



***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

May 12, 2014

## 2014 Champion's Corner

With 2013 Defending Champion, Justin McLearn



Justin, on behalf of the Endicott College Invitational, our valued sponsors and supporting fans, we are delighted to not only have you here for a pre-ECI interview – and as co-chairman, no less – but also to have you back once again in arguably one of the best fields of amateur golf.

It was 2008 when we had our last first-time champion at the ECI. Your body of work and dedication over the years have certainly paid off for you, and your incredible round last year at Red Tail was nothing short of dominating. You are a valued member of this select group and we are looking forward to having you back year after year. So let's get down to it!

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MZ: Justin, the ECI is an opportunity for players to put on display their current state of their game of golf amongst good friends and past teammates. How important is it for you to put on a good showing at this event?

**JM: First off Marc, let me be the first to welcome everyone to another ECI. This tourney is always one I look forward to. It's my goal every year to put on a good showing at this event. Last year, although we were missing some great players, was one of my best years, winning the ECI and UPS Open with fellow ECI'er Carl "prior obligations" Bean. I plan on another strong showing this year.**

MZ: You've at long last, earned your first ECI crown and will be defending your title this year at a new venue. How will you prepare now that the target is on your back?

**JM:** The prep for this year's tourney I must admit is lacking. I've got some new things going on in my life that unfortunately; my prep takes a back seat. With that being said, I will be ready.

MZ: Three of the previous four ECI champions are in this year's field, with Brian Gill potentially not being able to play. Is your game and strategy prepared to overcome those players, especially since they each have multiple titles at this event?

**JM:** You know Marc, I don't concern myself with the other players. They're good players and even better guys, but if I play my game, there's one that can compete with me. My game plan will be the same as always, keep everything in front of me and minimize mistakes.

MZ: This year's event starts a new era at a new venue; Shining Rock. You've played it and several have not. Does playing this course before yield an advantage for you?

**JM: I don't know if I'd necessarily say it's a big advantage. Shining Rock is a great track that I think everyone will enjoy. Lots of risk/reward holes. There should be some fireworks with lots of birdies to be had.**

MZ: If you had to choose two players that will be in contention this year, who are they? In your opinion, who has the greatest chance of winning their first ECI?

**JM: As I said earlier, we have some great players in this field. It wouldn't surprise me either way who walks away with the trophy. But like I said, I'd be very surprised if I didn't come out on top this year again. I've had some real good matches with Derek Sharron, my 4 ball partner that has me really prepared for events like these.**



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MZ: It seems that just about every amateur golfer is involved in some type of fun event every year with friends our colleagues. Is the ECI something you always have circled on your calendar?

**JM: The ECI is definitely one of my marquee events. It's always a great start to my tourney season. With work busy as ever, I've really given up on the thought of playing in state and us amateur events. My biggest tourneys are in the fall. Last year I committed to playing in a few four ball tournaments with fellow ECI'er DShar as well as the UPS Open in October with Bean. Hopefully I can get back into other state events but right now, I'm very content with my schedule.**

MZ: From what I've observed, your golf game has improved since college, would you agree? Why?

**JM: I think that's a fair assessment. I think it' a combination of playing more and working with Tom Waters. Having access to such a great player and teacher has been a huge benefit for me.**

MZ: What's going on off the golf course, Justin?

**JM: Off the course, life is busy as ever. I started a new job in February which requires some travel so I've been on the road a ton. Work is my top priority as of right now, hopefully that will slow down before pool season gets in full gear. Oh and there's also this thing called playoff hockey. I'm not sure you've heard of it, but it's kind of a big deal when your team is the best in the league. Someday maybe you'll know the feeling of watching Lord Stanley being lifted in your city. Looking forward to seeing everyone and take your Blue Blanc and Rouge and shove it up your ass! Fore Right.....**

MZ: Thanks, Justin! We are looking forward to seeing you on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual ECI. Best of luck!

**JM: Merci!**