

## AMATEUR . . .

# A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE Women's Western Golf Association

## Celebrating 118 Years of Women's Golf



**G**olf, before and in the early 1900's was defined in the dictionary as an "outdoor game." Today it is a major sport with literally millions of people playing the game. The history of golf and especially its history in the U.S. is also the history of the Women's Western Golf Association. The women of this Association promoted the growth of golf as they gained fame and strength and so did the interest in the sport by American women.

There were few golf courses in the Chicago area before 1900 with only a small group of men financially able to belong to a club. However, that these men encouraged women to play is evidenced by the fact that in 1895 a tournament for women was held at Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest, Illinois called the 'Championship for the Governor's Cup.' In 1899 a group of these men met, formed the **Western Golf Association** and conducted an Amateur and Open tournament. Whether these same men thought of a tournament for women or whether some of the competitors for the Governor's Cup persuaded them is not known but records show that in 1901 the first championship, called the "Western Women's Championship" was played at Onwentsia. Bessie Anthony won the title and possession, for one year, of a silver cup donated by Mr. W. A. Alexander, a member of the Western Golf Association.

Again in 1902 the men conducted the championship and again Miss Anthony won, defeating Mrs. W. A. (Maude) Alexander. In 1903 these golfing ladies of the Chicago area decided, "**Golf for the women would advance more quickly and more surely under their own management.**" The movement had the active and hardy support of the Western Golf Association.

**A**ccording to newspapers of that time, delegates from 20 clubs met on a hot day in July 1903, formed the **Women's Western Golf Association** and incorporated for the purpose of "holding golf tournaments and forwarding the growth of golf for women." Mrs. Alexander was elected President and plans were made for the 1903 Championship (which Bessie won again) and for team play that they hoped would promote interest in the game. The **AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP** was for players from WWGA Member Clubs. From that day long, long ago to the present – the WWGA has held this same Amateur Championship – without interruption, for women golfers from WWGA Member Clubs – not even two world wars have kept this tournament from being held! On June 22, 2011 the WWGA once again has partnered with the Western Golf Association.

**THE WWGA AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIPS HAS BEEN PLAYED IN  
SUCCESSION WITH ILLUSTRIOUS NAMES ENGRAVED ON THE ORIGINAL  
W. A. ALEXANDER CUP NOW RESTING ON A BASE  
LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD ALL 117 CHAMPIONS' NAMES.**

**WWGA JUNIOR CHAMPION** ... Young girls began taking an interest in the game and to encourage this group the WWGA held its first Junior Championship for girls 17 years of age and younger. The first event was a two-day medal play tournament held at Beverly Country Club in Chicago on July 26-27, 1920. Today this tournament is a Match Play Event.

**W**ith the Junior added to their list of tournaments, team matches and the special Chicago championships, the WWGA decided it was unfair to clubs throughout the U.S. to spend so much effort on Chicago tournaments thus the **Chicago Women's District Golf Association** was formed in 1930 to conduct these local tournaments and events of the Chicago area.

**A** **NOTABLE YEAR IN WOMEN'S GOLF HISTORY** ... In June of 1930, the first **WWGA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP** was held that included players from daily fee and public courses. The tournament started in a quiet way but in 1935 with the entry of two fine golfers who played for money as well as awards, the WWGA Open became a real "Open" – the first – and for many years the only tournament where these women (then called 'Business Women Golfers') were allowed to compete. That entry of two golfers has grown to a very large group of professionals forming the **Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA)** who now play for hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. The WWGA continued this now famous Open through 1967 when it decided to concentrate all its efforts on women's amateur golf.

In 1979 the WWGA held its first **SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP** for women 50 years of age and older. In 2001 a Super Senior Event was added to the tournament for women 65 years of age and older. This tournament is currently on hiatus.

### **HISTORY OF WWGA TROPHIES ...**

**Amateur Championship** ... **W. A. Alexander Cup** awarded to the Champion – donated in 1901 by W. A. Alexander of the Western Golf Association; **Babe Didrikson Zaharias Memorial Trophy** awarded to the Finalist. Members of the Nashville Golf & Athletic Club donated the trophy in 1987 where it remains on permanent display. **Margaret Lenz Trophy** is awarded to the Medalist – donated by Mrs. Philip Lenz, President of the WWGA, 1948-49.

