

Awards Winners for 2005

Bryan Hoops Leads the Way with the 2005 AGA Player of the Year Award



Bryan Hoops claimed his first AGA Player of the Year Award.



Bryan Hoops (pronounced 'Hops') of Chandler claimed his first Arizona Golf Association Player of the Year Award, narrowly edging out nine-time winner Ken Kellaney of Phoenix, who captured his 10th Mayfair Award for lowest stroke average. Divisional Player of the Year awards went to Cyrus Whitney (Masters), Cannon Randall (Seniors) and Bob Mandeville (Legends).

"Winning the Player of the Year Award is a sense of accomplishment," said the 37-year-old Hoops. "It is verification that I can play with all these great players and be successful. I will need to win this a few more times in order to feel that it wasn't a one-time year and that I can be the consistent, solid player that I feel I am.

"Overall, it is very satisfying to have the players come up, wish good things for me and to congratulate me on the great year. Getting their respect is very gratifying and fulfilling."

To be eligible for consideration for Player of the Year, a golfer must win one of the four majors conducted by the AGA or the Mayfair Award. As in years past,

the outcome hinged on the result of the Arizona Stroke Play Championship and ultimately the Mayfair Award as both Hoops and Kellaney were neck and neck, vying for the lowest stroke average.

If one ascribes to the philosophy that every stroke counts, then no adage was truer this year, when both players had 26 qualifying rounds with Kellaney recording 1,846 strokes and Hoops just one stroke back, a difference of just three one-hundredths of a point.

After winning the Arizona Mid-Amateur, a victory for Hoops at the Stroke Play Championship would have ensured Player of the Year honors. But for those who follow amateur golf in the state know, nothing can be taken for granted when Ken Kellaney is in the field. A threat every time he tees it up, he has proven in the past that when the pressure is on, he can rise to the occasion.

But such was not the case this year, as Kellaney finished fifth in the Championship and Hoops, who has the lead after the second round ended up in fourth place, but the drama was not lost on Hoops.

"I knew that Ken would have a chance to win Player of the Year, if he was to win the Stoke Play, but I was unaware that he was close in the Mayfair," Hoops said. "I just wanted to go out and play well and try to win the event myself so there would be no 11th hour change for the Player of the Year. I felt like I had a pretty good chance, but a bulky putter put me back a couple of shots."

Hoops, who played one year at ASU in 1989, turned pro and played in Florida and on the Asian tour in the early 90s. He re-gained his amateur status seven years ago and twice was a medalist in the qualifying rounds for the US Mid-Amateur.

Playing in AGA tournaments for the past five years, he has had a number of top five finishes, but didn't earn his first title until 2005, when he captured the East Valley Short Course. He went on to win the Arizona Mid-Amateur (leading wire to wire) and the Western Amateur, defeating Guy Gedeon and Mark Pancrazi on the fourth playoff at Yuma Golf and Country Club by sinking a 13-footer from the back edge of hole number 10 for the win.

In the other two AGA majors, Hoops finished tied for fourth at the Arizona Public Links Championship and was knocked out in the first round of the Arizona Amateur by Jeff Berkshire 1 up, who went on to win the championship.

Among the highlights of the year, one of the memorable for Hoops was playing at the U.S. Mid-Amateur that was contested at the Honors Course in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"I felt that I was playing very well and had a chance to advance further, but was very happy with reaching the Sweet 16," he said.

As for the future, Hoops clearly has defined his goals, "I would like to win at least one major, with top finishes in the regular open events and a very strong

showing at the US Mid-Amateur and US Amateur,” he said. “I feel very good about this year and hope to make it to the quarterfinals in both since both courses for these events are familiar to me and feel relaxed when playing them.

“Playing in more national events and cup matches will further test my abilities. I plan to play some other state association championships and see how well I finish there.”

He says he will bring with him, “a strong sense of confidence, a relaxed attitude and a further focused direction for winning.”



Ken Kellaney continued his winning ways in 2005, picking up his 10th Mayfair Award.

Ken Kellaney – Mayfair Award

If anyone represents the spirit of amateur golf, then Ken Kellaney is your man. His consistency over the years and the ability to bring his “A” game when it counts is unparalleled. While he fell just short in his goal to pick up a record 10th Player of the Year Award, he nonetheless, demonstrated his incredible talents over the year, picking up his third consecutive Mayfair Award and 10th overall.

Although 2005, was the first year he went without a major AGA Championship title since 2001, he had top five

finishes at the Arizona Stroke Play and Public Links Championships. He posted one victory at the Southern Amateur, was tied for second at the Eastern Amateur and had six other top 10 finishes.

“It is always gratifying to receive an award presented by the Arizona Golf Association,” he said. “The competitive standard has been raised each year and it is nice to be recognized for my performance in 2005.”

