



WM Phoenix Open: Another year of taking in the show in the desert

The more things change the more they stay the same at the WM Phoenix Open. As usual the crowds were huge - especially around the 16th hole (pictured right) and there was plenty of great golf as well at the TPC Scottsdale. For more on this year's event, see page 2 of this section of Inside Golf Newspaper.



WHAT'S NEW IN NW GOLF

If it's March in the Northwest it is time to start posting scores

If it's March, it must be time to start posting those scores when you play a round of golf in the Pacific Northwest.

The inactive score posting season began in November and ran through March 1 in the Pacific Northwest. The NW is one of 41 golf associations in the U.S. that has an inactive posting season during the winter months. This is because of the general change in course conditions in our region that would adversely affect course ratings.

If you played golf during the Inactive Score Posting Season in an area where scores are still being accepted for handicap purposes, you were supposed to post those scores as soon as practicable. On the other hand if you played a round of golf in one of those 41 areas where there was an inactive posting period you did not need to post those scores.

That time is over. All scores in all of those areas including the Pacific Northwest will now require you to post those scores.

So whenever and wherever you play a round of golf those scores must be posted after March 1 - and the end of the inactive posting season.

Rules Question of the month

Your match in fourball is underway and at the 8th hole you notice your opponent grounded his club prior to making a stroke in a bunker. As you know in match play rules if your opponent has breached a rule that comes with a penalty you can opt to not act on that breach. You and your opponent talk about what he did and he acknowledges he just forgot. You both agree not to apply the penalty. A sign of good sportsmanship on your part. Good for you. See the answer on Page 2.



River Ranch Golf Resort: New golf destination in Eastern Washington beginning to take shape

River Ranch Golf Resort, a new destination set atop the bluffs of the Snake River near Pasco, Wash., announced plans for its first golf course designed by world-renowned architect and Pacific Northwest resident David McLay Kidd.

River Ranch Golf Resort brings together golf, land and hospitality in a setting shaped by ancient floods, a historic river corridor and decades of careful stewardship. The course draws directly from the dramatic Snake River landscape, prevailing winds and natural topography to create a strategic and compelling golf experience that feels inseparable from the land itself.

"I've been so fortunate to get to create courses on spectacular land throughout my career...from Bandon Dunes to the latest addition at Streamsong. The older I get, the choosier I become. With probably more courses behind me than ahead, I look even harder for those unique sites and opportunities. When I first set foot on the site for River Ranch, I knew I'd found another unicorn!" said David McLay Kidd. "Set high on a bluff overlooking the last reaches of the Snake River before it joins the Columbia, this site has breathtaking views, great contour as well as sand on which to plant my favorite grass, fescue. That fescue will give the firm, fast bounce and roll that makes golf the game we Scots intended."

See River Ranch Page 4



River Ranch Golf Resort near Pasco, Wash. will be designed by David McLay Kidd

Northwest Golf Guide: Take a look at everything about golf in the NW



Inside Golf takes a look at everything about golf in the Pacific Northwest, including courses like Loomis Trail in Blaine (above). Inside Golf's Northwest Golf Guide is part of this month's section and gives you information about where to golf and practice plus where to travel with your RV to tee it up at courses around the Pacific Northwest.

Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation wins Outstanding Philanthropic award

The Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, has been named the recipient of the 2025 Outstanding Philanthropic Foundation Award by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Oregon and Southwest Washington Chapter.

The award celebrates the Foundation's longstanding commitment to supporting environmental stewardship, community well-being, and nonprofit capacity across rural and coastal Oregon.

Founded in 2006, the Bandon Dunes Charitable Foundation has granted millions of dollars to organizations focused on conservation, education, health and human services, and youth development. Its giving emphasizes long-term impact and place-based strategies that reflect the needs and values of southern Oregon communities.

The Foundation supports both small, grassroots nonprofits and larger-scale conservation and recreation efforts. Notable investments include trail development, watershed protection, and public recreation projects such as the Wild Rivers Coast Scenic Bikeway and portions of the Oregon Coast Trail.

Seattle Golf Show gets set for a new location at Puyallup Fair Events Center

There is a big change in store for the Seattle Golf Show for the 2026 season. The show is set for a new location as it moves to the Washington State Convention Center to the Fair Events Center in Puyallup.

The show is set for a three-day run March 13-15 at the new venue.

