

The Official Publication of the TGA

LONESTAR GOLF



Major Opportunities

INSIDE: 2017 Major Championships Preview ★ Meet Our Volunteers

As the first tint of green pops from the dormant landscape at your favorite golf course, a rebirth begins. A fresh start beckons. New goals, unlimited possibilities abound.

The same is true for the TGA's 2017 competitive season. »

Major Opportunities

With a multitude of tournament opportunities for every type of competitive amateur – men, women, seniors and juniors – the flipped calendar offers a clean slate. This season the TGA will conduct more than 50 competitions across all divisions. That’s not including 32 TGA qualifiers and another 38 USGA Championship qualifiers.

Each of the TGA events has a singular, top-line priority: to identify the state’s top competitors that given week. There are eight events, however, that stand taller above the rest. Our Major Championships determine the best amateur golfers *this year*.

Twelve months of prestige, honor and bragging rights are on the line at our statewide Majors: the Texas Four-Ball, Women’s Stroke Play, Byron Nelson Junior, WTGA State Amateur, Texas State Junior, Texas Mid-Amateur, Texas Senior Amateur and the granddaddy of them all, the 108th Texas Amateur.

In addition to the pressure and intensity produced by these prominent tournaments, the TGA’s 2017 Major Championship rotation also provides a scenic journey to some of Texas’ best venues, designed by architectural giants. From the Piney Woods of East Texas

to the panoramic vistas of the Hill Country, the state’s top amateurs will compete on masterpiece creations from the likes of Robert Trent Jones, Sr., Jack Nicklaus and Ben Crenshaw.

Throughout the year, thousands of hopeful amateurs will chase their competitive goals. Many of them will vie for the ultimate in statewide supremacy in one or more of our Majors. With something available for all levels of competitive amateurs, which events will you circle on your 2017 calendar?

For detailed information on all eight Major Championships, be sure to click the video player on this page and proceed to the next several pages of this issue. ★

2017 TGA Major Championships

- | | |
|---|---|
| ★ Texas Four-Ball
Crown Colony Country Club, Lufkin | ★ 96th WTGA State Amateur
Traditions Club, Bryan |
| ★ 108th Texas Amateur
Lakewood Country Club, Dallas | ★ Texas State Junior
Horseshoe Bay Resort, Horseshoe Bay |
| ★ Women’s Stroke Play
Clubs of Kingwood (Island Course), Kingwood | ★ Texas Mid-Amateur
The Club at Comanche Trace, Kerrville |
| ★ Byron Nelson Junior
Lakewood Country Club, Dallas | ★ Texas Senior Amateur
Royal Oaks Country Club, Dallas |

Texas Four-Ball Championship

May 19 - 21 ★ Crown Colony Country Club, Lufkin



Registration: April 4 - May 10

2016 Champions: Trey Hallmark & Terrence Miskell

Senior Division: Richard Koenig & Aaron Billings

Super Senior Division: Bob Hullender & Mike Arnold

Course Architects: Robert von Hagge & Bruce Devlin (1979)

Par/Yardage: 72/6,692

108th Texas Amateur Championship

June 15 - 18 ★ Lakewood Country Club, Dallas

Registration: Feb. 7 - March 29

2016 Champion: Frederick Wedel

Course Architects: Tom Bendelow (1912); Ralph Plummer (1947);
Ben Crenshaw & Bill Coore (1995, 2003, 2014)

Par/Yardage: 71/6,716

Women's Stroke Play Championship

June 22 - 24 ★ Clubs of Kingwood (Island Course), Kingwood

Registration: April 26 - June 7
2016 Champion: Megan Thothong
2016 Low Mid-Amateur: Marian Barker
Course Architect: Joe Finger (1974)
Par/Yardage: 72/6,777

