

USGA Media Center

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. and ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND (Aug. 27, 2018) – Braden Thornberry, 21, of Olive Branch, Miss., has won the Mark H. McCormack Medal as the leading men's player in the 2018 World Amateur Golf Ranking™ (WAGR). As the McCormack Medal recipient, Thornberry will earn exemptions into the 2019 U.S. Open Championship and 2019 Open Championship, conducted by The R&A, provided he remains an amateur.

Thornberry was chosen second-team All-American as a junior at the University of Mississippi in 2017-18 and became the third player in Ole Miss history to be selected to an All-America team multiple times. He also earned All-Southeast Region and All-Southeastern Conference (SEC) recognition for the second consecutive year. Thornberry, who was the world No. 1 player for 11 weeks, posted nine top-10 finishes, including four wins, and was 15th in the NCAA in stroke average (70.28). He is the program's career leader with 11 tournament victories.

"This is a prestigious award and I am honored to be among the group of past recipients," Thornberry said. "There are many people who have made this possible along the way, and I am grateful to everyone. I am really excited about my future in the game of golf and I hope to keep representing my country, my state and the University of Mississippi in the best way possible."

Thornberry, who recently advanced to match play in the U.S. Amateur at Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links, qualified for this year's U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club. Thornberry, who became the first Ole Miss player to be named a Ben Hogan Award finalist, made the 36-hole cut in two PGA Tour events – tied for 26th in the FedEx St. Jude Classic and tied for 61st in the RSM Classic – and tied for 22nd in the Web.com Tour's North Mississippi Classic.

In 2017, Thornberry won the NCAA Division I individual title by four strokes with a 72-hole score of 11-under 277 and received the Fred Haskins Award as the top collegiate golfer. He registered two singles victories in helping the USA win the Walker Cup Match at Los Angeles (Calif.) Country Club last September. Additionally, he was a key figure in Team USA capturing the 2018 Palmer Cup in France.

"On behalf of the USGA, I wish to extend our congratulations to Braden Thornberry on being awarded the McCormack Medal," said John Bodenhamer, USGA senior managing director of Championships. "Braden has had a fine college career, as evidenced by his 2017 NCAA championship, and he has represented the USA with distinction in international competition, including his role on the victorious 2017 USA Walker Cup Team in Los Angeles."

The USGA and The R&A co-award the McCormack Medal annually. It is named after Mark H. McCormack, who founded sports marketing company IMG and was a great supporter of amateur golf.

"Braden has joined the likes of Joaquin Niemann, Maverick McNealy, Jon Rahm and Matthew Fitzpatrick as a winner of the McCormack Medal and we congratulate him on this fantastic achievement," said Duncan Weir, Executive Director – Golf Development at The R&A. "He has delivered a number of outstanding results this season and is a deserving recipient of this award."

The World Amateur Golf Ranking, which is supported by Rolex, was established in 2007 when the men's ranking was launched. The men's ranking encompasses more than 2,700 counting events, ranking 6,200 players from 106 countries. The women's ranking was launched in 2011 and has a calendar of more than 1,850 counting events with more than 2,850 ranked players from 78 countries.

About WAGR™

The World Amateur Golf Ranking™, which comprises a women's ranking and a men's ranking for elite amateur players, is offered by The R&A and the USGA as a global service to golf. Through incorporation and assessment worldwide of both amateur and professional events, WAGR encourages the international development of the competitive game. The ranking endeavors to be the most comprehensive and accurate ranking in golf by effectively comparing players from around the world who may never directly compete against one another. It is available to national federations and organizers of amateur and professional events and tours as a criterion for tournament field selection and for purposes of exemptions, national team selection, and orders of merit.

About The Mark H. McCormack Medal

The award is named after Mark H. McCormack, the late founder of sports marketing company IMG and an avid supporter of amateur golf. The Mark H. McCormack Medal is awarded to the player ranked No. 1 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking™ after the U.S. Amateur Championship or the European Amateur Championship, whichever concludes last. Established in 2007, the same award goes to the player leading the women's ranking after the European Ladies' Amateur Championship or U.S. Women's Amateur Championship, whichever concludes last.

Previous Winners

Women: 2018 Jennifer Kupcho (USA), 2017, 2016, 2015 Leona Maguire (IRL), 2014 Minjee Lee (AUS), 2013, 2012, 2011 Lydia Ko (NZL)

Men: 2017 Joaquin Niemann (CHI), 2016 Maverick McNealy (USA), 2015 Jon Rahm-Rodriguez (ESP), 2014 Oliver Schniederjans (USA), 2013 Matthew Fitzpatrick (ENG), 2012 Chris Williams (USA), 2011 Patrick Cantlay (USA), 2010 Peter Uihlein (USA), 2009 Nick Taylor (CAN), 2008 Danny Lee (NZL), 2007 Colt Knost (USA)

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.

About The R&A

Based in St Andrews, The R&A runs The Open, elite amateur events, international matches and rankings. Together The R&A and the USGA govern the sport of

golf worldwide, operating in separate jurisdictions but sharing a commitment to a single code for the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Equipment Standards. The R&A, through R&A Rules Ltd, governs the sport worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, on behalf of over 36 million golfers in 143 countries and with the consent of 156 organizations from amateur and professional golf.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the sport internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. For more information, visit www.randa.org.

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