

Report (9 players)

Ben James

Things To Know

- Earned PGA TOUR membership as the No. 1 player from the 2026 PGA TOUR University Ranking after four seasons at University of Virginia (2022-26). Followed Ludvig Aberg (2023), Michael Thorbjornsen (2024), and David Ford (2025) as the fourth player to earn TOUR membership as the No. 1 player from PGA TOUR University.
- In four seasons at Virginia, earned seven individual victories, tying Ben Kohles' school record for career wins and became the fifth collegiate golfer in history to earn four All-America First Team honors, following Gary Hallberg (1977-80 at Wake Forest University), Phil Mickelson (1989-92 at Arizona State University), David Duval (1990-93 at Georgia Tech), and Bryce Molder (1998-2001 at Georgia Tech).
- Won the 2021 Junior PLAYERS Championship, posting a four-stroke victory over Nick Dunlap.

Background

- Grew up in Milford, Connecticut, developing his game at Great River Golf Club, where his grandfather, Donald James Sr., worked part-time after retirement and his father, Donald James Jr., played in his youth. James says, "I've played there all my life. When I go home in the summer, it's where I practice."
- When Ben was two years old, his grandfather, Donald James Sr., brought him to the driving range at Great River Golf Club. Don asked Tom Rosati, the head golf professional at the time, to watch young Ben hit a golf ball. Rosati recalls, "He's standing a mile away from it... takes it back, flushes it about 50 yards. I put another ball on the tee. He does it again. After about five shots, I said, 'Don, you might have something here.' The hand-eye coordination was freakish."
- Competed in the Boys 6 and Under division at the 2008 U.S. Kids Golf World Championship in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Was a fixture at the event through the years, and won the Boys 10 division in 2013.
- During the winters in the northeast, kept his game sharp at Fore Seasons Golf Club, an indoor facility, and SportsCenter of Connecticut, which had indoor-outdoor mats and a range with heated bays.
- Prepped at Hamden Hall Country Day in Connecticut. The golf team's home course was New Haven Country Club, a noted Willie Park Jr. design.
- Verbally committed to University of Connecticut in 2015 as an 11-year-old sixth-grader. Later re-opened his recruiting process and committed to University of Virginia in December 2018, and eventually signed with Virginia in November 2021.
- In addition to seven individual victories and four All-America First Team selections, other highlights at University of Virginia included the 2023 Division I Phil Mickelson Outstanding Freshman Award, leading the Cavaliers to back-to-back team titles at the 2025 and 2026 Atlantic Coast Conference Championships (the first league titles in program history), a T2 individual finish at the 2024 NCAA Championship, and leading Virginia to a runner-up finish at the 2025 NCAA Championship (fell to Oklahoma State in the final).
- Qualified for match play at four consecutive U.S. Amateur Championships (2022-25), with his best showing being a quarterfinals appearance in 2023 at Merion Golf Club.

Family

- Parents are Donald James Jr. and Gretchen. Ben is an only child.
- Grandfather, Donald James Sr., passed away in May 2012 at the age of 83. Don served in the U.S. Coast Guard during the Korean War. After his career as a sales representative, worked part-time at Great River Golf Club in Milford, Connecticut, where he helped introduce Ben to golf.

Interests/Hobbies/Quirks

- Loves cooking and often hosted "steak nights" for roommates and friends while at University of Virginia. His go-to steak cuts are New York Strip and Ribeye.

Inner Circle/Special Connections

- Acquainted with fellow University of Virginia alums Denny McCarthy and Ben Kohles. The three played a practice round together at the 2024 U.S. Open.
- Went 3-0 in match play in leading Virginia to a runner-up finish at the 2025 NCAA Championship, the best national finish in program history. Notably defeated Oklahoma State University's Preston Stout -- who went on to win the individual national title at the 2026 NCAA Championship -- in the final as Virginia fell, 4-1.
- Represented the United States at the 2023 and 2025 Walker Cups. Teammates at St. Andrews Golf Links in 2023 included Nick Dunlap, David Ford, and Gordon Sargent. Teammates at Cypress Point Club in 2025 included Jackson Koivun.
- Represented the United States at the 2019 Junior Presidents Cup, where Justin Leonard served as captain and James' teammates included Michael Thorbjornsen, Maxwell Moldovan, Jackson Van Paris, and Preston Summerhays.
- Was paired with Patrick Reed in the 2012 Travelers Championship Celebrity Pro-Am.

Other

- Made his PGA TOUR debut (while still an amateur) as a sponsor exemption at the 2022 Travelers Championship, a field which also featured Chris Gotterup, Cole Hammer, and Michael Thorbjornsen as sponsor exemptions.
- Seven collegiate victories included a win at the 2024 Valero Texas Collegiate, which earned him an exemption for the 2025 Valero Texas Open on the PGA TOUR.