Byron Nelson Junior Championship

June 27 - 29 ★ Lakewood Country Club, Dallas



Registration: March 27 - June 2

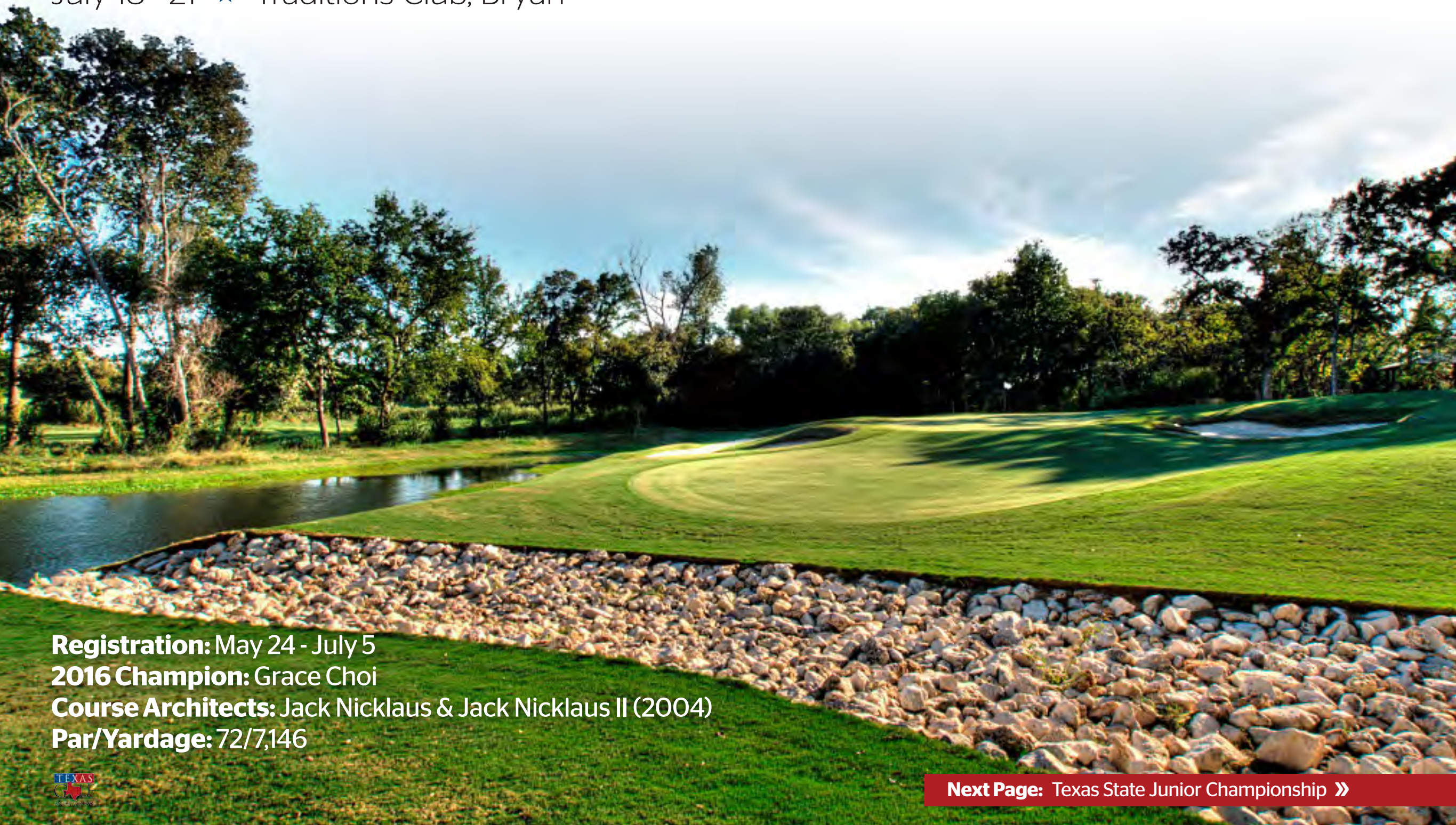
2016 Champion: Levi Valadez

Course Architects: Tom Bendelow (1912); Ralph Plummer (1947);
Ben Crenshaw & Bill Coore (1995, 2003, 2014)

Par/Yardage: 71/6,716

96th WTGA State Amateur Championship

July 18 - 21 ★ Traditions Club, Bryan



Registration: May 24 - July 5

2016 Champion: Grace Choi

Course Architects: Jack Nicklaus & Jack Nicklaus II (2004)

Par/Yardage: 72/7,146

Texas State Junior Championship

July 24 - 28 ★ Horseshoe Bay Resort, Horseshoe Bay

Registration: April 3 - June 12

Divisions: Boys/Girls 14 & Under; Girls 15-18; Boys 15-18

2016 Boys 14 & Under Champion: Evan Vo

2016 Girls 14 & Under Champion: Gabriella Tomanka

2016 Boys 15-18 Champion: Logan Pate

2016 Girls 15-18 Champion: Hailey Jones

Course Architect: Robert Trent Jones Sr. (1971)

