

Three Time Winner

St. Joseph's Brad Nurski was a favorite to win his third Missouri Amateur last month at Dalhousie GC in Cape Girardeau. Being a favorite did not mean winning would be easier. Nurski faced down several serious threats during the week long event. Now for a little "deep background" on his story.

The Pony Express ended more than 150 years ago when the railroads replaced them. Today a 'conductor' named Nurski on the BNSF railroad could have been a rider on that Pony Express as it left St. Joseph, headed for Sacramento. Today he assembles freight trains going in all directions from St. Joseph.

At 5-10 and 170 pounds, Nurski looks like a muscular lightweight with a low body fat number. Watch him hit a golf ball, however, and you see he is a boomer, able to hit 300 yard drives. Early in his career he relied on the long game as the strongest part of his game. Brad's game is now complete, able to strategize, hit the "feel shots" around the greens and putt well.

Beginning golf at age 8, Mike Habermehl has been his teacher/coach at Fairview GC and now at St. Joe CC. Nurski credits Habermehl as one of the people who have most helped him develop his golf game. While at Missouri Western the two went to Hickory Hills CC in Springfield to see head pro Sam Reynolds. In a typically Sam Reynolds concise evaluation, he said Brad had "fast hands; he'll be all right." High praise from Sam Reynolds. Wisely, Mike has not tried to change anything about Brad's golf swing. Just the fine tuning aspects, like alignment, finesse things around the greens and putting.

Nurski's successes date back to high school at Benton in St. Joseph. Missouri All-State in 1997, he played four years at Missouri

Western, making MIAA All-Conference his last three years.

After graduation he turned pro in 2002 and gave the Florida mini-tours a whirl. Playing 'about 40 rounds' with Bubba Watson may have been a good influence on his game.

After his sponsor money ran out he returned to St. Joe in 2003 and applied for reinstatement as an amateur. Receiving his amateur status back he played in his first Missouri Amateur at Ozark's Millwood Golf & Raquet Club in 2005. He lost his first round match to B.J. Curry, a two-time Mo Am medalist and winner of five MGA events. The fact that it took 23 holes for Curry to prevail was noticed.

His 2018 resume shows the Curry match, although a loss, was the beginning of a great amateur career. He is currently tied for 8th at 34-9 with Jim Holtgrieve on the list of all-time leaders of matches won in the Missouri Amateur.

What is his secret? Tiger-like gym workouts and hours-long ball striking sessions? No, neither of those. In fact, Brad takes about 3-4 months off in the winters, starting up again in March. Eating healthy and stretching, along with playing 9 holes after hitting on the range, followed by half-hour putting is his standard practice day

The calendar is of the utmost importance in the lives of Brad and his wife, Danielle, a nurse at the Mosaic Health Center in St. Joseph. Danielle was also a Benton Cardinal, but she and Brad didn't date in high school. That came after he returned home from Florida in '03. The family chores, including caring for Jaxon, 14, and Truman, 5, are well organized months ahead of time. Brad and Jaxon will team up for the first time in the MGA Parent-Child tournament at The Club at Porto Cima in Sunrise Beach this month.

Undoubtedly, Brad Nurski has the heart of

a champion; confident, unflappable, determined. In this year's Missouri Amateur at Dalhousie he faced adversity several times and stayed with his game plan, confident that if he just kept keepin' on, it would work out.

His second round match against Springfield's Eric Ecker (SEC Champion in 1998) was an example. One down early on, Brad lost the 15th hole to be only one up with 3 to go. He matched Eric's birdie on #17 and they halved #18.

Brad's third round match tested his patience to stick with his game plan even more. Chris Martin of Rolla birdied #18 to take it to the 19th hole, where Nurski won. Before that, neither had been more than 2 up.

His quarterfinal match with Cape's Brevin Giebler was perhaps his most likely chance to panic, as he was 3 down after 8 holes. The tee was moved up on #9 making it a driveable par 4. Nurski boomed it on the green from 307 yards, two putted for birdie and 'righted the ship' as he says. A 2&1 win over Brevin was the final result.

The final match was with Brooks Jungbluth, 18, a fellow St. Joe CC member and the 2018 Class 3A state high school champion from LeBlond. Brooks established an early lead of two up through 11 and still had a one up lead after 19. Nurski kept to his game plan throughout, hitting all 18 greens in the morning round, continuing to apply pressure on Brooks, who made putts to gain his slim lead. In the end Nurski won 3&1, winning his 3rd title in fourteen years.

Next year at Hickory Hills CC in Springfield there will be a spotlight on him as Brad is one win away from joining the elite group of Watson, Cochran, Bliss, Jackson and Manion, all of whom have won four Missouri Amateur titles. With his resume, being in the spotlight on a big stage is just fine for Brad Nurski.



Nurski in 2017 with son Truman

The Nurski resume

USGA events

2014 U.S. Mid-Amateur Medalist & Runner-up
3 times U.S. Four-Ball (with Skip Berkmeier)
4 times U.S. State Team

MGA Championship Wins

2006 Missouri 4 Ball (with Mark Korell)
2010 Missouri Amateur
2011 Missouri 4 Ball (with Brian Haskell)
2011 Missouri Mid-Amateur
2012 Missouri Stroke Play
2013 Missouri Mid-Amateur
2016 Missouri 4 Ball (with Brian Haskell)
2017 Missouri Amateur
2017 Jefferson City Memorial
2018 Missouri Amateur

Missouri Amateur Match Play record: 34-9

2nd in qualifying in 2009 and 2010.

3rd in qualifying in 2016.

11 times on the Hieronymus Cup team.



Brooks Jungbluth, Cord Dombrowski & Nurski