

Local Legends

Jon Brown

Age: 43

Residence: Urbandale, Iowa

Occupation: Iowa sales manager, consumer loan division, Union Bank & Trust

Club affiliation: Urbandale Golf & Country Club

Handicap: Plus-2

Accomplishments: Eight-time winner, Des Moines City Championship, including past six (1993, '95, 2005-10); two-time Iowa Golf Association Player of Year (2004, '06); winner of four Iowa Masters (1990, 2004, '05, '10), two Iowa Match Plays (2003, '06), Iowa Amateur (2006) and Iowa Mid-Amateur (2008).

Hawkeye rivalry: On a national level, Brown is the least-known member of an accomplished amateur trio from Iowa, joining Mike McCoy, who has a record 26 Iowa Golf Association titles, and Gene Elliott, a reinstated amateur who was stroke-play medalist at the 1999 U.S. Amateur. Brown's 18 IGA titles are second only to McCoy.

"I'm proud of achieving what I have in the Mike McCoy era," Brown said. "I also have a tremendous amount of respect for Gene. Those two guys are a challenge and a pleasure to play against."

The feeling is mutual. According to Bill Dickens, executive director of the IGA, Elliott calls Brown the "best player who's never taken his game national."

Six shooter: Brown's streak of six consecutive Des Moines City Championship titles hasn't been forged without a couple of close calls at Waveland Golf Course, a tight, traditional layout where the city tournament is held each year.

"Some pretty crazy things have happened to keep that streak going," he said. "In '06, I was leading Gene Elliott by a shot on the last hole. I was just short of the green, and he's on the green about 10 feet below the hole. If I can't get up-and-down and he makes his birdie, he wins. Instead, I chipped it in."

"Then in 2007, I was down two or three with five holes to play and birdied 14 and 15. Then on the 16th, a par 4, I holed out my

Jon Brown and daughter, Taylor, after his sixth consecutive city championship last year.



second shot for an eagle."

Brown also won the city title in 1993 and '95. But before his current streak, he mainly remembered the ones that got away. He has finished second seven times, including playoff losses in 1997 and '98 and consecutive runner-up finishes from 2002 to '04.

"But they don't sting quite as much now because of the success I've had (lately)," he said with a laugh.

All in the family: Brown played college golf for one season at West Texas State before the school dropped its program. He returned to Iowa and attended community college, but did not play golf. He said he has no regrets, and is satisfied playing state events almost exclusively.

"My family life and work life are just not conducive to playing (more nationally) because those events are so time-consuming," he said. "I had to make a choice whether to play locally and play more or try to play nationally and play

less events. I chose to play more."

Brown's daughter Taylor, 16, caddied for him during his last two city tournaments, and son Justin, 14, looped in the middle round last year. Both children play casual rounds with their dad, and Brown credits his wife of 20 years, Cherie, with understanding his love for the game. "She knows it's what makes me tick," he said.

Jon's father, Cleo Brown, who taught him the game, is the longtime starter at the Principal Charity Classic, the Champions Tour event held annually in Des Moines.

What's in the bag

TaylorMade R11 TP driver (8 degree), TaylorMade R11 3-wood (14 degree) and hybrid (16 degree), TaylorMade Tour Preferred MC (3-6) and Tour Preferred MB irons (7-PW), TaylorMade xFT wedges (54 and 60 degree), TaylorMade Rossa Corza Ghost putter, TaylorMade Penta ball.

- Kevin Adams