

SPORTS

Youth Golf Coach Finds His Calling

continued ▲ from Front

throughout the metro area and Vancouver, creating a diverse group ranging in age from 8 to 22.

"On the golf course they're equals," said Heard of youth in the program, which meets at the Heron Lakes Golf Course in north Portland.

Heard explained that the program stresses character development through the game of golf and is open to all students who can hold a C average in school.

The golf clubs and accessories used in the game are provided for those who can't afford them, but if they aren't properly cared for, the equipment will be quickly yanked away, said Heard.

If students can hold a B average, they also get free golf lessons from professional golfers and access to college scholarships.

Golf is a difficult game to learn, as Heard can attest, which helps youth learn the value of hard work and discipline.

"You can do everything in your power the best you can do it and still get results you don't want," said Heard, "and when that happens you have a choice of how you deal with it."

Heard said that in golf you can go find the ball and take another swing at it, which isn't too much different from challenges youth encounter in life.

He explained how the game builds confidence in youth, showing them that if they stick to a task and work hard, the pay off will be improved performance.

Heard loves to witness the successes his players achieve.

"When a young person can take a golf ball that's sitting on a tee and not moving, and propel it into the air in the direction they want it to go, on the first time, you get to observe the first look

on their face," he said.

Heard recalls the satisfaction of watching a young man in junior high grow up while playing golf in First Tee

When the student started the program, his clothes sagged off his body, he wore his hat crooked, he dabbled with drugs and alcohol and didn't think much about college, Heard said. But after the young man made a commitment to the game, he pulled up his pants, put his hat on straight, and went on to better things.

He also points to some outstanding individuals, such as Vincent Johnson, a local youth who participated in the First Tee and is now on the Professional Golf Association tour.

Heard's personal journey in the game was also arduous and unexpected.

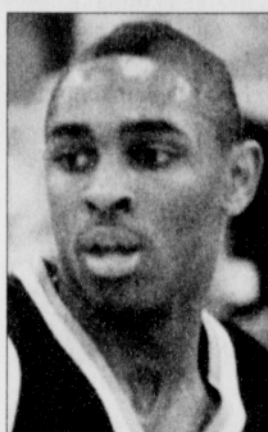
After a stint in the military and with a few small business start ups, he took a job washing golf carts and hauling bags. In 1997 he met Robert Clark, Oregon's first African-American elected to the Professional Golfers' Association.

Heard said that Clark acted as a mentor for him and pointed out that his aspirations to golf professionally could materialize if he worked hard.

In 2001, Heard was working at a golf course when he had a confrontation with a customer. He still hadn't made it professionally, and the nasty experience made him want to throw in the towel on his dream of golfing for a living. He called Clark to tell him his decision.

He said Clark told him to hold on, and called him back a few days later to offer him the job of executive director of the Portland Youth Golf Association.

Heard was eventually elected to the PGA in 2006 after demonstrating his playing level, but is still with the PYGA.



PHOTOS BY E.J. HARRIS, COURTESY OF THE EAST OREGONIAN

Congratulations to De La Salle North Catholic High Knights on a Great Year

Donta Harris (upper left) of De La Salle High School goes for a shot while playing against Knappa High School. Roynshad Curry (lower left) led the Knights in its game against Knappa Loggers, which the Knights lost 15-12. Both players made the First Team League. Harris was made player of the year by the The Knights gained entry into the OSAA 2A state basketball championships for the first time in school history.

March Madness Returns to Portland

After years of hard work, March Madness is finally returning to Oregon.

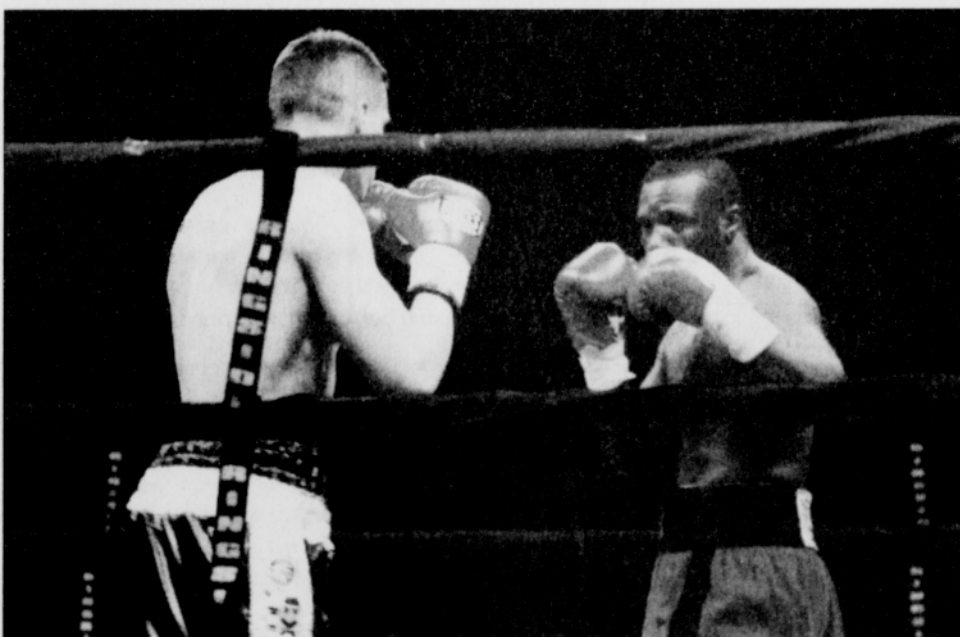
On March 19 and 21 the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship will return to Portland after a 34-year absence and a 26-year absence from Oregon.

"Four years ago, we took on the challenge of eliminating the state's sports lot-

tery with an unrelenting focus, knowing that the end result would be incredibly meaningful for the state," said Drew Mahalic, CEO of the Oregon Sports Authority, in a statement "And now that it's finally a reality, we couldn't be more proud and excited to welcome the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship back to Oregon."

The last time Portland hosted March Madness was in 1975. UCLA won the regional semifinal and final at Memorial Coliseum before going on to win the national championship.

Oregon has not been able to host the tournament because of the state lottery's sports action game.



Forbes Wins

Steve Forbes (right) squares off with Jason Davis (left) at Spirit Mountain Casino and Resort, which took place on Forbes, who grew up in Portland, won the fight after 12 grueling rounds continuing his impressive career with 34 wins total to only 7 losses. Forbes was featured on the ESPN reality show The Contender, where he made an impressive showing.



Golf is Quincy Heard favorite pastime, but also his calling as executive director of the Portland Youth Golf Association.

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