**Junior Championship** ... **Icely Cup** awarded to the Champion – donated by Mr. I. B. Icely of Wilson Sporting Goods in 1920. The **Ann Samford Upchurch Trophy** awarded to the Finalist in memory of Mrs. Upchurch, a Director of the WWGA who served as Rules Chairman for 21 years; **Marion Miley Trophy** originally awarded to the lowest combined qualifying scores in the Amateur & Open Championships this bracelet is now awarded to the player with the lowest combined gross score from the qualifying rounds in the Amateur & Junior Championships. **Senior Championship** ... **Alice Dye Trophy** was awarded to the Senior Champion – the Trophy was named in honor of Alice, a long-time WWGA Director and Past President of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. Mrs. Dye is a five-time Champion.

## WOMEN'S WESTERN GOLF FOUNDATION



**I**n 1971 the Women's Western Golf Foundation was formed as an outgrowth of the WWGA. This charitable trust was formed to receive and distribute funds to advance women in scholastic achievement by: promoting education with financial assistance to inadequately funded college women's golf programs; offering scholarships to deserving and worthy women students of high academic achievement; involvement or an interest in the sport of golf. In 2006 the **Evans Scholars Foundation** and the **Women's Western Golf Foundation** announced a joint sponsorship of an Evans Scholar that funds the tuition and housing of a woman caddie at one of the 14 universities where Evans Scholars Foundation owns and maintains a Scholarship House. Since its inception the Foundation's grants exceed \$4.1 million to over 690 scholars in 45 states.

Over →



# MISTWOOD GOLF CLUB Romeoville, Illinois

The women who met on that scorching July day in 1903 commenced an organization which today encompasses some 300 Member Clubs reaching 30,000 women players. The territory of the Association (in 1903) was composed of an area of 500 miles in and around Chicago. Today it includes the entire United States, its territories and possessions.

The dedicated women who serve on the WWGA Board of Directors devote many hours of their time and are proud of the Association.

**All Officers and Directors pay their own expenses; no Association or Foundation funds are used for their personal travel expenses to tournaments.**

Like their predecessors, WWGA Directors continue to promote education, sportsmanship and skill in the game for amateur women and girls in golf.

The WWGA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established under guidelines set by the Internal Revenue Service.

More WWGA information contact:  
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Rating/Slope: 76.1/140		
Hole	Par	Yardage
1	4	333
2	4	316
3	5	514
4	4	401
5	4	348
6	4	355
7	3	178
8	5	494
9	3	161
OUT		36 3100
10	4	323
11	4	403
12	4	369
13	4	322
14	3	137
15	5	512
16	4	340
17	3	140
18	5	485
OUT		36 3031
Par		72 6131

## 118<sup>th</sup> WWGA NATIONAL AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP

### Tournament Schedule

#### Monday – June 25

A.M./P.M. Practice Rounds

#### Tuesday – June 26

A.M./P.M. First Round Qualifying – 18 holes

#### Wednesday – June 27

A.M./P.M. Second Round Qualifying – 18 holes

#### Thursday – June 28

A.M. First Round Match Play – 32 Players  
P.M. Second Round Match Play – 16 Players

#### Friday – June 29

A.M. Round Three - Quarterfinal  
P.M. Round Four – Semifinal

#### Saturday – June 30

Championship Finals – 36 holes

Presentation of Championship Awards  
at  
Conclusion of Play

**Past Amateur Champions include:** Patty Berg (an 8-time Champion), Betty Jameson, Dorothy Germain, Louise Suggs, Polly Reily, Patricia Lesser, Marion Miley, Barbara McIntire, JoAnne Gunderson Carner, Catherine LaCoste, Elaine Rosenthal, Debbie Massey, Nancy Lopez, Beth Daniel, Mary Hafeman, Amy Benz, Joanne Pacillo, Katie Peterson, Moira Dunn, Cristie Kerr, Grace Park, Kellee Booth, Pearl Sinn, Sarah LeBrun Ingram, Meredith Duncan, Stacy Lewis, Brittany Lang, Ariya Jutanugam, Mika Liu, and Ashlan Ramsey to mention a few.

**Notable Finalists include:** Dorothy Page, Phyllis Otto, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Peggy Kirk Bell, Emilee Klein, Carol Semple Thompson, Vicki Goetze-Ackerman and Moiry Jutanugam.

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**Tournament results will appear on  
WWGA's website daily**

[www.WWGA.org](http://www.WWGA.org)