

The USGA will present its highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, to Ellen Port in 2026 in recognition of her exemplary sportsmanship, character and lifelong contributions to the game as one of the most accomplished amateur golfers in history and a devoted educator, coach and mentor.

Presented annually since 1955, the Bob Jones Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the character, integrity and respect for the game that were among the many lasting qualities of Robert Tyre "Bob" Jones Jr.

"What stands out about Ellen isn't just the historic success she's had as a player but the way she has gone about it – with humility, grace and a deep respect for everyone around her," said Mike Whan, CEO of the USGA. "She has spent her life pouring into others as a teacher, coach and mentor, all while competing at the very highest level of amateur golf. Ellen embodies everything this award represents."

Recognized as one of the nation's finest amateur golfers over the course of a distinguished playing career, Port is a seven-time USGA champion, tying her for second all-time among female champions with Carol Semple Thompson and Anne Quast Sander, and just one behind JoAnne Carner. Her reputation as a champion has always been matched by her reputation as a sportswoman — known for competing with integrity, treating others with respect and elevating everyone around her. Her decades of coaching and mentoring have shaped countless young players, reflecting the same values of character and respect that define the Bob Jones Award.

Inside the ropes, she captured the U.S. Women's Mid-Amateur Championship a record-tying four times (1995, 1996, 2000 and 2011) and added three U.S. Senior Women's Amateur titles, in 2012, 2013 and 2016. Her seven USGA victories place her among the most decorated champions in Association history. Only Bob Jones and Tiger Woods, with nine USGA titles each, and Jack Nicklaus and Carner with eight, own more.

Port's impact on the game extends well beyond her own competitive record. She represented the United States of America on two Curtis Cup Teams, in 1994 and 1996, and later captained the victorious 2014 USA side at St. Louis Country Club in her hometown.

A passionate educator, Port spent 30 years as a physical education teacher and coach at John Burroughs School in St. Louis, where she influenced generations of students both on and off the course.

"I am truly honored to be recognized by the USGA as the recipient of the Bob Jones Award," said Port. "I thank the Lord every day for the blessings the game of golf has brought into my life. I'm overwhelmed with gratitude and humbled by this distinction, and I will continue striving to live up to all that this award represents."

During her tenure at JBS, Port coached a number of sports, including boys' and girls' golf, which collected a combined three state championships and three runner-up finishes under her leadership. She later served as the women's golf coach at NCAA Division III Washington University in St. Louis, helping to build and guide a successful collegiate program while continuing to devote time to young people learning the game. She was the second women's golf coach in Washington University program history, serving from August 2015 through July 2018.

In three years of service, Port helped guide the Bears to an at-large bid to the 2018 NCAA Division III Women's Golf National Championship, a top-five individual finish at the 2017 NCAAAs produced multiple All-Americans, several All-Region performers and 11 all-University Athletic Association (UAA) recognitions.

Her achievements have been recognized widely in her home state and beyond. Port was named one of the St. Louis Sports Commission's Top 100 Athletes of the Century in 2000 and was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame (2012), the St. Louis Sports Hall of Fame (2012) and the Missouri Golf Association Hall of Fame (2018).

Recipients of the USGA's Bob Jones Award include Francis Ouimet, Margaret Curtis, Richard Tufts, George H.W. Bush, Jack Nicklaus, Annika Sorenstam and Lee Elder. Recent honorees include Tiger Woods (2024) and Mike Keiser (2025).

The USGA will honor Port on Feb. 28, 2026, in New York City as part of the Association's Annual Meeting.

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