

Blackhawk Country Club to Host 90th Women's Western Golf Association's National Junior Championship

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Golf, Ill. ... The Women's Western Golf Association's (WWGA) 90th Junior Championship will be held at Blackhawk Country Club, Madison, Wis. July 11-15. This will be the third time Blackhawk has opened its course and club to host the WWGA. The Badger State's motto is "Forward" which is most apropos for this year's tournament as junior girls will be arriving from 15 states and Canada, all vying to 'move forward' during match play to have their name engraved on the L.B. Icely Championship trophy.

Blackhawk, founded in 1921, has a challenging 18-hole layout, nestled on the shores of Lake Mendota and offering stunning views. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places with a course renovation by A. W. Tillinghast, best known as the architect of Winged Foot, Bethpage Black, Baltusrol and Medinah #3 and a participant in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program.

The tournament format is match play with a 36-hole stroke play qualifying round to establish flights; qualifying will be played July 11-12. Championship Flight will be comprised of the low 32 qualifiers, all other will be placed in flights of 16. Entries are open to amateur girls who have an up-to-date 18-hole USGA Handicap Index not to exceed 14.4; are girls 18 years of age or younger who have not reached their 19th birthday by the date of the finals and are not college or university students.

Derek Schnaar, Director of Golf at Blackhawk stated, *"We are thrilled to be hosting the 2016 Western Junior. This is a tournament that we feel is important to highlight the incredible talent that these ladies will showcase July 10-15. Blackhawk is an awesome venue for match play and we hope it provides a fair competitive stage for all."*

When Blackhawk hosted the tournament in 1992, Victoria Boysen from Ft. Worth, Tex. defeated Erin O'Neil, Zephyrhills, Fla.; six years later, in 1998, Candie Kung, Monterey Park, Calif. captured the title defeating Jimin Kang from South Korea. All these players, as well as others who competed in 1992 and 1998, enjoyed successful college golf careers and became or are still familiar names in the women's professional golf arena. A few other prominent names who have won this tournament: 3-time winner Nancy Lopez, Carol Mann, Pearl Sinn, Cristie Kerr, 3-time winner Candy Hannemann, Grace Park, Dottie Ardina and Chakansim "Fai" Khamborn who is the reigning WWGA Amateur Champion.

This year's field includes a number of top junior players who range in age from 15 to 18; many of their names will undoubtedly become well-known after they leave their junior golf days and begin playing in their collegiate golfing careers and then moving onto the Symetra and/or LPGA Tours.

WWGA's President Kim Schriver, Wilmette, Ill. stated, *"The Junior Championship is very special. We see young girls grow into young ladies as their golf game grows and matures with them. This tournament provides a foundation for match play in addition to stroke play. For many it is their first experience with match play. This is an opportunity to test their skill and to expand their skill."*

No doubt this championship has been a favorite for many players including Lili Klekner-Alt from Ontario, Canada who will be competing in her sixth WWGA Junior. A loyal participant and the last time she will be eligible to play, Lili opted to enter this year's Junior instead of the Ontario Provincials which is equivalent to a State Championship. Both her older sisters have played in this tournament and a number of WWGA Amateur Championships. Lili will be attending Southern Illinois University in the fall.

Maybe the third time playing will be the lucky charm for Louise McCulloch, Wilmette, Ill. who will attend Northwestern University in the fall or maybe it will be Nikki Cox, Empire, Mich. playing in her third WWGA Junior too. Another three-time player is Shannon Gould, O'Fallon, Mo., a left-handed player who recently won the St. Louis Women's District tournament. Kylie Greulich, Huron, Ohio, played in last year's championship at Hope Valley Country Club in Durham, N.C. and will be attending the University of Delaware. Sarah Fite, Maysville, Ky. is committed to play at University of Kentucky. Sophia Lau, Glenview, Ill. will be a sophomore in high school and like Stacy Lewis, who won the WWGA's 2006 Amateur Championship, Lau was diagnosed with scoliosis and has had to wear a brace around her torso for 13 hours a day to help straighten her back.

Several other players include the 2015 runner-up Central Ohio Player of the Year Abby Kiefer, Dublin, Ohio and Alexis Miestowski, Schererville, Ind. who used to compete in national roller skating competitions. Sisters Emily and Amelia Root will be traveling from Jacksonville, Fla. both hoping to claim the title. Could the final 18 holes be reminiscent to the 2012 WWGA Amateur Championship when Ariya Jutanugarn (a recent 3-time LPGA winner) defeated her sister Moirya in the finals? That must wait until the final round to be played on July 15.

Wherever this championship has been played, and it has traveled as far west to the State of Washington to Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Virginia and Georgia, oftentimes the home state will capture the attention of prospective players, this year is no different. The Badger State will be well represented with double-digits. Hoping to bring a championship to their home state are Verona players Loren Skibba, Makenzie George and Bailey Smith; from Middleton, Alexis Thomas and Ella Schroder; Jo Baranczyk from Green Bay; Madison players: Kira Wolf, Jennifer Johnson, Lillian Knetter and Grace Welch; Kendra Swanson and Ashley Kulka from Beaver Dam; Keara Richards, from Janesville; Taylor McCorke from Oregon, Courtney Matschke from Franklin, Speedy Kent and Anne Schlageter from Mequon; Taylor Hakala from Milton; Rachel Gentile from Racine; Taitum Beck, from Waterford; Faith Krause and Hailey Smoot from Franklin; Maria-Christina Seeman from Milton; Lorenza Martinez from Hartford; and from Fitchburg, Melissa Biesman.

