

**USGA Changes Exemption Category for Reigning
U.S. Amateur and U.S. Women's Amateur Champions**

Exemptions into U.S. Opens will no longer be contingent on retaining amateur status

Liberty Corner, N.J. (Aug. 5, 2019) – The USGA announced Monday that moving forward, the reigning U.S. Amateur and U.S. Women's Amateur champions will be afforded the opportunity to utilize their exemptions in the following year's U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open as an amateur or professional.

Previously, the reigning winners of the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Women's Amateur received an exemption into the following U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open, respectively, only if they maintained their amateur status. Moving forward, the reigning champions will have the option to turn professional while maintaining their exempt place in the field.

"We believe this change gives our champions an important option as they choose whether and when to embark on their professional careers," said John Bodenhamer, USGA Senior Managing Director, Championships. "Given the significant purses awarded at the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open, we realize how important it is for players to make the most appropriate decision for his or her career, and the positive impact it could have at the outset of their professional careers."

Over the past decade, four of 10 U.S. Amateur and three of 10 U.S. Women's Amateur champions forewent their exemptions into the following year's Open Championships, choosing to turn professional.

"Given the opportunities afforded the U.S. Amateur and U.S. Women's Amateur champions, we want to make sure they are able to take advantage of as many as possible," said Bodenhamer. "We feel strongly that our reigning champions have earned their places in the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open, regardless of their amateur status."

The 119th U.S. Women's Amateur Championship begins today at Old Waverly Golf Club in West Point., Miss., and concludes with Sunday's 36-hole final. The 119th U.S. Amateur begins Aug. 12 at Pinehurst (N.C.) Resort & Country Club and concludes with the 36-hole final on Aug. 18. For more information, visit the [USGA Championships schedule and tickets page](https://mediacenter.usga.org/press-releases?item=122721).

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