The 2026 Seattle Golf Show will feature all of the things golfers have come to see and experience including gifts at the front door with a ticket purchase. Plus once inside the door, there will be plenty of interactive things to experience.

There is always so much to see and do at the Seattle Golf Show from the free exhibits to the golf challenges to the instructional clinics. Plus there is always several things being given away from rounds of golf to other certificates.

The Portland Golf Show is set for March 6-8 at the Portland Expo Center. The three-day show will feature everything of interest to golfers, and visitors will receive gift certificates with their ticket purchase, adding a nice bonus just by attending the event.

The adventure continues at the WM Phoenix Open: The annual trip to the Valley of the Sun never gets old

It was business as usual as I made my eighth straight trip to the WM Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale. There are always plenty of shenanigans, but I was my usual professional self...taking photos, doing a couple of interviews and of course sitting for hours on the 16th hole. Were there beers involved? You make the call.

This has become an annual event for me and hundreds of thousands of my closest friends. In fact, if you had to look around and guess, maybe 20 percent of the people at the event were there for the golf. The other 80 percent, well, let's just say they might be wondering what those guys dressed in golf clothes are doing.

I always like to go and watch the Pacific Northwest players taking part in the tournament.

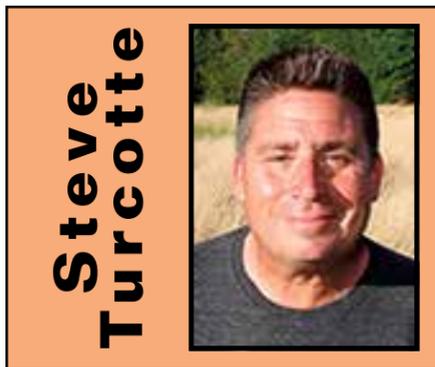
Let's start with Joel Dahmen of Clarkston, Wash., a former University of Washington player. He was coming off a great tournament the week before and I had high hopes. But he finished at even par and missed the cut. Dahmen still found ways to entertain the crowd wearing a Seahawk helmet as he walked from the tee on 16 to the green and then was a guest commentator on the Golf Channel.

Tacoma native Joe Highsmith didn't play as well as he wanted but made the cut and finished tied for 54th. I did get a smile from him as he made his way from 15 to 16 when I yelled go Bellarmine Prep - his high school alma mater.

Nick Taylor, a former University of Washington golfer, and Wyndham Clark, a former Oregon Duck both made the cut and finished in the top 40.

But off the course there was the usual action. Some guy named Jack Doherty who tries to cause trouble then hides behind his security guy. Really, you need a security guy? He paid a fan \$100 to yell "Jackass" when Mackenzie Hughes took a swing. The POS Doherty hid behind his security guy but still got kicked out and banned from future PGA Tour events. Good riddance A-hole.

But most were there for the fun. They don't give out the attendance numbers but it was big as usual. The folks were there for the yelling, the drinking and,



Steve Turcotte

yes, some were even there for the golf as Chris Gotterup won in a playoff over Hideki Matsuyama. I had money on Matsuyama too. And he led by a stroke going into the final hole. Oh well, that's the WM Phoenix Open. I guess. And to answer the earlier question, yes, there were beers involved!

Steve Turcotte is editor of Inside Golf Newspaper. He can be reached at sdturcotte@comcast.net.



Tacoma native Joe Highsmith was part of the field (top); This is what it looks like from the 16th grandstands.



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Subscription rates:
\$32-one year and \$56-two years (U.S. funds).

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Inside Golf Newspaper is a trademark of Northwest Publications, Inc. and is published on the first of each month.

Double Bogey



Harold Bluestein PGA



Rules Answer

Answer: Not so good. For either of you. If a player and opponent both agree not to apply a rule they both know applies and they have begun their round, they are both disqualified. See Rule 1.3b.

• Inside Golf would like to thank Paul Lucien for his for the rules questions and answers.



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More golfers around the country are keeping track of scores with handicaps

How did you play last year? Don't give us your gut feeling. Supply us with hard numbers, the kind of stats you get from counting every stroke and posting every score. That's what is required to keep an accurate handicap. It's not hard. Lots of people do it—3.68 million golfers in the United States alone.

In 2025, golfers posted 82 million rounds under the World Handicap System, a domestic record. The USGA counted every one and crunched those numbers to produce the 2025 Golf Scorecard, a compendium of data-driven findings that provide a snapshot of trends in the game. Here are seven that caught our eye.