Elsie Nemeth, WWGA's Second Vice President, who is from Granger, Ind. is serving as the Tournament Chairman. She stated, *"The WWGA is looking forward to a great tournament at Blackhawk Country Club. We are working together with the members and staff at Blackhawk to provide a memorable experience for the players and their families. It is exciting to see such a strong field. Although the field is closing in on reaching its capacity, tournament entry applications are still available on the WWGA's website."*

Audrey Peterson, a Blackhawk member and Past President of the WWGA will be wearing two hats, one as a WWGA Director and the other serving as the Assistant Tournament Chairman. She commented, *"The course is in beautiful condition and will be a true test of golf. We look forward to welcoming girls from so many states as well as all the Wisconsinites who will be playing."*

The 2003 Wisconsin Golf Hall of Fame recipient Mary Hafeman, LPGA, PGA from West Bend, Wis. and Jacksonville, Fla. will be the Guest Speaker at the Players' Welcome Dinner on Sunday July 10. Mary also serves on the WWGA Board of Directors. She has received the Golf Teacher of the Year awards numerous times and has successful golf schools in both Florida and Wisconsin.

Besides the three tournaments at Blackhawk Country Club, the WWGA Junior has been played in the State of Wisconsin a number of times. Lake Geneva Country Club has hosted it the most: in 1955 JoAnne Gunderson (now Carner) won; Janesville's Carol Sorenson won in 1959, (she also won the 1962 WWGA Amateur Championship); in 1962 Mary Lou Daniel was the winner; Nancy Lopez captured the crown for the second of her three wins in 1973 (she also won the WWGA Amateur in 1976); and in 1977, Mari McDougall claimed the title. Janesville Country Club hosted the tournament in 1983 when Caroline Keggi won. In 1988, Terri Thompson won at the Ozaukee Country Club in Mequon.

Spectators are welcome and as always with top-ranked amateur events, admission is free.

About the WWGA ... The WWGA was founded in 1901 under the sponsorship of the Western Golf Association and is one of the oldest women's golf organizations in the United States; it is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established under guidelines set by the Internal Revenue Service. In 2011, the WWGA once again partnered with the Western Golf who provides meeting space at their headquarters in Golf, Ill. and has Interns who assist at WWGA tournaments.

Two tournaments held annually ... The Amateur championship has been held without interruption since 1901, not even two world wars kept the tournament from being played. This year's Amateur is being held at Dayton Country Club in Dayton, Ohio. The Junior Championship was first held in 1920; this tournament has been held annually with the exception of a few years during WWII.

Former WWGA Tournaments ... the Derby Medal Invitational was inaugurated in 1929 and continued through 1941. In 1930 the Women's Western Open was established and held through 1967; the Open was considered a Major Championship in Women's Professional Golf with a number of its winners helping to establish the LPGA. In 1979 the WWGA introduced its Senior Championship which was held until 2007, that tournament is currently on hiatus.

The above mentioned tournaments were and continue to be conducted only by WWGA Directors who come from across the U.S., they are all dedicated volunteers giving their time and talent; they receive no compensation or reimbursement for personal travel expenses.

Past Champions of WWGA tournaments reads like a list of "Who's Who in Women's Golf": Patty Berg, an 8-time champions; JoAnne Carner, Carol Mann, Beth Daniel, Meredith Duncan, Moira Dunn, Mrs. Pete (Alice) Dye, Betty Jameson, Betsy Rawls, Louise Suggs, Kathy Whitworth, Mickey Wright, Mary Hafeman, Grace Park, Cristie Kerr, Stacy Lewis, Brittany Lang and Babe Didrikson Zaharias, to mention just a few.

Last year's Junior Champion, Emilia Migliaccio from Cary, N.C. and Finalist Tess Hackworthy from Madison, Wis. will not be participating, both are ineligible due to age. Hackworthy entered the University of Wisconsin last fall.

In 1971 the Women's Western Golf Foundation was formed as an outgrowth of the Women's Western golf Association. The Foundation was formed to receive and distribute funds to advance women in scholastic achievement and collegiate golf programs by granting academic undergraduate scholarships to deserving women students who have an involvement in golf.

Ellen Meister, Past President of the WWGA is the Chairman of the Foundation. Ellen is a member at Blackhawk Country Club and was instrumental in obtaining this year's Junior tournament. She stated, *"It is wonderful to have the tournament at my home course; the members and staff are looking forward to an outstanding week of watching these talented young women."*

Over the past 45 years the Foundation has granted in excess of \$3.5 million to more than 650 scholars representing 45 states and over two dozen collegiate women's golf programs. Its primary source of income is contributions from golf clubs and groups participating in the Annual Foundation Scholarship Day, WWGA Directors and Trustees of the Foundation, golf associations, individual friends of golf and benefactors.

The Women's Western Golf Association and its Foundation have no paid staff; all Trustees are volunteers who come from across the country.

For more information on past championships and history of the Women's Western Golf Association and its Foundation, view the website: www.wwga.org

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