

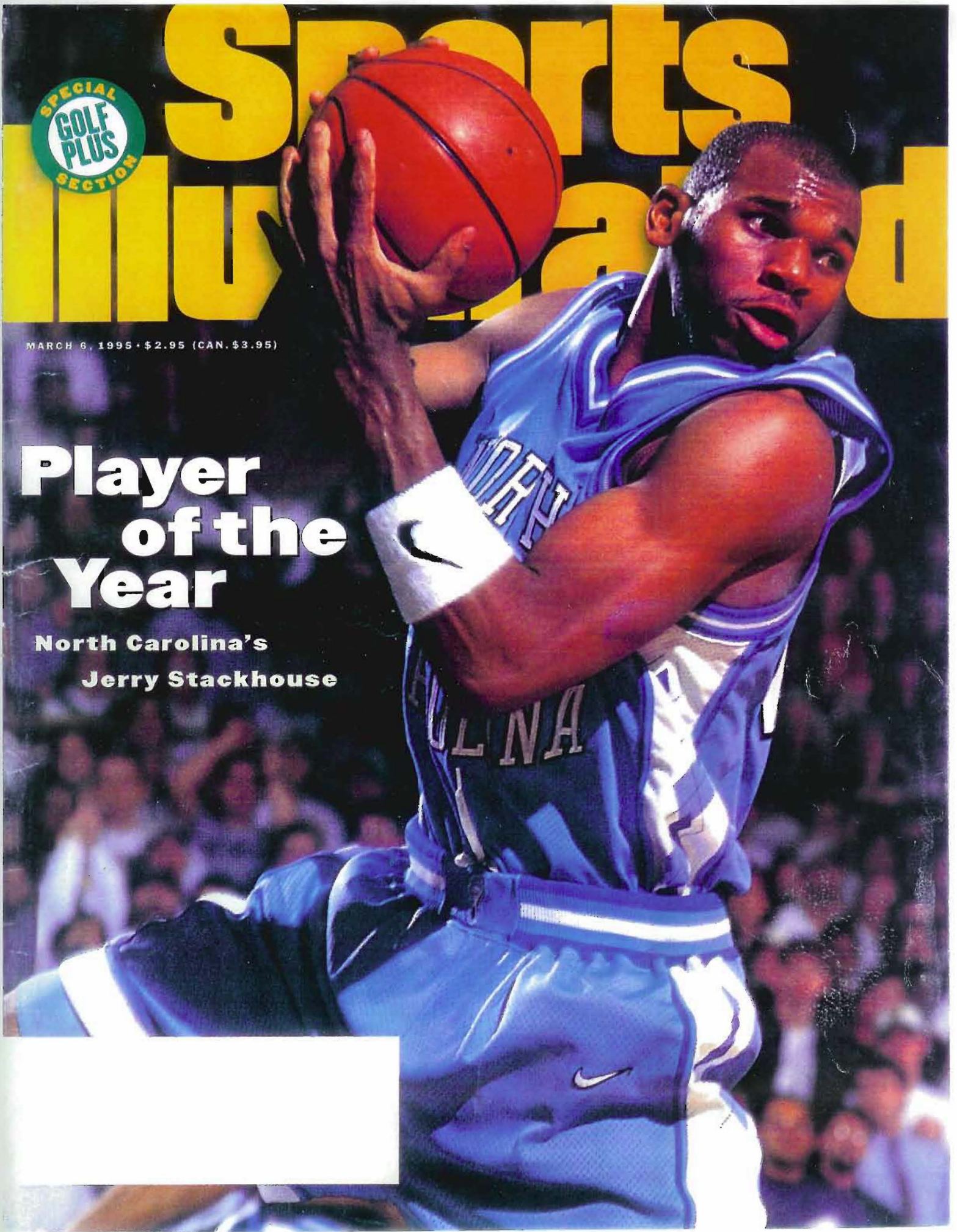
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Player of the Year

