

By Marisa Palmieri

Hess takes the trophy

Assistant superintendent Adam Hess, son of 30-year GCSAA member Alan Hess, won the GCSAA National Championship at the Greg Norman Course at PGA West in Palm Springs, Calif., last month.

On the surface, Adam Hess is like many assistant golf course superintendents: He's the son of a superintendent; he grew up working summers at the golf course and, upon high school graduation, wanted nothing to do with a career in golf course maintenance.

And, like many others, he tried a few career paths in college before realizing the allure of a 9-to-5 job wasn't all it's cracked up to be.

"I eventually realized I did want to get into the golf business, and with a little maturity, I've loved it ever since," says Hess, who's the assistant at Augusta Pines Golf Club in Spring, Texas, where his father Alan Hess, a 30-year GCSAA member, is the superintendent.

Unlike many other assistants, though, 26-year-old Hess is the youngest winner of last month's GCSAA National Championship at the Greg Norman Course at PGA West in Palm Springs, Calif.

ON THE GOLF COURSE

Playing in his first National Championship, Adam Hess parred the first playoff hole to defeat Tim Scott, the CGCS at Stony Creek Golf Course in Oak Lawn, Ill., who missed a five-foot putt for a par of his own on the hole.

Hess began the final round of the tournament three shots behind first-round leader Danny Fielder, CGCS at Creekside Golf Course in Modesto, Calif. Hess had a rough start to his day, with a double bogey on No. 3 and a bogey on No. 5, but settled down to birdie the seventh hole and then par the next 11 holes to finish the day at 2-over-par 74 and the tournament at 1-over-par 145.

While the sudden-death finish was exciting, Adam Hess says the last three holes of regulation play were the most difficult.

"I was more relaxed in the playoff then I was trying to finish the last three-hole stretch," he says. "That's when I had

most of my adrenaline pumping, knowing I needed to par it out. On the 16th hole, I drained about a 16-foot putt – that was probably the most exhilarating part of the tournament."

Several weeks after the tournament, Adam Hess was still in disbelief.

"It's still kind of unbelievable that it actually happened," he says. "Every day it sinks in a little more."

His dad agrees, saying he was probably more excited than his son was.

"I think it took him a while to settle in and realize what he accomplished, but I was probably more excited than he was. He seems pretty well under control."

Adam Hess, who played golf in high school, says the tournament reinvigorated his interest in competitive golf. In addition to a \$250 purse, a lot of positive press and messages from friends and family who didn't even realize what he'd accomplished until they saw him in the Houston Chronicle, he received an exemption to play in the Trans-Mississippi Amateur tournament, and he's looking

Adam Hess won the GCSAA Championship & Golf Classic as a rookie in the first hole of sudden death against Tim Scott, CGCS. See page 67 for the Top 10's stats.



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GCSAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP



Adam Hess and his father, Alan Hess, a 30-year member of the GCSAA, with the trophy.

forward to it – and to next year's GCSAA National.

"Next year I'm going to have more pressure on me, but I'm pretty psyched," he says. "I haven't come down from the high of winning and holding the trophy yet. It's a really good feeling."

Alan Hess, who one time aspired to be a golf professional, says he's played in the tournament about 20 times in his career, finishing in the top 10 a few times. This year he won the Senior II Gross Division. He calls the experience of playing in the Championship along with his son a special one.

"It just adds to the overall enjoyment of the experience not only being with friends and colleagues, but with a member of your family," he says.

Who's the better golfer when it comes to family match-ups?

"Adam comes out on top more than he used to," Alan Hess says, laughing. "I can't hit the ball as far as he can."

But who has the better short game?

"That would be my dad," Adam Hess says.

AT WORK

No matter where his amateur golf career takes him, Adam Hess is the assistant golf course superintendent at Augusta Pines, which is owned by Tour 18, the company for which his father is the agronomist. Alan Hess hired his son several years ago as a full-time assistant after Adam Hess completed an internship under superintendent Kevin Hicks at Coeur d'Alene Resort in Idaho.

