

Ko Wins LPGA's Season-Ending CME Group Title in a Flourish

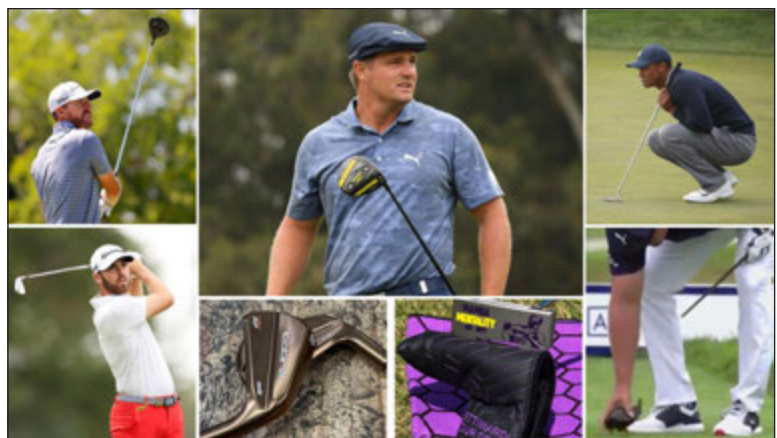


Jin Young Ko, of South Korea, hits from the 18th fairway during the final round of the U.S. Women's Open golf tournament, Monday, Dec. 14, in Houston. (AP Photo/Eric Gay)

NAPLES, Fla. (AP) — Jin Young Ko missed most of the LPGA Tour season and still won the yearlong money title. That's what a \$1.1 million check does. Ko, the No. 1 player in the

Ko Wins — PAGE 12

The Most Interesting Golf Equipment Stories of 2020



BY E. MICHAEL JOHNSON Not even a global pandemic and a three-month shutdown of professional golf could slow down equipment news in 2020. In an unusual year there were unusual moves — like a steel-shafted driver used

Equipment Stories — PAGE 5

European Tour Picks Four Tournaments That Will Form 'Global Circuit' in Partnership With PGA Tour

BY JAMES CORRIGAN The European Tour has identified the four tournaments that will begin the formation of a "global circuit" in conjunction with its new partners on the PGA Tour, with a schedule for 2021 expected in the next days. Rory McIlroy is expected to appear in the first event of the remodelled Rolex Series, with

Global Circuit — PAGE 3

Team Thomas Wins PNC as Woods Celebrates Memory With His Son

BY DOUG FERGUSON ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Justin Thomas and Tiger Woods traded text messages on the eve of the final round at the PNC Championship, their teams tied for the lead and in contention. Neither mentioned winning.

This was about Woods getting to play alongside 11-year-old son Charlie, watching him twirl the club after a good drive and yes, even deliver a fist pump in his red shirt on Sunday. For Thomas, it was about competing with his father Mike, a longtime club professional in Kentucky and the only coach he's ever had.

Team Thomas birdied the

Team Thomas — PAGE 6



Justin Thomas, left, and his father Mike Thomas check the distance of their shot from the 14th fairway during the first round of the PNC Championship golf tournament, Saturday, Dec. 19 in Orlando, Fla. (AP Photo/Phelan M. Ebenhack)

Golf Datatech Report: Huge Spike in November Play

Golf Datatech unveiled the results of its National Rounds Played Report for the month of November 2020. According to data compiled directly from golf course owners and operators, rounds of golf at public, private and resort courses nationwide were up 57 percent for the month and over 13% year-to-date through November 2020.

"Since golf returned from a near national shutdown in late spring due to COVID-19, we've

Huge Spike — PAGE 6



(Abode Stock)

Golf Balls to Get You Through Your Winter Rounds

BY JACK SEDDON If you're a fair weather golfer then you might not be shopping for more golf balls any time soon, but for those of you braving the cold this winter, there are some fantastic golf balls on the market, some of which are on sale too, so snap up some bargains!

So if you're planning on wrapping up warm and hitting the course, add some fresh golf balls

Winter Rounds — PAGE 7





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Mulligans

News, Notes, Quotes & Anecdotes from the Local Golfing Community

2020: The Year That (Almost) Wasn't Turned Out to Be Great for Local Golf

Julia Zigrossi's Accomplishments Earned Rochester Golf Week's Player of the Year Honors for 2020

BY DAVE EATON

It seems hard to remember but just 10 months ago, in February, the local golfing community was getting ready for what looked to be another solid season on the local links.

Then came March and April – and with the change in seasons came the COVID-19 pandemic, shutting everything down, including golf courses throughout New York State.

Fortunately, that shutdown lasted only a couple of weeks, thanks to new health and safety guidelines put forth by the New York State Office of Economic Development – and soon, golf courses throughout the area were open for business, just in time for the start of the 2020 golf season.

In fact, with the opening of the golf season came two developments that proved to be a boon for the local golfing community – first the weather suddenly turned warm and dry, followed soon thereafter by a wave of golfers that turned what could have been a lost year into a historic season for local facilities and golfers alike.

Beginning in early June and spurred by the ability to become involved with a familiar activity in a pandemic-affected world, golfers hit the local links in record



TOP HONORS: In 2020 Spencerport's Julia Zigrossi, 15, won the RDGA Women's Championship title in July (above), as well as several local and regional junior championships, demonstrating her ability to compete with top golfers in many levels and age groups – and earning the Rochester Golf Week Player of the Year honors for 2020. (Photo: Dave Eaton)

numbers – filling tee sheets at courses throughout the area, in leagues, tournaments and daily play alike.

The increased play at area courses eventually spilled over into local and regional tournaments and championships, which also resulted in a banner year for golf competition in the Rochester area. Throughout those tournaments, many individual performances stood out, from men's and women's competitions, to senior and junior tournaments.

Many Notable Performances In 2020

Among local men amateurs, Brook-Lea Country Club's Tom Linehan won the 54-hole RDGA District Championship John H. Ryan Jr. Memorial at Brook-Lea Country Club in July, then two weeks later returned to his home club to win the 36-hole Brook-Lea Amateur, one of the area's top men's amateur championships. Another top men's amateur in 2020 was Yarik Merkulov, who won the RDGA's Men's Match Play Championship and played in the U.S. Amateur Championship by special invitation from the USGA.

Among women amateurs, Monroe Golf Club's Tammy Blyth won the WRDGA Women's District Championship at Sodas Bay Heights Golf Club. Blyth also shined among area senior women golfers, teaming up with Oak Hill's Kitty Colliflower to win the women's Gross Score title in

the RDGA Richard Wood Senior Best Ball. Another golfer in the women's senior ranks, Cindy Glitzer of Chili, won the WRDGA Senior Championship title.

In the local men's senior ranks, a familiar name catapulted to the top of everyone's best-of lists. Jim Scorse, winner of multiple RDGA titles through the years, including five RDGA District Championships, captured a title he has never won before in 2020 – the RDGA Wilson Fitch Men's Senior Championship – in his first year of eligibility at age 55. The Stafford Country Club member won the RDGA Senior crown on his home course – then later in the season, finished in a tie for 8th in the RDGA Mid Amateur.

Among the ranks of local junior boys, there were many top players this year, including Mason Rivera, the RDGA Boys Junior Champion, and Philip Minnehan, winner of the RDGA Junior Invitational. It was John Mittiga of Geneva, however, who stood above others in his age group on the strength of two victories in which he competed against top men golfers: the RDGA District Championship Qualifier at Chili Country Club and the Western New York Open – a Western New York PGA Section event in which he posted a lower score than PGA Professionals in the field.