North Carolina's
Jerry Stackhouse





It's All Relative

For Josh McCumber and Robert Floyd, success at golf means filling the formidable spikes of their famous predecessors • by Rick Lipsey

STANFORD'S Tiger Woods isn't the only college freshman golfer whose career will likely be judged a failure unless he becomes a PGA Tour superstar. University of Florida freshmen Robert Floyd and Josh McCumber are burdened with similarly lofty expectations. These Gators are not only the nation's next-best freshmen after Woods, but also next-generation family members of famous touring pros. Robert is the younger of Ray Floyd's two sons, and Josh is the second of Mark McCumber's three nephews.

Excellent bloodlines may be a curse.

With the exception of Tom Morris Jr., who, like his father, won four British Opens between 1861 and 1872, and Willie Park Jr., who won two British Opens (in 1887 and '89) to his father's four (between 1860 and '75), no next-generation descendant of an eminent golfer has ever been nearly as successful as his predecessor.

"I always encouraged my boys to play golf, but only for fun," says Ray Floyd, whose other son, Ray Jr., is a sophomore at Wake Forest and has yet to crack his team's starting five. "I've told them all along that it's overwhelming to try to sur-

pass or even be as good as a relative who's been successful in any profession. There have been so many kids—Nicklaus, Snead, even Mantle—who've tried, and they all failed. The pressures are almost unbearable. It's going to take somebody with great desire to succeed, somebody who strives not to be equal, but better."

That description fits Robert and Josh, determined teenagers who desperately want to escape their familial shadows and someday win slews of their own PGA Tour trophies. Those shadows are imposing. On the PGA Tour, Ray Floyd, 52, has won 22 titles, including a Masters, a U.S. Open and two PGAs, and more than \$5 million. On the Senior tour he has nine wins and \$2.7 million in earnings. McCumber, 43, has 10 Tour victories, including last year's Tour Championship, and \$4.5 million in earnings.

"No one's ever done it," Robert says of filling the shoes of a famous golfing relative. "I use that as motivation." Says Josh, "It's a challenge because lots of people have tried and failed. That makes it easier for me, though, because it gives me a goal to channel my energy towards."

Besides desire, Robert and Josh have little in common. Whereas Robert listens to 2 Live Crew and Boyz II Men, Josh prefers Tom Petty and classical music. Robert plays air guitar. In high school Josh was a concert violinist and pianist who earned money playing weddings in a string quartet called the Mozart Minors.