Max McGreevy

Things To Know

- Serving a second consecutive year on the 16-member Player Advisory Council (PAC) for 2026. The PAC serves as a consulting body which vets and recommends changes to the PGA TOUR Policy Board on behalf of the membership.
- Regained PGA TOUR membership for 2025 with a top 30 finish on the 2024 Korn Ferry Tour Points List, finishing No. 2 in the standings off the strength of two wins. Previously graduated from the Korn Ferry Tour following the 2020-21 season, when he earned his first of three career wins on Tour.
- After getting married on December 31, 2022, Max and his wife, Liv, moved from Dallas back to Max's hometown of Edmond, Oklahoma, where he plays and practices at the famed Oak Tree Country Club. Max and Liv have a Chihuahua named "Belle," who occasionally joins them on the road and has been the star of some PGA TOUR social media posts.
- Went to PGA TOUR China on the advice of former college teammate Charlie Saxon, a four-time winner on PGA TOUR China and finished No. 2 on the 2018 Order of Merit. McGreevy followed Saxon's advice and proceeded to win the 2019 Order of Merit, enabling him to return to the Korn Ferry Tour (McGreevy played on the Korn Ferry Tour in 2018, but lost his card after nine missed cuts in 16 starts). McGreevy traveled to China with a former college teammate, Luke Kwon, and the two roomed together all year. Kwon finished fifth on the Order of Merit and earned Korn Ferry Tour membership as well. McGreevy then earned his first PGA TOUR card at the conclusion of the 2020-21 Korn Ferry Tour season, which spanned two full years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On his decision to play PGA TOUR China in 2019, McGreevy said, "It took a lot for me to go over there and do that. I had a fun journey. It was an experience I felt like I needed, and it made me stronger for the years to come."
- Considers his time on PGA TOUR China a big turning point in his career as he realized he could excel at the professional level: "In my mind, I just felt like I was always in contention every single week. I always had a chance, and that's what we want out here [on the PGA TOUR] every single week."
- Comes from an athletic family. Father (Brian) played golf at the University of Kansas, uncle (Tom McGreevy) played golf at Arizona State and another uncle (Gary Freeman) played football at Kansas State. His father, Brian, also won the 1998 Oklahoma State Amateur.

Background

- Growing up in Oklahoma, he consistently played a draw to deal with the windy conditions, but as his game has improved, he now considers a "little fade" as his go-to shot when he's under pressure.
- Played four seasons at University of Oklahoma (2013-17), helping the Sooners win the 2017 NCAA Championships for the second team national title in program history. McGreevy won his matches in the semifinals and final. Also won three times individually, earned two All-Big 12 Conference honors (2016, 2017), and garnered a 2016 All-America Third Team honor. Notably finished fifth at the 2017 Big 12 Championship, where the field included Scottie Scheffler (T2), Doug Ghim (T2), and Viktor Hovland (T6).
- McGreevy's coach at University of Oklahoma, Ryan Hybl, noted McGreevy played with a chip on his shoulder, saying, "For his entire life, up until he probably got to (Oklahoma), he just thought he was never quite good enough. He always has to believe that he's not quite good enough because that gets his engine roaring."

- Won the 2017 and 2019 Oklahoma Open at the famed Oak Tree Country Club in his hometown of Edmond, Oklahoma.
- Turned professional out of Oklahoma in 2017, but did not find his footing professionally until 2019, when he won the PGA TOUR China Order of Merit and earned fully exempt status on the Korn Ferry Tour.

Family

- Max and his wife, Liv, welcomed their first child, a daughter Claire, in December 2024.
- Max and his wife, Liv, were married on December 31, 2022 at Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club. Max and Liv previously got engaged on December 24, 2021. They had been dating for around two years. They met because Liv's little sister and Max's best friend's little sister lived together at Oklahoma State and introduced Max and Liv.
- Max proposed to his wife, Liv, on Christmas Eve of 2021. Liv noted on her Instagram that it was 34 years after her father proposed to her mother on Christmas Eve: "34 years ago my dad proposed to my mom on Christmas Eve. Thank you for making this so special Max. I love you more than you know and can't wait to spend the rest of my life with you!!! #mcmarried."
- Max said of the Christmas Eve engagement: "I came home from church to her parents' house where I had met [Liv] for the first time... set some stuff up in the backyard. Luckily, it was a nice day in December and had the whole family watching from inside the house. Just kind of surprised her outside and had everything set up."
- Parents are Brian (father) and Sherryl (mother); he also has an older brother, Tanner (seven years older than Max).
- Father, Brian McGreevy, played golf at the University of Kansas. He was the 1998 Oklahoma State Amateur champion and has been Max's coach his whole life. Brian also played Q-School once and was a professional for about a year and a half, but he gave it up due to the constant travel.
- In 2007, his father, Brian, was the club champion at The Greens Country Club in Oklahoma City while Max was the junior club champion. When Max was 15, he still had never beaten his dad, and they both shot a 64 on the same day, which remained Max's best score at The Greens Country Club for several years.

