

2022 TEXAS FIRST TEE HICKORY CHAMPIONSHIP

ONION CREEK CLUB

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022

Friday, March 25, 2022.

Seven of the nine Texas First Tee chapters sent a four-person team to Onion Creek Club in Austin for the second Texas First Tee Hickory Championship. Only the El Paso and West Texas chapters were missing.

The format was two two-person teams playing in a scramble, with the cumulative score of the two teams being the chapter's tournament score. Handicaps played no role, so this was a gross score format. At the end of the day, the Dallas and Fort Worth chapters were tied at four-under par. FOUR UNDER PAR!!!! For kids playing with antique, hickory-shaft golf clubs. THESE KIDS CAN PLAY!!!



The Dallas team... Texas Champions and custodians of *The Texas Cup* for the second year.

I-r: _Erik Ramos, Zach Lewallen, Brooks Freitas, and Jacob Lewallen



I-r, Fort Worth's Lauren Gatsos, Kaisone Chanthapanya, Victoria Farkas and Ethan Amendarez

There was a sudden-death playoff, starting at the 100-yard marker on the eighteenth fairway, to determine a champion. The Dallas team selected Jacob Lewallen and Brooks Freitas who would go up against Fort Worth's Laurie Gatsos and Ethan Armendarez.

While the four players, accompanied by Onion Creek head pro Lee Huntley, walked back to the 100-yard marker to start the playoff, many of those waiting up on the green recalled that in 2021, Jacob Lewallen's brother, Zach, put his second shot on this par-five hole on the green to set up a birdie and a Dallas win in that inaugural tournament. And "up" is the correct descriptive word for this hole, since there is a roughly thirty-foot rise in elevation in those last one-hundred yards, making the green surface invisible to the players and creating a VERY difficult golf shot. In fact, none of these four outstanding golfers hit the green, so the playoff now became a chip-off from the right side of the green.

Jacob Lewallen of Dallas hit first, and his ball lay about ten feet to the right of the green, hole high. Brooks Freitas's ball was right on line, but short, and rolled back down the hill fronting the green.

Dallas would be playing Jacob's ball.

Fort Worth's Lauren Gatsos was next, and she hit a good shot, but short. Finally, Ethan Amendarez's attempt ended up a few yards behind the Dallas ball of Jacob Lewallen.

Fort Worth was away.

Lauren hit a very good pitch, but a touch off-line, ending up about four or five feet above the hole. Ethan misjudged his shot and the ball fell short of the green. They would be using Lauren's ball. No easy putt! Jacob and Brooks both hit very good chips and they selected Jacobs' ball, about 15 inches below the hole. Both Fort Worth players missed their putts, Ethan's ball lipping out to the right, and Lauren's ball just missing left. Jacob Lewallen rammed his putt into the hole, winning the tournament for the Dallas team. The Dallas chapter would keep the Texas Cup for another year.

Players, coaches, and parents joined the players competing in the Onion Creek Hickory Classic in

the Onion Creek dining room immediately after the playoff for an awards ceremony with the Dallas First Tee team, having had custody of the prestigious TEXAS CUP for the past year, retaining the cup for a second year. Gold, silver and bronze medals on presentation ribbons were awarded to the first three teams, and all members of those three teams selected a hickory-shaft golf club, every one of which had been (refurbished and put into playable condition by Onion Creek member and antique golf club restoration expert John Drake). Every participant in the tournament went home with a golf book signed by Texas authors Ben Crenshaw, Barbara Puett, Curt Sampson and Kevin Robbins. Then, everyone settled back and were treated to an outstanding presentation by noted golf instructor and Texas Golf Hall of Fame member Chuck Cook. Mr. Cook, it turns out, is the sixth member of the Texas Golf Hall of Fame to serve as speaker at this tournament, joining previous speakers Joe Black, Charlie Epps, Bill Eschenbrenner, Robin Burke, and Kathy Whitworth.

Pete League, Tournament Director