• **More Golfers Are Keeping Score:** The 3.68 million golfers who kept a handicap in 2025 represent an 8.2 percent bump from 2024, and a 46 percent jump since 2020. Another way to put it is that the number of golfers who keep handicaps has increased by around 1.16 million since Covid hit.

• **Average Handicaps Haven't Budged:** With so many new golfers taking up the game, you might expect handicap averages to go up. But there hasn't

been dramatic change in those numbers. In 2025, the average handicap was 14.0 for male golfers and 28.8 for female golfers. In 2020, those numbers were 14.2 and 27.7, respectively.

• **Scratch Golfers Are Unicorns:** A lot of golfers dream of getting down to scratch. Very few do. Only 2 percent of male golfers have handicaps of 0 or lower. Female scratch golfers are even harder to come by. They make up just .85 percent of girls and women.

• **Florida Posted the Most Rounds:** When you've got year-round weather and courses on every corner, the numbers add up. Florida golfers logged more total rounds than any other state in 2025. The Sunshine State's dominance in raw volume comes as a shock to absolutely no one who's ever spent January anywhere north of the Mason-Dixon line.

• **Arkansas Golfers Are the Best in America:** If you're looking for the lowest handicap average for men in the nation, head to Arkansas. Golfers in the Natural State posted better numbers than anywhere else in the country.

Did you know....

• First held in 1899, the PPGA Women's Amateur is one of the oldest women's amateur championships in the world. It will be held this year on July 13-17 at the OGA Golf Course in Woodburn, Ore. The PPGA Women's Amateur is designated as an official USGA Exemption Event, and the champion will receive an exemption into the 2026 U.S. Women's Amateur.



• WA Golf is one of 41 golf associations in the U.S. that recognizes an "Inactive Score Posting Season," which for WA Golf runs from Nov. 14 to the last day of February the following year. So, the Active Score Posting Season begins March 1, and scores from rounds played in WA Golf territory can now be posted, with your Handicap Index being updated daily.



Tour Players With Northwest ties

PGA Tour

- Andrew Putnam • Tacoma • 35th on the list with \$616,400
- Nick Taylor • Ex-UW • 42nd on the list with \$582,408
- Wyndham Clark • Ex-Oregon • 55th on the list with \$354,642
- Dylan Wu • Medford, Ore. • 113th on the list with \$75,275
- Joel Dahmen • Clarkston • 70th on the list with \$39,100
- Joe Highsmith • Tacoma • 114th on the list with \$74,507
- Cameron Davis • Australia (Member at Sahalee) • 134th on the list with \$38,496
- Adam Svensson • British Columbia • 139th on the list with \$31,522
- Carl Yuan • Ex-UW • No events
- Kevin Chappell • Kirkland • No events
- A.J. Ewart • B.C. Canada • No events

Korn Ferry Tour

- Alistair Docherty • Vancouver, Wash. • 13th on the list with \$75,000
- Dylan Wu • Medford, Ore. • No events
- Carl Yuan • Ex-UW • No cuts made
- Aaron Wise • Ex-Oregon • No events

Champions Tour

- Fred Couples • Seattle • 17th on the list with \$71,500
- Kirk Triplett • Pullman • No events

LPGA Tour

- Jing Yan • Ex-UW • No events
- Gigi Stoll • Tigard • No events
- Carolyn Inglis • Eugene • No events
- Sarah Rhee • Ex-UW • No events

LPGA Epson Tour

- Kathleen Scavo • Eugene • No events



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2026 might be the time to finally get a GHIN handicap; Wine Valley will host PNGA Men's Master-40 event

If you are looking to get a golf handicap for the 2026 season it is nice and easy with any of your local golf organizations..

1) Sign up for a Handicap ID

Your unique Handicap ID number gives you the ability to post scores from which your Handicap Index is calculated. Get your Handicap ID number when you join a WA Golf member club such as the men's or women's club at a local golf course, or one at your workplace or community. Or join the Oregon Golf Association (OGA).

Join a WA Golf Associate Club or OGA club. Associate members receive all the benefits of a WA Golf membership with no strings attached or obligations to their host club.

2) Start posting your scores

With your Handicap ID number you can post your scores: Through the USGA GHIN app on your mobile device. The app lets you post your scores, calculate course handicap, view score history and more. The app features touch-point GPS for thousands of golf courses worldwide. Download the free app from the App Store or Google Play.

