

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Nov. 4, 2024) – The USGA's International Team Selection (ITS) Working Group has invited 16 players to attend a practice session Dec. 14-16 for the 2025 Walker Cup Match. The three days of practice will be held in Jupiter, Fla., at McArthur Golf Club, Seminole Golf Club and The Bear's Club.

The following 16 players have accepted invitations to the practice session (with college affiliation):

- Evan Beck, 34, of Virginia Beach, Va. (Wake Forest, class of 2013)
- Parker Bell, 20, of Tallahassee, Fla. (Florida, junior)
- Blades Brown, 17, of Nashville, Tenn. (high school class of 2026)
- Luke Clanton, 20, of Hialeah, Fla. (Florida State, junior)
- Ethan Fang, 19, of Plano, Texas (Oklahoma State, sophomore)
- Stewart Hagestad, 33, of Newport Beach, Calif. (Southern California, class of 2013)
- Max Herendeen, 19, of Bellevue, Wash. (Illinois, sophomore)
- Ben James, 21, of Milford, Conn. (Virginia, junior)
- Noah Kent, 20, of Naples, Fla. (Iowa, sophomore)
- Jackson Koivun, 19, of Chapel Hill, N.C. (Auburn, sophomore)
- Michael La Sasso, 20, of Raleigh, N.C. (Ole Miss, junior)
- Bryan Lee, 20, of Fairfax, Va. (Virginia, junior)
- Tommy Morrison, 20, of Dallas, Texas (Texas, junior)
- Jase Summy, 20, of Keller, Texas (Oklahoma, junior)
- Brendan Valdes, 21, of Orlando, Fla. (Auburn, senior)
- Jackson Van Paris, 21, of Pinehurst, N.C. (Vanderbilt, senior)

Clanton, the 2024 McCormack Medal winner and current No. 1-ranked amateur, highlights the group of invites. Over the summer, he became the first amateur to record consecutive top 10s on the PGA Tour since 1958. A week after finishing T-10 in the 2024 Rocket Mortgage Classic, the Florida State All-American finished runner-up in the John Deere Classic. He also made his U.S. Open debut at Pinehurst and became the first amateur in championship history to record consecutive rounds in the 60s with back-to-back 69s in the second and third rounds.

Hagestad, a three-time USGA champion (2016, 2021 and 2023 U.S. Mid-Amateur) is one of two players with previous Walker Cup experience (2017, 2019, 2021, 2023) to be invited to the practice session, joining Ben James (2023).

"This serves as another step in the process of team selection and is an opportunity for all involved to become more familiar with each other and begin to build team camaraderie," said John Bodenhamer, USGA chief championships officer. "These decorated amateurs represent a talented group of potential team members, but we expect others will also be

considered as the selection process moves toward its conclusion."

Nathan Smith, of Pittsburgh, Pa., will captain the USA Team for the 2025 Walker Cup Match. He has won four U.S. Mid-Amateur Championships (2003, 2009, 2010, 2012) as well as the inaugural 2015 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball Championship, with partner Todd White.

"The amateur golf talent in this country is impressive, and I'm thrilled to gather with this group for a practice session next month," said Smith. "We have a strong list of young men attending; a mixture of seasoned veterans as well as up-and-comers of the game. I'm excited to spend more time with this group."

The USGA also announced that Smith will be retained as captain for the 2026 Walker Cup Match at Lahinch Golf Club in Ireland. It was announced previously that due to other international competitions, including the re-emergence of the Olympics, that the Walker Cup would be moved to even years beginning in 2026.

"Given the tight turnaround between the 2025 and 2026 Matches, it was clear to us that Nathan should return as captain and provide the team with a consistent leader during the unique situation of two Walker Cups in two years," said Bodenhamer.

One of the most decorated mid-amateurs in the country, Smith has competed in 48 USGA championships, six State Team championships and played on three consecutive Walker Cup Teams (2009, 2011, 2013), earning the clinching point in the 2013 USA victory at the National Golf Links of America in Southampton, N.Y. In the USA's 2009 Walker Cup victory at Merion Golf Club, Smith won two foursomes matches with partner Peter Uihlein. His singles victory over GB&I's Nathan Kimsey provided the winning point in the USA's 17-9 triumph in 2013. Smith amassed a 3-4-1 record in his three Walker Cup Matches.

An invitation to the Walker Cup practice session does not guarantee selection to the team. Players not invited will also be considered for inclusion on the team. Seven of the 16 players from the December 2022 Walker Cup practice session competed on the 2023 USA Team, when the USA defeated Great Britain and Ireland, 14.5 to 11.5, at The Old Course in Scotland. Ten of the 16 players from the December 2020 Walker Cup practice session competed on the 2021 USA Team that defeated Great Britain and Ireland, 14-12, at Seminole.

The 50th Match will be played at the Cypress Point Club in Pebble Beach, Calif., on Sept. 6-7, 2025. The Match is played over two days with 18 singles matches and eight foursomes (alternate-shot) matches. The USA leads the overall series that began in 1922, 39-9-1, but it has been tremendously competitive over the last three decades, with the USA holding just a 11-7 advantage in the Match since 1989. The R&A will select the 10 members of the GB&I Team, which represents England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

About the USGA

The USGA is a mission-based golf organization whose purpose is to unify the golf community through handicapping and grassroots programs; to showcase the game's best talent through the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open Presented by Ally and 13 other national championships and our museum; to provide unbiased global governance with The R&A through the playing, equipment and Amateur Status rules; and to advance issues important to golf's future, with a focus on driving sustainability, accessibility and inclusion. As a nonprofit association, our work and our team are driven to act for the good of the game. For more, visit usga.org.

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