

The History Of The US Open Golf Tournament

The second oldest of the major golf tournaments, the US Open golf tournament started 35 years after The Open in 1895. Originally, the majors consisted of The Open, The (British) Amateur Championship, The US Open, and The US Amateur. With the introduction of The PGA in 1916 and The Masters in 1934, eventually the majors were described as The Masters, The US Open, The Open, and The PGA.

The first US Open had to take second stage to the US Amateur as it was played at the same course and on the same week. The place where this historic event took place was at the 9-hole Newport Golf and Country Club, Rhode Island. As was normal in the late 1800's, the championship was played over 4 rounds of the 9-holes all on the same day. The field was only 10 professionals and one amateur and the event was won by an Englishman - Horace Rawlins who took home a prize of \$150.

From the original 36 holes in one day, the format of The US Open has changed several times during the years. The Championship was extended by the USGA to 72-holes in 1898; 36-holes played over each of two days. The format was changed in 1926 to 18-holes played over each of two days, finishing with 36 holes on the third day. The present day format was established in 1965 - 18-holes played over each of 4 days.

The popularity of The US Open coincided with the incredible career of Georgia amateur, Bobby Jones, who won in 1923, 1926, 1929, and 1930. Another contributing factor was that spectator tickets were sold to the public for the first time in 1922. The next big surge in popularity happened in 1954 because the event was televised on national television for the first time. All 18 holes from the final two days had live coverage in 1977 and, believe it or not, it wasn't until 1982 that there was live broadcasts of the first two days.

From 1895 until 1910, the British dominated The US Open, or more correctly, the Scots - winning 12 of the first 15 events. One of those Scots, Willie Anderson, won The US Open four times in the 1900's. There has only been a total of four players that have won four times; the other three were Bobby Jones in the 1920's and 1930 (when he won the Grand Slam); Ben Hogan from the late 40's to early 50's; and The Golden Bear, Jack Nicklaus who won his first in 1962 and his last in 1980.

With Tiger Woods third victory at the 2008 US Open, it can only be a matter of time before he joins the illustrious golfers with four wins, and who knows, maybe he will go into the golfing history books with 5 wins or more. Did you know that a European has not won the event since 1970, when Tony Jacklin from England won? Another Englishman, Lee Westwood, had a chance in the 2008 US Open but missed a 15 foot birdie putt on the last hole.

Surprisingly, only 5 players have managed to win The US Open as well as The Open, The Masters, and The PGA. None of them have won all 4 majors in one single year though - Bobby Jones did his Grand Slam with The Open, The (British) Amateur Championship, The US Open, and The US Amateur. The five players to win the four golf majors were Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, and Tiger Woods.

With 78 wins between 1911 and 2008, Americans have dominated The US Open. No other country have come close; South Africa has the second most wins with 5 titles. There have only been a handful of nations that have won the event once or twice - Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, and Argentina. Since 1910, Scotland have only managed to produce one golfer that has won The US Open; Willie MacFarlane in 1925. In fact, in recent years, only Sandy Lyle has managed to win a golf major on US soil - The Masters in 1988.

About the Author

Mick Euan Tait is a golfer, golf fan, and golf writer. Visit his website for more interesting facts about [golf tournaments](#).

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