



GOLF TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION - Over 128 people registered to participate in this year's Mike Hazelton Memorial Golf Tournament. This year marks the 20 year anniversary of the tournament. (Jadlos Photo)

Hazelton's Friends Gather For Golf To Remember Mike

By JONATHAN JADLOS

MASSENA - Mike Hazelton liked nothing better than getting together with his friends and family for a good time.

And after the former standout athlete at Massena Central and Hobart College died after being struck by a vehicle while out jogging, friends and family found a way to honor his memory, help others in the community and share the good times Hazelton enjoyed during his lifetime.

"His friends started the tournament 20 years ago as a way to get everyone back together," according to Mike's sister, Kelly Gordon. "Now they come back every year from all over. It's because of the kind of person he was. He always liked having everyone together."

The Massena Country Club hosted over 125 golfers during the 20th annual Mike Hazelton Memorial Golf Tournament earlier this month.

This year's field was comprised of 32 teams of golfers made up of friends and family of Mike Hazelton. The tournament format also included morning tee times for the early risers and a shotgun start in the afternoon for the rest of the participants. But the real story coming off the links this year isn't about how they play, it's about why they play.

Even though this golf tournament isn't recognized by the PGA or the LPGA, and there isn't a green jacket awaiting the winners coming off the 18th green, the importance of this particular golf tournament can not be understated.

The tournament takes place every year as an opportunity for friends and family to get together and honor the memory of the Massena native killed in an accident just over 21 years ago in New York City.

Hazelton was a 1981 graduate of Massena High School and went on to play football at Hobart College in Geneva, where he graduated in 1985.

Proceeds from the tournament go to the Mike Hazelton Memorial Scholarship Fund. The scholarship is given to a Massena High School senior and student-athlete who best exemplifies Mike's own ideals, commitment and character.

The fund was established 1986 and has continued to grow over the years. What started out as a \$1,000 scholarship is now worth four times



TEEING OFF - Mario Fiocco tees off on hole number one at the Massena Town and Country Club during the Mike Hazelton Memorial Golf Tournament. (Jadlos Photo)

that amount. Over the last 21 years over \$50,000 has been awarded to recipients to further their education.

Recent recipients include Emily Riley, 2007; Meghan Corcoran, 2006; Thomas Whitcomb, 2005; Aimee Meacham, 2004; Tim Bacon, 2003; Ryan Toth, 2002; and Kortney Borgosa, 2001; and Matt Hubert, 2000.

When the final foursome returned to the clubhouse at the conclusion of the 2007 tournament, teams were awarded first place in three separate divisions and individual golfers were honored for recording the longest drives and the approach shots closest to the pin.

First place in the men's division went to Tom Post, Mark

Tyo, Charlie Durant and Dan Casey.

Martha Slack, Coeetta Perez, Rose Branchetti and Rowena Lett took first place in the women's division.

And Jeff Slack, Danielle Long, Tim Long, and Benton Sullivan entered the lowest score in mixed competition.

Longest drive honors were awarded to Tom Post and Rose Branchetti, while Crowe Smith and Rowena Lett were recognized for their accuracy on the greens.

In the end, however, the real winners were all the friends and family members who took part in remembering Mike Hazelton this year, because 21 years after an accident took his life, Mike is still getting everyone together for a good time.