



THE DOGWOOD INVITATIONAL

It's More Than a Golf Tournament

The Dogwood's Impact on Amateur Golf

Edward Toledano sits down with Walker Cup Captain Jim Holtgrieve

Before he was chosen as the 2013 Walker Cup Captain, Jim played on three winning Walker Cup teams (1979, 1981, and 1983) and turned professional in 1998. Playing five years on the Champions Tour only to retire and get his amateur status back with an eye toward a future Walker Cup captaincy.



Q: How does participation in elite amateurs, like the Dogwood, lead to being selected for the Walker Cup team? What do you look for in a player?

A: While the USGA does not select Walker Cup players through a point system like the Ryder Cup; they do look at the top amateur golf events over the last two years. Certainly there is focus on the USGA events but amateur tournaments with good fields are very important to the process. The Dogwood always seems to draw a very good field; so a victory or high finish in The Dogwood is important in the selection criteria.

The reason there is not a point system in the WC process is because it is not just about talent. A Walker Cup player must also be able to represent the United States of America. When I attend these tournaments I get a first hand look at how the player manages his game and how he reacts to a variety of circumstances. I look for patience, course management, response to a negative occurrence or conduct, in addition to a player's strong elements; driving, iron play, short game, etc.

I will be attending tournaments over the next few months to further evaluate players and while the USGA does provide a detailed and comprehensive analysis, I have developed and will use my own stat record worksheet that goes in concert with my on course observations.

Q: You have enjoyed a very successful golf career. Can you share a few words of advice for amateur golfers?

A: I have been very blessed and fortunate to play this magnificent game. The USGA has been very good to me and certainly has given me one of the greatest honors in golf - Captain of the Walker Cup Team. There is no greater honor in sport than to play for and represent your country. I tell amateur golfers that if they have the chance to play for their country; they need to do just that. Professional golf can come later; do not miss an opportunity to be a Walker Cupper. I also tell them to be respectful of all the volunteers, sponsors, staff, etc - and say "thank you". Finally I tell them to "never forget where they came from" - we are very fortunate to play the greatest game.

Q: Can you give us a feel for the importance of amateur golf in the world? Is amateur golf losing its importance, or is it producing more great players?

This is a very good question because I do see some struggles in growing the game; time, money. And now with the elimination of Q school I believe that amateur golf will suffer. Unfortunately, young amateur golfers (with talent) are only thinking about the MONEY. Too bad because I did learn that MONEY is not the answer. Success is great but significance is more important in one's life.

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