

## **Jennifer Johnson leaves stellar amateur golf career and makes professional debut in Syracuse**

Written by Donna Ditota, *The Post-Standard*  
July 30, 2010

Jennifer Johnson will make her professional debut in Syracuse this weekend. The former Arizona State star, who finished second at the NCAA championship and the U.S. Women's Amateur, decided to turn professional after one season at ASU.

She played in the U.S. Women's Open as an amateur and announced her intention to play as a pro after the tournament. She's out here on the Futures Tour in an attempt to prepare for the grind of the LPGA's Q-School.



"I've only played three tournaments this summer since college got out," she said. "So I just want to get a feel for what it's like to be in this environment and just get ready and be tournament-fresh."

Johnson said she knows many of her Futures Tour contemporaries from junior or college golf. Media accounts depict her as a good student at ASU, and Johnson acknowledged Thursday she enjoyed collegiate life.

"I just really wanted to work hard on my game," she said. "And I felt that being in school, having to worry about schoolwork and golf at the same time kind of took me away from golf a little bit. And that was mostly (what went into) my decision."

Based upon her initial inspection of Drumlins, Johnson said the golf course seemed to "set up pretty well for my draw." She described herself as "really excited to finally get started" with her professional career.

Johnson, who hails from Carlsbad, Calif., turns 19 on Monday -- the day after the Alliance Bank Golf Classic concludes.

Winning the tournament, she said, "would be a pretty good birthday present."

NOTES – Christian Brothers Academy junior Mary Fletcher is in the Alliance Bank field. Fletcher practiced at Drumlins, her home course, on Thursday and considered her course knowledge a calming factor. But she doesn't deny that when she arrives today for her 2 p.m. tee time, she'll be gripped by nerves.

"I'm excited. But I'm also a little nervous," Fletcher said. "I've been practicing a lot. I made a little bit of a swing change the other night and it's been working well. So I'm just looking forward to tomorrow."

Fletcher said she's met plenty of Futures Tour players this week that have been generous with advice: "They're very nice," she said, "and they're just giving me pointers on tomorrow: Stay calm and have fun."

Jillian Fraccola, of Manlius, will also be in the field. Fraccola tees off at 7:50 a.m. And Lori Atsedes, a long-time Futures Tour member from Ithaca, also has a 7:50 a.m. tee time. The Central New Yorkers will start from different tees.

....

Playing a summer sport, often with an unrelenting, searing sun overhead, underlines the importance of skin care. Futures Tour player Ryann O'Toole has done public service announcements on the significance of sunscreen.

"You need a golf ball-sized amount of sunscreen on you at least twice a day when you're playing," O'Toole said. "We're out here all day, every day, dead of the summer. It's hot. You really need to protect your skin. It's so important that you put the sunscreen on."

Donna Ditota can be reached at 470-2208 or [dditota@syracuse.com](mailto:dditota@syracuse.com).