USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J. (May 17, 2016) – Two-time U.S. Open champion Retief Goosen, of South Africa, has received a special exemption into the 116th U.S. Open Championship, which will be conducted June 16-19 at Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club.

Goosen, 47, won the 2001 U.S. Open at Southern Hills Country Club in Tulsa, Okla., holding at least a share of the lead after each round before defeating Mark Brooks by two strokes in an 18-hole playoff. In 2004, Goosen defeated Phil Mickelson by two strokes at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., to become the 18th and most recent player to win multiple U.S. Opens.

“I am incredibly grateful to receive a special exemption into the 2016 U.S. Open,” said Goosen. “It is, of course, a very special championship for me, having managed to win it twice and I am delighted to know that I will be in the field again this year.”

After his 10-year exemption for his 2004 victory expired following the 2014 U.S. Open at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club (Course No. 2) – he finished tied for 45th – Goosen earned a place in last year’s championship at Chambers Bay via sectional qualifying. He claimed the final spot from the Memphis, Tenn., qualifying site, then missed the cut at Chambers Bay by three strokes.

Goosen is the first player to receive a special exemption into the U.S. Open since Tom Watson and Vijay Singh in 2010 at Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links. The last three players to receive special exemptions into the U.S. Open have made the cut, as Watson finished tied for 29th, Singh tied for 40th and Nick Price finished tied for ninth in 2005 at Pinehurst No. 2. Hale Irwin is the only player to win the U.S. Open playing on a special exemption, doing so in a memorable 19-hole playoff over Mike Donald in 1990 at Medinah (Ill.) Country Club to claim his third U.S. Open title, 11 years after his second victory at Inverness Club in Toledo, Ohio.

Goosen’s 2001 victory at Southern Hills featured one of the most memorable finishes in championship history, as Goosen, Brooks and Stewart Cink all had chances to win outright on the 72nd hole. Goosen missed a 2-foot putt to seal the victory, then made an even longer putt coming back to secure the playoff against Brooks. Trailing Brooks by one stroke after five holes on Monday, Goosen birdied three of the next five holes to take a five-stroke lead and went on to win by two with a round of even-par 70.

“I learned a lot about myself this week, and I know that I can handle a little bit of pressure,” said Goosen after his 2001 victory. “I felt like I needed to win this today somehow, from what happened yesterday.”

Mickelson took a one-stroke lead on the 70th hole in 2004 at Shinnecock Hills before Goosen, playing one group behind, finished birdie-par-par while Mickelson made double bogey on 17. Goosen had 11 one-putt greens in the final round.

A seven-time winner on the PGA Tour and 14-time winner on the PGA European Tour, Goosen will attempt to become the seventh player to win three or more U.S. Open Championships.

Goosen’s exemption brings the total of fully exempt players for the 2016 U.S. Open to 51, with the possibility of more players added on May 24, based on the Official World Golf Ranking.

More information about the 116th U.S. Open before, during and after the championship is available at usopen.com. Several ticket options are available for purchase at usga.org/tickets.

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