The one individual whose performance stood out above all others in 2020, however, towered above her competitors across several age groups.

Award-Winner Lee Westwood Seeing Golf’s Bigger Picture at 47

BY STEVE DOUGLAS
(AP) — It's not just the pandemic that has given Lee Westwood some perspective in this most strangest of years in golf. It's the person carrying his bag, too.

"When I start to get carried away with myself — you know in the majors and stuff like that — she says it's just another walk around a big green field, really," Westwood said of his fiancée, Helen Storey, who also happens to be his caddie.

"It's the sort of thing I need, to simplify everything. Because that's what it is, just another green field."

Such an outlook is doing wonders for a former top-ranked player who, at the age of 47, is showing no sign of slowing down.

Westwood was voted as the European Tour's golfer of the year for the fourth time on Monday, a week after finishing the season as the Race to Dubai champion — formerly known as the winner of the Order of Merit — for the third time in his career and 20 years after the first.

OK, a major title is still missing from Westwood's resume — he is near the top of the list of the best golfers to have never won one — but he has done pretty much everything else in a 27-year pro career that he sees extending into his 50s.

"At the end of the day, it



Lee Westwood of England before the U.S. Open Championship golf tournament, at the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., Sept. 15. Westwood was voted as the European Tours golfer of the year for 2020 on Monday Dec. 21, winning the award for the fourth time in his career after ending the season as the Race to Dubai champion at the age of 47.
(AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File)

comes to just loving the game," he said on a video call. "I have had eight days without hitting balls and I'm itching to go hit balls now."

"I don't feel like a 47-year-old, I feel like a 25-year-old."

Though the Englishman sees the bigger picture now — he says his weeks off going to horse racing's Cheltenham Festival, skiing in the Alps, or on a short break with Helen are just as valuable — Westwood also remains a hard worker.

The outbreak of the coronavirus, which brought about a three-month pause to the golf season, allowed him to spend

more time working on his fitness in the gym. Keeping and staying fit has become a big part of Westwood's life.

"I love working hard," he said. "I guess it's part of my upbringing with my mum and dad. Coming from where I did in Worksop, being a working-class lad. I went to see my careers' officer at 16 and the options he gave me were the Batchelors Pea factory or the sandwich factory."

"I fancied being a golfer a little bit more so I worked hard at it."

Now he's approaching 50, still winning big tournaments — his victory in Abu Dhabi in January ensured he is the only active golfer

to be a title-winner in four separate decades — and still riding high in the world ranking, at No. 36.

That gains him entry to all the World Golf Championship events and he'll be back at the Masters in April, too, in his latest bid for a major.

"You can't turn up at major championships and say, 'I'm going to win this week.' You turn up and say, 'I've done all the preparation I could do,'" he said. "I've ticked every box, I'm in the best shape I could be in, the best frame of mind." Then hit it. It's as simple as that.

"The build-up to the Masters doesn't start with the run of tournaments up to it in March. It starts on the bike, on the weight bench in the middle of last year."

That's experience talking, and Westwood said he has learned to embrace being an elder statesman not just of the European Tour but of golf in general.

"It is nice to beat kids that weren't born when you won your first tournament, I must admit," he said with a smile.

Helen has been on his bag since the end of 2018 after Westwood ended his long-time association with caddie Billy Foster and she'll be there next year again, getting the first call for the big events if the family situation allows.

They also plan to get married

some time in 2021.

Westwood couldn't do without her at the moment, even if she doesn't get involved in the decisions he makes on the course.

"Helen working with me is like having a psychologist there," he said. "It's just a game, it's as ridiculous as getting a little white ball into a hole that's way too small."

"If you've got that kind of perspective, that it's just a game, especially with what's gone on this year and people's freedom being taken away, it gives you the perspective and that's taken pressure off me as well."

Westwood praised the European Tour for putting on a full schedule this year in difficult times during the pandemic but he played his part, too, hosting the British Masters in July — a tournament that marked the full resumption of the tour's 2020 season.

"His performances and his professionalism are matched by his longevity and his commitment to European golf," the tour's CEO, Keith Pelley, said about Westwood. "For Lee to call shortly before our resumption and ask what he could do to help the tour is testament to the person and the player he is."

"To then go on to become the European Tour's No. 1 player for a third time, 20 years after he first achieved that accolade, was a storybook way to end this most challenging of years." 🌱

Global Circuit



Rory McIlroy is expected to appear in the first event of the remodelled Rolex Series next month. (Getty Images)

next month's Abu Dhabi Championship having its prize fund boosted to \$8 million (£6 million) to bring it up to PGA Tour levels.

It is understood that the Scottish Open, the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth and the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai will also have \$8 million prizes, with the view to the quartet becoming co-sanctioned with the PGA Tour in 2022.

They are positioned on the European Tour's strongest spots on the calendar where they often achieve stronger fields than the PGA Tour.

It will mean that in these Rolex Series tournaments, "global" players such as McIlroy and other dual-Tour members will be

able to earn Race to Dubai and FedEx Cup points in the circuits' respective money lists, as well as Ryder Cup points.

Keith Pelley, the European Tour's chief executive, will hope to entice more of the highest-ranked Americans and he is backed in this aim by Jay Monahan, the PGA Tour commissioner, following the signing of the already celebrated "strategic alliance" last month.

"The wheels for co-sanctioned events will be in motion with this announcement of the schedule," a Tour insider told The Daily Telegraph. "The Americans are keen on promoting the Irish Open and Italian Open as well, because of those countries' close ties with the States."

On the 2019 schedule, Ireland and Italy were Rolex Series events before being demoted this year due to the economic carnage of the pandemic. But these tournaments will have their prize funds trebled to \$3 million for 2021, as the PGA Tour assists with the marketing and promotion. With Rome hosting the 2023 Ryder

Cup and Adare the 2027 match, it is expected that these will also become co-sanctioned events.

The Turkish Airlines Open and the Nedbank Challenge in Sun City, which were also Rolex Series events, will be the obvious absences on the schedule.

However, with the UK Swing once again taking place after

helping fill the holes so effectively this summer, there will be plenty to enthuse the memberships. The sight of McIlroy opening his campaign in the desert next month will certainly be much welcomed. The Northern Irishman has not played on his home tour for 13 months. 🌱

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A Major Success Getting in 7 Major Championships

BY DOUG FERGUSON

HOUSTON (AP) — Already the latest a major championship had ever been played, it was only fitting the U.S. Women's Open had to go an additional day because of rain.

Equally appropriate for the conclusion of this surreal season was the winner, A Lim Kim, wearing a mask while she played. "I'm OK to get positive tests for COVID-19, but I don't want to affect other people," Kim said.

What a year.

