



Gold Coaster, Hugo Smith, a junior member at RACV Royal Pines and a student at Somerset College at the age of just 8, can now also be referred to as a World Champion.

In July, Hugo held off some of the brightest youngsters in the game to win the Uswing Mojing Junior World Golf Championship (previously Callaway World Junior Championships) for 7–8-year-olds near San Diego in California and in doing so joins some great names in performing with distinction in that age group in the history of this event.

In case the significance of this event is in question, that none other than Scottie Scheffler finished 5th in the same age-group in 2005, tells the story of an event that carries some weight in the game.

Higher age-groups in the same event have seen the likes of Tiger Woods and Australia's very own Jason Day win the event and so young Hugo has achieved something very special just 2.5 years after starting his golfing journey.

But not only would Hugo win the World Junior Championship, just a week or so later he would win again in yet another junior event, the FCG Callaway World Championship in Rancho Mirage in California, defeating many of those he had beaten in San Diego.

Clearly Hugo loves the game and the great opportunities and experiences it has already provided.

Hugo has other interests including motor bikes and horse riding on their acreage property at Tallai in the Gold Coast hinterland, but he is clearly focused on pursuing his dream of a career in golf. "I would like to take up motor cross racing at some stage but that might have to be put aside for now," added Hugo. "I love it (golf) and come down here to Royal Pines almost every day after school.

I like the practice facilities here and have played the green and gold courses quite often, on my own normally so am looking forward to playing in some of the junior competitions." The strength of Hugo's game would appear to be his length from the tee for one so young (he averages around 200 metre drives) which many of us in a much higher age bracket would kill for.

While Somerset College has occasionally included golf amongst its sports programs, it is not the case at present but there have been one or two standouts from that school who are doing impressive things in the game, including Sarah Hammet who has recently signed to attend the golf program at the University of Southern California.

When looking ahead to a possible golfing career, Hugo is focusing on an initial goal of getting his handicap down to 9 by the end of this year. His clear determination and skillset suggest that this is a highly attainable objective, even for someone approaching the age of nine.

Foot note – Hugo has already secured a handicap of 8.3 as a result of a couple of competition from the blue tees at RACV Royal Pines including a round of 81 and he is still just 8.

**(please note this is an extract from an interview conducted by journalist Bruce Young and the commentary and quotes are a direct copy from that interview).**

The Gold Coast District Golf Association would like to thank Bruce Young for allowing us to use his interview for this post.