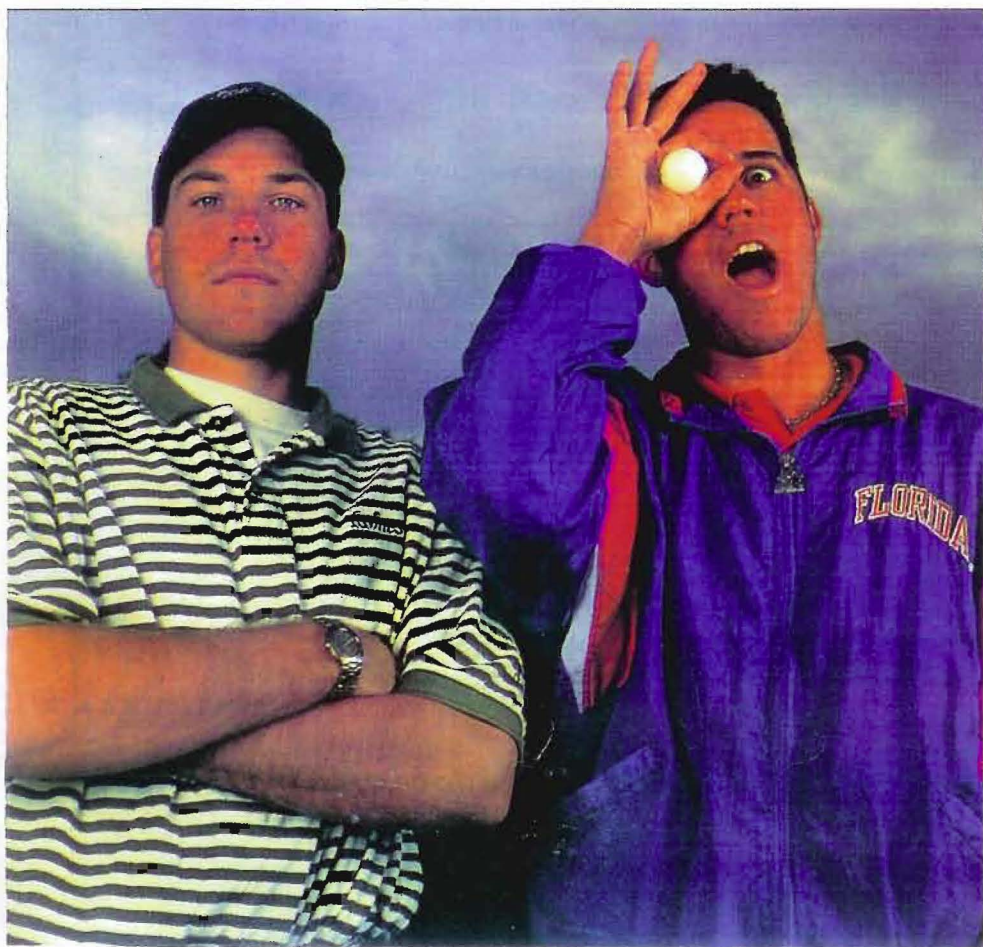
Robert is a quick-witted prankster who loves the spotlight. Last July, after he won the American Junior Golf Association's Tournament of Champions, he gave a lighthearted acceptance speech at the awards ceremony. "Rob cracked everybody up," says Chris Haack, the AJGA's assistant executive director. "Most kids are nervous in those settings, but not Rob. The only other junior I've ever seen with so much personality was Phil Mickelson."

Josh, Robert's polar opposite, is quiet, meditative and mature beyond his years. "Last fall I was unhappy with the team's effort and focus," says Buddy Alexander, the men's golf coach at Florida. "I told the team if they wanted to see a perfect example of how to act, they should follow Josh around campus for a few days. Do exactly as he does. It was most unusual to tell a team to follow a freshman's example. But he's 18 going on 29."

Last week Robert and Josh discussed

A study of opposites: McCumber, left, is quiet and reserved, while Floyd is a constant cutup.

Photographs by Ben Van Hook



McCumber and Floyd

their dissimilarities while giving a visitor a tour of their adjacent dorm rooms. Josh's was tidy—his bed was made, his books shelved and his clothes neatly hung. Robert's looked as if a tornado had just passed through it. "He's Danny Noonan from *Caddyshack*, and I'm Ty Webb, Chevy Chase's part," explained Robert. "Both are great players, but they go their own ways. Danny's set on college, the quiet type. He's got one girl. Ty's the real smart-ass always searching for women."

"I am pretty straight and narrow," said Josh, who for several months has been dating a girl who goes to college in his hometown of Jacksonville. "I came here



Floyd blasted through the junior ranks, but McCumber (above) has fared better at Florida.

mansion in Miami Beach. At least once a day he speaks to his mother, Maria, and his father. "I miss my bed, my shower, our Jet Ski," he says. "Mostly, I miss Mom's spaghetti and tomato sauce. If the University of Miami had a golf team, I'd be there in a flash and living at home."

One thing Josh and Robert do share is an intimate familiarity with the PGA Tour. Like Josh's family, Mark McCumber's clan lives in Jacksonville, and Josh and Mark are particularly close. They even share a swing teacher, Mike Blackburn, who runs the McCumber Golf School. "I've always looked over Josh," says Mark. "I've gotten him equipment, let him caddy for me in Tour events. We used to play together in the father-child tournament at the Disney Classic."