Here are a couple of ways to get it going: Through ghin.com or Online at wagolf.org/post. Scores should be posted as soon as possible after your round on the day it was played.

3) Post three 18-hole rounds

A minimum of three 18-hole or six 9-hole scores posted are all that's needed to calculate and establish your Handicap Index! The more often you post your score, the more accurate your handicap.

Wine Valley to host Men's Master-40

If there's anything smoother than the red wine produced from the vineyards of Walla Walla, Wash., it might be the fairways of that town's renowned golf course, which has long been a host of championship-grade play.

Wine Valley Golf Club, that very place, is set to host the Pacific Northwest Men's Master-40 Amateur, to be held Aug. 3-7, 2026.

Opened in 2009 and designed by Northwest architect Dan Hixson, the long, treeless course sits some seven miles west of town, among the rolling waves of pure Eastern Washington prairie.

Built on land that once was wheat and alfalfa fields, Wine Valley is one of the state's most expansive courses. From its longest tees, the course measures a little more than 7,600 yards.

The scheduling of the PNGA Men's Master-40 continues what has been a full-throttle period for Wine Valley. Last year, the club hosted its second PNGA Women's Amateur, as well as a U.S. Open Final Qualifier. It has been the site of the PNGA Men's Amateur three times, the Washington Men's Amateur twice, and the Northwest Open Invitational a total of 12 times, among an assortment of other events, for which it has always been well-equipped.

Pro tours heading to the Northwest

The LPGA and PGA Tour Champions have set their dates for their return appearances to the Pacific Northwest for their annual tournaments for the 2026 golf season..

Interestingly both are set for the same weekend in August. The LPGA Portland Standard is set for Aug. 13-16 at Columbia Edgewater Country Club while The Boeing Classic will take place Aug. 14-16 at Snoqualmie Ridge Golf Club. The LPGA Portland Standard is the longest-running tournament on the LPGA Tour schedule.

After a historic 75th anniversary season, the LPGA Tour announces the 2026 schedule featuring 33 events and a total prize fund of over \$132 million. The world's best female golfers will once again compete for the largest prize fund in the Tour's history. The upcoming year will notably see the Solheim Cup in the Nether-

lands as well as new events, new venues and increased purses. In 2026, the LPGA Tour will travel to 13 different countries and regions and 13 states across the United States. There will be two multi-event swings in Asia – the first in the spring to Thailand, Singapore and the People's Republic of China and the second in the fall to People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Japan. One European swing will take place in the middle of the year, including two major championships and the ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open, before the LPGA Tour returns to Europe for the Solheim Cup in September.

The Boeing Classic just celebrated its 20th year in 2025 and always features one of the top fields on the PGA Tour Champions schedule, when it gets going at the Snoqualmie Ridge Golf Club.

New River Ranch Resort located along Snake River

Continued from Page 1

River Ranch Golf Resort is the vision of a locally rooted ownership group—individuals who grew up on the Snake River boating, exploring and developing a deep connection to the land. Through a shared passion for golf, architecture and place, their paths converged to bring River Ranch Golf Resort to life.

The resort will welcome traveling golfers and overnight guests, featuring guest cottages, an integrated real estate offering and a world-class clubhouse overlooking the Snake River. The course is expected to open to the public in August 2027, with members receiving preview access prior to public opening.

For more information on River Ranch Golf Resort, visit www.riverranchgolf.com. KemperSports.

Black Butte Ranch, Eagle Crest team up for three-day Battle at the Resorts

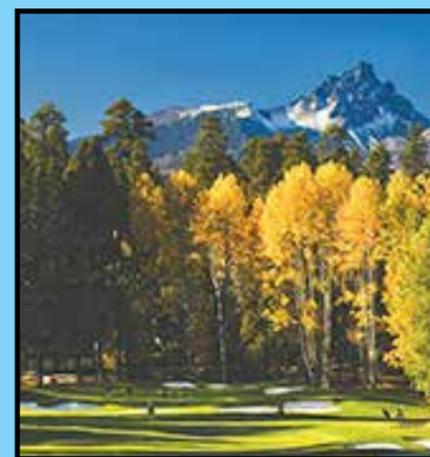
Black Butte Ranch and Eagle Crest Resort in Central Oregon are teaming up for the annual Battle at the Resorts (B.A.R.) set for May 1-3.

