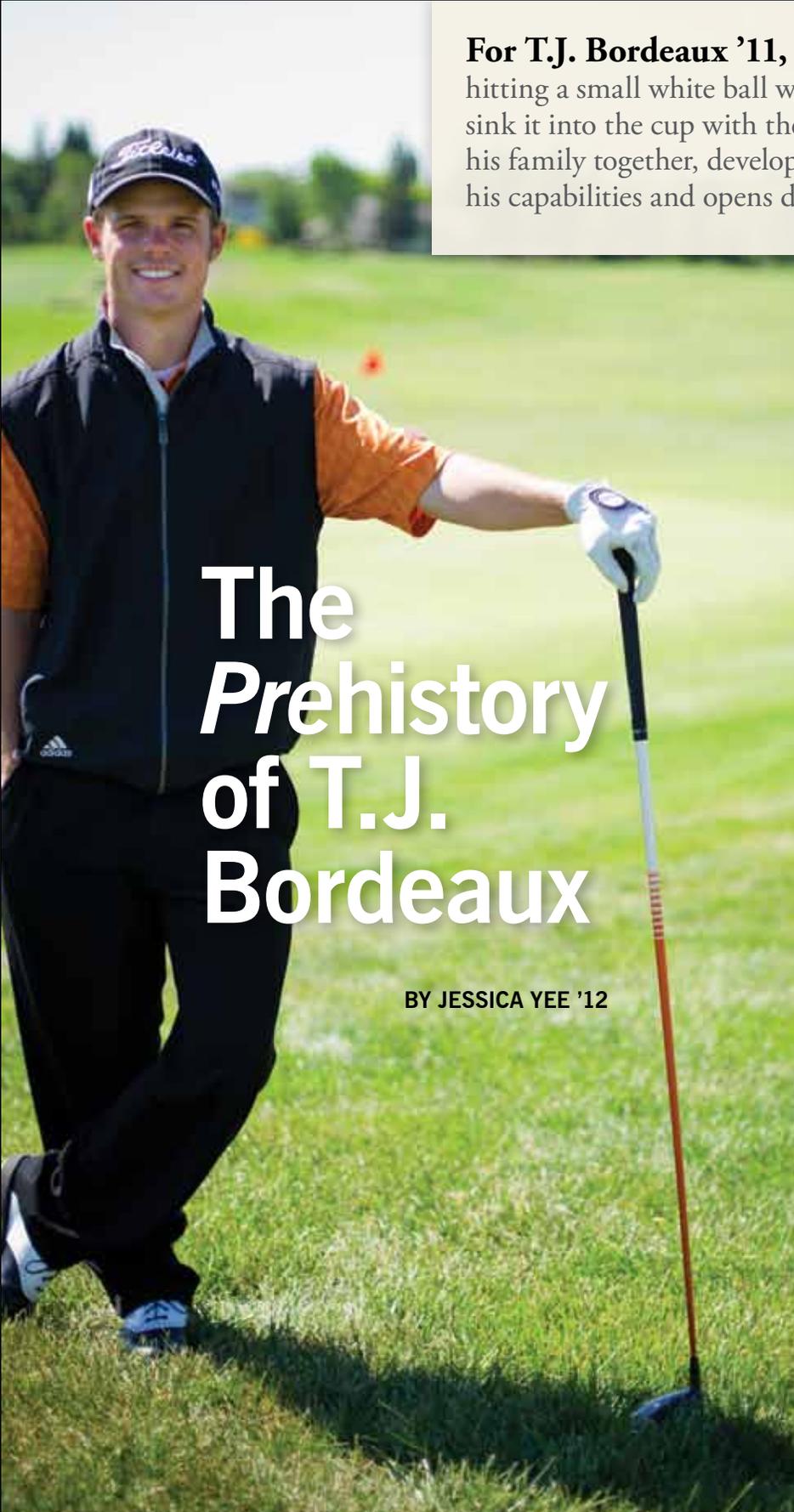


For T.J. Bordeaux '11, golf is more than just hitting a small white ball with a club and trying to sink it into the cup with the fewest strokes. It brings his family together, develops his talents, challenges his capabilities and opens doors to his future.



The Prehistory of T.J. Bordeaux

BY JESSICA YEE '12

“He picked up the club at 18 months old and never put it down,” says Lorrie Bordeaux, T.J.’s mother. “Even after breaking his arm at age 4, he still played.” Remarkably, Bordeaux never had a formal golf lesson. He learned the game watching his dad, grandfather and uncles.

When Coach Brandon Goethals recruited Bordeaux in 2007, he was immediately drawn to Bordeaux’s game.

“He has an excellent short game,” says Goethals. “He can putt the lights out. I just knew I had to have him.”

