

# New Mexico Activities Association Student-Athlete Spotlight

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## Caldwell uses Golf as an Avenue in Life

By J.P. Murrieta, NMAA Sports Information Director

"It gives me a place where I can truly be myself."

That's how Farmington's Mari Caldwell views the game of golf. This high school sophomore has a very unique opportunity this summer. Caldwell has been selected to participate in the Joe Louis Barrow, Jr. Life Skills and Leadership Academy at Michigan State University. Caldwell is one of 96 students selected from a nationwide pool of applicants based on her golf ability and leadership skills.

"I'm very excited and can't wait," Caldwell replied when asked about the opportunity.

Caldwell participates in The First Tee of San Juan County golf program and plays on the Farmington High School golf team.

"Mari encapsulates everything The First Tee stands for," said Tom Yost, Programming Director of The First Tee of San Juan County. "We are so proud of her and how hard she has worked to earn this prestigious honor. She is a role model for the younger participants in our program and we are excited for her to have this experience!"

During the week-long event, participants will have the opportunity to develop and hone skills to become leaders in their chapters, schools and communities while experiencing championship golf and career exploration.

"I know there's going to be a lot of golf," said Caldwell. "There's going to be lectures and seminars about how to become an effective leader in your community."

Caldwell says she first got involved in golf because of her father, or maybe it was her mother. "One day my dad was going out to go golfing," explained Caldwell. "My mom was tired of all the kids, so she told him 'You can't go golfing unless you take Mari along.'"

She was hooked ever since and started taking lessons the next summer.

Along with golf, the 15-year old is involved with The Four Corners Bird Club and San Juan Gem and Mineral Society. She enjoys reading, writing, learning, and aspires to work as a teacher.