Interests/Hobbies/Quirks

- Favorite food while on the road is Chipotle. Also a "big sushi guy."
- His wife, Liv, claims that Max is a great dancer
- Says his favorite music depends on the time of year: "I like country music a lot. But I also like EDM, kind of pop-house music. It kind of gets me going for a tournament or something like that. I'm all over the place. I like slower stuff, too. My brother was always in to the alternative music, so I listened to that growing up. Whatever gets the vibe right is essentially what I'm listening to." Listed Parker McCollum and Post Malone as two of his favorite artists.
- Dream vacation would be traveling to Singapore and staying at the Marina Bay Sands resort.

Charity

- Is a Play Yellow Ambassador. Play Yellow is a Children's Miracle Network Hospitals campaign with support from Jack and Barbara Nicklaus and the PGA TOUR to bring the entire golf world together to help the 10 million kids treated at local children's hospitals each year.

Inner Circle/Special Connections

- Shared a house in Dallas for a couple of years with future PGA TOUR Player of the Year Scottie Scheffler and Korn Ferry Tour members Charlie Saxon and Grant Hirschman. The house was nicknamed "The Dirty Meadow" because their address on Clover Meadow Drive. The most heated competitions involved ping pong or Sequence. They no longer live together, but they maintain a close friendship.

Stefano Mazzoli

Gordon Sargent

Things To Know

- Earned his 20th point at the 2023 World Amateur Team Championships to become the first player to earn PGA TOUR membership via PGA TOUR University Accelerated. Although he was eligible to accept membership as soon as June 2024, Sargent opted to return to Vanderbilt University for his senior season. Eventually accepted PGA TOUR membership upon conclusion of the 2025 NCAA Championship, and made his first PGA TOUR start as a member at the 2025 RBC Canadian Open.
- The PGA TOUR University Accelerated program was announced in November 2022 as a way for high-achieving underclassmen - juniors, sophomores or freshmen - to earn PGA TOUR membership. Sargent became the first player to earn PGA TOUR membership via PGA TOUR University Accelerated, and he was swiftly followed by Luke Clanton (2025) and Jackson Koivun (2025).
- Won the individual national title at the 2022 NCAA Championship as a freshman at Vanderbilt University. Birdied the first hole of a four-man playoff, defeating Ryan Burnett (North Carolina), Parker Coody (Texas), and Eugenio Chacarra (Oklahoma State) to become the ninth freshman in history to win the individual national title, and the first to accomplish the feat since Jamie Lovemark of University of Southern California in 2007.
- Played four seasons at Vanderbilt University (2021-25), where he set a school record with six collegiate victories, with the crown jewel being an individual national title his freshman season at the 2022 NCAA Championship. Broke the single-season scoring average school record as a sophomore (68.51 for the 2022-23 season), and broke the school record for career scoring average (70.32).

Background

- Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. In addition to golf, played baseball and basketball until the end of sixth grade, at which time he turned his focus solely to golf.
- Gordon's father, Seth, introduced him to the game as a young boy. Seth cut down a putter for Gordon so he could accompany him to the local course. The Sargents were members at Country Club of Birmingham, and each summer Gordon and his brother, Thomas, along with a few friends, would get dropped off in the morning and picked up in the evening, with Gordon recalling, "Chipping contests would turn into wiffle ball games. The goal was to have fun."
- At nine years old, played the Future Masters in Dothan, Alabama. Although he said he didn't play great, returned the following year and vividly remembered seeing the growth in his game, which in turn got him addicted to golf.
- When Gordon was nine years old, his mother, Monica, called longtime University of Alabama men's golf head coach Jay Seawell asking if Gordon could attend the school's golf camp even though the minimum age was 10. Seawell recalled how Gordon showed up with a cut-down wedge and picked a ball clean off a tight lie, stopping it next to the hole after two bounces. Seawell jokingly asked, "Do you want to teach the camp?"
- Won the 2019 Alabama State Junior Championship, followed by back-to-back victories at the 2020 and 2021 Alabama State Amateur Championship. Won the 2020 title at just 17 years of age, making him the youngest winner in the modern era.
- Prepped at Mountain Brook High School just outside his longtime hometown of Birmingham, Alabama. Led Mountain Brook to three consecutive state championships, winning Class 7A titles in 2018 and 2019, followed by a Class 6A title in 2021 (the 2020 championship was

canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Sargent also earned individual medalist honors in 2018 (co-medalist with teammate William Wann) and 2021.

- Runner-up finisher at the 2021 Western Amateur Championship; his path to the championship match included wins over David Ford (quarterfinals) and Pierceson Coody (semifinals). Lost to Michael Thorbjornsen in the championship match. Coody (2022), Ford (2025), and Thorbjornsen (2024) all finished No. 1 in their respective PGA TOUR University classes.
- Won the 2023 Mark H. McCormack Medal, given to the top male in the World Amateur Golf Ranking following the U.S. Amateur or European Amateur (whichever finishes last). Earned exemptions into the 2024 U.S. Open (missed cut) and 2024 Open Championship (missed cut).
- In addition to garnering three consecutive All-America First Team selections (2022, 2023, 2024) at Vanderbilt, earned the 2022 NCAA Division I Phil Mickelson Outstanding Freshman Award, was named the 2022-23 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year, and earned three All-SEC First Team honors.
- Represented the United States at the 2023 Walker Cup, held at The Old Course at St. Andrews Links, two Arnold Palmer Cups (2022, 2024), and two World Amateur Team Championships (2022, 2023).

