

# **BEST IN U.S.: Local water ski jumpers place first and second at Junior Open**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
July 6 2017 5:55 AM





**DOW** - Two Dow, Illinois, 15-year-old neighbors are the two best water ski jumpers in the country in the junior division.

Neighbors growing up at Lake Richard since infants, Brett Stackpole and Will Roberts out-performed six other skiers from around the world who qualified for this elite ski tournament in Mobile, Ala., featuring boys and girls in both the Under 17 and the Under 21 age groups.

In each event, only eight competitors were accepted to compete in the tournament and a field of 40 skiers from around the world competed. Stackpole and Roberts were first and second overall in the Under 17 age division in the ski jumping event.

With jumps of 170' in the preliminary round and 168' in the final round, Will won his first U.S. Junior Open title in his first year of participating. With the age cut-off rules,

Will has two more opportunities in this event in the U17 age group in 2018 and 2019. His victory qualifies him to participate in the most elite tournament in the world next year, the U.S. Masters. Held in the pristine Pine Mountain, Ga., resort called Callaway Gardens, the Masters features the best juniors and professional skiers in the world, with only seven participants accepted in each division.

Brett Stackpole, who turns 16 in just two months, unleashed a 159' jump in the finals, 18 feet further than his previous highest ranking score in that event. With professional instruction from Mark Lane of Bellingham, Wa., during the week prior to the tournament, Brett had a remarkable performance, shocking the field of skiers with a jump that surpassed the third place finisher by 5 feet.

For Brett and Will, their short four-month ski season makes it difficult to compete with the elite worldwide skiers, all of whom ski for nearly the entire year. Skiing together on a man-made lake in the farm country between Alton and Jerseyville, they practice together every day with sisters, Sammy Stackpole, Nellie Roberts and Will's brother, Edward. Up and comers, Brendan and Katie Schultz complete the field of skiers at Lake Richard, home to some of the best junior skiers in the country.





