

Salina Public Schools USD 305

1511 Gypsum Ave.
Salina, KS 67401
(785)309-4700
usd305.com



Media Release

Date: August 27, 2024

Contact: Jennifer Camien, Director of Communications, (785) 309-4723

Ashtyn Hooper's Unstoppable Spirit Takes Second Place in NAOAGA Junior Championship



At just nine years old, Ashtyn Hooper stepped onto the golf course at the North American One-Armed Golfers Association (NAOAGA) Junior Championship in Easley, South Carolina, with a determination beyond her years. Familiar with transforming challenges into opportunities, Ashtyn played her way to a 2nd place finish in the tournament that brought together competitors with upper limb differences from across the United States. Ashtyn's success is a powerful reminder that the game of golf – and life itself – is open to all, no matter the obstacles in their path.

Ashtyn, who is missing her left hand, has been around the game of golf her entire life. Her dad is Jason Hooper, head golf coach at South High School. She began at local practice facilities, increasing her strength to swing the club. She moved on to playing shortened holes and participated in First Tee classes at the Salina Municipal Golf Course.

"We tried to keep it fun and let her go at her own pace," explained Jason. "We wanted her to enjoy playing the game." Her family was there to help creatively with challenges. "We made homemade prosthetics to help her attach her arm to the club, which allows her to swing with both arms," said Jason.

Practice isn't just about golf at the Hoopers. Jason shared, "Ashtyn is enjoying just being a kid and participating in a wide variety of activities such as tumbling, basketball, volleyball, singing and theatre. She loves being a student at Coronado Elementary School."

The summer trip to SC was a highlight for Ashtyn's family. "It's been such a blessing to discover all the opportunities that exist for kids with physical impairments," said Jason. "It has been so much fun for her and our entire family to meet other people similar to Ashtyn and watch them excel in life, just as she has."

And Ashtyn couldn't agree more! "The trip was amazing," she added. "I was so excited when I got second place and I can't wait to do it again!"

###