

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. and ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND (Aug. 18, 2021) - Keita Nakajima, of Japan, has won the Mark H. McCormack Medal as the leading men's player in the 2021 World Amateur Golf Ranking® (WAGR).

Nakajima follows on the footsteps of fellow countryman Takumi Kanaya, who won the 2020 McCormack Medal, and receives exemptions into The 150th Open at St Andrews and the U.S. Open at The Country Club in Brookline, Mass.

The 21-year-old tasted national success earlier this summer when he won the Japan Amateur Championship by three strokes at Ohtone Country Club, near Tokyo.

Nakajima has also made a series of appearances in Japan Golf Tour Professional events over the last year, finishing runner-up in the 2021 Token Homemate Cup, third in the 2020 Mitsui Sumitomo VISA Taiheiyo Masters and eighth in the 2020 Dunlop Phoenix.

He also recorded top-20 finishes in the Asia-Pacific Diamond Cup and Japan Open Championship.

"I am so excited and happy to have won the 2021 Mark H McCormack Medal," said Nakajima. "Heading into university, my goal was to be the number one player in the World Amateur Golf Ranking. I want to give many thanks for the support of my family, university, national team coaches and teammates. Without them, I could not have achieved this. I am also very proud and honoured to be awarded the medal following Takumi Kanaya.

"My next goal is to demonstrate my abilities on the world stage with confidence and hopefully follow in the footsteps of my fellow Japanese players including Hideki Matsuyama, Nasa Hataoka, Takumi Kanaya, and Yuka Saso.

"Thank you again to everyone who has supported me and to The R&A and USGA for their work in promoting amateur golf around the world. Arigato!"

The R&A and the USGA jointly 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.

Professor Steve Otto, Chief Technology Officer at The R&A, said, "We have seen Keita go from strength-to-strength since finishing runner-up in the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship in 2018 and it fantastic to see another player from Japan winning the McCormack Medal for a second successive year after Takumi Kanaya in 2020.

"To perform at a consistently high level in both amateur and professional events is impressive and demonstrates that he is a deserving winner of the award. We look forward to welcoming him to St Andrews for The 150th Open next year."

"On behalf of everyone at the USGA, we want to commend Keita on his outstanding performance over the past year," said John Bodenhamer, USGA senior managing director, championships. "We know the hard work and dedication it takes to reach this level, and Keita has shown that that type of efforts pays off. We look forward to watching his career continue to reach new levels."

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 nearly 2,900 counting events, ranking 7,309 players from 117 countries. The women's ranking was launched in 2011 and has a calendar of around 1,900 counting events with more than 3,830 ranked players from 88 countries.

About WAGR®

The World Amateur Golf Ranking® / WAGR®, 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 organisers 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 number one in the World Amateur Golf Ranking® / WAGR® after the US Women's Amateur Championship or the European Ladies' Amateur Championship, whichever concludes last. Established in 2007, the same award goes to the player leading the men's ranking after the European Amateur Championship or U.S. Amateur Championship, whichever concludes last.

Previous Winners

Men: 2020 Takumi Kanaya (JAP), 2019 Cole Hammer (USA), 2018 Braden Thornberry (USA), 2017 Joaquin Niemann (Chile), 2016 Maverick McNealy (USA), 2015 Jon Rahm (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).

Women: 2021, 2022 Rose Zhang (USA), 2019 Andrea Lee (USA), 2018 Jennifer Kupcho (USA), 2017, 2016, 2015 Leona Maguire (IRE), 2014 Minjee Lee (AUS), 2013, 2012, 2011 Lydia Ko (NZL).

About the USGA

The USGA is a nonprofit organization that celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf. Founded in 1894, we conduct many of golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the US Open and US Women's Open. With The R&A, we govern the sport via a global set of playing, equipment, handicapping and amateur status rules. 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 158 organisations 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 randa.org

For further information: Julia Pine, jpine@usga.org