Par/Yardage: 72/6,834

Texas Mid-Amateur Championship

September 22 - 24 ★ The Club at Comanche Trace, Kerrville



Registration: May 23 - July 12

2016 Champion: Joshua Irving

Course Architect: Tom Kite, Roy Bechtol & Randy Russell (1999)

Par/Yardage: 72/7,059

Texas Senior Amateur Championship

September 29 - October 1 ★ Royal Oaks Country Club, Dallas

Registration: July 10 - Aug. 23
2016 Champion: Lewis Stephenson
Course Architects: Don January & Billy Martindale (1969);
Jay Morrish (1995); D.A. Weibring (2002); Chet Williams (2014)
Par/Yardage: 71/7,068

(Photo by: Evan Schiller)

Let the Fun Times Roll

TGA Looks to Build on 2016 Fun Golf Success

Late on a sun-soaked afternoon last November, Kelly Kilgo stood on the balcony overlooking the 18th green at Mira Vista Country Club in Fort Worth. A big grin spread across her face when the players below whooped it up. As the final putt dropped, it marked the end of the last Fun Golf Play Day of 2016.

As always, Kilgo, the TGA's Senior Director of Membership Services & Course Rating and Fun Golf head honcho, passed out gifts and prizes. Kilgo made sure everyone had fun – that's the whole point – and she had reasons to smile, too. In just two years, she's seen an influx of TGA Members sign up for these laid-back outings on some of the state's best courses.

Launched in 2015, Fun Golf engages a broad spectrum of players with events that are less serious, more dynamic and tons of fun.

"We want to bring the fun side of golf back," said Kilgo. "We do a good job of conducting competitive championships, but there is also a big group who just want to have some fun. Fun Golf gives members chances to play courses they might not otherwise get to experience."

More than 600 golfers last year participated in 15 Fun Golf Play Days. With ambitious plans for continued growth, TGA Members can look forward to even more playing opportunities.

The recently released 2017 Fun Golf



2017 Fun Golf Calendar »

Calendar includes stops at old favorites like Onion Creek, Golf Club of Texas, TPC San Antonio and Las Colinas CC. Newcomers such as Beaumont CC, Old American and Walden on Lake Conroe will add spice to the lineup.

The one-day events are open to men and women of all ages and abilities. You can sign up as a foursome or individual. Nearly all the 2016 events were sold out, so be sure to sign up early. For more information, [click here](#). ★



RENOWNED AND RENEWED: RTJ TURNS 25

Acclaimed as one of the world's great golf destinations, Alabama's Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail invites you to celebrate its 25th year by offering a fantastic deal. Unlimited golf packages start at \$132 per person/per day. All of the original RTJ Golf Trail sites have been renovated and are ready for your arrival. Celebrate our silver anniversary while saving some silver yourself.

» Plan your visit to the RTJ Golf Trail by calling 1.800.949.4444 or visiting rtjgolf.com. [facebook.com/rtjgolf](https://www.facebook.com/rtjgolf) twitter.com/rtjgolf «



*Offer valid March 21 – May 8, 2017. Specials cannot be combined with other discounts and must be paid in full and booked with Reservations at least 48 hours prior to play. Specials do not include play at Lakewood Golf Club. Specials do not include tax or lodging. Not valid with previously booked packages. There is a \$10 surcharge for each round on the Judge at Capitol Hill. Some restrictions may apply. Offers subject to change.

The First Tee Chapters of Texas Aim High in 2017

For the past 20 years, The First Tee has taught critical life lessons to young people through the game of golf. What started out as a partnership in 1997 between the USGA, PGA of America, PGA Tour, LPGA and the Masters Tournament to bring affordable junior golf programs to economically disadvantaged U.S. communities quickly blossomed into a platform to positively affect a new generation with a curriculum that teaches a range of valuable life and leadership lessons.

Everything revolves around The First Tee's Nine Core Values: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment. The goal is bigger than building better young golfers. The First Tee aims to build character, and they're very good at it.

As one of the TGA's Allied Associations, we're extremely proud of the work done in all eight Texas chapters of The First Tee. Each chapter experienced success in 2016, and they're looking forward to achieving greater goals this year.

