

NEWS RELEASE



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Florida's Natural Charity Classic
Country Club of Winter Haven
Winter Haven, Florida
March 6, 2017
Storylines



WINTER HAVEN, FLORIDA, March 6, 2017 - The Symetra Tour, Road to the LPGA, begins the 2017 season with the ninth annual Florida's Natural Charity Classic at the Country Club of Winter Haven. The 54-hole tournament begins on Friday, March 10 and concludes on Sunday, March 12. The Tour takes center stage as both the LPGA Tour and the Ladies European Tour (LET) are off this week.

The field of 132 players from the United States and 27 countries around the globe will compete for a \$125,000 purse. The winner will earn \$18,750 and assume the top spot on the first Volvik Race for the Card money list. The Florida's Natural Charity Classic is the first of 21 events with a 22nd tournament expected to be announced in April. The season concludes with the Symetra Tour Championship from October 5-8 in Daytona Beach. The top 10 on the final Volvik Race for the Card money list will earn LPGA membership for the 2018 season.

Play will begin at 7:15 a.m. on Friday and Saturday while the final-round is scheduled for 8:30 a.m to accommodate the 4:00-6:00 p.m. Facebook Live broadcast on Sunday. The professionals will start from the first and tenth tees on Friday and Saturday while a single-tee start is scheduled for Sunday.

There will be a cut made after the second round to the low 60 and ties.

There are two Polk County locals in the field this week. Erica Popson of Davenport starred on the Symetra Tour in 2016, narrowly missing a spot in the top 10. The former Ridge Community High School standout won the Symetra Classic and finished 12th on the final money list. Meanwhile, Shelby Brauckmuller, a freshman at Marshall, is playing on a sponsors exemption. Brauckmuller, a former Auburndale High School star, grew up playing Country Club of Winter Haven. She was a four-time All-Polk County selection in high school.

The youngest player in the field is Brooke Seay, 16, who earned an exemption into the field by winning the ANNIKA Invitational on the AJGA in February. There are two 18-year-olds (Shelby Brauckmuller, Ruixin Liu), a 19-year-old (Budsabakorn Sukapan) and a 20-year-old (Csisi Rozsa).

There are ten players from the state of Florida: Shelby Brauckmuller (Winter Haven), Ginger Howard (Bradenton), Daniela Iacobelli (Melbourne), Casey Kennedy (Venice), Cindy LaCrosse (Tampa), Christina Miller (Bradenton), Erica Popson (Davenport), Madison Pressel (Boca Raton), Jessy Tang (Daytona Beach) and Carlie Yadloczky (Casselberry).

There are also 28 LPGA Tour members in the field.

The Florida's Natural Charity Classic has helped to raise over \$1.3 million since 2009 for the Florida's Natural Growers Foundation, which distributes grants to charities in Polk County.

Tickets can be purchased at Country Club of Winter Haven for \$10 for a day pass and \$25 for all three rounds. On site parking is free.

STRONG FIELD INCLUDES TWO WORLD TOP 100 PLAYERS: The top two players in the field according to the Rolex Women's World Golf Rankings both hail from Denmark. Nanna Koerstz Madsen (Copenhagen) is No. 66 in the world while Nicole Broch Larsen (Hillerod) is No. 100. Koerstz Madsen, 22, got into the ISPS Handa Australian Women's Open through her Ladies European Tour (LET) membership and finished second, three shots back of winner Ha Na Jang. Koerstz Madsen had a very strong season on the LET in 2016, finishing sixth on the Order of Merit. She has played in two RICOH Women's British Open's and has made the cut in both including a T21 finish in 2015. Koerstz Madsen also represented Denmark in the Rio Olympics and finished a very respectable T13. Koerstz Madsen, who surprisingly failed to advance out of Stage II of LPGA Qualifying Tournament in 2016, will make her Symetra Tour debut this week.

Broch Larsen, 23, is no stranger to the Symetra Tour. She won the Symetra Tour Championship last year and catapulted to 20th on the final Volvik Race for the Card money list in just four starts. Broch Larsen nearly won the Guardian Retirement Championship at Sara Bay earlier in the year, but fell in a playoff. Broch Larsen finished third on the LET Order of Merit in 2015 and was the Player of the Year while she was 12th in 2016. She also represented Denmark at the Olympic Games. Broch Larsen has LPGA status through Qualifying Tournament. She finished T65 at the Pure Silk Bahamas LPGA Classic to start 2017.