Family

- Father, Seth, is a University of Georgia alum and has served as Vice President at multiple construction companies; he was also a competitive amateur golfer in Alabama until 2019, when he pared down his competitive golf schedule.
- Mother, Monica, graduated from University of Tennessee (Class of 1993) with a bachelor's degree in accounting, and graduated from Cumberland School of Law (Class of 1997). She specializes in corporate finance and securities at a corporate law firm.
- Younger brother, Thomas, attends Auburn University and projects to be a member of the Class of 2027.

Charity

- Twice hosted the Alabama Cup (2018, 2019), part of the AJGA's State Cup Series. The event is a two-day Ryder Cup-style tournament which sees each junior golfer (24 in the field) raise a minimum of \$1,000 for charitable beneficiaries. The 2018 event raised \$57,000 for Children's Harbor, the Alabama chapter of the American Cancer Society, and the AJGA's ACE Grant, which provides financial assistance to young men and women who aspire to earn a college golf scholarship through competitive junior golf. Sargent himself raised more than \$10,000 in the two-year span.

Inner Circle/Special Connections

- Cited Justin Thomas and Billy Horschel as two PGA TOUR players who he reaches out to for advice as a young pro.
- In addition to growing up playing at Country Club of Birmingham, played at Shoal Creek Club, where he developed a friendship with PGA TOUR winner Smylie Kaufman.
- Actress Courteney Cox is a Class of 1982 graduate of Mountain Brook High School. Cox is best known for her role as Monica Geller in the hit TV show Friends, and Gale Weathers in the Scream franchise.
- Teammates on the victorious United States team at the 2023 World Amateur Team Championship were multi-time PGA TOUR winner Nick Dunlap and David Ford, who finished

No. 1 in the 2025 PGA TOUR University Ranking. Teammates the previous year at the 2022 World Amateur Team Championship, where the United States finished third, were Austin Greaser and Michael Thorbjornsen, who finished No. 1 in the 2024 PGA TOUR University Ranking. Sargent, Ford, and Dunlap were also teammates on the victorious United States team at the 2023 Walker Cup.

- First golfing idol was Jordan Spieth, with 12-year-old Gordon becoming a fan after Spieth's victory at the 2015 Masters Tournament.
- Quarterfinalist at the 2021 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship at The Country Club of North Carolina; he was eliminated by Luke Clanton.

Other

- Finished T4 at the 2019 Junior PLAYERS Championship.
- At 19 years old, Sargent was extended a special invitation to play in the 2023 Masters Tournament; he was the first amateur since Aaron Baddeley in 2000 to secure this type of invite from Augusta National.
- Won the 2022 John Hayt Invitational (also referred to as The Hayt) at Sawgrass Country Club.

Aaron Wise

Things To Know

- Took six weeks off following the 2023 WGC-Dell Technologies Match Play (returned at the AT&T Byron Nelson) citing mental health: "Regretfully, I am withdrawing from the Masters today. Golf is just as much a mental game as it is one of physical skill, and the mental piece of it has been a struggle for me recently," Wise wrote on an Instagram story. "I don't take the significance of playing at Augusta lightly, but know that I need to take some time away to focus on my mental health so I can get back to competing at a level I am proud of. This hurts, but it's needed. See you all soon."
- Voted the 2018 PGA TOUR Rookie of the Year after winning the 2018 AT&T Byron Nelson at Trinity Forest Golf Club and becoming the only rookie to qualify for the 2018 TOUR Championship. Wise was the first player from a PAC-12 school to be named Rookie of the Year since Tiger Woods in 1996.
- Has wins across multiple PGA TOUR-sanctioned Tours: 2018 AT&T Byron Nelson (PGA TOUR), 2017 Air Capital Classic (Korn Ferry Tour), 2016 Syncrude Oil Country Championship (PGA TOUR Canada).
- Was born in South Africa but moved to the Southern California (Lake Elsinore) at the age of three. He does not identify with South Africa and doesn't have a strong memory of living there.
- Ernie Els was a guy he looked up to growing up, being born in South Africa. His dad was a huge advocate for him.
- Captured the 2016 NCAA Men's Individual title at Eugene Country Club with rounds of 70-70-64-71, then helped the Oregon Ducks to their first ever team championship by going 2-1 in match play (lost to Texas' Scottie Scheffler, 4 and 3 in the Championship Round). Became first player since Kevin Chappell (UCLA) in 2008 to win both the Individual and Team NCAA Championships.
- Elected to turn professional following the 2016 NCAA Championship and won in his second start on PGA TOUR Canada at the Syncrude Oil Country Championship, which helped qualify him for the Korn Ferry Tour in 2017.
- Although he grew up and learned the game in Southern California and played collegiately at Oregon, he prefers the Florida Swing events over the West Coast Swing and thinks the courses better suit his game. Resides in Jupiter, Florida.

