Tour. Two years into her developmental stay, Brittany has a lot to show for her dedication and commitment.

Last week she secured her first professional win, taking a three-stroke victory at the PHC Championship in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. That first-place finish edges her ever closer to a top-10 end-of-season finish on the tour's money list, which would secure a spot on next year's LPGA Tour.

"This is definitely fulfilling for sure," Marchand said after the win. "I feel like my game has been there, I feel like this has been hiding within me. I know that I have the ability and I know it's in me, it's just really cool to see it shine through."

And while the \$15,000 winners' cheque will have surely brought a smile to Brittany's face, this career-first victory comes with an added bonus: a guaranteed spot in the Evian Masters, one of the LPGA Tour's five major championships. Taking place in Evian-les-Bains in France from Sept. 14 to 17, the event will mark Ms. Marchand's second LPGA appearance after a spirited performance at the Manulife LPGA Classic in Cambridge, Ont. back in June. As an added, added bonus she has also been granted entry into the CP Women's Open in Ottawa in two weeks' time.

Always the first to admit when she hasn't played to her lofty capabilities, Brittany has been critical of herself at times this season. With six events left on the Symetra Tour schedule, she is currently roughly \$14,000 short of the No. 10 spot on the money list and she knows it could very well be now or never as she bids to make her way onto the LPGA.

"I feel like I've been very up-and-down this season and it has knocked my confidence down a bit because I know I am there, but I haven't been able to see it shine through," Brittany said. "The win definitely gives me a good boost going into the last six events,

feeling confident to make a push for my (LPGA) card.?