FIVE 2016 OLYMPIANS: The return of golf to the 2016 Olympics was a major story in and out of the sport. There are five Olympians in the field this week: Nanna Koerstz Madsen (Denmark, T13), Marianne Skarpnord (Norway, T25), Nicole Broch Larsen (Denmark, 36), Alejandra Llana (Mexico, T44) and Julieta Granada (Paraguay, T44).

THREE VETERAN LPGA WINNERS IN FIELD: The Symetra Tour is known for relative newcomers to professional golf, but there are three veterans that have won on the LPGA Tour in the field this week. The one that has had the most recent success is Julieta Granada, who won the 2006 ADT Championship and has 28 career top 10's on the LPGA. In 2006, Granada became the first LPGA player to cash a \$1 million paycheck by winning the season-ending event. Granada struggled on the LPGA in 2016, finishing 130th on the money list so she will likely have limited playing opportunities on the LPGA this year. She is No. 239 on the LPGA priority list. Granada represented Paraguay at the 2016 Olympics. The other two former LPGA winners are Silvia Cavalleri, who claimed the 2007 Corona Championship and Lorie Kane, who has four career LPGA wins. Kane won four times between August of 2000 and February of 2001.

SEVEN 2016 COLLEGE ALL-AMERICANS: There are seven 2016 WGCA All-Americans in the field including Mariah Stackhouse, who led Stanford to a national title in 2015 and turned professional in 2016. The other All-Americans are Lauren Kim (Stanford), Lauren Coughlin (Virginia), Charlotte Thomas (Washington), Emma Talley (Alabama), Daniela Darquea (Miami) and Elizabeth Szokol (Virginia).

There are two additional 2014-15 All-Americans in the field: Erynne Lee (UCLA) and Lindsey Weaver (Arizona).

12 PLAYERS THAT FINISHED 11-30 ON 2016 MONEY LIST: If you're looking for early favorites, start with the 12 players that finished 11 through 30 on the final money list in 2016. Numbers 12 (Popson), 13 (Augusta James) and 14 (Sophia Popov) are scheduled to compete. Only James has partial LPGA status this year so expect the trio to compete and contend on a regular basis. They combined for 18 top 10 finishes last year. Erynne Lee, who won the IOA Championship to begin the 2016 season, finished 17th on the money list. Natalie Sheary, who won the W.B. Mason Championship, finished 18th on the money list while No. 20 Nicole Broch Larsen is also in the field.

In addition, there are six that finished between 20 and 30 that are in the field: No. 22 Paola Moreno, No. 24

Shannon Fish, No. 26 Emma Talley, No. 27 Kendall Dye, No. 28 Samantha Richdale and No. 29 Brittany Marchand.

DEFENDING CHAMP GOES FOR WIN NUMBER FIVE: Samantha Richdale (Kelowna, British Columbia) captured her fourth Symetra Tour victory at the 2016 Florida's Natural Charity Classic. She birdied three of the final four holes to edge Madelene Sagstrom at Lake Wales Country Club. Richdale, whose rookie year was 2006, has 28 career top 10 finishes on the Symetra Tour.

Richdale has also made 55 career starts on the LPGA Tour. Her best finish on the LPGA was a T14 result at the 2016 ShopRite LPGA Classic.

NELLY KORDA OFF TO STRONG START ON LPGA: Nelly Korda finished 9th on the Symetra Tour money list in 2016 and the teen is quickly making a name for herself on the LPGA. She made a splash at the opening Pure Silk Bahamas LPGA Classic by finishing T5. She also made the cut at the ISPS Handa Australian Women's Open. Korda has already accumulated \$58,792 in her two starts to rank 27th on the early LPGA money list.

Laura Gonzalez Escallon, who finished fifth on the money list last year, also posted a top 10 result in the Bahamas (T9). She ranks 47th on the LPGA money list in a pair of starts.

The LPGA is back in the states next week for the Bank of Hope Founders Cup in Phoenix and Korda will make her third start.

QUICK HITS

- There are two members of the 2016 Washington Huskies national championship team in the field. Charlotte Thomas and Ying Luo were major parts of bringing the Huskies their first golf title. Both make their Symetra Tour debuts this week.
- The medalists at LPGA Qualifying Tournament Stages I (Daniela Darquea) and II (Marianne Skarpnord) are in the field this week. Darquea earned partial LPGA Tour status by finishing T29 at Final Stage.
- There are 28 players in the field that have won a Symetra Tour tournament including two that have won the Florida's Natural Charity Classic (Richdale - 2016, Jean Reynolds - 2009).
- Savannah Vilaubi won in January on the Cactus Tour at Wigwam New Blue.