The event is open to men and women of all handicaps with the opportunity to play the championship courses at both Black Butte Ranch and Eagle Crest Resort over three days.

The formats for the tournament will be different each day with the opening round featuring a two-person scramble, the second round a two-person best ball and the final round a two-person chapman.

There is also a new senior option this year for players age 60 or over.

Over \$21,000 in prize payments are expected to be paid out to the nearly 300 teams expected to sign up. E-mail dmcclery@bbranch.org for more.



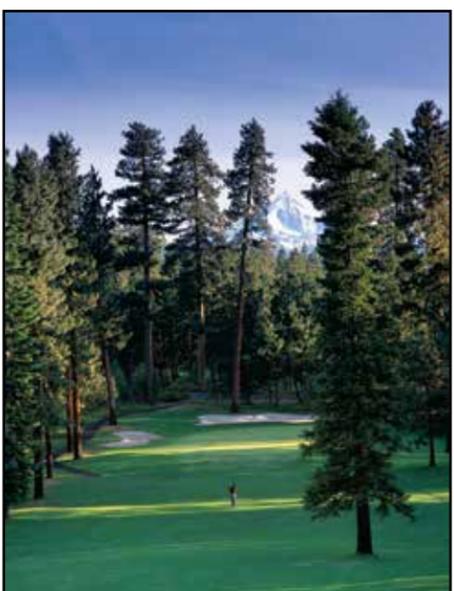
Black Butte will be a host for the Battle at the Resorts.



2 PERSON TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP

Battle at the Resorts is scheduled to take place from May 1st to May 3rd, 2026, featuring a two-person team format across three premier courses: Glaze Meadow at Black Butte Ranch, and the Ridge and Resort courses at Eagle Crest Resort.

This event, formerly known as the Central Oregon Shootout, utilizes a round-robin style where different flights rotate through the participating courses over three days.



Black Butte Ranch

Participants compete in six net divisions with a maximum handicap of 36 for men and 42 for ladies, and a maximum 6-stroke differential between partners.

The tournament structure involves three distinct formats of play: a Two-Person Scramble on Friday, May 1; a Two-Person Best Ball on Saturday, May 2; and a Two-Person Chapman on Sunday, May 3.

Eagle Crest Resort

Practice rounds are available on April 30, 2026, for \$59 (walking) or \$82 (riding), followed by the "Cinco De Mayo Bash" at Eagle Crest's newly remodeled Resort Course Deck.



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Rules of the Game: In tournament play, what are you required to do when a thunderstorm suspends play?

The weather man is calling for thunderstorms in the afternoon. Kirk has a tee time for his club championship at 1 p.m.. Not being one to believe every forecast, Kirk heads to the course thinking it's another false alarm. Things are looking calm when his group tees off. Kirk is having a great round when the thunderheads start to appear on the horizon. A little bit later, while in the middle of the 12th fairway everyone in the group hears one long horn blast. Now what? (Next month we will look at a Normal Suspension—like for darkness when no imminent danger is present)

Rule 5.7b(1) describes what players in an immediate suspension situation are required to do. One long horn blast signals an immediate suspension of play due to imminent danger. Considering that Kirk and everyone else in the group—and everyone on the course playing in the tournament—are walking around with 14 (or less) lightning rods in their golf bags, and swinging them to the sky, lightning is imminent danger!

When the committee suspends play for imminent danger, it is an immediate suspension. ALL players (regardless of if they are having the round of their lives) are required to stop play immediately. Players must not make another stroke until the Committee resumes play.

Kirk is upset about the determination of immediate suspension, and he wants to play on because he personally does not fear lightning. But if Kirk does not follow the immediate suspension rule and he makes another stroke, Kirk is going to really upset when he learns that not following the rules governing an immediate suspension means that he is



Patti Daskalos

When the committee suspends play for imminent danger, it is an immediate suspension. ALL players (regardless of if they are having the round of their lives) are required to stop play immediately. Players must not make another stroke until the Committee resumes play.

disqualified from the round of his life.

For an immediate suspension, players may mark the spot of the ball and lift it, or they may mark and leave the ball in its spot or just leave the ball. When play resumes what happens next depends upon if the ball was lifted during the suspension. The following assumes that the ball or ball marker were not moved prior to the resumption of play:

- When a player's ball was lifted during the suspension, the player must replace the original ball, or another ball on the original



When weather like this is about to hit make sure you follow the rules when the horn sounds to stop play.

spot—and if the spot is not exactly known, use the estimated spot.