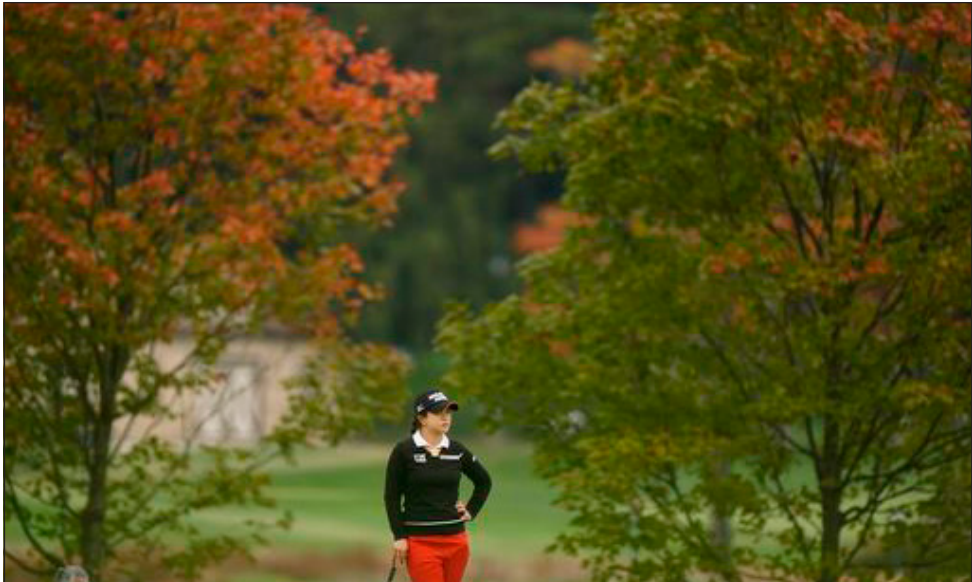
Mike Davis, the retiring CEO of the USGA, couldn't help but think about what almost was.

Imagine the USGA leaving the wintry chill of Houston on Monday and heading straight to Los Angeles for a U.S. Open at Riviera the week before Christmas. It was one day away from happening.

And it's a reminder that piecing together a major championship schedule among seven golf organizations in the middle of a pandemic was tougher than trying to hit a mud-splotted ball with a 5-iron.

Davis could only smile and shake his head on the eve of the Women's Open when thinking back to the possibilities and the last-minute phone calls as golf was trying to reconfigure a schedule that worked for everyone.

September was probably the latest the British Open could be played because of weather and daylight in England. The PGA Championship was going from May to August. The Masters was going from



Sei Young Kim, of South Korea, waits on the 16th green during the final round at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship golf tournament at the Aronimink Golf Club in Newtown Square, Pa., in this Sunday, Oct. 11, 2020, file photo. Because of the pandemic, three of the seven golf majors for men and women were held in the fall. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum, File)

April to November. Davis said the USGA thought about consecutive weeks in December to stage a U.S. Open for women and men.

He said he called Los Angeles Country Club, site of the 2023 U.S. Open, but the greens on the North course were not ready. So he called Riviera Country Club, which asked for 24 hours to consider, and called back to accept.

"We were ready to go," Davis said.

Press releases were prepared for the surprise announcement. And then the R&A concluded it could not host the Brit-

ish Open this year and would be forced to cancel. That freed up September, the USGA made sure the date would work with Winged Foot, and so it was.

That only one major — the oldest one — wasn't played is remarkable.

Between the men and women, golf staged seven majors in five U.S. states (two in California separated by one month, 500 miles and more than 50 degrees in temperature) and Scotland.

No tickets were sold.

The courses were not devoid of spectators because of player guests (a spouse,

a parent); photographers, writers and support staff for the broadcast; and tournament and club officials. The Masters allowed Augusta National members, who only wore their green jackets if they were on a tournament committee (Peyton Manning apparently isn't on a committee yet).

Observers can only speculate whether the silence helped or hurt. Six of the seven winners had never won a major. Two of them — Sophia Popov in the Women's British Open at Royal Troon and Kim at the U.S. Women's Open — had never even played a major.

Rory McIlroy was among those who said he didn't do a good job adjusting to the lack of buzz. For those players who wondered how Tiger Woods dealt with chaos around him, he got a taste of their world with hardly anyone watching.

Everyone played in the same environment. The low score won. That didn't change.

The ANA Inspiration in the California desert moved from early spring to late summer, and when temperatures climbed toward 120 degrees, the LPGA Tour wisely allowed carts for caddies all week and for players during practice.

Augusta National was stunning in autumn colors, and while it looked mostly the same on TV, spells of warm weather kept the Bermuda grass from going entirely dormant, leading to a different variety of shots. The course was so soft that players took aim at spots on the greens

Major Success - PAGE 11



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Mulligans

(Continued from Page 2)

Zigrossi Stands Out as Rochester Golf Week Player Of The Year

It was 10 years ago that A 15-year-old golfer by the name of Gavin Hall took the local amateur scene by storm, winning the annual RDGA District Championship John H. Ryan Jr. Memorial, along with a handful of junior championships and events. That year, *Rochester Golf Week* bestowed its Player of the Year honors upon Hall – and this year, we honor another 15-year-old prodigy with similar credentials.

In 2020, Spencerport's Julia Zigrossi excelled at every level in which she competed. The Ridgemont member opened the year with three victories in 36-hole Hurricane Junior Golf Tour events, often competing against top juniors from around the U.S., then captured the 2020 RDGA Girls Junior Championship, the Monroe County Girls High School Tournament of Champions and the Section V Girls High School title - but one of her most impressive accomplishments was winning the RDGA Women's Championship at Brook-Lea Country Club in July against many of the area's top women's amateurs.

For these reasons, *Rochester Golf Week* is pleased to



HONORABLE MENTION: Among many individual accomplishments throughout 2020, some that stood out included (clockwise, from left): Tom Linehan, who won the RDGA District Championship John H. Ryan Jr. Memorial and the Brook-Lea Invitational; Jim Scorse, who won the RDGA Wilson Fitch Senior Championship in his first year of eligibility at age 55; Tammy Blyth, who captured the WRDGA District Championship crown; and 15-year-old John Mittiga, who won two events competing against much older golfers – and in one event, PGA Club Professionals. (Photos: Dave Eaton)

announce that Zigrossi is our choice as the *Rochester Golf Week* Player of the Year for 2020 – becoming the second youngest to be so honored, as well as only the third female to win the title since 2005.

The sky seems to be the limit for Zigrossi, who continues to focus on state and national competitions as well as local cham-

pionship. It remains to be seen if her aspirations of becoming a member of the LPGA Tour match those of Hall, whose drive a decade ago has now led him to the doorstep of the PGA Tour.

One thing is for sure: friends, family and local golf fans will all be watching – and cheering for – Zigrossi as she aims for her dreams. ➡


Mizuno Adds Three New Models to Its M.Craft Line of Forged Putters



BY MIKE STACHURA
What you need to know: Mizuno’s M.Craft lineup of forged carbon steel putters, which debuted earlier this year, adds three new models for 2021, including two new mallets and a wide-body blade.
Price: \$300 (new models available Feb. 4).
The Deep Dive: Mizuno got back into the putter business earlier this year by concentrating on putters that take after the company’s main skill set: precision forgings in classic shapes. The

M.Craft line debuted with three models, and now the company is scheduled to double the collection in 2021.
The M.Craft putters are forged from 1025 mild carbon steel and then CNC milled to precise shapes and a deep milling pattern on the face for a softer feel. The putters utilize two switchable sole weight ports with three different pairs of weight screws included in every purchase. The standard offering is with two eight-gram weights in the heel and toe, but the kit comes with

a three-gram pair and a 13-gram pair.
The new models for 2021 include the M.Craft IV, which features a slant neck connected to square-back blade shape; the M.Craft V, which also utilizes a slant neck in a deep mallet shape; and the M.Craft VI, a winged mallet in a face-balanced configuration.
The M.Craft putters are built at a slightly heavier stock weight of 355 grams except for the VI, which checks in at an even more robust 371 grams. The heavier mass is designed to promote a more stable head both during the stroke and at impact.
Including last year’s models, the lineup with the standard weight configurations includes two face-balanced models and four with varying degrees of toe hang to fit a range of arcing strokes, as well as straight back and straight through motions.

