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Date: 11.15.18
Contact: Rob Addington – AGA
P: 214.893.36855
Email: raddington@anerasports.com

AGA and Gasparilla Invitational Announce Partnership

TAMPA, FLA. – Aligning with ongoing initiatives to expand and promote the amateur game at the highest level of competition, the Amateur Golf Alliance (AGA) today announced it has entered into a new relationship with the Gasparilla Invitational Golf Tournament, a well-known mid-amateur and senior amateur championship hosted annually by Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club.

The AGA and the Gasparilla Invitational Tournament Executive Committee will be working together to reposition the championship as a more prominent event on the amateur golf competitions calendar by strengthening the field depth, increasing the event's visibility and enhancing WAGR points, as well as AGA performance points, which are awarded to top finishers.

“The new partnership with the Gasparilla Invitational reflects the AGA’s continued commitment to supporting and growing amateur competition well into the future,” said Rob Addington, Vice President of the AGA. “We look forward to our collaboration with the Gasparilla Invitational Tournament Executive Committee and our joint efforts to build and deepen engagement within the amateur golf community in order to make this championship one of the nation’s premier, high-ranking events for mid-amateurs and seniors.”

The Gasparilla Invitational was first played in 1956 at Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club in Tampa, Fla. Over the following years and to this very day, many U.S. Amateur, U.S. Mid-Amateur and U.S. Senior Amateur champions have competed at Palma Ceia, including Downing Gray, Dick Siderowf, Hal Sutton, Buddy Alexander, Tim Jackson, Spider Miller, Randy Lewis, Gene Elliott, Doug Hanzel, Scott Harvey, Matt Parziale, Steve Melnyk, as well as Fred Ridley, past captain of the USA Walker Cup Team, and Nathaniel Crosby, captain of the 2019 USA Walker Cup Team.

“Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club has had a long and storied tradition in amateur golf and is honored to be working with the AGA to elevate the national standing of the Gasparilla Invitational,” said Chuck Davis, Executive Committee Chair. “The Gasparilla Invitational hosted by Palma Ceia is known for having the largest galleries in amateur golf, a great venue and a challenging test for all competitors. Our members and staff are excited about the prospect of welcoming more of the top ranked national players to the Gasparilla Invitational and providing them with a world-class experience.”

Several immediate objectives of the new partnership are to raise Gasparilla Invitational’s standing in the World Amateur Golf Ranking, increasing the number of AGA performance points awarded to top finishers for potential invitations and exemptions to The Concession Cup and other AGA-affiliated tournaments.

The 64th Annual Gasparilla Invitational will be contested Feb. 21-23, 2019. The format for the championship is 54 holes of individual stroke play with a cut after 36 holes to the low 60 and ties. Two age divisions will compete for separate titles: Mid-Amateur (25 or older by tournament start date) and Seniors (55 or older by tournament start date).

For more information about the Gasparilla Invitational, including additional eligibility requirements and online registration, please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the website.

About the AGA

The Amateur Golf Alliance was established in 2014 to conduct the Concession Cup Matches – a biennial 10-man (middle aged and senior amateurs), match play competition pitting the U.S. against Great Britain and Ireland – as well as other events and initiatives to promote the amateur game at the highest level of competition. The AGA serves as a platform for formal ongoing programs that enhance and increase playing opportunities and interest in amateur golf.

About the Gasparilla Invitational

The Gasparilla Invitational Tournament's roots go all the way back to The Gasparilla Open, a match play event for professional golfers first held in 1932 at Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club. In 1933, the tournament offered the highest purse for professional golfers. During that time, the golf tournament was closely tied to the Ye Mystic Krewe of Gasparilla (YMKG) who annually sponsored a February Pirate Invasion and “Mardi Gras-type” parade for the City of Tampa. The event maintained its professional status until 1956 when it became strictly an amateur event.

About the Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club

Palma Ceia Golf & Country Club opened for play in 1916 with an original design by Tom Bendelow. In 1922, Donald Ross supervised an extensive redesign, which included re-routing the original course to its modern-day layout. In 2011, noted architect and Ross historian Bobby Weed oversaw a comprehensive, multimillion-dollar restoration project that included regrading and resurfacing fairways, enlarging and regrassing green complexes, rebuilding and repositioning bunkers, and installing state-of-the-art irrigation and drainage systems.

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