

2023 ISPS Handa United States Open

March 21st – 23rd

Green Island Country Club

Columbus, Georgia

The United States Open Golf Tournament, sponsored by ISPS Handa, was held in late March in Columbus Georgia. The host golf course was Green Island Country Club. Green Island Country Club is a PGA caliber course, hosting PGA tour events in the past and is home to several past and current PGA professionals.

Players and Coaches arrived on Sunday, March 20th. The hotel was the La Quinta, which included a breakfast bar. The hotel was located two miles from the golf course and was surrounded by restaurants and retail establishments.

On Monday, the players and coaches awoke to below freezing temperatures and a light breeze. The weather conditions limited morning activities at the golf course and the practice round did not start until after eleven in the morning. All pre round activities were cancelled due to frost and the driving range and putting green being closed to players. The players did a shotgun start for the practice round and there was a player/coach scramble tournament for those who wished to participate. Those who did not wish to participate played their practice round with the group. The golf course is normally closed on Monday's but staff was on site to assist players, serve drinks, and open the pro shop. The players and coaches had the course to themselves for the full day. Box lunches were provided, and cash donations were made to cover the cost.

The practice round was followed by dinner and the player/coach meeting that evening at Country's BBQ. This restaurant was located just a few minutes' drive from the hotel. A section of the restaurant was reserved for our group and the host/owner of the restaurant was Scott Ressmeyer. Some may remember Scott as the host of the 2011 ISPS Handa US Open and the 2013 Ressmeyer Cup. At the dinner, player and coaches heard from Dan Parker, the fastest blind man, holding the record for unassisted driving at over 200 mph. His story was exciting, moving, and an inspiration to hear.

Tuesday morning arrived with cool temperatures and again a light wind. Opening Ceremonies included a flag presentation, local First Responders, First Responder vehicles, PGA Hope Members, Blinded Veterans, the Mayor of Columbus, the Columbus Sports Council, our players, and coaches. The National Anthem was sung, the Mayor and Course Pro shared a few words, flags were honored, and players were recognized.

The competition started with tee times, players going off in groups of three. Each player and Coach were announced at the tee by Matt Jones. Play proceeded and the weather improved in the afternoon. The course proved to be challenging and showed its teeth a few times during the day. The course was reserved for our players for the remainder of the day so there were no regular members on the course when our players played their round. PGA Hope volunteers and many local volunteers helped by being fore caddies and scorekeeping.

Wednesday, the final day, started again at eleven in the morning with tee times and player/coach being announced at the tee. The weather warmed up and Wednesday proved to be pleasant to play golf but the course again proved to be difficult. The course was again reserved for our players for the remainder of the day so there were no regular members on the course when our players played their round. PGA Hope volunteers and many local volunteers helped by being fore caddies and scorekeeping again on the second day.

Following play on the final day, the dinner and awards banquet were held at the golf course and hosted by Green Island Country Club. The facility has a formal banquet room which was set up nicely for our group and the staff, food, and hospitality was amazing. Awards were presented and Tournament Director Greg Hooper recognized and thanked many people who helped make this tournament possible.

The tournament was a great experience for the twenty-six participants from the United States and Canada. The golf course was amazing, the staff great to work with, and the PGA Hope volunteers and local volunteers were a great help.

List of Winners

Stroke

B1 Division -

1st Place Gross - Gerry Nelson

1st Place Net - James Meacham

B2 Division -

Gross

1st Place - James Whitton

2nd Place - Charlie Adams

3rd Place - Ty Thompson

Net

1st Place - Orlando Ramirez

2nd Place - Phil Hubbard

3rd Place - William Mathis

B3 Division -

Gross

1st Place - Bill Pease

2nd Place - JoJo McCarron

3rd Place - Kevin McBride

Net

1st Place - Scott Wilson

2nd Place - Harry Hester

3rd Place - Greg Hooper

Stableford

B1 1st Place - Brad Eaton

B1 2nd Place - Joe Furber

B2/B3 1st Place - Rick Coffey

B2/B3 2nd Place - Jeff Carrico