Using different weights in each of the heel and toe ports allows even more stroke and head mass variety, as well.
Each head style is available in three finishes: white satin, blue ion and black ion. 
© **GolfDigest.com**

Equipment Stories

(Continued from Page 1)
on the PGA Tour — unusual protocols for players and PGA Tour reps upon pro golf’s re-start and the nearly impossible thought of Tiger Woods benching his trusty Scotty Cameron putter used for 14 of his 15 majors wins. Several other stories of note relating to bats, balls and, of course, the hot-button topic of distance, grabbed our attention during the past 12 months. And so, we give you our top equipment stories of 2020.

Equipment Sales Soar Amid a Pandemic
At the outset of the coronavirus outbreak in the United States, golf appeared to be among the industries that would be hit hard by widespread state and local lockdowns, as evidenced by a cratering of equipment sales from March through May. But in the ensuing months, the sport became one of the early recreational activities deemed “safe” by authorities thanks to it being played outdoors and with its ability to follow natural social distancing practices. In turn, recreational golf became significantly more popular and the increase in play was accompanied by a historic surge in the sales of golf equipment. Starting in June, the comeback was not only swift, but startling. By October, Golf Datatech, an industry research firm, announced that golf equipment sales in the U.S. surpassed \$1 billion for the third quarter, a first for that time of the year. It also was the second-highest quarter (\$1.013 billion in Q2, 2008) of all time.
Although numbers for the entire year are yet not in, it is likely the rebound will result in equipment sales being up for the year, an unthinkable fact back in May. “These month-over-

month sales records are unlike anything we’ve ever seen since Golf Datatech started tracking performance data in 1997,” said John Krzynowek, one of the research firm’s partners. “Our rounds played data also shows similar record-breaking growth over the past several months, which is a strong indication that avid golfers and newcomers alike are driving the sport to new levels right now.”

Bramlett Honors Kobe



Joseph Bramlett’s PGA Tour profile page lists his special interests as basketball and music. When Kobe Bryant died in a helicopter crash in January, Bramlett asked Bettinardi Golf to produce a backup of his Studio Stock 28 Armlock putter to pay homage to the Los Angeles Laker great. Although it took a while to produce, Bettinardi responded by presenting Bramlett a replica of his gamer at this year’s Sanderson Farms Championship — a 40.5-inch wide-bodied blade with 5 degrees of loft and 74 degrees of lie angle that boasted a logo in purple and gold (the colors of Bryant’s Lakers) on the face and purple paint fill for the Bettinardi name in the rear cavity. It’s the sole of the club, however, the received the most attention. Along with a likeness of

Bryant wearing his No. 24 jersey, in large block letters are the words “Mamba Mentality” and #8 and #24 — the two numbers Bryant wore during his career with the Lakers.

Rickie’s New MB Irons

When it comes to his equipment, Rickie Fowler likes to have a voice in the design process. He assisted TaylorMade in the choice of the pattern used on its new TP5 Pix 2.0 ball, and with his equipment company, Cobra, he has been instrumental in helping bring back railed soles on fairway woods and heavily involved in the creation of his irons. That collaboration continued with the set of irons Fowler put into play at the TaylorMade Driving Relief skins game in May, the culmination of a year-long process that saw Fowler and Cobra go through 33 revisions before arriving at the finished product. The irons, named Rickie Fowler Prototype MB, boasted an eye-catching copper color and a parallel hosel that eliminates all offset. Additionally, the topline at address is ultra-thin

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Team Thomas

(Continued from Page 1)
opening seven holes and the father delivered a 5-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole that gave them a 15-under 57 in the scramble format and a one-shot victory over Vijay Singh and son Qass. They won the Willie Park Trophy. It only felt like the other 19 teams won a participation trophy.

“Memories we’ll have for our entire lives,” Woods said after he and Charlie posted another 62 to finish seventh. “He’s not going to appreciate this at 11 years old. I didn’t when I was with my dad. As the years go by, you start appreciating it more.” Woods and his son dressed in his traditional Sunday red with black trousers. Charlie’s mother, Elin Nordegren, walked the final round at The Ritz-Carlton Club at Grande Lakes, her first time at a golf tournament since the 2009 Presidents Cup at Harding Park. The Woodses played the final six holes in 6-under par, too late by then to do anything about Thomas and his father. Thomas, a former world No. 1 and PGA champion, has grown close to the Woods clan and talked in

the days leading up to this event about how badly Charlie wants to beat him. Mike Thomas said young Woods took \$1 off him on the putting green Saturday afternoon and said with a laugh, “I’ll show him what I got here.” Mike Thomas specializes in working with juniors and spends time with Charlie when he’s in Florida. Thomas, who has multiple PGA Tour titles in each of his last four years, wasn’t about to compare this with his PGA Championship, World Golf Championships or any other of his 13 tour victories. Even so, he called the PNC Championship “100 percent the most enjoyable.” When his father holed the birdie putt, he said he knew there were 10 teams still on the course and it still felt as though the tournament was over. “A part of you didn’t care who won,” he said. “We were here as father and son to enjoy a special moment.” That’s what Alastair Johnston, the vice chairman at IMG, had in mind when he created this tournament 25 years ago. It started as the Father-Son Challenge. It since has changed into major champi-

ons and Players Championship winners competing with a family member — son, daughter, father-in-law, grandson. The idea was that golf fans would be curious to see the children of great players. Throw in the 11-year-old son of golf’s biggest star, and interest surged to new levels. Charlie Woods delivered a great show, unfazed by the 250 spectators (mostly sponsor guests) or the national TV spotlight. “I’d like to find the right way to tell Charlie that thousands of kids watching at home will be inspired to want to play golf with their dads,” Johnston said. “He wouldn’t appreciate it now. But one day he might.” The PNC Championship has the strongest waiting list in golf, and it’s always been that way. Newcomers to the field this year included Woods and Thomas, Bubba Watson and Mark Calcavecchia. Calcavecchia played with his son Eric. When they finished, the former British Open champion who has been trying to get in the tournament for seven years was asked how it went. “Nothing short of amazing,” Calcavecchia said. “I’m kind of sad it’s over. I feel like a little kid when the carnival leaves town.” That’s about how it felt for Woods. His son played from tee mark-



Sam Alexis Woods, center, Elin Nordegren, left, and Erica Herman follow Tiger Woods and Charlie Woods on the 11th hole during the final round of the PNC Championship. (AP Photo/Phelan M. Ebenhack)

ers more than 100 yards ahead in some cases, and Woods often waited for Charlie to hit his drive. More times than not, Charlie would look back give him the thumbs-up and Woods didn’t even bother hitting his shot. “I’m proud of how he handled everything,” Woods said. He said it was “without a doubt” the most fun he’s had on the golf course this year. Woods played only nine times because of the COVID-19 pandemic and only once finished in the top 10. But he wasn’t about to rank the week with other big moments in his remarkable career. He said the idea was to enjoy the experience together, “and we did that.”



