

Putting It All Together

David Pastore's twin majors cap a dream season that was worth the wait

BY CHRISTOPHER POWERS



You know that young prodigy golfer, the one who wins throughout his junior career and then fades away as the years go by? David Pastore is anything but that guy. Pastore, now 22 and a recent graduate of the University of Virginia, is the 2014 MGA Jerry Courville Sr. Player of the Year on the strength of his wins at two of the Association's three major championships, the Met Amateur and the Ike.

His two big victories, along with a win at the Westchester Open and high placements at the Connecticut Open (tied for third, low amateur) and USGA Men's State Team Championship (second individual) put Pastore well in front of the field. Dylan Newman and Met Amateur runner-up Matthew Lowe battled for second, with Newman edging Lowe by just three points.

It hasn't been a straight line to glory for Pastore, who won two Met Juniors (2006 and 2009) and the 2010 Carter Cup. That year he graced the cover of *The Met Golfer* alongside Cam Wilson and Mike Miller, three young studs headed off to college. Miller and Wilson thrived: Miller won the 2011 Met Amateur, and Wilson took back-to-back Ike Championships in 2012 and 2013. Pastore's best

result in those years came at the 2012 MGA Public Links, where he finished third.

"I thought about that a lot," Pastore said. "Two or three years into school Cameron was one of the top 20 players in the country, Mike was a two-time [MGA] player of the year and one of the top amateurs in the world, and I wasn't even on the golf team anymore."

Pastore admits he made a lot of mistakes. In his freshman year he didn't play in any tournaments at Virginia, and he acknowledges he didn't have an open attitude to listening and learning. By his sophomore year he was off the team and playing in club tournaments. But in his junior year an opportu-

nity arose: the once heavily-recruited golfer could take part in an open tryout for the team with all the other hopefuls. It was tough to have to earn his way back, but his belief in himself allowed him to keep plugging along, and he shot a 66 to regain a spot on the roster.

He took inspiration from the company he'd kept. "I never stopped believing that I could compete with those guys [Miller and Wilson]," he said. "I'd done it in the past and I was just as good as them at one point."

Pastore only played in one MGA tournament in the summer of 2013, the Met Open at Old Westbury. He opened with a 75, but followed it up with a 72 on Wednesday and 71 on Thursday to tie for fourteenth, fourth best among the amateurs. It didn't shatter any records, but it was a step back in the right direction.

After three straight intercollegiate top-tens (including a tie for first) in April 2014, he opened his Met Area season in May by earning medalist honors at the U.S. Open Local Qualifying round held at Paramount Country Club. Just a few weeks later, he won the Ike at Montclair, then followed with a win against some of the area's top professionals at the Westchester Open in July.

"I won the Ike, but a lot of people might think you get lucky with one win," he said. "I wanted to prove that I could do it again."

Pastore indeed wasn't finished. You've probably heard he won the Met Amateur in historic fashion. On the 35th hole of the championship match with a large gallery looking on at The Creek, Pastore recorded a hole-in-one on the par-3 17th to win.

The Honor Roll

Final standings for the 2014 MGA Jerry Courville Sr. Player of the Year award

Pos.	Name	Club	Points
1	David Pastore	Griffith E. Harris Men's Club	1,265
2	Dylan Newman	Hollow Brook GC	715
3	Matthew Lowe	Colonial Springs GC	712
4	Cameron Young	Sleepy Hollow CC	694
5	Sam Bernstein	Century CC	592
6	Trevor Randolph	Arcola CC	572
7	Brian Komline	Black Oak GC	541
8	Joe Saladino	Huntington CC	530
9	Steve Zychowski	Mendham G&TC	504
10	Max Greyserman	Crestmont CC	490

This remarkable feat was featured on Golf Channel's "Morning Drive" the next day, with Gary Williams awarding Pastore a "game ball."

"Since that day, everything is different," he said. "For the ball to go in, to be on the Golf Channel, I got a lot of congratulations, even from people who don't play golf."

After a season like that for Pastore, an admitted goal setter, are there more goals to achieve?

"Some of them I'll keep to myself, but for next year I want to have somewhere set to play. Web.com Tour is the ultimate goal," he said.

He has already cleared two hurdles and advanced to the second stage of the Web.com Q School, with his eye on the Finals to be held in December in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Don't discount his chances, even if the path has a few bumps in it. Pastore has shown the persistence and confidence to make his goals a reality. ■

Above left: David Pastore plants one on the Met Amateur trophy. Below: Matthew Lowe and Pastore share a few words during the Met Am final.