Background

- He was serious about the game at a young age. His parents took him out of golf in middle school because they thought he was getting too complacent and thought he wasn't enjoying it. They took him out of it for about a year-and-a-half. They didn't let him play any competitive golf.

Family

- Wise grew up in a family of modest means, so his mother, Karla, used to buy shoes so big that her son could never outgrow them. It was a strategy devised to extend the time between purchases.
- Aaron hit the jackpot during his freshman year of high school when one of his teammates was about to get rid of 10 pairs of old golf shoes. Aaron asked if he could take them home instead.

- He still wears a size 10.5 today even though his feet are a 9.5. The proper size felt too constricting to feet accustomed to more space.

Interests/Hobbies/Quirks

- Lists “Lola’s” as one of his favorite restaurants in Las Vegas; he really enjoys Cajun food.
- Favorite sports teams are the Oregon Ducks (college team), Los Angeles Lakers (NBA team), and Florida Panthers (NHL team). Massive Kobe Bryant fan.
- Loves going fast with favorite activities including go-kart racing and roller coasters.

Blades Brown

Things To Know

- 18-year-old professional who earned Special Temporary Membership during the 2025 Korn Ferry Tour season and finished No. 68 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List, earning full status for the 2026 season.
- Turned professional at 17 years old on December 17, 2024. Made his professional debut at the 2025 American Express (missed cut). Previously made his PGA TOUR debut as an amateur at the 2024 ONEflight Myrtle Beach Classic, where he finished T26 as a sponsor exemption at 16 years, 11 months, 21 days of age.
- Notable players who turned professional at age 17 include multi-time PGA TOUR winners Akshay Bhatia (2019), Tony Finau (2007), and Justin Rose (1998).
- Blades said of his decision to turn professional and skip college, "There were a lot of trade-offs in every decision that we make, and for me turning professional was a very difficult decision. But it was the best decision that I believe was for me. When someone comes up to you and says, 'Hey, do you want to play on the PGA TOUR?' I'm like, 'Yeah, 100 percent, let's do it.'" Received advice along the way from TOUR winners Ben Griffin, Brandt Snedeker, and Scott Stallings.
- Finished T2 as a 17-year-old professional at the 2025 Veritex Bank Championship in his third career start on the Korn Ferry Tour. The co-runner-up finish marked the highest finish by a player under the age of 18 in Korn Ferry Tour history, usurping 17-year-old Si Woo Kim's T11 finish at the 2013 Mid-Atlantic Championship. Brown opened the tournament with a 10-under 61, which marked the lowest round by a player under the age of 18 on record on either the PGA TOUR or Korn Ferry Tour.
- At the 2023 U.S. Amateur Championship, contested at Cherry Hills Country Club in Colorado, shared stroke play medalist honors with Sampson Zheng and Jackson Buchanan, becoming the youngest stroke play medalist in U.S. Amateur history at 16 years old. The previous record was held by Bobby Jones, who earned medalist honors in 1920 at 18 years old. Brown was eliminated from match play by Jackson Koivun in the Round of 32. Koivun went on to earn PGA TOUR membership via PGA TOUR University Accelerated in May 2025.
- Earned stroke play medalist honors at the 2024 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship, contested at Oakland Hills Country Club in Michigan. Coupled with co-medalist honors from the 2023 U.S. Amateur Championship, followed Bobby Clampett and Tiger Woods as the third player in history to earn medalist honors at both the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Junior Amateur. Brown was eliminated by eventual champion Trevor Gutschewski, son of three-time Korn Ferry Tour winner Scott Gutschewski, in the Round of 32.

Background

- At age 10, played in his first golf tournament. As his father, Parke, remembers it, rain poured down and Blades looked over to see if they would have to seek shelter. Parke told him, "As long as it's not thundering, you can keep playing. He was running up and down the fairway with mud all over his Rickie Fowler orange shorts and having the best time. He shot 75 from the red tees and beat a few kids out there, and he really liked that."
- Prepped at Brentwood Academy in Nashville, Tennessee until after his sophomore year of high school (was reported he left the school in July 2024), at which time he continued his studies online. A notable Brentwood Academy alum is NFL All-Pro defensive back Jalen Ramsey (Class of 2013).

- Won three consecutive Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association individual state titles, winning the Division II-AA titles in fall 2021 (won by six strokes), 2022 (won by three strokes) and 2023 (won by five strokes).
- Named the 2024 AJGA Rolex Junior Player of the Year. Past recipients of the award include Phil Mickelson (1986, 1987, 1988), David Duval (1989), Tiger Woods (1991, 1992), Brian Harman (2003, 2004), Jordan Spieth (2009), Scottie Scheffler (2013), Sam Burns (2014), Akshay Bhatia (2018), and Nick Dunlap (2021).
- Qualified for match play at the 2024 Western Amateur Championship; he lost to eventual champion Ian Gilligan in the first round of match play.
- Although Blades did not play college golf, he went through the recruiting process and took official visits to Florida State, Illinois, Stanford, Tennessee, and Vanderbilt. His official visit to Vanderbilt was the same weekend the football team stunned No. 1-ranked Alabama in October 2024. Blades recalled, "That was the most into a football game I've ever been."

