

FAR HILLS, N.J. (Oct. 5, 2017) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) today announced that the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open will increase the number of exemption categories from qualifying, effective with the 2018 championships. The U.S. Junior Amateur and U.S. Mid-Amateur champions from the previous year will be exempt from local and sectional qualifying for the U.S. Open. The U.S. Girls' Junior and U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur champions from the previous year will be exempt from U.S. Women's Open sectional qualifying.

"Amateur golf is central to the USGA's mission," said Stuart Francis, USGA Championship Committee chairman. "Adding these exemptions to both Open championships affirms our commitment while supporting and celebrating amateur golf. The openness of both the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open is very important to the USGA, and we feel these exemptions are befitting of national champions."

The first two players to earn exemptions are Erica Shepherd, of Greenwood, Ind., the 2017 U.S. Girls' Junior champion, and Noah Goodwin, of Corinth, Texas, the 2017 U.S. Junior Amateur champion. Both earned their victories in July, and they will be joined on Oct. 12 by the U.S. Mid-Amateur champion and on Nov. 16 by the U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur champion. The U.S. Mid-Amateur begins on Saturday, Oct. 7, at the Capital City Club, in Atlanta, Ga., and stroke-play co-host Atlanta National Golf Club, in Milton, Ga. The U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur will begin on Nov. 11 at Champions Golf Club (Cypress Creek Course) in Houston, Texas.

The U.S. Open, which will be played at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, in Southampton, N.Y., from June 14-17, 2018, will now include 17 exemption categories from the two-tiered qualifying process. Local qualifying, played over 18 holes, was held at 113 sites in 2017, while sectional qualifying, played over 36 holes, was conducted at 10 U.S. sites and two international sites (Japan, England). A player must have a Handicap Index® not exceeding 1.4, or be a professional. In 2017, 77 players in the 156-player field were exempt from qualifying. The USGA accepted 9,485 entries for the 2017 championship.

There are now 19 exemption categories from U.S. Women's Open sectional qualifying. The championship will be played at Shoal Creek, in Shoal Creek, Ala., from May 31-June 3, 2018. To be eligible for the U.S. Women's Open, a player must have a Handicap Index® not exceeding 2.4, or be a professional. Sectional qualifying was conducted at 21 sites in the United States and four international sites in 2017 (England, Japan, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea). The USGA accepted 1,709 entries for the 2017 championship.

Previously, U.S. Open exemptions were awarded to the following amateur players: the U.S. Amateur champion, U.S. Amateur runner-up, the winner of The Amateur Championship, conducted by The R&A, and the recipient of the Mark H. McCormack Medal as the No. 1 player in the World Amateur Golf Ranking™. U.S. Women's Open exemptions have been given to the U.S. Women's Amateur champion, U.S. Women's Amateur runner-up, Ladies British Amateur champion and the McCormack Medal recipient as the No. 1-ranked female amateur golfer.

2018 U.S. Open Exemptions:

- 1 - Winners of the U.S. Open Championship the last 10 years (2008-17)
- 2 - Winner and runner-up of the 2017 U.S. Amateur Championship (must be an amateur)
- 3 - Winner of the 2017 Amateur Championship, conducted by The R&A (must be an amateur)
- 4 - Winner of the 2017 Mark H. McCormack Medal (top-ranked in World Amateur Golf Ranking & must be an amateur)
- 5 - Winners of the Masters Tournament the last five years (2014-18)
- 6 - Winners of The Open Championship, conducted by The R&A, the last five years (2013-17)
- 7 - Winners of The PGA of America Championship the last five years (2013-17)
- 8 - Winners of The Players Championship the last three years (2016-18)
- 9 - Winner of the 2018 European Tour BMW PGA Championship
- 10 - Winner of the 2017 U.S. Senior Open Championship
- 11 - From the 2017 U.S. Open Championship, the 10 lowest scorers and anyone tying for 10th place
- 12 - Those players who qualified for the season-ending 2017 PGA Tour Championship
- 13 - Winner of the 2017 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship (must be an amateur)
- 14 - Winner of the 2017 U.S. Mid-Amateur Championship (must be an amateur)
- 15 - Top 60 point leaders and ties from the Official World Golf Ranking as of May 21, 2018
- 16 - Top 60 point leaders and ties from the Official World Golf Ranking as of June 11, 2018
- 17 - Special exemptions selected by the USGA

2018 U.S. Women's Open Exemptions:

- 1 - Winners of the U.S. Women's Open Championship the last 10 years (2008-17)
- 2 - Winner and runner-up of the 2017 U.S. Women's Amateur Championship (must be an amateur)
- 3 - Winner of the 2017 Ladies Amateur Championship, conducted by The R&A (must be an amateur)
- 4 - Winner of the 2017 Mark H. McCormack Medal (top-ranked in Women's World Amateur Golf Ranking & must be an amateur)
- 5 - Winners of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship the last four years (2014-17)
- 6 - Winners of the Women's British Open Championship the last five years (2013-17)
- 7 - Winners of the ANA Inspiration Championship the last five years (2014-18)
- 8 - Winners of the Evian Championship the last four years (2014-17)
- 9 - From the 2017 U.S. Women's Open Championship, the 10 lowest scorers and anyone tying for 10th place
- 10 - Winner of the 2017 U.S. Girls' Junior Championship (must be an amateur)
- 11 - Winner of the 2017 U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur Championship (must be an amateur)
- 12 - From the 2017 final official LPGA money list, the top 75 players
- 13 - From the 2018 official LPGA money list, the top 10 money leaders through the close of entries
- 14 - Winners of LPGA co-sponsored events, whose victories are considered official, from the conclusion of the 2017 U.S. Women's Open to the initiation of the 2018 U.S. Women's Open
- 15 - Top five Ladies European Tour members from the final 2017 LET Order of Merit and the top five from the final 2017 Japan LPGA Tour and Korea LPGA Tour

money lists

16 - Top three money leaders from the 2017 China LPGA Tour

17 - From the Rolex Rankings, the top 50 point leaders and anyone tying for 50th place at the close of entries

18 - From the Rolex Rankings, the top 50 point leaders and anyone tying for 50th place as of May 28, 2018

19 - Special exemptions selected by the USGA

About the USGA

The USGA celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf. Founded in 1894, we conduct many of golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open. With The R&A, we govern the sport via a global set of playing, equipment and amateur status rules. Our operating jurisdiction for these governance functions is the United States, its territories and Mexico. The USGA Handicap System is utilized in more than 40 countries and our Course Rating System covers 95 percent of the world's golf courses, enabling all golfers to play on an equitable basis. The USGA campus in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, is home to the Association's Research and Test Center, where science and innovation are fueling a healthy and sustainable game for the future. The campus is also home to the USGA Golf Museum, where we honor the game by curating the world's most comprehensive archive of golf artifacts. To learn more, visit usga.org.

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