NCAA Approves Golf Legislation

NCAA Board of Directors
Approves Legislation For
Western
Refining College All-America Golf Classic

Past
Champions

1974

Jerry Pate

Alabama

1975

Randy
Simmons

Texas

1976

Scott
Simpson

USC

1977

Mike Gove

Weber State

1978

Gary
Hallberg

Wake Forest

1979

Tim Norris

Fresno State

1980

Jay Don
Blake

Utah State

1981

Willie
Wood

Oklahoma State

1982

Billy Ray
Brown

Houston

1983

John
Slaughter

Houston

1984

Davis Love III

North Carolina

1985

Sam
Randolph

USC

1986

Billy
Mayfair

Arizona State

1987

No
tournament due to pending NCAA legislation

1988

Chris
Patton

Clemson

1989

Chris
Patton

Clemson

1990

Geoff Griffin

Fresno State

1991

David
Duval

Georgia
Tech

1992

Robert
Damron

Central Florida

1993

Chris
Riley

UNLV

1994

Notah
Begay

Stanford

1995

Tiger
Woods

Stanford

1996

Chad Wright

USC

1997

Alberto
Ochoa

TCU

1998

Jeremy
Anderson

UNLV

1999

Matt
Kuchar

Georgia Tech

2000

Ricky Barnes

Arizona

2001

Brad Heaven

Toledo

2002

Adam
Rubinson

TCU

2003

Chris
Nallen

Arizona

2004

Nicholas
Thompson

Georgia Tech

2005

Luke List

Vanderbilt

2006

Chris Kirk

Georgia

2007

Webb
Simpson

Wake Forest

EL PASO, Texas (January 15, 2008) - The NCAA Board of Directors voted to approve NCAA legislative proposal 2007-93 on Monday afternoon, effectively reinstating the exemption status for the Sun Bowl Association's Western Refining College All-America Golf Classic, announced SBA executive director Bernie Olivas.

Proposal 2007-93, which was sponsored by Conference USA, was written in order to give the nation's top collegiate golf tournament its exempt status back. The status was lost last year, when proposal 2006-107 eliminated the certification process for all exempt events.

"This is great news for the Sun Bowl Association, the city of El Paso and collegiate golf," said Olivas. "We have been trying to secure the exemption for the Western Refining College All-America Golf Classic since the fall of 2006. It took us over a year with a lot of help from several NCAA member institutions, the Golf Coaches Association of America and especially (commissioner) Britton Banowski and Conference USA.

"Locally, we could not have done this without the help of (UTEP athletic director) Bob Stull and (senior associate athletic director) Lisa Campos. They guided us through the process," said Olivas.

With the addition of the exemption, the Western Refining College All-America Golf Classic can continue to exist. It is the only individual stroke-play event in the NCAA and has been rated the No. 1 men's collegiate golf tournament in the nation for the past five years by the Golfweek/Sagarin Performance Index.

"The exemption is crucial for the event to exist because it allows the nation's top players to compete in the tournament without taking away from the team's playing dates," said tournament director Bob Kimble. "Each school can utilize 24 playing dates a year and with the exemption, a competing player does not count against those dates.

"If we did not have the exemption, then it is most likely that the tournament would not be played. No coach is going to send his best player to the All-American if it would count against his team's playing dates," added Kimble.

Just one hurdle remains in order for this legislation to take affect for the 2008-09 season - the 60-day period to request an override of the approval. NCAA membership has until March 14 to garner enough opposition to the proposal to override the approved legislation. This is standard procedure for all legislative items.

"We feel that with as much support that we have received from across the country, that the 60-day period should not be a problem," said Olivas. "We are confident that this legislation will complete the 60-day period unopposed."

This is not the first time that the tournament has felt the pressure from the NCAA. In 1986, the NCAA passed legislation limiting playing dates for men's golf that forced the tournament to be cancelled for 1987 season. Central Connecticut State University's Lowell Lukas was instrumental in helping secure the exemption in 1987 which lasted until the current legislation passed.

This past year, Wake Forest University's Webb Simpson won the 33rd edition of the Western Refining College All-America Golf Classic, putting his name on a list of champions that includes Jerry Pate, Scott Simpson, Davis Love, David Duval, Notah Begay and Tiger Woods.

Alumni of this event have gone on to earn just over $1 billion on the PGA Tour. The alumni list includes 17 U.S. Amateur champions and 20 major championship winners. The field has also included Jim Furyk, David Toms, Justin Leonard and Stewart Cink and rising stars Ryan Moore, J.B. Holmes, Nick Watney and Nicholas Thompson.

The tournament, which is hosted by the Sun Bowl Association, is slated for Nov. 23-25 at the par-71, 6,837-yard El Paso Country Club.

In all, 125 colleges and universities have participated in the tournament, raising more than $600,000 in scholarship money for the participating institutions. Each university is awarded a $1,000 scholarship if a golfer from that school competes in the tournament.