

2nd year

Champion Roberto De Vincenzo faces stiff challenge by 'younger' players

By Brad Emons
staff writer

Sponsorship of major tournaments is quite common for the United States Golf Association (USGA).

All told, the USGA, formed in 1894, conducts 13 national championships ranging from juniors to the pros.

The U.S. Senior Open is the latest addition to the USGA tournaments. The event is only in its second year.

This year's site, Oakland Hills, has hosted the U.S. Open four times in addition to the PGA and Carling World Open tournaments.

The first USGA Senior Open was played last June at the Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y.

Roberto De Vincenzo of Argentina, a leading international player for the past 30 years, captured the event with total score of 285, one over par.

He finished four strokes ahead of 57-year-old William Campbell of Huntington, W.V., a vice president of the USGA and U.S. Amateur Champion in 1964, who, incidentally, played as an amateur.

THE INAUGURAL event went smoothly but for two complaints. Many golf experts felt Winged Foot's East Course was too

tough. Others wanted the age limit of 55 lowered to 50 to coincide with the U.S. Senior Women's age requirement. The USGA argued against the change, stating the idea came about solely for the attraction of larger galleries. The USGA, however, eventually conceded.

When the age limit was dropped to 50, it admitted such newcomers to the field as Arnold Palmer, Gene Littler and Don January.

Oakland Hills, rated by Gary Player as one of the toughest golf courses in the world, was shortened by almost 200 yards for the U.S. Senior Open, making a pair of long par-5 holes reachable.

But the fast greens and high rough make the test difficult.

Sandy Tatum, a longtime member of the USGA, came up with the idea of the USGA Seniors Open.

"HE FELT it was something whose time had come," said Dave Fay, manager and program development director of the USGA. "He felt there were a lot of fine players to hold a viable championship."

Fay said the survival of the tournament does not depend on television.

"The tournament rights are held by ABC," he explained. "They televised it last year and chose not to do it this year."



Roberto De Vincenzo
1980 U.S. Senior Open champion



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