From doubling the amount of program schools in the East Texas Piney Woods chapter to increasing fundraising efforts by 10 percent in Greater San Antonio, all the 2017

goals of The First Tee chapters in Texas are admirable. If you would like to get involved and help, click the link below that corresponds to your local chapter. ★

The First Tee of Greater Austin

Overarching 2017 Goal: On the heels of completing a three-year strategic plan, TFTGA sets its sights on a new three-year goal to serve young people aged 5-17 who reflect the gender, socio-economic and ethnic breakdown of Central Texas.

Big Event: On March 20, TFTGA will hold its annual "9 Core Values Luncheon." This year's guest speaker is Ty Votaw, Executive VP & Chief Marketing Officer of the PGA Tour.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of Greater Dallas

Overarching 2017 Goal: In addition to a successful transition to its new home at the new Trinity Forest Golf Club, TFTGD wants to continue to focus on the retention, progression and quality of its Life Skills programming.

Big Event: The TFTGD's annual Spring Classic Golf Tournament brings together 54 teams across two courses for a day of camaraderie and fun while raising money for the chapter's programs.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of Greater El Paso

Overarching 2017 Goal: Along with increasing total participation numbers, the El Paso chapter aims to establish full-time programming at Fort Bliss Golf Complex, an affiliate location.

Big Event: The Fourth Annual First Tee of Greater El Paso Benefit Golf Tournament is scheduled for April 28 at Butterfield Trail Golf Club. The 18-hole tournament includes lunch, an awards dinner and a silent auction.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of Greater Fort Worth

Overarching 2017 Goal: Continue to impact lives of young people by providing participation in The First Tee's Life Skills Curriculum and its Nine Core Values.

Big Event: TFTGFW plans to open an 11-acre program site at Briscoe Elementary in southeast Fort Worth. It's a collaborative effort between Fort Worth ISD, Morningside Children's Partnership, the Rainwater Foundation and TFTGFW. There are more than 6,000 disadvantaged, school-aged children within minutes of the Briscoe Project.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)



The First Tee of Greater Dallas

The First Tee of Greater Houston

Overarching 2017 Goal: Reach 350,000 youths via programming and continue quality, sustained growth in its Life Skills Experience and after-school and National School programs.

Big Event: On June 15 at FM Law Park, TFTGH will host a local qualifier for the national Drive, Chip & Putt competition.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of Greater Tyler

Overarching 2017 Goal: Continue to grow overall participation and encourage the children who experience the National School Program to also participate in TFTGT's after-school Life Skills Experience.

Big Event: The annual Pro-Am Challenge will take place in September. The unique scramble tournament groups recreational golfers with local pros and kids from the TFT program for traditional golf and on-brand challenges like flop-shot walls and playing an entire hole with junior clubs.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of Greater San Antonio

Overarching 2017 Goal: Increase fundraising efforts by 10 percent by implementing the Board's fundraising plan.

Big Event: The annual Rudy's I-35 Cup presented by Ameritas is set for Oct. 21-22. The charity fundraising tournament pits top golfers from Austin against those from San Antonio in a Ryder Cup-style format.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

The First Tee of The Piney Woods

Overarching 2017 Goal: The Piney Woods Chapter wants to increase the number of participants from 320 to more than 500 across Longview, Marshall, Kilgore and Carthage. The East Texas chapter also wants to double its National School Program from four to eight schools.

Big Event: Held in the fall each year, the Texas Golf Legends Pro-Am Tournament draws all manners of Texas golf royalty, including Lee Trevino, Charles Coody, Homero Blancas and J.C. Snead.

Get Involved: [Click here](#)

TELL A FRIEND



As a valued TGA Member, you're part of one of the most prestigious golf associations in the country. We thank you for your patronage and look forward to serving you in 2017 and beyond. We also encourage you to invite your friends and family who love this great game to join in on the fun and become a TGA Member, too!

Membership Benefits Include:

Official USGA GHIN Handicap ★ Access to Elite Amateur Championships

Fun Golf Series for Casual Golfers ★ Members-Only Marketing Offers

Exclusive TGA Communications ★ And much more!*

*Coming soon, additional membership benefits include the TGA Member Rewards Program, which offers hotel discounts, discounted golf rates, discounted TGA product rates & more!

Meet Our Volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of the TGA. More than 220 tireless men and women from all over Texas comprise our talented and dedicated support staff. Not only are these great people beyond generous with their time, they're also experts in critical areas such as the Rules of Golf and Course Rating.

We can't thank our volunteers enough, and this year we want to shine a light on several of these hardworking individuals. We hope you enjoy getting to know the stars behind the scenes who work to ensure success for our Championships and Member Clubs.