Family

- Mother, Rhonda Blades Brown, played two seasons in the WNBA (1997, 1998) after four seasons at Vanderbilt University (1991-95). She was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in 2023, as she grew up in Springfield, Missouri and played at Parkview High School. Rhonda said of her induction, "Being inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame is one of the highlights of my basketball career. I have dreamed since I was a little girl that I would be considered one of the best to come through the state of Missouri, and I'm very thankful and grateful to be considered worth of this honor."
- Rhonda played the inaugural WNBA season in 1997 as a member of the New York Liberty, and she made the first 3-pointer in league history in the league's inaugural game on June 21, 1997. Rhonda played for the Detroit Shock in her second and final WNBA season in 1998. After professional seasons in Israel and Turkey, Rhonda left professional basketball in 2001.
- In her four seasons at Vanderbilt (1991-95), Rhonda recorded 505 assists (a school record upon exhaustion of her eligibility) and made 171 3-pointers (second-most in program history upon exhaustion of her eligibility). Rhonda helped Vanderbilt earned NCAA Tournament berths in all four of her seasons with the program, including a Final Four appearance in 1993.
- Following her playing career, Rhonda spent 23 seasons as coach of the Brentwood Academy girls basketball team in Nashville, Tennessee. Rhonda, who also taught anatomy at the school, stepped down in February 2024 after five state championships (2006, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018) and 475 victories.
- Father, Parke, battles Hairy Cell Leukemia. Parke was initially diagnosed with bone cancer and only given months to live in 2022, though doctors discovered through additional tests he actually had Hairy Cell Leukemia - an extremely rare form of the disease (according to the Hairy Cell Leukemia Foundation, only two percent of adult patients with leukemia have this form of the disease) which is treatable but not curable. Parke went through 20 rounds of chemotherapy in the early months of his diagnosis, and his health stabilized by the time Blades turned professional in December 2024.
- Parke and Rhonda delayed telling their children (son Blades, daughter Millie) about Parke's diagnosis until December 2022, when Parke needed some urgent treatment around Christmas. Parke recalled, "We're standing there in an airport terminal and I told (Blades). He cried." Blades later recalled, "It was super difficult. When the doctor says your dad only has six months to live, it hit me for a second. But I knew God had everything under control, and I could trust Him. My dad looked leukemia in the face and said, 'No.' He beat it, and it just put a whole new perspective on golf. I'm not just playing for the benefit of me. I'm playing for the benefit of watching him watch me on the PGA TOUR."

- Older sister, Millie, plays college basketball and is a senior for the 2025-26 season at University of Alabama in Huntsville, an NCAA Division II program. Millie previously played two seasons at University of North Carolina Asheville (2022-24). Millie played on the varsity team for five seasons at Brentwood Academy, where her mom, Rhonda, spent 23 seasons as head coach until she stepped down in February 2024. Millie was a member of the 2018 state championship-winning team as an eighth-grader.
- Blades said his No. 1 childhood mission was "to be as good of a shooter as my sister."

Interests/Hobbies/Quirks

- Basketball, pickleball, and lifting weights / going to the gym.
- Earned a black belt in tae kwon do in his youth.
- Stephen Curry is among his favorite athletes outside of golf.
- Big fan of Christian worship singer and guitarist Brandon Lake. Not really a country music fan, which is notable since he grew up in Nashville, Tennessee.

Inner Circle/Special Connections

- Grew up a huge fan of Rickie Fowler, and loved to wear all of Rickie's signature orange gear. [The family has a photo of Blades in orange shorts posing with Brandt Snedeker after winning a Sneds Tour event.]
- Met Tiger Woods at the 2024 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship. Got a photo with Tiger, shook his hand and remembered thinking, "These hands have hit millions and millions of golf balls." Blades, who was born in 2007, says he was always aware of Tiger, but did not truly "appreciate and realize what he's done until the 2019 Masters (Tournament)."
- Represented the United States at the 2024 Junior Presidents Cup in Quebec, Canada. The United States team was captained by multi-time PGA TOUR winner Charley Hoffman. Hoffman recalled a particular day that week when he went to the gym at 5 a.m. and Brown was already there working out, saying, "I don't know if I had that work ethic at 17... I promise you I didn't. He puts the work in, he's a solid golfer, and obviously the future's very bright for him."
- Won the 2023 Wyndham Invitational, an annual AJGA event contested at Sedgefield Country Club, host of the PGA TOUR's Wyndham Championship. Past champions of the AJGA event include PGA TOUR winners Brian Harman (2003, 2004 - neither contested at Sedgefield Country Club), Justin Thomas (2009), and Karl Vilips (2018).
- Won a 2023 AJGA event at Canebrake Club in Athens, Alabama. Canebrake Club is where PGA TOUR winner Lee Hodges grew up playing, and Hodges became a co-owner of the club in August 2024.

