

Casullo takes a swing at South Carolina, accepting prestigious golf scholarship



By Jeff Doner

Marc Casullo knew he loved golf right from the first time his dad entered him into a tournament at the age of eight.

After that win, now aged 17, and an upcoming graduate at Villanova College in King City, Casullo is taking his game to the United States on a scholarship at Francis Marion College in South Carolina.

He first visited the school in January and things fell into place from there. He committed to them in February, officially signing his commitment in April to mark another achievement in his young career.

"It felt awesome because there were a lot of schools I was looking at, but they were more in the northern area," he said. "They didn't really work out for me and then once I heard about this school and all the good stuff about it, I made my decision. Being able to be recognized at that level was pretty cool."

He admitted that the harsh winter up here in Canada may have influenced his decision just a bit, with the thought of being able to practice outside on the beautiful golf courses in South Carolina year-round drawing him in.

However, he was quick to point out that there were many other obvious factors that led to making his final decision to go there for golf and to study business.

"The weather being nicer was another thing, but having the opportunity to become a better player and seeing a lot more playing time were other factors," he said.

"When I met the coach, he really drew me in. You can tell he's a motivator who really pushes the players on the team and puts us in very competitive tournaments to show how well we stack up against other teams."

When he began at Villanova four years ago, his Grade 9 year ended without much success on the course. Grade 10, however, ended on a positive note, which then snowballed into a very successful year in Grade 11 when he placed sixth overall at OFSAA.

He said 2013 was definitely a turning point for his career. After his strong showing at OFSAA, he went to the US juniors in California and then played in the Canadian Amateur in Victoria, the biggest amateur tournament in the country, where he was the youngest player.

Then this year, he closed out his time at Villanova with a CISAA individual title at the end of May.

?That felt great because I missed OFSAA this year for the first time in three years and I was telling everyone that this was my last chance to win the CISAA title, so I put my mind into that,? he said. ?To win it was pretty awesome. To close out my career like that at Villanova was just the cherry on the cake.?

As well as playing with the team at Villanova, Casullo is also a member at Summit Golf and Country Club, where he is coached by Canadian pro golfer, Ian Leggatt.

?I wouldn't say all my successes came after working with him, but he's someone that's just so professional and he says it how it is,? he said. ?He helped me get into a different mindset with the game. He has been a pretty big part of my success.?

When asked about his future goals and aspirations, Casullo spoke of taking his golf game pro, but said it's important to be realistic and not get too carried away.

?It's easy for anyone to say they want to move on to the PGA tour, but that's going to be a hard thing to do,? he said. ?It's mainly about going through each process and now that I'm going to College, I've just got to compete there, do as well as I can and see where I go next. I'm just going to keep striving to do as well as I can.?

If he doesn't make it pro, the soft-spoken Aurora resident said he loves teaching the game to kids and will always look at getting into the teaching/instruction side of things.

He'll soon be heading down to South Carolina for his new adventure, which he said can be traced back to that first tournament he won nine years ago.

?It just kept growing from there,? he said. ?I have found that it's a tough sport mentally, but it always keeps me coming back for more.?