

Putting safety first

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Section: Top Story_2

Page: A1

If 16-year-old **Will Scarlett** needs golf insight or inspiration this weekend as a first-time junior competitor at The First Tee Open at Pebble Beach, he shouldn't have to look farther than his caddie.

Carrying **Will**'s bag **will** be Dan Dougherty, who has caddied at The Masters and The U.S. Open for his brother, Dillon, a PGA Tour pro.

Dan's also the son of Bill Dougherty, a well-known figure in California's amateur golf circles who died in 2005 from injuries sustained when he was struck by a runaway golf cart while watching his sons play in a tournament.

The Dougherty and **Scarlett** families were (and are) close friends in their hometown of Woodland, which is why **Will** teamed up with Mia Dougherty — one of Bill's nine grandchildren — to found an organization called Cart Smarts that promotes golf cart safety for youths and adults.

Both of the youngsters are gifted junior golfers, much of which they probably owe to family tradition.

"My grandfather was a golfer, and my dad (Tom) has done pretty well, too," **Will** says. "He's a 13-time club champion at the Yolo Fliers Club in Woodland. He carries an index of between zero and two, and right now he's playing to about a one handicap."

The late Bill Dougherty also won the Yolo Fliers Club championship several times, competed in numerous state and national amateur tournaments, played in the British and French amateurs, the Crosby (now known as the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am), and was a founding member of the Spyglass Hill Golf Club.

"Having Dan with me on the course this week is absolutely great," **Will** said. "He's a really good guy and a great caddie with a lot of experience. We're going to have a great time out there."

Will, a 2 handicap, is a third-year varsity golfer at Woodland High (he placed fourth in the Tri-County League as a freshman, second as a sophomore, and was the Wolves' team MVP), and currently is playing the best golf of his life. He's fresh off his first-ever tournament victory after posting a career-best score of 69 — 3 under par — to top more than 100 other juniors at the State Fair Junior Golf Championship at Haggin Oaks in Sacramento.

"I was hitting a lot of really good iron shots that day, leaving myself a lot of 5-foot putts, and making them," he said. "But after the tournament, we were really in a rush to get to the Walmart First Tee Kickoff event, so I didn't get to stick around and enjoy the victory."

Not that he wasn't anxious to get started with The First Tee experience. **Will** earned his spot in this weekend's elite field of 78 juniors through a process that included interviews, essays, and a qualifying tournament in Arkansas.

"It was a very nervous time for me, waiting to hear whether I had been selected, and I was really relieved and excited when I heard my name," said the high school junior, whose PGA Tour partner **will** be Steve Thomas. "I played Pebble Beach for the first time (Thursday) and it was an amazing experience. It was a beautiful day, the greens were perfect, and it was incredible to be walking in the middle of the fairways for the first time, instead of along the cart paths."

Will plans to pursue a career in golf course architecture after he graduates from Woodland High, where he's an honor student. He says he'd also love to play intercollegiate golf if the opportunity presents itself.

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