In addition to his full-time assistant duties, Adam Hess is wrapping up his advanced certificate in turfgrass management from Penn State's World Campus. He'll graduate in the fall and soon after he hopes to pursue a full-time superintendent position.

As for working for his father, Adam Hess likes it.

"It's very open around here," he says. "My suggestions are listened to and taken into thought and consideration. Also, there's a bit of flexibility involved, which is nice when you have the stresses of both work and school."

Alan Hess agrees. "We have our routine and we work very well together. He's familiar with me and my peccadilloes – my expectations.

He knows how I think, and he's able to deliver pretty much on everything I ask him to do."

Like many superintendent/fathers, Alan Hess is happy his son is following in his footsteps as long as Adam is happy.

"I never wanted to pressure him into the business," he says. "I wanted him to come to

the business only if he wanted to and was going to be happy. I've seen a lot of parents expecting and demanding too much from their children – forcing them into their careers when maybe it wasn't necessarily the right fit or wanting them to play golf all the time.


"I always wanted Adam and his two broth-

ers to have golf as an outlet, but I never wanted them to feel that they had to play," Alan Hess says. His sons Stephen and Nicholas are also both in college.


Did his pressure-free strategy work – are they golfers? "We make a good foursome," Adam Hess says. **GCI**

GCSAA National Championship & Golf Classic Top 10 at PGA West - Greg Norman Course


		Scoring to par	Round 1	Round 2	Total	Purse
1	Adam Hess Augusta Pines Golf Club, Spring, Texas	+1	71	74	145	\$250
2	Tim Scott Stony Creek Golf Course, Oak Lawn, Ill.	+1	76	69	145	\$125
3	Daniel Fielder Creekside Golf Course, Modesto, Calif.	+3	68	79	147	\$75
T4	Justin VanLanduit Briarwood Country Club, Deerfield, Ill.	+4	79	69	148	\$65
T4	Jonas Conlan Desert Princess Country Club, Indio, Calif.	+4	75	73	148	\$65
T4	Michael Stieler Riverbend Golf Club, Madera, Calif.	+4	73	75	148	\$65
T7	David Brown Flatirons Golf Course, Boulder, Colo.	+6	74	76	150	\$50
T7	Chris Webster Braeburn Country Club, Houston, Texas	+6	72	78	150	\$50
T7	Shawn Westacott Jackson Country Club, Jackson, Tenn.	+6	72	78	150	\$50
10	James Rattigan Schuyhill Country Club, Orwigsburg, Pa.	+7	77	74	151	\$40



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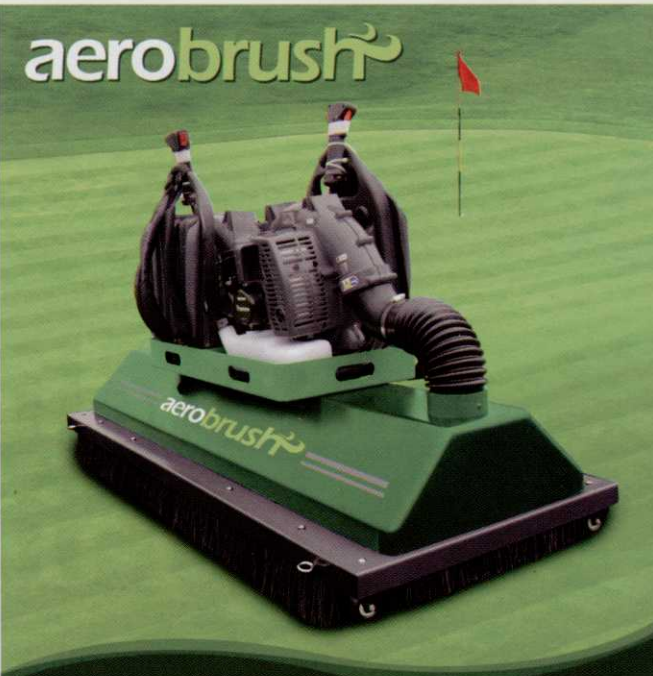
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