Other

- Runner-up finisher at the 2024 Junior PLAYERS Championship (lost a playoff to Hamilton Coleman), and previously finished T13 at the 2023 Junior PLAYERS Championship (won by Miles Russell).

Marcel Schneider

Jacob Skov Olesen

Joe Highsmith

Things To Know

- Earned his first PGA TOUR title at the 2025 Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches, where he became the first winner who made the cut on the number since 2016 (Brandt Snedeker/Farmers Insurance Open). Closed with back-to-back 64s on the weekend at the PGA National Resort (Champion Course), which marked the lowest final 36-hole score (128) in tournament history.
- Explained his unique putting grip in a June 2025 interview, "I got full-blown putting yips when I was 12 years old. I played a tournament, hit 18 greens and shot 84, so I switched around all kinds of grips. I started with a regular claw -- that worked for a while, but I realized I got the yips again. It was my right hand that still was the problem. I don't know how I figured it out, but I was like, 'What if I just clawed my right hand?' Since then -- I was 15 or 16 years old -- I've putted like that pretty much exclusively since that age." Also revealed he closes his eyes on putts inside 15 feet around the time he was 17 or 18 years old, noting, "I made a putt on No. 17 at the (2025) Cognizant (Classic in The Palm Beaches) to pretty much secure the win... eyes closed. I just try to aim it square, and I know I'm going to make a better stroke if I close my eyes, because I'm not going to get worried about where the ball is going to go. Once the eyes shut, you're just focused on making your stroke."
- Became the first player on record (since 1983) to make three holes-in-one in a single season in PGA TOUR history when he aced the 12th hole in the second round of the 2024 Wyndham Championship.
- Earned PGA TOUR membership for the first time via the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season, which awarded TOUR cards to the top 30 players on the final Korn Ferry Tour Points List. Highsmith stood 56th on the Points List with six events remaining in the season, and he proceeded to post four finishes of T11 or better across those six events, including finishes of T2 (Nationwide Children's Hospital Championship in Columbus, Ohio) and T3 (Korn Ferry Tour Championship) in the season's final two events en route to a No. 18 finish on the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour Points List.
- Finished No. 10 in the 2022 PGA TOUR University Ranking following a decorated, championship-winning career at Pepperdine University. Highsmith's PGA TOUR University performance benefits included PGA TOUR Canada membership for the 2022 season -- which saw him record five top-10s in eight starts to finish No. 9 on the Order of Merit and earn Korn Ferry Tour membership.
- Says the biggest lesson he's learned as a professional is the importance of every shot, noting, "You don't really learn that until you're playing for a living. Treating every shot really seriously is the biggest thing I've learned... valuing every shot as much as any other one."
- Highsmith's home course in his hometown of Lakewood, Washington -- Tacoma Country & Golf Club -- was where the Putnam brothers (Andrew and Michael) honed their games growing up in Washington before they reached the PGA TOUR.
- Frequently had chipping contests at Tacoma Country & Golf Club with RJ Manke, who later played the 2023 Korn Ferry Tour season with Highsmith. The two were also teammates in high school (Bellarmine Preparatory School) and at Pepperdine University. As kids, they typically spent all day at the golf club with their older brothers. These days, if they are all together at Tacoma Country & Golf Club, they will play a round of golf and follow it with a pickleball match.
- The origin story of Highsmith wearing a bucket hat stems from the 2017 Polo Junior Golf Classic, a prestigious AJGA tournament. A friend of the Highsmith family was a dermatologist and told Joe about the importance of taking care of his skin, which was something he had not

really thought about to that point. Highsmith bought a bucket hat prior to the tournament, finished T2 (behind Australian Karl Vilips), and clinched a spot for the 2017 Junior Presidents Cup. Highsmith has worn a bucket hat while golfing ever since, and he actually thinks he looks a little funny wearing a traditional cap.