Though Robert has never caddied for his dad, he has played with him in a few tournaments. Robert was in Ray's group in the 1994 Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Last March, Robert competed in the Doral-Ryder Open on a sponsor's exemption. He shot an eight-over-par 77-75-152 to miss the cut by four shots, while Ray, after sharing the first-round lead, finished 13th. Doral gave Robert another sponsor's exemption to compete in this week's Doral. He has high expectations. "I'm gunning for a top-10 finish," he says.

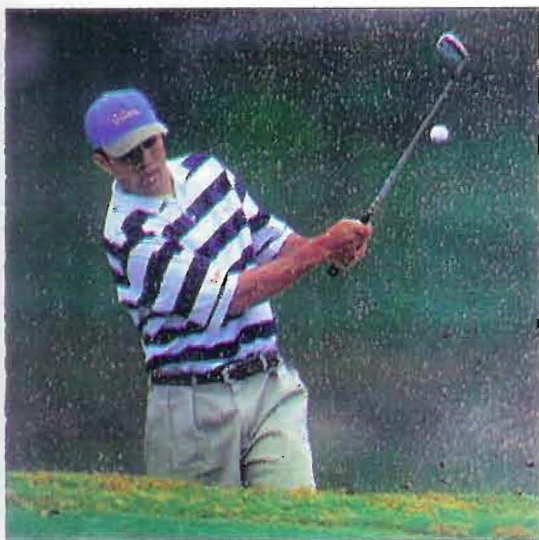
Robert arrived at Florida as the country's No. 1-ranked junior, and last fall he was named the AJGA's Male Junior Co-Player of the Year. Josh had had a solid if

unspectacular junior career, with only one national title. In the past six months their fortunes have flipped. Robert started preseason with a bout of the flu and bronchitis, and he had only one top-20 finish in four fall events. His dad helped him make some swing adjustments over Christmas break, and his game and confidence are on the mend. Two weeks ago he had his best college result, a tie for eighth in the Gator Invitational.

Josh has been the biggest surprise in college golf. In eight events he has five top-10 finishes for the 11th-ranked Gators. He has been a runner-up twice, his 71.7 stroke average is tops on the team, and, most impressive, he's the fifth-ranked collegian in the U.S. "My hours of work are paying dividends," says Josh, whose younger brother Kort, a high school senior, has received golf scholarship offers from several schools, including Florida. "I'm getting to the next level and making a name for myself for the first time."

Coach Alexander knows it's not yet time to get excited. His father, Skip, a Tour player in the late 1940s and early '50s, won three events and earned two Ryder Cup berths in just four years before plane-crash injuries ended his career. Buddy played the Tour for a few years in the early 1980s but, like most golfing offspring, failed to live up to his legacy.

"The determination of these two kids is mind-boggling," he says. "Robert's got his dad's fire, and Josh has Mark's intense work ethic. For now, I couldn't be more pleased. But what happens in the future, only time will tell." ■



to play golf and go to school. That's what I do. I go to bed early, get up early."

"Not me," said Robert, who has been unattached since he arrived at Florida. "The only thing I'll get up for in the morning is golf. My dad had some playboy in him, and we're similar like that. I guess I need a little taming down."

Their academic goals are clearly different. Josh, who has a 3.10 GPA, plans to stay at Florida for four years and earn a business degree. Neither Josh's uncle Mark nor his father, Jim, who serves as Mark's business agent and as president of McCumber Golf, a course-design firm, went to college. Josh wants to be the first male McCumber to get a college degree.

Ray Floyd dropped out of North Carolina after one semester, and Robert, who has a 2.56 GPA, isn't gung ho about getting a degree or being in Gainesville. Last fall he was the typical homesick freshman. The Floyds are a close-knit family, and Robert misses the comforts of his folks'