- If the player's ball was not lifted (and not marked) during the suspension, then the player may play the ball as it lies. Or may mark the spot of the ball, lift it and replace that ball or another ball on the spot.

- If the player's ball was not lifted and marked during the suspension, since the ball's

location is already marked, may lift the ball and replace that ball or another ball on the spot, or the player may remove the markers and play the ball as it lies.

Remember that immediate suspension means no more strokes can be made without disqualification—one long horn blast, decide what to do about marking or lifting your ball, and seek shelter!

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The Lesson Tee: Here are some concepts for success with your game for the 2026 season

Wow it's March and awesome weather is coming soon. I'm beginning year 32 of the Jeff Coston Golf Academy at Semiahmoo. I love it here. The membership, staff and ownership are amazing.

I've been fortunate to write for Inside Golf Newspaper for over 31 years. So grateful for so many opportunities in my career and life.

I love playing golf tournaments and coaching. I would blow up without these passions in my life. It is not only my passion, but privilege to pass on this lifelong journey to those who trust me with their game. Golf has been my pursuit since I could hold a golf club.

I would like to share a few simple, but very important concepts for your success this year.

1. Nine out of 10 golfers would enjoy more success if they strengthened their grip and aimed their feet more left. Like the left side of the fairway or left side of the green. Ones shoulders could feel a bit right, but feet left. To many are feet right, shoulders left and a weak grip.

2. Another thought for this year is this; most amateur golfers lift their arms on the backswing rather than turning their shoulders and hips during the backswing. (Photo 1). Ben Hogan imagined a "Plane of Glass" resting on his shoulders and he would turn under the plane of glass without breaking the glass on the backswing and downswing. This "Anti-Lift" pole would simulate that! I have my students set this up at home and practice and also hit balls on the practice tee! Then imagine it there on the golf course. People talk about height and width on the backswing but seldom is depth taught which is essential. One must turn their shoulders and hips on the backswing rather than just lifting their arms! Almost like you are turning and touching a wall behind you. (Photo 3). Make sure when you touch the wall you hands are shoulder high.

3. Photo 2: If you put a pole at a 45 degree angle 5" from your right shoulder and swing under it with



Jeff Coston

the above concepts on the backswing and to the ball you will have a much better swing plane on the downswing also Work these "Swing Stations" for a better technique.

Jeff Coston is a member of the PGA Hall of Fame and Golf Digest #1 Teacher in Washington. Jeff can be reached for appointment by calling 360 201-4590.



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Las Vegas World Am set for three-day tournament run from March 30-April 1

If you have not put the clubs away for winter and are looking to get a competitive fix, then look no further than the Las Vegas World Amateur set for March 30-April 1, 2026

This three-day event in the city that never sleeps offers a three-round event at three different courses, including Canyon Gate, Spanish Trail and Chimera.

Entry fee is \$765 and provides green fees, carts, range balls, a prize package and tournament banquet. Plus daily games for each flight as well.

The tournament is set up as an individual net stroke play event meaning that handicaps will be used for all players. There will be divisions for everyone from men to women to seniors. All players will play different tee for the different divisions.

For information see www.vegasworldam.com.

Las Vegas World Am

Here are some facts and figures about the Las Vegas World Am.

- **Dates:** March 30-April 1, 2026
- **Courses:** Canyon Gate Country Club, Spanish Trail, Chimera
- **Format:** Individual net stroke play with divisions for men, women and seniors.
- **Entry fee:** \$765, includes green fees, carts, tournament prize package and tournament banquet.
- **Information:** Tournament web site is www.vegasworldam.com.



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Puget Sound Golf Association

2026 Schedule

April 1-3, 2026
Gamble Sands Resort

April 27, 2026
Snoqualmie Ridge Golf Club

May 4, 2026
Sand Point Country Club

June 15, 2026
Canterwood Golf & Country Club

June 29, 2026
Astoria Country Club

June 30, 2026
Gearhart Golf Links

The Puget Sound Golf Association invites you to enjoy golf on quality private clubs and courses in the great Pacific Northwest. The 2026 schedule is on the left.

Friends and business associates are welcome to join your group, there's never a membership required to play. All players must observe course rules and dress codes. Remember, this is your opportunity to play some of the best courses in the region without becoming a member!

Check out our website at: nwgolfadventures.com

For info, email info@golfpugetsound.com



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