As a family-oriented person who loves his hometown of Tacoma, Wash., Bordeaux planned to play golf for the University of Washington. Their offer made recruiting Bordeaux an extra challenge for Goethals, who attended every high school match Bordeaux had. It was the start of the strong relationship the two have today.

“He’s a good kid, and he just gets it. He makes coaching fun,” says Goethals.

“I was not very consistent and did not have enough control,” Bordeaux says of his early Pacific golf career. “I was talented, but very raw. Today I am far more disciplined. I can think my way around a golf course rather than just hit it and hope.”

“He has a reliable swing, can hit it a mile and has one of the best short games out there,” says friend and teammate Alex Grieb ’11. “There’s no chance anyone will touch him if his putting is solid.”

Bordeaux started his college golf career with an average of 72.38 for 12 tournaments, collecting First-Team All-Big West Honors. In summer 2008, he played in the British Amateur Championship in Scotland, won the Oregon Duck

Classic and played in the U.S. Amateur Championship at Chambers Bay. During the 2010–11 season, he claimed a third all-conference selection.

A career highlight was leading Pacific to victory at the Stockton Sports Commission Pacific Invitational at Brookside Country Club in November 2010. Among Bordeaux's many accomplishments, he names winning the Pacific Invitational as his proudest to date. Sports Illustrated acknowledged his second round finish of 61 and 15 under par for the tournament in its "Faces in the Crowd." His 61 was both a school and a course record. The team's finish at 25 under par topped second-place

Oregon State by 19 strokes and set both tournament and team records.

Bordeaux currently holds the best scoring average for the team.

Goethals is proud of the team's current ranking at 58, up from 200 four years ago. He says the huge leap is due in part to Bordeaux's competitive drive and determination. This year the team took home six straight top-four finishes and placed second in the Big West Championships, advancing to NCAA West Regionals for the first time since 2002.

"Golf is an individual sport, but when you combine five individuals' scores and compete with the best schools in the nation, it becomes a team effort," Bordeaux says. He says the Pacific Golf Team is like his family. They understand one another's strengths and weaknesses and motivate each other to improve their game.

"Although we compete in everything we

do, we're always laughing and having a great time," Grieb says. He says Bordeaux has his lighter side when business is finished on the course. "Bordeaux is a clown!"

"He's the biggest nut you'll ever meet and he's also the nuts and bolts of the Pacific golf team" says teammate Danny Garcia '12. Bordeaux has acquired the nickname "Nuts" from his teammates.

For inspiration, Bordeaux draws on the example of legendary cross-country runner Steve "Pre" Prefontaine. After every tournament, every fist pump, every victory, and even after a bad hole, he recalls Prefontaine's famous saying, "To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift."

T.J.'s father, Tim Bordeaux, who ran cross country in college, introduced T.J. to Prefontaine's story when he was in the eighth grade. Prefontaine had a remarkable running career in the 1970s. A talented and dedicated athlete who gave his all during competition, his career was tragically cut short at age 24 when he was killed in a car accident.

"After my dad introduced me to the story, Pre has been my hero," Bordeaux says. "I started writing 'Pre' on the side of my golf ball

right before I started playing for Pacific." Golfers typically mark their golf balls to differentiate them from those of other players. Bordeaux says the reminder helps keep him focused out on the course. "I'm going to have to pick up the ball out of every hole. It is a simple way to remind me to give it everything I have, whether it's competition or practice."



T. J. Bordeaux '11 and Coach Brandon Goethals sport individual and team trophies after record-setting performances at the Stockton Sports Commission Pacific Invitational in November 2010.



"To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift," a saying of legendary cross-country runner Steve "Pre" Prefontaine, is Bordeaux's inspiration.

"Golf has instilled honesty, discipline, sportsmanship, loyalty and work ethic into my life," Bordeaux says. "In golf a tiny mistake will cost you a tournament, but through hard work and dedication I know I can do anything I set my mind to." After graduation, Bordeaux plans to attend the PGA tour qualifying school, where he hopes to earn a tour card, enabling him to compete in PGA tournaments and play professionally.

"Every step of my golf career I have been lucky enough to have teammates, coaches, friends and family guide and help me with my game," he says. "I hope to be a role model who provides future generations of golfers with the opportunities I was lucky to have."

"With the support of Pacific golf, he now understands what it takes to get to the next level," says Bordeaux's mother. "He pushes himself beyond most, because he has such a passion to play."

"For the past four years, Pacific and the Pacific golf program became my family and my home away from home," Bordeaux says. "I loved my experiences here at Pacific and will always consider this place as the prehistory to my future."

Jessica Yee '12, an English major with a minor in Pre-Law, plans to go on to law school after graduation. She played varsity golf in high school and enjoys playing recreationally with her father.