Charlie Woods, son of golfer Tiger Woods, tosses a ball to his caddie after marking his spot on the third green during the final round of the PNC Championship. (AP Photo/Phelan M. Ebenhack)



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Huge Spike

(Continued from Page 1)
recorded double digit growth every month for the last seven months” said John Krzynowek, partner, Golf Datatech. “November was another excellent month for rounds, up an astounding 57 percent over the same month in 2019. Typically, it’s a time of year when much of the country is starting to wind down for winter and it can be uncomfortable to be outside to play. This year, however, we had above average weather for playing the game, continuing a lengthy streak of minimal precipitation and warm temperatures.” Krzynowek said, “Due to the continuation of limited play and

attendance of youth sports, college and pro football, as well as minimal travel and restrictions on other activities, people kept coming to their golf courses to play in November. Golf is the perfect social distancing outdoor recreational activity for any and every member of the family.” In 1999, Golf Datatech undertook the task of creating the golf industry’s first monthly projections of rounds played by state and region around the country. The Company’s objective from day one was to provide accurate estimates of the health of golf by tracking rounds, which are the engine that drives almost every other aspect of the business. The company also receives support from the National Golf Foundation (delivering course data) and WeatherTrends (weather data) in an effort to provide the industry with granular detail at the market level. November’s rounds data indicated that only three states, Hawaii, Florida and New Mexico showed negative results for the month. This is due to a season long decline in golfer travel to Hawaii, while Florida, especially southern Florida, was hit hard by rain caused by tropical storm Eta that hit in the early part of the month and caused flooding in some areas. Additionally, New Mexico was under a statewide order to close non-essential busi-

nesses including golf courses Nov. 16-30. “Based on our analysis, since the start of the pandemic and related lockdowns, international and long-distance travel remains a challenge for many (but not all) resort facilities, particularly in markets like Hawaii where rounds are down over 35 percent YTD,” Krzynowek said. “Public facilities have been consistently packed with players post lockdowns, and private club membership has skyrocketed. In fact, public course rounds played are up nearly 12 percent year-to-date, while rounds at private courses are up nearly 19 percent year-to-date. We expect this trend to continue at least into the first half of 2021, as the pandemic keeps people confined to their local communities looking for socially distant activities that they can enjoy outdoors.” Krzynowek concluded, “Each month we’re able to provide data so that our industry partners can keep their finger on the pulse of the golf industry, both nationally and regionally, and right now support for the game itself is strong. In late January 2021 we will provide detailed insights into both rounds and golf equipment sales trends for all of 2020. We anticipate the look back on the year, despite the pandemic, will be quite positive.”

Winter Rounds

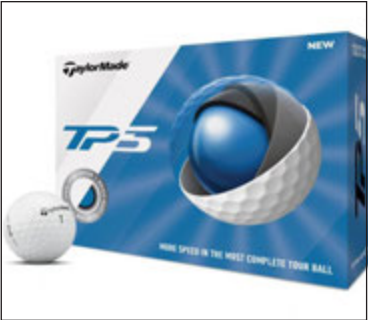
(Continued from Page 1)
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4th Generation Spin Skin with SeRM: A new urethane coating with flexible molecular bonds that dig deep into wedge and iron grooves, maximizing spin for more control and more stopping power.
338 Speed Dimple Pattern: Offering less drag and more lift, the 338 Speed Dimple Pattern boosts overall distance and flies straight, even in the toughest wind conditions.

TaylorMade TP5 Golf Balls



THE DETAILS:
More Speed: Packed with new technologies, the latest TP5 ball is even faster with a greater rebound effect and optimized spin rates. There's no ball faster, no ball longer, and no ball better than the most complete Tour ball.
The TP5 Difference: Compared to TP5x, TP5 offers lower compression, lower launch, and more wedge spin to help improve your short game — ultimately, TP5 provides a more workable golf ball with softer feel.
5-Layer Construction: The key to achieving enhanced speed without negatively affecting spin performance comes from TaylorMade's proprietary 5-layer ball construction. Including a Tri-Fast Core that delivers maximum carry and low drag and a Dual-Spin Cover that features an ultra-soft, highly durable cast

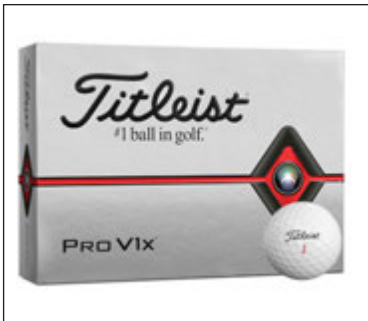
urethane cover, TP5/TP5x offer complete tee-to-green performance without sacrifice.
New Speed-Layer System: The new Speed-Layer System is comprised of four increasingly stiff layers to produce more ball speed. The result is more carry distance off the tee, more control in the wind, and more spin around the greens.

Mizuno RB Tour X Golf Balls



THE DETAILS:
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C-Dimple For Reduced Drag: Mizuno's new Cone (C) Dimple is the result of 12 years of wind tunnel testing at Mizuno's MT (Mizuno Technics) test facility. The C-Dimple creates more trigger points to keep fast-flowing air close to the ball's surface for longer — simultaneously reducing drag, and strengthening trajectory. Under laboratory testing, a configuration of 360 Cone Dimples was discovered the most effective at producing a controllable, penetrating driver flight, and noticeable distance gains on full iron shots.

Titleist Pro V1x Golf Balls



THE DETAILS:
Faster from core to cover, the new Titleist Pro V1 and Pro V1x golf balls have been designed to leave the clubface with more ball speed and lower long game spin for more distance while providing the best short game control to help golfers shoot lower scores.
17% Thinner Cover: A More Efficient Design. The proprietary cast thermoset urethane elastomer cover system provides the best scoring control. While great for generating high spin on approach shots and short game shots, the cover does not contribute speed. By reducing the cover thickness, we have


added speed while retaining the spin and control.
New, Larger Casing Layer: More of What's Fast. The casing layer is the speed enhancing, spin optimising layer that helps power Pro V1 and Pro V1x for exceptional distance in the long game. The new Pro V1 and Pro V1x have larger casing layers, adding more fast material to their respective designs.
New, Fast Core: More Speed. Less Spin. Same Feel. The combination of the most advanced formulation and processing capabilities deliver powerful engines to Pro V1 and Pro V1x. The new cores have more speed and less spin while maintaining their feel characteristics and compression.

Bridgestone Tour B XS Golf Balls

THE DETAILS:
Consistent flight and performance in the Tour B balls are a result of the proprietary Seamless Cover Technology. Designed and played by Tiger Woods, the choice of a true champion.
REACTIV Cover: REACTIV is a smart Urethane that acts as an 'impact modifier' to deliver a shock absorbing cover on slow impact shots for more spin and control (wedge) — and high resilience on high impact shots for more power and distance (drive). The cover reacts differently depending on the force of the impact.
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core. Higher initial ball speed and lower side spin from the Gradational Compression core help give you an advantage on the course.
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distance and enhanced aerodynamics are a result of the Dual Dimple technology. The added distance comes from a more efficient ball trajectory thanks to less drag when the ball is in flight.
Seamless Cover: Consistent flight and performance are a result of the proprietary Seamless Cover Technology. The perfect performance and aerodynamic balance comes from a manufacturing processes that creates a perfectly balanced dimple pattern. 

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Equipment Stories

(Continued from Page 5)

thanks to a chamfer that slims it down while not altering the sound properties of the iron. On the back of the club is stamped “RF” on one side and “REV 33” on the other — a homage to the 33 revisions it took to fully dial in the clubs to Fowler’s liking.