In reviewing the year, he singled out his performance at the U.S. Mid-Amateur where he reached the quarterfinals as the highlight on the season.

Masters Player of the Year (45-54)

Cyrus Whitney, 48 of Oro Valley, completed his first full year of Arizona amateur golf in the state and cites his consistent play and victory at the Divisional Match Play Championship for his Player of the Year honor. He is also quick to credit his wife and family for the support he receives in the pursuit of a sport he loves.

A retired banking executive from New Year, his job did not afford him the time he would have liked to have devoted to amateur golf. Now, he is free of those time constraints and found an additional benefit of having divisional events open to those 45 years old, rather than the age requirement of 55 back east.

“I tried to play a lot of events. I was pretty steady and fortunate to win the Divisional Match Play,” he said. “It was a break through for me to win that event. Knowing those guys made it really special. It was almost like being in a big club to win that championship.”

While he clearly has demonstrated his competitiveness in the Open events having finished fifth overall in the NOVA Points Rankings, he enjoys the camaraderie that develops among his peers and the chance to compete on a more even playing field,

“In the Open division, I have had some success, but you have to play really well, especially when competing against the young players,” he said. “When you get to the Divisional events, you feel like you are in with the guys you know and



Cyrus Whitney, Masters Division Player of the Year

can compete against.”

Not to be overlooked this year, was his selection to participate, for the first time, in the Arizona-Utah Shootout and the Goldwater Cup.

“Both of those events were very special and it was an honor to be apart of them,” Whitney said. “In Arizona, you want to win and play in these big events and all my contemporaries feel the same way.”

Senior Player of Year – (55-64)

Cannon Randall, 58 of Mesa, is flying high and with good measure after winning his first Divisional tournament at the Stroke Play Championship and being named the Player of the Year.

“I am still quite astounded that they figured out how to pick me and I’m thrilled,” said the retired Air Force pilot. “I am very humbled to have ever been selected for this and didn’t think I would be considered.”

Randall, who grew up in Utah, hails from a strong golfing family where everyone participated. His now 84-year-old father, who was a scratch golfer for nearly 50 years, cut down his first set up clubs when he was just five years old.

Like his father, he has passed on the tradition of the sport to his children. Perhaps best of all, the family was reunited last year when he represented the AGA at



*Senior Player of the Year
Cannon Randall*

the Arizona/Utah Shootout with his father and son completing the circle and cheering him on from the gallery.

“The whole experience was wonderful,” he said. “Since I had grown up in the area and knew the president of the UGA, it was great just being a part of it all. I didn’t play especially well. But my dad and son were there and I loved that.”

For Randall like so many of his contemporaries, the love of the game, the competition and the camaraderie is really what it is all about.

“The recognition is very meaningful to me,” he said. “I love playing in the AGA events, they are fun and you meet excellent players and play on great golf courses in great condition. And I take my hat off to the AGA for what they do, especially the volunteers, who do so much for us and give of their time. It really means a lot.”

Legends Player of the Year (65 and older)

Bob Mandeville, 72 of Scottsdale, is a long-time AGA volunteer and is a member of the Executive Committee and Course Rating Committee. This year, he

picked up a victory at the East Valley Divisional Four-Ball Championship, was second at the Southern Divisional Four-Ball and reached the quarterfinals of the Divisional Match Play Championship.

“It’s a very gratifying reward, especially at my age,” said the retired CEO. “As you get in the twilight of your golfing career you have goals you want to achieve and this is one of them. To be selected by your peers is very humbling.

A golfer since the age of 10, Mandeville played in national junior tournaments in the late 40s and early 50s and has never lost that competitive spirit. He relocated to Arizona in 1968 and was one of the pioneers in the development of the Divisional structure in the 80s.

He has shot his age 14 times, but he says it pales in comparison to Dr. Ed Updegraff, who has accomplished this feat some 1,800 times.

“Shooting your age is another goal you have as you grow older,” he says. “Goals keep you going if you are competitive, like I am. I love the camaraderie and the competition, whether it be AGA, USGA or club events.”

One thing that is not lost on Mandeville is the difficulty to win a Divisional Player of the Year award as you progress in age.

“If you don’t win in the first couple of years, your chances get slimmer and slimmer,” he says. “You have to make your hay when you turn the corner, and that is what makes this a little extra special. When you turn 65 or 66 that is when you typically win.”

John Gusky – AGA Volunteer of the Year

The important role that volunteers play in the successful operation of the Arizona Golf Association can never be overstated, and we are extremely grateful to all of them for their time, effort and dedication. This year’s honoree has clearly distinguished himself with eight years of service to the Association as rules official and we are pleased to announce the selection of John Gusky

from the Pueblo Del Sol Men’s Club in Sierra Vista.

