

1996 U.S. OPEN

*It's big. It's classic. It's major.
And it's right in our own backyard.*

The 1996 U.S. Open Golf Tournament begins next week at world renowned Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Township.

Yes, golf fans, it doesn't get any better than this. One of professional golf's four major tournaments, the United States Open golf championship is set to tee off with practice rounds beginning June 10. Championship rounds begin June 13 and conclude Sunday, June 16.

The big names - Jack Nicklaus, Fred Couples, Corey Pavin, Greg Norman and Nick Faldo - are slated to be among the 156-person starting field. And so are the not-so-big names, players like Phil Mickelson, Davis Love III, Jeff Maggert and David Duval who are having great years and could challenge for the national championship.

In this special U.S. Open section, you can learn all about the Open. For instance, take a look out for the colorful map of historic Oakland Hills on pages 12 and 13. The map not only offers a unique perspective of the course layout, but also gives locations of important elements like bleacher seating, leader boards and concession stands.

The center spread provides a series of charts detailing the course's yardage and par, past Oakland Hills champions and a map of how shuttle service will work. Andy North, the last U.S. Open champion at Oakland Hills in 1985, is still involved with golf. North has a lot of things to say about his experience with 'The Monster'. Look for his story in this special section.

Also, look for interesting items about defending champion Corey Pavin, Oakland Hills caddies, a recap of the 1985 tournament and a history of the major tournaments Oakland Hills has hosted.

We enjoyed putting the section together. We hope you enjoy browsing through it.

And, most of all, enjoy the tournament.

- Marty Budner

CREDITS:

Sports reporters Marty Budner, Chris Mayer, Bill Parker, Steve Stein and Jim Toth provided story material. David Snyder coordinated advertising, and Glenn Menilat, creative services supervisor, designed the cover. Center spread graphics provided by Tamme Graves. Direct questions to Budner at 901-2564.

U.S. OPEN INFORMATION

U.S. OPEN FACT SHEET

WHAT: 96th United States Open Championship conducted by the United States Golf Association (USGA).

WHERE: Oakland Hills Country Club's South Course in Bloomfield Township (southeast corner of Telegraph and Maple roads).

WHEN: June 10-12 (practice rounds); June 13-16 (championship rounds).

WHO: The Professional Golf Association's top four golfers.

TOTAL ENTRIES: A total of 5,925 entries were accepted by the USGA. Nearly 500 entries came in via overnight delivery on the last two days before the closing date.

EXEMPT PLAYERS: Sixty-nine players are fully exempt in the 156-player Open field, including the past 10 champions - Ernie Els (1994), Lee Janzen (1993), Tom Kite (1992), Payne Stewart (1991), Hale Irwin (1990), Curtis Strange (1989, 1988), Scott Simpson (1987) and Raymond Floyd (1986).

FIRST ENTRY: The first entry received by the USGA for the Open was on March 5 from 1990 champion Hale Irwin.

OTHER RETURNING CHAMPIONS: Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson are also past Open winners exempt from qualifying. Nicklaus, a four-time winner, and Watson, who won in 1982, were given special invitations from the USGA Executive Committee.

NUMBER 40 FOR JACK: This will

be the 40th consecutive start for Jack Nicklaus, who competed in his first Open in 1957. Nicklaus finished fourth in the 1961 Open at Oakland Hills, but missed the cut in 1985. He won the Senior Open at Oakland Hills in 1991. Raymond Floyd will be making his 31st consecutive start; Hale Irwin will be making his 27th start; and Tom Watson and Tom Kite will be making their 25th starts.

OAKLAND HILLS' SIXTH OPEN: Oakland Hills' last U.S. Open was in 1985 when Andy North survived with a winning final round of 4-over 74 - a round in which he hit only four fairways and birdied just once. The first Open at Oakland Hills was won by 118-pound Englishman Cyril Walker in 1924. Ralph Guldahl set an Open record with his winning score of 7-under-par 281 in 1937. Ben Hogan's masterful final-round 67 gave him the 1951 Open title. Sweet-swinging Gene Littler showed he was fully recovered from a rib injury when he won the 1961 U.S. Open.

REPEAT WINNERS: Six players have defended their U.S. Open championships over the 96-year tournament history. Curtis Strange, in 1988 and 1989, was the last golfer to successfully defend his U.S. Open title. The others to win two consecutive championships were Willie Anderson (1903, 1904, 1905); John J. McDermott (1911, 1912); amateur Robert T. Jones, Jr. (1929, 1930); Ralph Guldahl (1937, 1938); and Ben Hogan (1950, 1951).

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