Background

- Born and raised in Lakewood, Washington, where he attended Bellarmine Preparatory School.
- In addition to Tacoma Country & Golf Club in his native of Lakewood, Washington, cites The Plantation Golf Club in Indio, California (just outside of La Quinta) as a "home" course, as his family owned a home in La Quinta.
- Initially committed to Southern Methodist University early in his high school years, but admitted it was "a bit premature" and he eventually chose Pepperdine. Highsmith said of his decision, "The big thing for me was to go somewhere with good weather all year... I grew up in the Seattle area, so I was pretty sick of the rainy weather. I also knew the Putnam family... Andrew played there. They had nothing but good things to say about Pepperdine."
- Played four seasons at Pepperdine University (2018-22), winning three times individually, earning three All-West Coast Conference First Team selections (2019, 2021, 2022), and leading the Waves to a team national title at the 2021 NCAA Championship.
- Posted a 3-0 record in match play as he helped Pepperdine win the team national title at the 2021 NCAA Championship. Notably hit an incredible bunker shot on the final hole of the semifinals as he defeated Oklahoma State's Aman Gupta 1-up, with the victory sending Pepperdine to the title match.
- Highsmith actually entered the 2021 NCAA Championship as an alternate for Pepperdine. The week prior, Highsmith finished fourth among the five Waves players who competed at the NCAA Regional in Washington State which, to his surprise, forced him into a three-man qualifier for the final spot in the team's NCAA Championship lineup. Highsmith played poorly in the qualifier and was not in the lineup for the first of four rounds of stroke play. Highsmith replaced RJ Manke (his former high school teammate) in the lineup for the second and third rounds, posting scores of 72 and 78 as Pepperdine sat just off the cut line for match play -- which determines the team national champion. Following Highsmith's third-round 78, he and head coach Michael Beard had an hour-long conversation that evening, with the discussion centering on both focusing on the shot at hand and detaching himself from the result. Highsmith said of the discussion, "In the third round, I tried to play in a carefree manner, which was new for me. I had the detachment part down, but the focus wasn't there. Our meeting reinforced some things for me." Beard referred to it as a "productive meeting" and a "heart-to-heart." Highsmith carded a 67 in the fourth and final round of stroke play, then went 3-0 in match play as Pepperdine won the team national title.
- Qualified for four consecutive U.S. Amateur Championships from 2018 through 2021.
- Reached the quarterfinals of the 2018 U.S. Junior Amateur at Baltusrol Golf Club. Defeated No. 2-seeded Ricky Castillo 5 and 3 to reach the quarterfinals. Highsmith and Castillo later faced off in the first round of match play at the 2021 Western Amateur, with Castillo winning 1-up.
- Won the 2017 Washington State Amateur roughly four months after his 17th birthday, making him the youngest winner in the history of the event. The year prior, Highsmith bogeyed the final hole and finished one stroke out of a playoff for the 2016 title. Notable past champions of the Washington State Amateur include Joel Dahmen (2007) and Fred Couples (1978).

- Named to the 2017 AJGA All-America First Team. Other first-team selections included PGA TOUR winner Akshay Bhatia, as well as fellow Korn Ferry Tour graduates Noah Goodwin and William Mouw.

Family

- Parents are Chris (father) and Anne (mother).
- Joe claims his mother, Anne, was hitting golf balls the day he was born.
- Has one sibling, an older brother, Sam.
- Uncle, Matt Highsmith, played golf for four seasons at University of Washington (1978-82).

Interests/Hobbies/Quirks

- Played piano for 12 years and is a developing chess player.
- Once jokingly claimed to be a better pickleball player than golfer. Told NBC during a walk and talk at the 2024 Texas Children's Houston Open that getting his feels in pickleball has helped his golf game.
- Huge fan of tennis, and his favorite athletes include professional tennis players Gael Monfils, Nick Kyrgios, and Dustin Brown.
- Favorite golfers are Jordan Spieth and Tiger Woods.
- Other favorites include The Conjuring (movie), Stranger Things (TV show), Ed Sheeran (musical artist), and "the feeling of a flush (golf) shot."

Inner Circle/Special Connections

- Highsmith's head coach for the entirety of his collegiate career at Pepperdine was Michael Beard. The program's longtime head coach, Beard turned professional out of Pepperdine in the early 2000s, played half a season on the Korn Ferry Tour and made two PGA TOUR starts. Michael's father, Frank Beard, was an 11-time PGA TOUR winner who notably won The Sentry in 1967 and 1970, represented the U.S. in the 1969 and 1971 Ryder Cups, and led the PGA TOUR money list in 1969 with \$164,707; he also wrote a book edited by Dick Schaap and titled "Pro: Frank Beard on the Golf Tour".
- Highsmith says of Coach Beard, "He has helped me probably as much if not more than any other person in my career. He has a great understanding of what the game is all about. He's really helped me focus on the mental side of the game, and has taught me how to block out all of the noise around me. I think I've always had pretty good mechanics, but there was something that was missing. His advice has really freed me up on the course."
- Played two seasons alongside Sahith Theegala at Pepperdine (2018-20).
- A friend and occasional playing partner of Fred Couples, who also hails from the state of Washington. The two have several mutual friends from Seattle and La Quinta, California. They first met in 2017 at the Junior Presidents Cup, as Couples was serving as an assistant captain for the 2017 Presidents Cup. The two spent time together inside the ropes that week and hit it off. Couples will often share messages of encouragement with Highsmith.
- Helped the United States win the 2017 Junior Presidents Cup alongside a group of teammates which included PGA TOUR winner Akshay Bhatia, fellow Class of 2023 Korn Ferry Tour graduate Jacob Bridgeman, and a host of fellow professionals headlined by Cole Hammer, Noah Goodwin, William Mouw, and Trent Phillips. The United States team was captained by David Toms.

- Graduated from Bellarmine Preparatory Academy in Tacoma, Washington, the same school which produced five-time MLB All-Star pitcher Jon Lester, who won two World Series with the Boston Red Sox, and another with the Chicago Cubs.

Other

- Finished T4 in his only appearance at the Junior PLAYERS Championship in 2017.