Equipment Adjustments on Tour With COVID

When the PGA Tour re-started at the Charles Schwab Challenge in June, it also served as a return for the tour’s equipment road warriors — the tour reps who operate the vans that go from tournament to tournament servicing their respective players. Balancing safety and player’s equipment needs, reps were no longer able to freely roam the range and clubhouse at events. Previously, gloves, balls, towels and shirts would be placed by reps in player’s lockers. Post COVID, a player concierge area was created where products were dropped and distributed in the locker room after being sanitized. Work on the range also was different. Instead of unfettered access, each player had a guest badge they could use for a teacher or an equipment rep to be with them. Club builds also had to be dropped off at a station for sanitizing. Despite the extra effort needed, the protocols worked, showing just like the tour itself, everyone learned to adapt in order to keep playing.

Bryson’s Big Break

Prior to 2020, the equipment talk around Bryson DeChambeau centered mostly on his single-length irons. But a beefed-up Bryson changed the conversation to his driver, notably the decision to go with a long-drive-like loft of 5.5 degrees. As if that didn’t get people talking, there was the moment in August when DeChambeau accidentally snapped

the shaft of his Cobra Speedzone driver during the opening round of the PGA Championship. On the seventh hole at TPC Harding Park, Bryson leaned a little too hard on the club after hitting a tee shot. For his part, DeChambeau was nonplussed by the damage, as he could be overheard saying, “It was bound to break — I’ve been using it for a long time.” After the round, he was equally even-keeled. “At some point, material is material,” he said. “You keep wearing it and using it like that, you know, stuff is going to break down. I’m just glad it lasted this long. Being able to switch it out [allowed under the Rules of Golf] and put a new one right back in play in a major championship and stripe one on 9, that’s pretty impressive.”

Players Go Long(er) With Their Drivers

On the heels of his runaway U.S. Open win at Winged Foot in September, in which he bludgeoned Winged Foot with his 323-yard driving average, DeChambeau boastfully talked about trying to gain more yards in a quest for a Masters title in November. To do so, he started experimenting with a longer-shafted driver, going all the way to the max length of 48 inches. Ultimately, he decided against putting that club in play at Augusta, but that didn’t slow a pair of past Masters champions — Adam Scott and Phil Mickelson — from trying it. On a Callaway podcast, Lefty mentioned how he would use a 47.5-inch Callaway Mavrik Sub Zero to do things such as carry the bunker on the first hole at Augusta National. Scott, meanwhile, bumped the shaft length on his Titleist TSi4 up an inch to 46 and saw a ball-speed increase of 4 to 5 mph. Unfortunately, both fell well short of the desired result at Augusta National. Scott finished a pedestrian T-34 while

Mickelson lagged even further behind at T-55.

Matthew Wolff’s New Sticks at the U.S. Open

In just his second career appearance in a major, Matthew Wolff led the U.S. Open at Winged Foot after 54 holes — and he did it with a new set of irons and a tweaked putter. Wolff, who did not qualify for the Tour Championship two weeks earlier, used the time off to test a set of TaylorMade P•7MC irons. After playing one round at home with them, he put the new clubs in the bag. Despite standing 6 feet tall, Wolff has his irons a half-inch shorter than standard. “I’ve done that for a long time, and it just feels comfortable to me,” he said. Wolff also made a couple tweaks to his putter, adding weight to his TaylorMade Spider X mallet and flattening the lie angle. Although he didn’t win, Wolff did finish second, making the switch timely indeed.

Jimmy Walker’s Throwback Shafts

Several players used the downtime created by the coronavirus to work on their equipment ahead of the PGA Tour’s re-start at the Charles Schwab Challenge. Former PGA Championship winner Jimmy Walker, however, took it to a new level. Walker came to Colonial Country Club in Fort Worth armed with metal woods with steel shafts, including his Titleist TS3 driver. According to the Darrell Survey, it marked only the third time since 2008 that a PGA Tour player put a steel-shafted driver in play, the others being Todd Demsey, who used a True Temper Dynamic Gold shaft in his TaylorMade R11s driver at the 2012 Byron Nelson Championship, and Patrick Reed, who also used Dynamic Gold in his Callaway X2Hot Deep Pro at the 2014 RBC Heritage. Walker had True Temper X100 steel shafts (with D-5 swing weights) in his 44-inch, 8.5-degree Titleist TS3 driver and TS3 3-wood (15 degree) after practicing with each for several weeks. When Walker informed Titleist’s tour rep of his plan, the reaction was as one might expect. “I was trying to be serious and he’s laughing,” Walker said. “He said, ‘Well let me try and find some X shafts if I can even get in the building. I’ll see if I can dust some off and build you a current model.’ Sure enough, he sent me a picture of this dusty box in the corner. He built the TS3 fairway and shipped it to me.” The experiment, though, didn’t last long. By the Rocket Mortgage Classic a few weeks later, Walker was back to graphite shafts.

Endorsement Comings and Goings

In May, less than a year and a half after signing with Honma, Justin Rose and the company officially parted ways although that seemed likely months earlier when Rose showed up at



(Gregory Shamus)



(Ron Jenkins)



(Christian Petersen/PGA of America)

March’s Honda Classic without a single piece of Honma gear in the bag. Billy Horschel and PXG also split early in the season. Contrast that to Bubba Watson and Ping, who right before the Masters in November announced they had entered into a “lifetime” contract that would extend well past Watson’s PGA Tour days. As for what is yet to come, TaylorMade’s holiday card with its tour staff was absent Jon Rahm and Jason Day. Stay tuned.

Tiger’s (Short-Lived) Putter Switch

Tiger Woods changed putters at the PGA Championship at TPC Harding Park, and the Internet went berserk. After all, Woods benched the Scotty Cameron by Titleist putter that he had won 14 of his 15 majors with. Of course, Woods, as he almost always does for an equipment change, had a rationale for it, citing that the longer length on the new flat stick (below) put less stress on his back. “It’s difficult for me to bend over at times, and so

practicing putting, I don’t spend the hours I used to,” Woods said after an opening-round 68. “Most of the guys on the Champions Tour have gone to longer putters as they have gotten older, because it’s easier to bend over, or not bend over. This putter is just a little bit longer, and I’ve been able to spend a little bit more time putting.” After spotty putting at the PGA, however, Woods was back with his old Cameron at The Northern Trust, opting to use that in competition while continuing to practice with the longer putter. “Just stubbornness, I guess,” Woods replied when asked about the change back. Queried as to why he didn’t just put a longer shaft in his gamer, Woods seemed reticent to mess with success. “I’ve thought about doing that, but I don’t know,” he said. “I just can’t do it. I’ve regripped it. I’ve sent it to Scotty to rebuild the hosel because I’ve thrown it a few times. But I’ve never dinged the shaft. That’s the same shaft for the last 21 years.” 🏌️

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GOLF opinion & comment

Youngest Captain in 234-Year Club History Appointed at Crail Golfing Society

BY BERNIE MCGUIRE

It has been just a handful of years since Crail Golfing Society proudly became the oldest club in Scotland to appoint its first female captain, and now golf's seventh oldest club has appointed one of the Home of Golf nation's youngest Captains.

Max Baillie, at 27-years of age, is believed to be one of the youngest currently acting in the role as Captain in some 550 clubs under the Scottish Golf umbrella.

Historically, Max is the youngest to accept the Crail captaincy reins since the Society's first Captain, William Ranken, in 1786 who was aged 28.

Baillie was the unanimous vote of the members at a recent 'Zoom' annual general meeting, and also an historic first in an electronic format in the 196 AGMs held at the famed club at Fifeness and just to the east of St. Andrews.