“This is a tremendous honor,” Gusky said. “There are a lot of people that dedicate a lot of time to provide golfing opportunities to amateurs in Arizona and they do a really good job. For me, it is really fun and I enjoy the friendships. It really is an honor to be included with those who have preceded me because there are a lot of really good candidates each year.”

If anyone exemplifies living their passion, then John is your man. Following the rules has been a way of life for him that began with an undergraduate degree in law enforcement that led to a 31-year career as a civilian employee for security with the U.S. Army. In his off time, to no one’s surprise, he was a rules official for football and baseball. Bad knees halted his involvement with those sports and ultimately Arizona amateur golf became the beneficiary of his abilities.

Although he didn’t take up the game until 18 years ago, it didn’t take him long to get proficient in the rules and he says very matter-of-factly, “Once an official, always an official. It is essential you know the rules to play the game properly, since I had the mindset, it was just a natural transition for me.”

“John is a tremendous volunteer and a real asset,” Dave Patterson, AGA tournament operations manager said. “His dedication is clearly evident by the amount of time that he gives and the distances that he is willing to drive to ensure that our events have the best officiating crew possible. We all applaud his professionalism and are grateful for his efforts.”

Unlike football and baseball where the officials are seen as the adversary, Gusky points out the unique position of officials in golf that many times gets overlooked, “In a lot of cases, officials probably help the players more than in other sports to avoid trouble. Even the starters, spotters and scoring area can help players.

“I see our role is helping them play the game better, stay in the competition and avoid problems.”

That is not to say, however, that everyone is happy with every call that is made, but in a game of honor, it is rare for a confrontation to rise to a Bobby Knight-level.

Gusky has also found a balance of rules officiating in his own life and if he is playing as he says a “Wednesday gaggle,” with his friends, they understand he isn’t going to call the round. But that doesn’t mean there won’t be a mention or two after the round that can also prove to be very educational.

Real tournament play is where he draws the line, and when challenged by a club member that questions a ruling and

points out that this is not the PGA Tour, he is ready with his stock answer, “there are 34 rules in the rule book, please tell me today which ones we are not going to follow?” The discussion is pretty much ended at that point.

For someone that has followed the rules his entire life, he points to the consequences that can happen for the casual golfer who doesn’t know the rules and especially does not read the “Notice to Competitors” at a tournament.

Playing a city championship he had to disqualify himself.

“I made a mistake, before I really got

into rules and it was one that no serious golfer should ever do,” he said “I did not read the Notice to the Competitors and played from the wrong teeing ground. When I teed off on the second hole from the wrong tees, I was technically disqualified. But, I didn’t realize it until the next day, when my fellow competitor made a comment about playing the white tees after we had played the blue tees. We looked at the sheet and realized the mistakes. I have never not read one since”

Local rules are written to benefit the player, but only when he chooses to read them.

AGA and Southwest Golf Media Association To Present Awards at Annual Dinner

On Tuesday, March 21, at Moon Valley Country Club, the AGA teamed up with the Southwest Golf Media Association (SWGMA) for a special evening of honors and awards.

The AGA will recognize its Volunteer of the Year (John Gusky), Updegraff Award Winner (Robert Laubach), Player of the Year (Bryan Hoops), Mayfair Award Winner (Ken Kellaney) and three Divisional Winners (Cyrus Whitney, Cannon Randall and Bob Mandeville), while the SWGMA will announce three inaugural awards.

SWGMA’s awards include the Ambassador of Golf Award (Bob Goldwater, Sr.), Golf Media Award (Bill Huffman) and Club of the Year (The Rim Golf Club).

The Ambassador of Golf Award is “presented to someone from Arizona, or with significant Arizona ties who represents the game, on and off the course, and embodies its tradition and values.” The Golf Media Award is “presented to a writer, broadcaster, photographer, artist or other individual for outstanding contributions in the field of golf media. The Club of the Year is “presented to an AGA club for upholding the spirit and traditions of golf through energetic support,



Club of the Year, The Rim Club

and consistent dedication to the game.”

“We are pleased to be joined by SWGMA in the creation of a golf celebration for Arizona that will grow in stature every year.”

Cori Brett, president of the Southwest Golf Media Association, said the two organizations are excited about a long-term relationship. “This event was very memorable for the AGA, SWGMA, the people in attendance and the recipients,” she said. “We’re excited to have honored

Mr. Goldwater, Mr. Huffman and The Rim Golf Club for their contributions to the game.”

Founded in 2004, the Southwest Golf Media Association is dedicated to perpetuating the mutual interests and fellowships among golf writers and other members of the golf media, honoring outstanding contributors to the golf industry, and being a strong partner in promoting the rich golf heritage of the Southwest.