



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Note to Editors: This press release has been updated. Matthew Cooper will be available for interviews Saturday, May 19 at the Duke University Golf Club.*

#### **14-YEAR-OLD PATIENT PLAYING IN DUKE CHILDREN'S CLASSIC**

**Durham, N.C.** – It is pretty amazing that 14-year-old Duke Children's patient Matthew Cooper will be playing a complete round of golf next weekend in the Duke Children's Classic Celebrity golf tournament, but it is even more amazing to know that Matthew is blind.

Matthew has been playing golf ever since he was a "little kid." Now 14 years old, Matthew is playing in the Duke Children's Classic Celebrity golf tournament May 19 and 20.

Matthew was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1996 in his home state California. He has been a patient at Duke Children's Hospital & Health Center since 1998. Matthew has undergone several chemotherapy treatments and has even gone blind as a result of the tumor.

A big sports fan and passionate about golf, after some research, Matthew discovered that golf is a very popular sport for the blind.

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### **Duke Children's Classic- page 2 of 3**

First Matthew participated in "Putt with the Stars" at the Duke Children's Classic, which is an event where patients have the opportunity to putt with the celebrities in the tournament.

In March of 2006, Matthew started taking golf lessons with a private instructor. Now he's ready to play the entire tournament.

The Cooper family originally lived in a small town in northern California. Matthew was being seen at Duke Children's in Durham, N.C. It was challenging making appointments. The Coopers had to drive five hours to the nearest airport in San Francisco, and then fly into Durham, but the care Matthew received at Duke Children's was worth the effort.

The Coopers decided to move to Durham in July of 2005. Duke Children's Hospital & Health Center offered Matthew more treatment options than the hospital close to his home. As an added bonus, Matthew had more opportunities to hone his golf skills in the Durham area.

"The main thing is by playing in the tournament, I'll get to talk to people and tell them that Duke is amazing," Matthew said.

Duke Children's Classic Celebrity golf tournament is May 19 and 20 at the Duke University Golf Club. In addition to the golf tournament, there will be lots of activities for families, including a KidZone from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with games, prizes, mascots, inflatables, big wheels, face painting, miniature horse and more. From 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. the "Putt with the Stars" event takes place, giving Duke Children's patients the opportunity to putt with celebrities and mascots. There is also a celebrity autograph session each day at 1:30 p.m. For a complete list of participating celebrities, please visit [www.dukechildrens.org](http://www.dukechildrens.org).

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### **Duke Children's Classic- page 3 of 3**

Matthew is just one of the many amazing patients at Duke Children's Hospital & Health Center. The Duke Children's Classic Celebrity golf tournament benefits all the patients at Duke Children's. Admission is free and open to the public.

#### **About Duke Children's Hospital & Health Center:**

Duke Children's Hospital & Health Center, located in Durham, N.C., is nationally ranked among the best in pediatric health care programs. Caring for children is our number one priority, from routine check-ups and immunizations to the treatment of life-threatening injuries and illnesses. At Duke Children's, we provide hope and the most advanced health care available. Offering innovative procedures including stem cell and bone marrow transplants as well as a variety of support services for our patients and their families, Duke Children's cares for children from around the world. For more information visit [www.dukechildrens.org](http://www.dukechildrens.org).

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