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Watson Challenge Champion Receives Exemption To Play in KC Golf Classic

2019 champion Alex Springer to compete in KC's Korn Ferry Tour event

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (Feb. 19, 2020) –The KC Golf Classic – a Korn Ferry Tour stop and Kansas City’s only PGA TOUR-sanctioned event – has partnered with the Watson Challenge, honoring KC golf legend Tom Watson to award an exemption to its annual champion, beginning with the 2020 event. Alex Springer, the 2019 Watson Challenge champion, will compete in this year’s KC Golf Classic, to be held May 4-10 at Blue Hills Country Club.

"My vision of the Watson Challenge remains to determine the best player in the Greater Kansas City golf community," Watson added. "This partnership with the KC Golf Classic enhances that vision by providing the opportunity for the Watson Challenge champion to participate in Kansas City’s only professional golf tournament and to showcase their talents against the future stars of the PGA TOUR on the Korn Ferry Tour. We believe this will also increase the local interest of both the Watson Challenge and the KC Golf Classic."

Founded in 2007 by Watson himself, the Watson Challenge has raised more than \$600,000 for First Tee of Kansas City since its inception. The World Golf Hall of Fame member’s vision for the event continues to be determining the best player in the Kansas City golf community, with the 48-player field comprised of the area’s top professionals and amateurs – at times, including Watson. This year’s Watson Challenge will be contested May 29-31 at the National Golf Club in Parkville.

"This is exciting for both the KC Golf Classic and the Watson Challenge," said KC Golf Classic Executive Director Drew Van Meeteren. "It is one more example that reinforces the tournament’s commitment to the Kansas City community and fulfilling its mission. The path to the PGA TOUR runs through KC and we are thrilled to have the Watson Challenge champion in the field."

"Tom Watson has been a legendary figure in our game for six decades, and it’s tremendous to see the Watson Challenge partner with our KC Golf Classic to help drive even more interest in one of our premier events for area golf fans," said Korn Ferry Tour President Alex Baldwin.

The Watson Challenge is managed by the Golf Foundation of Kansas City. Founded in 2007, the Foundation was formed as the tax charitable affiliate of Central Links Golf that is committed to supporting the local golf community. The foundation is governed by volunteers and managed by Central Links Golf as a non-profit 501 (c) 3 Missouri corporation.

“We are very excited to enter this partnership with the KC Golf Classic. We are always looking for ways to strengthen the connections between different parts of the golf community in the area and working with the KC Golf Classic and Tom Watson to offer this opportunity to an aspiring young player is a great chance to do that,” noted Central Links Golf Executive Director Doug Habel.

Springer, who played golf at nearby Olathe East High School and then the University of Central Missouri, finished 8-under in last year’s rain-shortened Watson Challenge to defeat Watson and defending back-to-back winner Andy Spencer.

Springer turned pro in the fall of 2017 and played on the Mackenzie Tour – PGA TOUR Canada in 2018 and part of 2019. In the summer of 2018, he Monday qualified for the KC Golf Classic at Nicklaus Golf Club at Lionsgate but missed the cut by one shot following rounds of 69-71—140.

“I am thrilled to receive this exemption into the KC Golf Classic. I want to thank the tournament staff, as well as The Watson Challenge, for this opportunity,” said Springer. “This new partnership is very exciting and will certainly be beneficial for both tournaments. I can't wait to get back out there in May competing against my peers.”

Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities for the 2020 KC Golf Classic are still available. Information and registration can be found at KCGolfClassic.com.

About the KC Golf Classic

Established in 2009, the mission of the KC Golf Classic is to deliver a world class “must attend” entertainment experience for spectators, volunteers and Tour players generating substantial charitable and economic impact for the Kansas City community and promoting enjoyment of the game. Hosted at Blue Hills Country Club, last year’s winner, Michael Gellerman, broke through with a final-round 3-under 69 to win, finishing one stroke clear of 54-hole leader Nelson Ledesma. To learn more about the KC Golf Classic, visit KCGolfClassic.com or follow the tournament on social media via Instagram (@KCGolfClassic), Twitter (@KCGolfClassic) and Facebook (facebook.com/KCGolfClassic).

About Blue Hills Country Club

Blue Hills Country Club, established in 1912 and relocated to its current location in 1963, has consistently been rated among the top courses in the Midwest. The Robert Dunning design features a 7,347-yard layout that has hosted numerous qualifiers for the U.S. Open and other USGA events. Thirty-nine-time PGA TOUR winner Tom Watson, an honorary member of Blue Hills, once hosted the Children’s Mercy Hospital Golf Classic at the course, an event which attracted golf greats Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Lee Trevino.

About Korn Ferry Tour

Founded (1990), owned and operated by the PGA TOUR, the Korn Ferry Tour identifies and develops those players who are ready to compete and win on golf’s biggest stage. In 2013, the Korn Ferry Tour became The Path to the PGA TOUR with all 50 available PGA TOUR cards coming through the Tour and the season culminating at the Korn Ferry Tour Finals. This season marks the 30th year of competition on the Korn Ferry Tour. Three out of four PGA TOUR members are Korn Ferry Tour alumni. Tour alumni have won more than 500 PGA TOUR titles, including 24 major championships and eight PLAYERS Championships. To learn more about the PGA TOUR, the Korn Ferry Tour and to follow the season-long quest for a PGA TOUR card, visit PGATOUR.COM, or follow the Tour on social media via Instagram (@KornFerryTour), Twitter (@KornFerryTour) and Facebook (facebook.com/KornFerryTour). For more information on the Korn Ferry Tour, please visit PGATOUR.com.

About Korn Ferry

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