

Amari Avery, 6-year-old Junior World Golf Champion

Watch out, Tiger Woods! A (young) Tigress has arrived

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO / AJPress

IN THE Golf Channel's hard-hitting and inspirational summer series for 2010, viewers across America were treated to never-before-told stories that truly capture the heart and spirit of the game. One of the dynamic golf personalities featured was a little 6-year-old girl, the daughter of a Filipina Maria Decena and African-American Andre Avery.

Amari Nicole Avery is a 6-year-old golf prodigy who happens to have a striking number of similarities to Tiger Woods -- the same birthday (December 30), family background (Asian mother and African-American father), and growing up in Riverside, California. Tiger and Amari also share their first "Hole-in-Ones" at the same golf course, Heartwell, located in Long Beach, California.

Amari is the current 2010 Callaway Junior World Champion, the San Diego Junior Masters Champion and the Champion in the Future Champions Golf World Championship, age 6 and under division.

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For the Golf Channel, Avery was filmed in part at El Prado Golf Courses, where she takes lessons from Rick Hunter, director of instruction at the club and a US Kids Top 50 teacher. She has also been featured in ABC Channel 7, and KTLA Channel 5 Los Angeles aside from the Golf Channel.

The ABC story on Amari entitled Little Golf Prodigy Girl Guns for Tiger, said "She has yet to start kindergarten, but Amari Avery is already well-schooled in the game of gold."

The story also featured Amari's golf coach, Kris Olsen. "I've been teaching golf for about 20 years and done a lot of junior golf, and I have to say it's a lot of talent in a little 5-year-old package," Kris said.

Amari's father proudly refers to his daughter as "Tigress." "It was just a little joke, just fun, same birthday, whatever. But as time went on the name kind of stuck," said Andre.

When Amari was asked what she thought about Tiger, the little girl answered, "I don't like him because I could beat him," said Amari.

"I think she's going to do for the LPGA what Tiger Woods did for the PGA," Andre told the Golf Channel. "Ultimately, that's what she's going to do."

Andre revealed that Amari started showing her natural expertise in golf at a very young age. By age 4, she showed her very competitive side. "She goes, 'Daddy, I want to play against somebody.' OK. And I said, 'Well, why?'" said Andre. "Because I want to beat them," said Amari.

Amari's competitive spirit has been described by golf coach Kris Olsen as "awesome." "That kind of competitive fire -- it's just natural."

Amari's problem is finding kids she can play against, because she's considered too young to play in most tournaments. "A lot of people want you to be 7 to play in the tournaments," said Andre. "They want you to be able to hold your own clubs, write your own score, those kind of things."

When Amari won at the 43rd Callaway World Junior Golf Championships in San Diego recently, the first-grader at McCullough Elementary in Riverside said she celebrated the next day with her family by going out to Chuck E. Cheese's.

"After she won, she shook everybody's hands and ran down the walkway high-fiving everyone," Andre Avery said of his daughter. "It was phenomenal to see. She was very, very, very happy."

Amari practices her golf skills everyday, without fail. One of her favorite quotes is "Practice makes permanent." Like most kids her age, Amari attends school in the morning, then daycare. After daycare, Dad Andre, Amari's little sister Alona and Amari go off to a local golf course to practice hitting golf balls, putting and if there's time, playing a little golf. Most kids like to drive the ball, while Amari's favorite part of golf is putting. She likes to see that ball go in the hole, hopefully for a birdie.

While golf may be her first choice, Amari also enjoys other activities such as jumping rope, playing with her hula hoop, singing and dancing. She also enjoys spending time with her family and friends, especially her sister Alona, who is also an up and coming young golfer. Amari has already started sharing her golf tips with Alona.

Recently, Amari has been invited to attend the US Kids Gold World Championship, which is the most prestigious junior golf even of the year. Invitations are based on exemplary play and a

qualifying score of forty five on a nine hole par thirty-six US Kids golf tournament. The three day event held in Pinehurst, North California will bring together the best junior golfers in the world. Amari is currently seeking financial sponsors to help her with registration and the funds necessary to play in the prestigious event next year.

With the help of her coach, Rick Hunter, she has made tremendous improvements in her golf game, discipline, and overall scoring during a tournament.

As actor Anthony Anderson of Golf in America put it, the chapter of Amari Avery's life in the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) has yet to be written. No doubt, Amari will be a force to reckon with in the next few years, as she continues to excel in her game.

Look out world, the Tigress has arrived!

To contact the golf prodigy, interested readers may call (951)588-8999, (909) 802-4170 or email andre70@msn.com or maria.avery@yahoo.com. ■



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AMARI AVERY'S GOLF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

US Kids Golf Tour Championship Summer Tour – 1ST Place
Vellano Country Club – Chino, CA
August 16, 2010

2010 Callaway Junior World Championship – 1st Place
Colima Park Golf Course- San Diego CA
July 12-16 2010

2010 San Diego Junior Masters Championship – 1st Place
Colima Park Golf Course- San Diego CA
July 5-8, 2010

2010 Future Champions Golf World Championship – 1st Place
Colima Park Golf Course- San Diego CA
Feb 13-15, 2010

US Kids Golf – Los Angeles South- Summer Tour Results

Azusa Greens GC – 1st Place
Azusa, California
May 23, 2010

Willowick GC – 2nd Place
Santa Ana, California
June 6, 2010

Canyon Crest Country Club – 1st Place
Riverside, California
June 28, 2010

El Prado GC – 1st Place
Chino California
July 14, 2010

Willowick GC – 1st Place
Santa Ana, California
July 18, 2010

Royal Vista Golf Club – 1st Place
Walnut, California
July 27, 2010

Green River Golf Club – 1st Place
Corona California
August 11, 2010

Vellano Country Club Tour Championship – 1st Place
Chino Hills, California
August 16, 2010
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