



## Press Release

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### **BLIND YOUTH TAKE TO THE GOLF COURSE DURING THE OREGON LIONS SIGHT & HEARING FOUNDATION'S "SCRAMBLE FOR SIGHT & JUNIOR GOLF CLINIC FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED YOUTH"**

**Portland, Ore. – September 17, 2007** – It's every golfer's dream to hit a hole-in-one. 16 year-old Robby Cole is planning on it. He is well aware of blind golfer Sheila Drummond's recent hole-in-one during United States Blind Golfing tournament play in Pennsylvania. Robby attends the Washington School for the Blind in Vancouver, WA. and has been golfing since he was eight years old.

"Some people just don't have the patience it takes for golf," says Robby. "It's too tedious and moves too slow for them. Kids think it's an older person's sport. I think golf is fun. If they'd give the sport a little more respect, they'd enjoy it." Those are exactly the words that USBGA champion Ron Plath, from Portland wants to hear. Ron is involved with First Tee, a national program that provides young people of all backgrounds and physical levels an opportunity to develop life enhancing values such as confidence, perseverance, and judgment through golf and character education.

"Robby represents all that the program promotes," remarked Plath. "When I first met Robby, it was a summer sports camp for visually impaired or blind youth. Being blind myself, I didn't see his swing, but I heard the solid hits on the ball and knew that this kid had potential. He was hitting the ball like any golfer, not a beginner."

Robby attributes his experience and love of the sport to his dad and granddad. Growing up in Shelton, Washington, they would take Robby along when they went golfing. They taught him to be independent and confident in his abilities. Robby experienced

blindness very young. A brain tumor put pressure on his optic nerve at only five months old.

Robby is just one of many youth who will be attending the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Scramble for Sight and Golf Clinic for Visually Impaired Youth at The Reserve on Monday September 24<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 10:00 am. Youth from both the Oregon and Washington Schools for the Blind, as well as low vision youth from local special needs education will attend the event for some hands on instruction in the sport of golfing. Plath is instrumental in setting up the golf clinic for visually impaired youth.

"I fully imagine that Robby will be at the event not only as a participant, but also as a guide for fellow students," remarked Adrienne Fernandez Stout, Volunteer Recreation Coordinator at the Washington School for the Blind. "Robby is great with other kids. He's always encouraging them, placing his hand on their shoulder and guiding them. He's an inspiration to others."

The Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Scramble for Sight and Junior Golf Clinic for Visually Impaired Youth, takes place at 10:00 am Monday, Sept 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at The Reserve's North Course in Aloha. The event raises funds to support sight and hearing assistance programs provided to people in need throughout Oregon. This event draws golfers from all facets of the community, including local Lions.

The Junior Golf Clinic also tees off at 10:00 am at The Reserve. Low vision and blind youth will receive guidance and reassurance as they learn hitting, putting and chipping at the course. For many, this learning could be an introduction to a life long exciting sport. Golf is a sport that may allow them to compete despite their vision loss, as proven by the many blind golfers who compete across the country in the United States Blind Golfers Association.

"Many organizations have golf tournaments these days," says Amber Kern, Executive

Director of OLSHF. “But I believe our tournament is unique and special. A major part of our charity event is the junior golf clinic which provides blind and visually impaired students the opportunity to spend the morning learning the thrills and challenges of the game from blind and sighted professionals who are volunteering their time to work closely with these children.”

The Scramble For Sight is one of the OLSHF’s largest annual fund raising events. Since 1959, the Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation has supported the 188 Lions Clubs throughout Oregon and operates the Lions Eye Bank at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland. The Foundation also provides financial assistance for eye and ear surgeries, recycles used eyeglasses and hearing aids and operates a children’s statewide low-vision clinic.

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**On the Internet:**

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