Baillie takes over the Captaincy role from Jim McArthur, former Chairman of the R & A's Championship Committee and a past Chairman of CONGU.

McArthur had been captain from 2018 – 2020 and helped steer the club, and like all clubs in the UK and around the world, through troubled times, before not witnessed since WW2.



Max Baillie – At age 27 and the youngest Crail Golfing Society Captain

Baillie served under McArthur as Vice-Captain and has confidently accepted the role with restrictions still in place across Scotland, and no certainty when they will be fully lifted and with many clubs also continuing to struggle financially in the nearly 10 months since the initial lockdown.

"Crail Golfing Society has always been a very special place to me," said Baillie. "This club has provided me with so much throughout my life, both personally and

professionally, and I am relishing the opportunity to Captain such a historic Society and give back to a place which means so much to me.

"The spirit at Crail Golfing Society has always been one of friendliness and pride."

"As with all clubs in Scotland and throughout the United Kingdom, we are facing numerous daily challenges as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is only with the continued

support of such a loyal Membership and a dedicated and professional Team, that we will ensure the Society is positioned for a successful exit from the effects of the current situation, and we can soon warmly welcome back all our Members and Visitors alike.

"To hold such a distinguished position is a true honour, and I look forward to working closely with the Society's Management Committee, Members and Crail Team over the coming years.

"Until to then, Crail GS remains strongly confident the ancient game can continue to set the best examples of social-distancing practices, so that golf will also emerge stronger for what has transpired for already much of this year."

Originally from Falkirk, Baillie joined the club as a 12-year-old in 2005 and quickly stamped his golfing credentials, capturing three Junior Club Championships; the 4-handicapper also claimed the Gents Club Handicap Championship in 2011.

Away from Crail, Baillie currently works within the Drinks and Spirits Industry, having graduated in Brewing and Distilling from Heriot Watt University in 2018.

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The 19th Hole... News, Notes & Quotes From the World of Golf

Tiger Woods, Playing Partner and Parent

BY KAREN CROUSE

ORLANDO, Fla. — The kid, like others of his generation, had never seen Tiger Woods win a major. He had no clue how cool golf could be.

And then his father unexpectedly won the 2019 Masters. That's when the game got a hold on Woods's son, Charlie, 11, almost as soon as Woods swept him up in his arms behind Augusta National Golf Club's 18th green.

"It was casual before then," Woods's caddie, Joe LaCava said, referring to Charlie's interest in golf. "Now it's intense — in a good way."

Charlie Woods's deeper embrace of golf has afforded the public a rare view this weekend of another side of his famous father, one that Tiger Woods usually chooses to keep out of sight of the prying public: the devoted dad.

Woods, 44, and his son will make their debut Saturday in the PNC Championship, a 36-hole best-ball format featuring 20 teams of prominent past champions and their family members. On a chilly Thursday at the Ritz-Carlton Golf Club at Grande Lakes, where the tournament is taking place, the Woodses warmed up with an 18-hole pro-am that was memorable for Charlie's approach-shot darts and Woods's paternal pride.



Tiger Woods, right, and his son, Charlie, will play in a televised father-son event this weekend. (Phelan M. Ebenhack/Associated Press)

"It's so much fun for me to see him enjoying the game," Woods said. "That's the whole idea. Enjoy hitting shots and creating those shots."

Golf has come full circle for Woods, who forged a deep connection with his father, Earl, through the game. As Earl did with Tiger, Woods exposed Charlie to the game early. At 6, Charlie had a swing that Woods said he envied.

Charlie moves his neck to

work out the cricks the way his father does. He shakes his water bottle, minus the added electrolyte powders, just like his father. He stuffs his hands in his pockets when he is cold like his father. And when he is playing with his father at home, he reacts to good shots just like he does, by twirling his club.

But Charlie is not a sawed-down version of Woods. Unlike his father, who competed in a putting contest with Bob Hope

on "The Mike Douglas Show" when he was a toddler and had been profiled in *Golf Digest* and *Ebony* magazine by the time he was 6, Charlie has had a much more low-key childhood.

He dabbled in golf but initially seemed more interested, as is his older sister, Sam, in soccer. That was fine by Woods, who said Thursday, "Whatever he decides to do, as long as he has a passion for it, I'm happy."

Until this week, his children

have made infrequent appearances in the glare of his spotlight. Sam, 13, hadn't planned on attending the final round of the 2019 Masters, showing up only after her club soccer team failed to advance to a tournament final scheduled for the same day, and Woods said that Charlie came only because his sister was there.


After he won, Woods said, they spent the short flight home fighting over who got to wear the green jacket. He was gratified by their enthusiasm.

Woods has spoken often of how he thought his children were reluctant to commit to golf because they associated the sport with the pain it has caused him, not just his physical struggles but perhaps also his arrest with painkillers in his system in 2017 after a risky back surgery. The operation had been undertaken, Woods said at the time, to improve his quality of life with his children, not prolong his career, which he thought was over.


Woods's voice and expressions always soften when he speaks of his children. They are the one topic that can reliably engender a smile that reaches his eyes.

"So excited that we're able to have these moments," he said Thursday.

To watch Woods and his



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LPGA Reveals 2021 Schedule: 34 Events, Plus Solheim Cup; Record Prize Money

BY BRENTLEY ROMINE

As its pandemic-shortened season wraps up this week in Naples, Florida, the LPGA has released its schedule for next year.

The tour plans to conduct 34 tournaments, plus the Solheim Cup, in 2021. This is up from just 18 events this year. There will also be a record \$76.45 million in prize money up for grabs next season and a few new events, including a match-play tournament in May.

“We can all agree that 2020, while certainly not the 70th anniversary year that we expected, was a year that we will never forget,” LPGA commissioner Mike Whan said. “As we look back at the year, I am amazed at how our partnerships have actually grown during this trying time, and how the LPGA staff was able to return all three tours to play in summer 2020. We actually added sponsorship sales in 2020 in the form of new title partners and new marketing partners, and we proved that professional golf can be played safely for all involved. And our fans responded. Social engagement is up more than 40% and TV viewership is up more than 30% over last year.

“As we look to 2021, we

are recapturing the momentum that we had at the beginning of 2020 and we are excited about our future, which will include news of new title sponsors and several significant purse increases.”

Here are some notes on the new schedule:

- The 2021 campaign will begin at the Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions on Jan. 21-24 in Orlando, Florida. That event announced earlier this week that it will only invite select guests and that the general public will not be permitted to attend. Two more Florida events will be played, one in late February and the other in early March, before the tour heads to California and ramps up its schedule March 25-28 at the Kia Classic in Carlsbad, California.
- While the LPGA’s two Australian stops, which usually happen in February, have been postponed until 2022, both Asian Swings are a go after being scrapped this year because of the pandemic. The first will begin in late April with an event in Singapore, followed by tournaments in Thailand, China. The LPGA will return to Asia in October and play events in China, South Korea, Taiwan

and Japan before returning to the U.S. for its final two events in Florida.

- All five majors are back on the schedule, including the U.S. Women’s Open, which will move back to its summer date. The June 3-6 at The Olympic Club in San Francisco will feature a \$5.5 million purse.
- The women’s portion of the Olympics will take place Aug. 4-7 at Kasumigaseki Country Club near Tokyo, and it will fit between a new co-sanctioned event with the LET and European Tour (July 29-Aug. 1) and the Ladies Scottish Open (Aug. 12-15). Qualifying for the 60-player field will conclude June 27, after the KPMG Women’s PGA Championship at Atlanta Athletic Club.
- Speaking of new tournaments, the LPGA will host a match-play competition May 26-30, though no further details, including a location, were released.
- The Solheim Cup is scheduled for Sept. 4-6 at Inverness Club in Toledo, Ohio. “Inverness is going to be an amazing venue for the 2021 Solheim Cup and I know that Toledo golf fans will support us like they always do,” said LPGA star Danielle Kang.