A.J. Cortez

Montgomery

Home Club

(GHIN Index):

Bentwater Yacht & CC (5.0)

How long have you been a Volunteer?

5 years

Why do you

volunteer? "There

are several reasons. I like the feeling of giving back to the game of golf, especially amateur golf and junior golf. I feel really needed by the TGA staff and feel like I'm part of the association. As I have found in all aspects of my life, what I really enjoy about volunteering are the people: the TGA staff, other volunteers (who have become great friends) and the players."

Favorite event to work? "I greatly enjoy working the Texas Amateur Championship each year. Getting to walk with a group the last two rounds and be involved in the history being made is a great feeling. I also really like refereeing at the Spirit International, which is held biennially."



Carey Schulten

Dallas

Home Club

(GHIN Index):

Dallas National GC (6.6)

How long have you been a Volunteer?

14 years

Why do you

volunteer?

"Volunteering is fun, and the most satisfaction I receive is when I am working a college tournament and a player I know from junior golf comes over and says hello. It tells me that the junior golf development program in Texas is working, and the kids who participate are on the road to success."
Favorite event to work? "The Texas State Junior Championship is my favorite event because you can see the future of the game. For many of the players it's their first time to compete in a really big event, and it's rewarding to be part of all the excitement."

Interested in becoming a TGA Volunteer?

[Click here](#) for more information. ★



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Member Club Spotlight: Golfcrest Country Club



Boasting some of the purest-rolling greens in the state, Golfcrest Country Club in Pearland is an old school layout that demands accuracy off the tees.

Narrow, tree-lined fairways present a balanced mix of doglegs right and left, as well as straighter holes. In order to score in red numbers, competitors in the **South Texas Senior Amateur** will have to work the ball both ways with the driver.

Rows of mature cypress and live oak trees stand guard over both sides of most fairways; missing the short grass off the tee leads to punch-outs from the timber.

Thanks to a unique fertilizing process, Golfcrest CC showcases some of the smoothest, most consistent putting surfaces in Texas.

The greens are super-fast, too. That means staying below the hole on approach is crucial. Director

of Golf Chase Smith said on some greens there are spots where a downhill putt that misses the mark will roll out eight feet. No one wants that length for par.

Golfcrest CC was the site of the 2013 South Texas Four-Ball, 2014 U.S. Senior Open qualifying and this summer will host a U.S. Amateur Qualifier.

The club also played host to a Hooters Tour event from 2008-10. PGA Tour major champion Keegan

Bradley won the Texas Honing Open there in 2009.

As Bradley and the others who've competed at Golfcrest CC will attest, the traditional nature of the course and its speedy greens will test all facets of a players' game.

"There is nothing tricky out here," General Manager Rene Rangel said. "Usually when we host tournaments like these, the best player wins." ★

Golfcrest Country Club

Pearland, TX



	7,362 yards (75.7/139)
	6,805 yards (73.2/134)
	6,361 yards (71.8/128)
	5,872 yards (69.8/118)
	5,181 yards (63.8/111)

Par: 72

Member Club Since: 2009

Architects: Joseph Finger (1971);
Jeff Blume (2008)

Greens: Mini-Verde Bermuda

Fairways: Celebration Bermuda

Director of Golf: Chase Smith

Site of **South Texas Senior Amateur**, April 12-13

To register, [click here](#)

Member Club Spotlight: Ridglea Country Club



Like a Tony Award-winning production, Ridglea Country Club’s Championship Course in southwest Fort Worth plays out in three distinct acts. Act I is the setup, where our hero is greeted on the front nine with generous fairways devoid of much trouble. The playable nature of the first nine holes should lead to a number of looks at birdie. The conflict, however, occurs in Act II. Holes 10-15 are rife with potential

pitfalls. The fairways narrow and water hazards lurk on all six holes. Strategy and shot-making become vital. Pars or better are less common on this stretch. Take the short par-4 14th, for example. Risk, reward: it’s all there. At less than 300 yards from where competitors will play during the **North Texas Senior Amateur**, they’ll be tempted to bomb driver. Not so fast. Mary’s Creek, a Trinity River tributary, skirts the right side. The


hazard chokes the fairway tighter close the green and past a gaping fairway bunker about 100 yards out. All of that, plus the overhanging pecan tree branches on the left side, suggest discretion. The hero wins the day in Act III, of course. After defending a score (or taking some lumps), holes 16-18 offer redemption. The final three holes are gettable, especially the straightaway par-5 finisher. “Get your birdies on the front




nine, protect your score in the middle and try to finish with a flurry,” said CJ Whetsell, the head pro. “Players with a combination of length and accuracy will have an advantage on the field.” One of two 18-hole courses at

