LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (May 8, 2023) – So Yeon Ryu, the 2011 champion from the Republic of Korea, has accepted a special exemption from the USGA into the field for the 78th U.S. Women's Open Championship, to be contested July 6-9 at Pebble Beach (Calif.) Golf Links. Ryu, whose maiden major victory came in the U.S. Women's Open at The Broadmoor (East Course) in Colorado Springs, Colo., will be making her 14th consecutive start in the championship.

"I am excited and honored to accept this special exemption into the U.S. Women's Open," said Ryu. "This championship means so much to me, and to be able to compete in it again, and to do so at a place as special as Pebble Beach, is thrilling, and I am so grateful to the USGA for this opportunity. I look forward to teeing it up there in July."

Ryu's U.S. Women's Open victory came in a three-hole aggregate playoff victory over countrywoman Hee Kyung Seo that she won by three strokes (10-13) with two birdies and a par. It was her second start in the championship.

Prior to last year's missed cut at the 2022 U.S. Women's Open at Pine Needles Lodge & Golf Club in Southern Pines, N.C., Ryu had made 12 straight cuts in the championship, amassing an impressive six top-five finishes during that stretch, with a tie for second in 2019 at the Country Club of Charleston (S.C.). Ryu has posted 17 rounds under par in her 13 starts, a statistic bested by only two players since 2000: two-time champion Inbee Park and Stacy Lewis.

Ryu added a second major championship title in 2017 when she won the Chevron Championship en route to securing LPGA Player of the Year honors. She has won six times on the LPGA Tour, as well as 10 times on the LPGA of Korea, one time on the LPGA of Japan and once on the Epson Tour. She was the LPGA's Rookie of the Year in 2012.

Ryu joins three-time champion Annika Sorenstam, of Sweden, as recipients of special exemptions into this year's field. They are among 87 players who are currently fully exempt. Qualifying for this year's championship begins on Tuesday (May 9) at two sites.

In addition to Ryu and Sorenstam, 10 other U.S. Women's Open champions are currently exempt into the field, while two more will attempt to qualify. The USGA will host a Reunion of Champions during championship week, an event that is bringing together many of the 46 living U.S. Women's Open champions for the first time since 2014. In addition to private reunion events, champions will engage with fans, media and viewers throughout championship week. That also includes serving as honorary starters, appearing on NBCU broadcasts and USGA channels as well as participating in special events.

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 U.S. Open and U.S. 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.

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