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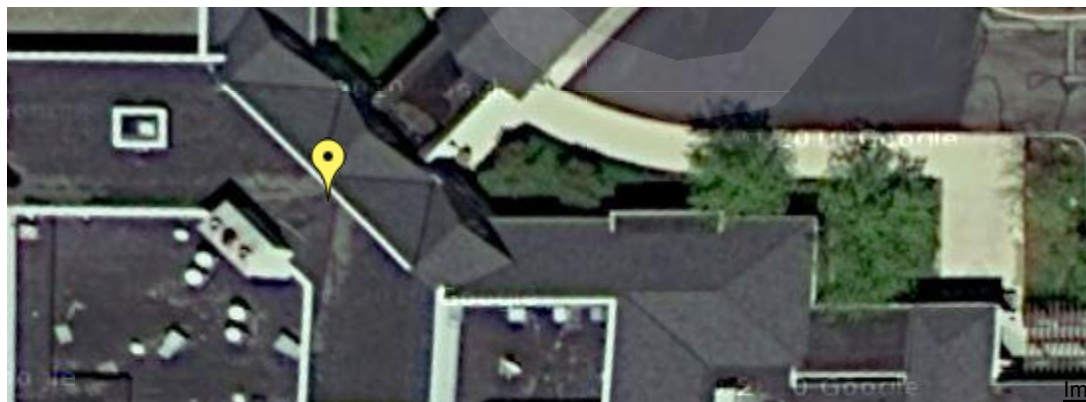
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Featured, [Local People](#) | March 19, 2012 10:34 am

[Road to the LPGA Stops in Local Pro's Backyard](#)



Brittany Kelly, shown here at her favorite indoor golf practice facility Golf 365, will be playing close to home in the My Marsh Golf Classic May 28-June 3 at the Hawthorns Golf Club in Fishers. Kelly is the daughter of Ken Kelly, a teacher at Carmel Middle School.

Give an 8-year old a golf club and a little white ball, and you never know what might happen when she tees it up. In Brittany Kelly's case, that golf club felt like it belonged in her hands, but before it became an extension of who she is, she juggled multiple balls – from soccer to basketball. But, her relationship with golf has had staying power and is now offering opportunities she could only dream about. As a member of the [Symetra Tour](#) player marketing team, she has been chosen as spokeswoman for the [My Marsh Golf Classic](#), a \$100,000 purse world-class women's golf event, scheduled to be held at [The Hawthorns Golf and Country Club](#) in Fishers May 28-June 3.

“What an honor to be asked to publicize this local tournament that will take place in my hometown on the same course I played in high school, where I qualified for my first U.S. Girls Junior, and became runner up at the MAC championships while playing for [Ball State](#),” said Brittany. “I couldn't be more excited to play in my own backyard.”

Sponsored by [Marsh Supermarkets](#), [Hamilton County Sports Authority](#) and the [Ladies Professional Golf Association](#), the Road to the LPGA will stop in Hamilton County for the first time in tour history. According

to Joe Kelley, chairman, CEO and president of Marsh, “We are delighted to help bring the rising stars of the LPGA to Central Indiana as a way to raise valuable funds for the [Muscular Dystrophy Association](#) and further enable this great organization to achieve its goals.” A full field of 144 golfers from around the world will compete to develop their careers.

A born competitor, Kelly excelled in athletics as a youngster. Upon entering high school, she was forced to toss around her options realizing she had to choose just one sport when freshman soccer conflicted with tryouts for the Hamilton Southeastern girl's golf team. “I'm very competitive and it was a big decision between soccer and golf. Both sports were in the same season,” said Brittany. “It was a big turning point for me. I was not going to be able to play all the sports I wanted to play. I decided golf was going to take me further and I really wanted to play in college at a Division 1 school with a full ride scholarship, so I had to make some tough decisions.” Ultimately, she was able to play goalie on her high school soccer team her senior year.



Brittany Kelly portrait shoot and practice round prior to the LPGA Futures Tour's Teva Championship at The Golf Center at Kings Island in Mason, Ohio ©2011 Jay LaPrete

Brittany's grandparents on her mother's side introduced her to the game of golf. “My sister and I used to ride on the cart and keep score.” Ashley, who is four years older, chose not to pursue a career in golf but supports her baby sister. “My dad never played golf until he met my mom and now he's my caddie whenever it fits into his schedule.”

It all started with Hamilton County's 4-hole junior tournaments. Occasional wins as a junior golfer kicked in her drive to tee it up and keep the ball in play. “The first four-hole tournament I won was at Forest Park in Noblesville,” said Brittany. “I thought it was so cool to get a trophy.” And she learned as she grew into the game, it's not just cool to get a trophy, but it's seriously hard work to keep that cool going.

Upon graduating from Hamilton Southeastern High School, she realized she needed to keep in the swing of things, participating in 18-hole events almost daily, all summer long prior to her participation on the Ball State women's golf team, “Sometimes it's so hard when you are not playing well and you still have to show up for work day after day.”

“During spring break, I'd go to Florida and practice golf. It was like a kick off to the season. In fact, almost every family vacation was a golf vacation.” But, even though Brittany worked hard at her game and put in

numerous hours and effort to reach the top, she was humbled upon arriving at Qualifying School. "It's really hard when you have had a successful college career and everyone you are competing with is as good or better than you. I learned through my rookie season that I have some things to work on, needed to make changes and focus on what was going to be my one up on everyone else," said Brittany. "I finally got new clubs and was professionally fitted."



©2011 Jay LaPrete

Brittany did qualify for the Symetra Tour during Q-school and she gives her caddie high scores for her winning performance. "Dad started caddying for me when I played in the Indiana Women's Golf events," said Brittany. "He's great at helping with yardage, wind and encouraging me think about things I'm not thinking about at the moment, like play the slope, if I'm putting."

But, on the green her Dad, Ken Kelly, a teacher at Carmel Middle School, normally hangs back and does not read putts. "You know it's just like coaching. When players are playing well it's fun and everybody is happy. When Brittany is on her game my job is easy and life is good," said Kelly, who has coached the Carmel High School girl's golf team for nearly two decades. "As her caddy, I never really feel nervous until her game gets challenging. I take my job seriously and focus on giving her the facts she needs to make the shot. I try to keep her calm and positive when shots aren't coming."

Brittany decided to give up her amateur status and turn pro after graduating from Ball State and she has not experienced much glamour. "It's lonely on the road, I miss my family and there's not much money at this stage. I have to make my own schedule, be disciplined to practice and workout and find places to stay when I'm in an unfamiliar town for a tournament. But I love it."

Now in her second year on the Symetra Tour, Brittany has the chance to be a big shot in her hometown with her Daddy Caddy in tow. Both are no longer rookies and have learned some valuable lessons marching along the fairway, "Last summer, I let a 'just don't leave it short' comment slip on the putting green after we lined up her putt. She ran it by two feet and I got a glare that could kill. Thankfully, she made the putt coming back," recalled Kelly. "A few weeks later Brittany presented me with CD's titled 'Who's Your Caddy?' The best advice I got from the stories told were; #1 show-up, #2 keep up and #3 shut-up."

Kelly reflects on how rewarding it has been watching his youngest daughter progress through a life in golf. "From nearly birth she's been saying 'Watch me Daddy, watch this' and I have been watching her. I will keep watching her golf and compete for as long as she is in the game."

My goal is to place in the top ten in the [My Marsh Golf Classic](#). Both me and my Dad know the Hawthorns course well,” said Brittany. “Dad has helped me win tournaments before. He can help me win this tournament!”

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