

LOs Plath inducted into Blind Golf Hall of Fame

Published by the Portland Tribune on Wednesday, August 08, 2012 | Written by [Matt Sherman](#) |

The local golfer is the first visually impaired individual to receive the honor



Photo by: JEFFERY BASINGER - Lake Oswego's Ron Plath was recently inducted into the Blind Golf Hall of Fame for his playing career.

Lake Oswego golfer Ron Plath has had plenty of career highlights. The golfer, who was diagnosed with macular degeneration when he was 26 years old and is legally blind, has won multiple United States Blind Golf Association National Championships and the 2008 World Championship in Northern Ireland.

And while Plath is still very active with his playing career, he recently received an honor which commemorates his stellar career as well as his work promoting the sport of blind golf when he was inducted into the Blind Golf Hall of Fame.

“I was very surprised when they even told me that I was nominated. This was never something that I had in my mind when I first started playing,” Plath said.

Plath's induction makes him the first individual who is visually impaired, as opposed to being entirely blind, to enter the Hall of Fame.

A ceremony was held on Tuesday in New York, honoring Plath and two other inductees but Plath could not attend as he is currently dealing with a recent back injury he suffered while playing in a tournament in Canada.

However, he will be honored at a ceremony next year when Oregon hosts the Blind Golf Open Championship, an event that occurs every two years and features some of the best blind golfers from around the world.

Plath had the opportunity to help bring the blind golf equivalent of the U.S. Open to Oregon this year but wanted to hold off until next year to host an international event, which will likely be held at Stone Creek in Oregon City.

“So many of the friends I have made are international players. I've played all over the world and nothing beats Oregon. I wanted those friends to come here and witness the beauty of Oregon. Even though they can't see, they know and actually can have a better understanding than someone with sight,” Plath said.

Plath has worked hard to build up blind golf over the years. He has worked with First Tee, hosting clinics at the Lake Oswego Municipal Golf Course and at Stone Creek and helped found the Northwest Blind Golf Foundation six years ago.

“When I first started losing my sight it was always my hope to keep playing but I wasn't sure if it was possible. When I saw that completely blind people were competing, it was comforting to know that this was something I could do forever,” Plath said.

He has also been extremely successful on the course. As his sight slowly deteriorated over the years to the point where he had to give up driving and his job as an educator in the Beaverton School District, his golf game didn't miss a beat.

He is quick to credit his coaches who help ready him for each shot but, ultimately, Plath is the one with the club in his hands and the nerves during tournaments.

“It's the ultimate team experience. I hit the ball but someone has to find it for me and help with the anxiety that comes with competitive golf,” Plath said.

This year, Plath was putting together a terrific season. He has played in four tournaments and carded a 73, his lowest round as a professional blind golfer.

But, less than a month later, Plath's back flared up which has forced him to take a temporary respite.

“Golf can be tough. I was really going well and then three weeks later I'm on the floor,” Plath said.

But Plath knows the setback is temporary. He bounced back from knee surgery less than two years ago as well.

He will have plenty of time to fine-tune his game for next year's Open event in Oregon where he will be honored for his Hall of Fame induction and will likely be one of the favorites in the tournament as well.

