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# Watch the Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals live on the Golf Channel

Brookfield's **Sarah Balding** will compete on golf's finest stage—Augusta National—this coming **Sunday, April 7 at 8am EST**

**AUGUSTA, GA (April 4, 2019)** - Being the President of your high school's Symphony Orchestra and competing at such a high level in golf may seem incongruous at first glance, but the two go hand-in-hand for 15-year-old Sarah Balding of Brookfield, Wisconsin. She's got the track record to prove it.

Whether she faces a ten foot slider on the final hole to make the cut, or must hit every note on her violin just perfectly, Sarah is more than comfortable with any kind of pressure.

"I have been playing golf since I was very young. We would go out as a family and play nine holes here and there. At first, I was never very interested; however, I began to take the sport seriously for the past four or five years," states Balding during a phone interview with the Wisconsin PGA.

Although her childhood consisted of living in Peoria (IL), Eau Claire—and even one year in Montana—Balding is thriving during her freshman year as a varsity golfer on the girls' team at Brookfield Central and on the Wisconsin PGA Junior Tour circuit. Her 2018 calendar consisted of statewide, regional and national competitions, weekly off-season practices, and lessons with swing coach and PGA Professional, Chuck Wood. Highlights included a trip to the WIAA Girl's State Championship recording a 4th place finish on her team coached by Brian Scrobel. Balding accumulated over 400 points as an individual on the WPGA Junior Tour Player of the Year rankings over seven events. Her decorated golf career thus far landed her the *number one individual* ranking via Wisconsin.golf in the Girl's Class of 2022.

Sarah actually missed her first varsity meet to compete at the Drive, Chip and Putt Regional this past September at Whistling Straits. With her last year of DCP eligibility, she knew she had a job to do. Ultimately, Balding found herself in the middle of a playoff for the coveted trip to Augusta National. Her chipping was put to the test after both Balding and Shannyn Vogler (Illinois) striped drives down the middle. Sarah came away victorious and the waiting game came to an end—that was it. She was headed to Augusta National as one of the 80 finalists from all over the continent! For results and a recap on last year's Regional at Whistling Straits, [click here](#).

"I am obviously looking forward to the competition, but also really excited to be on the course. My family is coming to support me, in fact my sister Emily (a college golfer at DePauw University in Indiana) is flying in before we head down. We're going a few days early to practice on greens—practice on real grass," chuckles Sarah. "Real grass is hard to come by for Wisconsinites this time of year. I get to go to the practice round on Monday, and then we'll probably play somewhere on Tuesday before we head back home."

During the Drive, Chip and Putt National Championship, finalists are permitted to use a caddie, and Sarah is looking forward to employing swing coach Chuck Wood. Sounds like the two already have a game plan in the works. Yes, a few butterflies are expected as she puts her skills to the test against the world's best in front of 5,000+ spectators—all while competing at golf's holiest of grounds—but she's ready.

"Golf has taught me to approach problems in different ways. You can play the same (...) course a million times and you'll always have a different shot. You have to figure out how to perform your best in any situation coming your way. It's very similar to life," Sarah realizes. "You can only practice and prepare so much, but when it comes down to (it), you have to handle (things) as they come."

That's one good dose of medicine coming from a 15-year-old. Wise words we can all live by no matter what comes our way. Did you know Sarah will go straight from the Drive, Chip and Putt National Finals to the State Solo & Ensemble competition for her violin solo? She received a perfect score on her class A solo this past year. Yeah, we think Sarah's future is bright no matter the stage.

Written by: Erika Pirkle, PGA—Director of Player Development, Wisconsin PGA

**Make sure to tune into the Golf Channel for coverage starting at 8am EST/7am CST on Sunday, April 7. Best of luck to Sarah—we know you will represent Wisconsin well!**



# WISCONSIN PGA JUNIOR GOLF

## Get to know Wisconsin's Finalist—Sarah Balding

**Favorite Food:** "Fruit"

**Favorite TV Show:** "Grey's Anatomy"

**Favorite Subject:** "Science"

**In 10 years I see myself:** "either in medical school or graduating from medical school."

**Favorite golfer(s):** "My sister, Emily, my high school (Brookfield Central) teammates. Tiger Woods is my favorite PGA Tour professional."

**Quote I live by:** "I have this quote in the signature of my emails — 'Losers quit when they fail and winners fail until they succeed.'"

**Funniest High School teammate:** "CJ Romero. She is always cracking a joke."



Sarah Balding of Brookfield hits her tee shot in the driving skill portion of the playoff in the girls 14-15 division of the Drive, Chip and Putt regional finals at Whistling Straits.

Photo from Wisconsin.Golf photo / Gary D'Amato

**If I had a Superpower it would be:**

"Teleportation because I never want to be late. Teleportation would give me more time to either sleep in or get ready."

**Any golf superstitions?:** "I actually don't have any, which is probably a good thing."

**Favorite Hobby Outside Golf:** "Playing violin."

**My swing coach is:** "Chuck Wood, PGA"

**Why should someone sign up for DCP?**

"I think Drive Chip and Putt is a great opportunity to work on different skills in your game. You kind of focus on the three main skills (driving, chipping and putting) as building blocks. (...) teaches you what you need to work on and you get immediate feedback. I would recommend testing your skills in competition to any new golfer. It's fun!"



Right: Sarah poses during the Regional qualifying stage in Sep 2018 (photo courtesy Brookfield Central Athletics)

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# 2019 DRIVE, CHIP AND PUTT

## SIGN UP TODAY!



Drive, Chip and Putt is for every kid, everywhere. Boys and girls ages 7 through 15 can sign up for one local qualifier to get started. The event focuses on the fundamentals—each participant tests his or her skills in driving, chipping and putting to earn points. All participants receive a tee gift before the competition, and it is FREE to enter!

### **2019-2020 Wisconsin Qualifying:**

**Local Qualifying:** (top 3 in each age division advance)

May 19th—Erin Hills Golf Course, Hartford

June 15th—Whistling Straits Golf Course, Kohler

June 24th—The Oaks Golf Course, Cottage Grove

July 1st —Green Bay Country Club, Green Bay

July 8th —Reedsburg Country Club, Reedsburg

July 16th —Edgewood Golf Course, Big Bend

July 23rd—The Legend at Merrill Hills, Waukesha

August 1st—Eau Claire G&CC, Altoona

**Sub Regional Qualifying:** (top 2 in each age division advance)

August 3rd, University Ridge GC, Verona

August 9th, SentryWorld, Stevens Point

**Regional Qualifying:** (the top junior in each age division advances)

September 28th, Interlachen CC, Edina, Minnesota

**Finals:** (top 80 juniors nationwide)