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Ko Wins

(Continued from Page 1)

world, put an emphatic capper on her truncated year Sunday by shooting a final-round 6-under 66 and winning the CME Group Tour Championship by five strokes over Hannah Green and Sei Young Kim.

"I still can't believe it, that I'm here, that I won this tournament," Ko said.

With a birdie on the final hole, the LPGA's final putt of the season, Ko finished at 18 under for her seventh career LPGA win. Green's final-round 67 — on her 24th birthday — helped push her into the second-place tie.

Kim, who took a one-shot lead into the final round, shot 72 and that was good enough for her to clinch Rolex Player of the Year honors. Danielle Kang

won the Vare Trophy for the lowest scoring average.

"Feels like a pretty solid accomplishment in 2020, to be honest," Kang said.

Ko started the final round one shot back of Kim and opened with a birdie. The key stretch was Ko's run of three straight birdies on the 12th through the 14th — her longest such run of the week. She left a chance for a fourth in a row just left of the cup on 15, then all but wrapped up the win with another birdie on the 16th.

The win wrapped up a wire-to-wire year in the No. 1 spot for Ko, who has held the ranking since July 29, 2019. She moved to \$5,600,824 in career earnings, making her the 71st player in LPGA history to cross

the \$5 million mark.

Her approach Sunday was quite simple: "I just (thought), OK, 18 holes left and then go to home," Ko said.

She's going back to South Korea as a winner, too.

Ko played only four LPGA events in 2020 — she competed six times on the Korean LPGA while riding out the coronavirus pandemic at home — but Sunday's win and a check for \$487,286 for finishing second in last week's U.S. Women's Open helped push her season earnings to \$1,667,925. That would have been good for fifth-best on tour last season, when each of the 21 leading money-winners all appeared in at least 20 events.

Kim's realistic hopes of win-

ning ended when she left a 25-foot par putt short on the par-4 15th to fall four off Ko's lead. But the player-of-the-year award was still in her control at that point, and she finished that off.

Mina Harigae (68) finished at 12 under, the fourth-place finish matching the best of her LPGA career.

Lexi Thompson shot a 2-under 70 on Sunday and finished at 11 under, seven shots off the pace and tied with Lydia Ko for fifth. Thompson, the leader after Thursday's first round, saw her streak of consecutive seasons with at least one victory end at seven.

"Definitely a good ending to the year and to the week," said Thompson, the native South Floridian who had about 15

fans following her Sunday even though the tournament was technically closed to ticketholders.

She said she's looking forward to some normalcy in 2021.

"It was nice to have a few people out there supporting us," Thompson said. "I think the fans make the game, so hopefully we'll get back to that in 2021."

Sunday marked the end to the 18-event LPGA season that was cut almost in half by the pandemic and was shut down for 5 1/2 months from mid-February through the end of July. Next season is scheduled for 34 events, starting with the Diamond Resorts Tournament of Champions in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, from Jan. 21-24. 🏌️

Major Success

(Continued from Page 4)



Dustin Johnson tees off on the 18th hole during the final round of the Masters golf tournament in Augusta, Ga., in this Sunday, Nov. 15, 2020, file photo. The Masters was among seven majors for men and women this year, none selling tickets to the public. (AP Photo/David J. Phillip, File)

they never would contemplate in April.

Turns out Augusta National can't control everything. Who knew?

And yes, the climate from late fall led to some mud on golf balls at the Masters and U.S. Women's Open, which was smartly referred to by Dottie Pepper on the CBS broadcast at Augusta National as "organic matter."

Dustin Johnson managed fine. He had a clump of mud on the right side of his ball in the 10th fairway and said he aimed right of the bunker toward the bushes and trusted it would move left (it did). He had mud on the left side of his ball on No. 11. Aim a little left? "I

can't start this in the water," he said. From right of the green, he saved par. Exquisite.

Through it all, golf was seamless.

Johnson was the biggest star to test positive for the coronavirus, costing him two tournaments. Sergio Garcia and Joaquin Niemann had to withdraw from the Masters. Jin Young Ko, the No. 1 player in women's golf, played it safe by staying home in South Korea and skipping three majors. She was runner-up in the U.S. Women's Open by one shot.

It was nothing like the NBA bubble in Florida. The PGA Tour, Champions and LPGA Tour combined to play 44 domestic

tournaments in 24 states. There were no stoppages, no last-minute changes like in football.

USC began this week preparing to play Washington in the Pac-12 Championship, only for Washington to cancel because of COVID-19 and be replaced by Oregon. Imagine turning up at Winged Foot for a day of practice and being told the U.S. Open instead would be played at Oakmont.

The seven majors were played in a span of 130 days, even with an extra day in Houston. The ANA Inspiration is 107 days away. No telling what 2021 will bring. But if golf can make it through this year, it should be ready for anything. 🏌️

The 19th Hole ... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9



"My dad never coached me," Tiger Woods said. "It was all about feels and being there, being present, being with me. He did that and I'm doing it the same way with Charlie." (Phelan M. Ebenhack/Associated Press)

son on the golf course is to be granted a porthole into Woods's parenting. Tournament officials have added forward tee boxes to accommodate Charlie, the youngest competitor in the tournament's history. On the ninth

hole, Woods stood behind Charlie, saying nothing until after he had hit an errant drive and looked imploringly at his father, who pointed out that the hitting strip was on a slight slope so he had to adjust his setup to

account for that.

"My dad never coached me," Woods said. "It was all about feels and being there, being present, being with me. He did that and I'm doing it the same way with Charlie."

On the same hole, Woods's son asked him why he had used his 9-iron for a 113-yard approach. Woods explained that it was cold and windy so he decided to go with that club and take a little off his swing.

"He picks up on everything," LaCava said. "He doesn't just say, 'Good shot, dad.'"

Woods and his son played each nine with a different set of amateurs. At the ninth and 18th holes, Charlie took off his billed cap to shake hands with his playing partners. He was polite and attentive and seemed unfazed by all the adults, including a few with their small children in tow, who cheered his every shot.

"It's so cool for me to see him enjoy the sport and feeling the shots and hitting it as solid as he is hitting it," Woods said.

As the lead producer of NBC's golf coverage, Tommy Roy has grown accustomed to seeing Woods on the 120 screens he monitors during a telecast. But playing the first nine Thursday in the same group as Woods, Roy saw him from a new angle.

"It's really cool, I have to say, to see him as a dad," Roy said.

Whether Woods was standing behind his son studying his form and the flight of his ball or leaning down to answer a question, the result was the same. Woods described them as "bonding moments."

Rory McIlroy and Justin Thomas, younger stars who have gotten to know Woods well over the past few years, each described him as a great father. But until this week, people drawn to Woods, the performer, had no idea really what he looked like as a parent.

On every hole, after the group putted out, Woods stuck a tee in the ground and engaged Charlie in contests to see whose putt or chip came closest to it. On the 18th hole, as Woods and his son walked side by side down the fairway, pulling roughly two dozen spectators along, one man in the crowd turned to another and said, "I'm not even a big fan, but I'm enjoying this. It's pretty cool." 🏌️

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