Ridglea CC, a TGA Member Club since 2006, the Championship Course promises to test the best senior amateurs in North Texas. And just like the Tony Awards, someone will take home a trophy. ★

Ridglea Country Club

Fort Worth, TX



	7,125 yards (74.6/139)
	6,833 yards (73.2/135)
	6,464 yards (71.5/132)

Par: 72

Member Club Since: 2006

Architects: Ralph Plummer (1968); Jay Morrish (1988)

Greens: TifEagle Bermuda

Fairways: 419 Bermuda

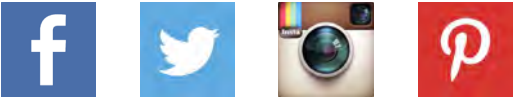
Head Pro: CJ Whetsell

Site of **North Texas Senior Amateur**, April 11-12

To register, [click here](#)

Engage with the TGA

A Look at What's Been Happening on Social Media



TexasGolfAssn

@TexasGolfAssn

Jun 17

What part of your game gives you the most trouble?

22% Driver off the tee

19% Iron play

31% Short game/putting

28% Patience/ Mental Game

89 votes • Final results

Texas Golf Association

Published by Patrick McKinley [?]

January 11 at 3:10pm

Happy birthday to our 1972 Texas Amateur Champion, "Gentle" Ben Crenshaw! In his honor, here's a clip from our interview with him last year at Oak Hills CC.

texasgolfassociation

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♥ emilyheyman, gsga1916 and 23 others

texasgolfassociation Want to try out @TPCSanAntonio? Register today for our #FunGolfPlayDay on 3/3/17. Registration includes golf, tee, gifts & awards. Sign up today at bit.ly/TPCSa #playTPC #FunGolf

FEATURED FOLLOW



Deb Vangellow

This month's Lone Star Golf Featured Follow is Deb Vangellow (@debbievang). Deb teaches at Riverbend CC in Sugar Land, is a Lead Instructor in the LPGA Global Education Program, a top-50 Teacher in America, and a must-follow! Learn more about Deb below:

Hometown: Fairport, NY

2012 LPGA Teacher of the Year

@debbievang

Favorite Course: Cypress Point Club

Favorite Golfer: Mickey Wright

Favorite Follow on Social Media: @TheEllenShow

Favorite Hobby: "Love hot yoga and going to movies."

Favorite Golf Memory: "Traveling to Los Angeles for 15 consecutive years with LPGA mentor Betsy Cullen to study the golf swing with long drive World Record holder 'Mighty' Mike Austin...OMG what passion we had!"

Favorite Inspirational Quote: "Kindness is more important than wisdom, and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom."



THE PROVING GROUNDS

Whistling Straits is a world-class venue set atop the cliffs overlooking Lake Michigan. It has played host to three PGA Championships and will be the home of the 2020 Ryder Cup. It will test your mettle at every turn. And you wouldn't want it any other way. Come and take your best shot.

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The Big Number

2.1

As in, the average male TGA Member's GHIN Handicap Index is 2.1 shots lower than the USGA's national average for men. Everything is bigger in Texas? Not the GHIN Indexes. As proud Texans, we know many of the country's best players live right here in the Lone Star State. Now we have data to confirm it. Male TGA Members have an average GHIN Index of 12.3, a shade better than two shots lower than the USGA's national average of 14.4 for men.

It's the same story for our women. Female TGA Members have an average GHIN Index of 24.7, almost a shot and a half better than the national women's average of 26.1.

Way to go! We're proud of you and hope those Texas indexes shrink some this year. For information on the USGA Handicap System, [click here](#). To get or renew your GHIN Handicap Index, [click here](#). ★

Sources: USGA GHIN Database (approx. 2 million golfers), TGA GHIN Database (approx. 122,000 golfers).

They Said It

“Charity is at the heart of the U.S. golf industry.”

- Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation, on GOLF 20/20's announcement about the sport's \$3.9 billion charitable impact in 2016. A record 12,700 golf facilities - accounting for 84 percent of the U.S. total - held charity events last year.

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Have a story idea or comment about this issue?
[Click here](#) to send us an email.

Allied Associations

