USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J. (March 27, 2017) – The USGA today announced its exemption categories from sectional qualifying for the U.S. Senior Women's Open Championship, which will be contested for the first time July 12-15, 2018 at Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, Ill. A full list of exemption categories – which includes any player in her first 10 years of age eligibility who has won a U.S. Women's Open Championship – is available on usga.org.

The U.S. Senior Women's Open is open to professional females, and amateur females with a Handicap Index® not exceeding 7.4, who have reached their 50th birthday as of the first day of the championship. The field will include 120 players, who will earn entry into the championship through an exemption category or via sectional qualifying at sites nationwide. Exempt players who wish to compete in the championship must file an entry. Qualifying sites will be announced in the spring of 2018.

"Starting next summer, the U.S. Senior Women's Open Championship will provide the game's ultimate test for some of the most decorated women in golf, both professional and amateur," said Stuart Francis, USGA Championship Committee chairman. "Chicago Golf Club, one of five founding member clubs of the USGA, will serve as a grand stage that will celebrate these incredible players who have paved the way for the current generation while continuing to elevate the game we all love."

Several age-eligible players who meet exemption criteria for the 2018 U.S. Senior Women's Open have won U.S. Women's Open Championships, including: three-time champion Hollis Stacy (1977, 1978 and 1984), Juli Inkster (1999 and 2002), Amy Alcott (1980), Pat Bradley (1981), Laura Davies (1987) and Liselotte Neumann (1988).

Also exempt is any player in her first three years of age eligibility who has won the U.S. Women's Amateur, ANA Inspiration, Ricoh Women's Open, KPMG Women's PGA Championship, Evian Championship or the Ladies' British Open Amateur. Players in this category include Dottie Pepper, who won the 1992 and 1999 ANA Inspiration; Kay Cockerill, the 1986 and 1987 U.S. Women's Amateur champion; and Pearl Sinn, the 1988 U.S. Women's Amateur champion.

Winners of co-sponsored events on the 2016 and 2017 Legends Tour, the official senior tour of the LPGA, also earn exemptions. This adds Lorie Kane, who played in more than 10 U.S. Women's Opens. Additionally, LPGA Teaching and Club Professional (T&CP) Championship winners from 2013-2016 – Jean Bartholomew, Lisa Grimes and Laurie Rinker – and the 2017 champion and runner-up, will earn berths in the 2018 Senior Women's Open, provided they are age-eligible and file an entry.

There are also exemption categories for senior amateur players, provided they remain an amateur through the championship. This includes 2016 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur champion Ellen Port. A seven-time USGA champion, Port is tied with Anne Quast Sander and Carol Semple Thompson for the second-most USGA championships

won by a woman, trailing only JoAnne Gunderson Carner (8). Jack Nicklaus (8), Robert T. Jones Jr. (9) and Tiger Woods (9) are the only other golfers with more USGA titles than Port. Exemptions upon entry will also be given to the 2017 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur champion and runner-up, as well as winners of the 2017 Ladies' Senior British Open Amateur and 2017 Canadian Senior Women's Amateur Championship.

The U.S. Senior Women's Open format will mirror that of the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open and U.S. Senior Open championships: a walking-only, 72-hole stroke-play competition over four consecutive days. There will be a 36-hole cut to the top 50 players, including ties, and prize money will be announced at a later date.

Chicago Golf Club, the oldest golf club in the United States in continuous use at the same location, will host its 12th USGA championship and the first since the 2005 Walker Cup Match. The 2019 Senior Women's Open will be contested at Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C., from May 16-19. It will be the sixth USGA championship contested at the club and first since the 2007 Women's Open, won by Cristie Kerr.

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https://mediacenter.usga.org/2017-03-27USGA-Announces-Sectional-Qualifying-Exemptions-for-Inaugural-U-S-Senior-Womens-Open