

# THE FOG HORN

VOLUME 55 • SPRING 2019

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF GOLF

www.friendsofgolf.org



## KOEPKA BRINGS A MAJOR VIBE AS FOG'S 2019 HONOREE

One look at FOG's 2019 Honoree Brooks Koepka and the way he carries himself surely ends the argument once and for all of whether or not golfers are athletes. Rather than being the winner in three of the last six professional golf majors he's played in (he missed the 2018 Masters due to injury), one would guess he's an NFL free safety, the number three hitter in an MLB line-up or perhaps a 19-foot pole vaulter. Koepka has combined his physical prowess with a Zen-like approach to crucial putts to win the 2017 and 2018 U.S. Opens, the 2018 PGA Championship and the 2018 PGA Player of the Year. However, in spite of recent success, the former Florida St. Seminole is by no means an overnight success. Koepka paid his dues.

After qualifying as an amateur for the 2012 U.S. Open and missing the cut by six strokes, Koepka spent several years honing his skills abroad. He began by playing on Europe's Challenge Tour where he won three tournaments in two years and earned his European Tour card. In 2014, he won the European Tour's Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year award. He eventually tallied four wins on the European Tour followed by another two on the Japan Tour.

As for the athletic prowess, apparently it's in the genes. Koepka's great uncle is Dick Groat, shortstop for the 1960 World Series Champion Pittsburgh Pirates and the 1960 National League MVP. Groat also played basketball at Duke where he was a two-time All-American and National Player of the Year in 1952 when he averaged 25.2 points per game. He was drafted third



**Koepka's great uncle, Dick Groat won both NCAA Player of the Year while playing basketball at Duke and National League MVP as a shortstop for the 1960 World Series Champion Pittsburgh Pirates.**

overall by the Ft. Wayne Pistons in the 1952 NBA Draft, but played only one year before entering the military. Groat was the first person to be elected to both the College Basketball Hall of Fame and the College Baseball Hall of Fame.

After winning the CJ Cup to kick off his 2019 PGA Tour wrap-around season, Koepka now has five PGA Tour victories

(three are majors) to go with his international wins. Since joining the PGA Tour, his numbers are staggering. As of this writing, he's only played in 111 PGA Tour events. Yet he's made 92 cuts, has the five wins, seven second place finishes, 32 Top 10's (29%) and won over \$23 million. Success may not have happened overnight for Brooks Koepka, but it's certainly happening now.

*"The finest one day tournament of its kind in the USA." - Byron Nelson*





## WE GET LETTERS

In each edition of FOG Horn we devote space to reprinting excerpts from a few of the many letters FOG receives from the schools and organizations it benefits. They not only offer thanks but remind us that FOG's value extends beyond the golf course and into the community. Many coaches, especially at the high school level are fighting budget cuts and other economic realities and FOG's support is the primary reason their programs survive.

*"Thank you for your generous gift and continuous support of the SCGA Junior Golf Foundation. We believe every kid, no matter what circumstances the person is born into, should have the opportunity to enjoy the game of golf and receive the lifelong benefits the game has to offer. Since you began your support five years ago, we have had more than 10,000 kids use the SCGA Junior Golf Pass to play for \$5 or less more than 156,000 times and to hit balls for \$2 or less more than 220,000 times. We have also awarded nearly \$750,000 in college scholarships in that time.*

*With your help, we are creating local golf communities that provide a safe, supportive, and encouraging environment for youth to have fun, explore their future, and develop the necessary skills to achieve their goals. The Southeast Los Angeles golf community that you have helped us create serves more than 600 avid junior golfers annually and has reached more than 5,000 kids in total. With this success, we continue to expand. We opened up programming in the San Fernando Valley last month and anticipate additional communities in future years. Your support makes a difference to us and all the kids we serve."*

**Suzanne Kelley, SCGA President**  
**Kevin Gigax, SCGA Executive Director**

*"I would like to take this opportunity to once again express my sincere appreciation for your kind donations to our boys and girls golf programs. As fees increase at golf courses, it's becoming harder to keep programs such as golf open in many schools. It has been a pleasure being able to coach these young adults and in part is because of the donations from FOG. We have been able to practice and play different courses, pay*

*for the matches and buy gloves and tees. Last year our girls' team came in third place and this season we won league for the first time in the school's history. Seeing the smiles on the girl's faces and how much they love the sport is awesome. This is why we coach, to see these student athletes experience success, set new goals, and accomplish them."*

**Wilquin Garcia, Girls and Boys Golf Coach**  
**Sylmar Charter High School, Sylmar, CA**

*"Thank you for your recent donation to the Citrus Valley High School Boys and Girls Golf Programs. Your generosity is of great assistance in providing these student athletes with much needed supplies including range balls for practice before matches. This simple letter and the words it contains cannot adequately express the gratitude we have for your ongoing support of our school, staff and students! It is with much pleasure I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you for the ongoing success of Citrus Valley High School and our students."*

**Rhonda Bruce, Principal**  
**Citrus Valley High School, Redlands, CA**

*"You are a friend! I love the game of golf and I love sharing my knowledge of the game with the student-athletes here at Taft. You have supported our program since I've been the coach and I'm grateful and always moved by your commitment to this most beautiful game. I cannot begin to thank you for your financial support. We have been able to purchase all we need to be successful. On behalf of the team, Taft Charter High School, and myself, thank you. You have helped to make many things possible for the golf team and this year again we have the distinct possibility of producing the individual champion of the Los Angeles Section."*

**Edwin Tucker, Boys Golf Coach**  
**Taft Charter High School, Woodland Hills, CA**

*"On behalf of The Beach, I want to thank Friends of Golf for the organization's recent gifts to Long Beach State Athletics in support of our men's and women's golf teams. As a mid-major athletics program, we are competing with some of the nation's top collegiate programs in both athletics and academics. Thanks to loyal support from partners like Friends of Golf, we can focus on recruiting the most*

*talented student-athletes and developing their success, both on the course and in the classroom. We appreciate your confidence in Long Beach State and your commitment to ensuring that men's and women's golf continues to thrive at The Beach. We are proud to count Friends of Golf as a partner."*

**Andrea Taylor, Vice President**  
**California State University,**  
**Long Beach, Long Beach, CA**

## HOGAN TROPHY TO BE ANNOUNCED MAY 20

Friends of Golf, the Hogan Trophy Award Foundation and the Golf Coaches Association of America recently announced The Ben Hogan Award Watch List that included 28 collegiate golfers from 23 different schools. The Ben Hogan Award presented by Konica Minolta Business Solutions U.S.A. annually selects the top college level golfer when considering both collegiate and amateur competition over the previous year. The Watch List was whittled down to 10 semi-finalists April 17 and will be followed by the announcement of the three finalists on May 2. The winner is then selected and announced Monday, May 20 during the banquet held at Colonial Country Club, Ben Hogan's home course.



**After capturing the 2018 Hogan Trophy and becoming the top ranked amateur in the world, Ghim turned professional and is now ranked 25th in FedEx Cup points.**

The 2019 Hogan Award Watch List includes USC's Justin Suh, the second ranked amateur in the world and a candidate for several 2019 college golf awards. Suh was a Hogan semi-finalist in 2018 when he captured the PAC-12 individual title, was named PAC-12 Player of the Year and earned PING First Team All-American honors. Suh, who grew up in San Jose, is joined on the list by four other California natives; Peter Kuest, Fresno (BYU), Matthew Wolff, Agoura Hills (Oklahoma St.), 2018 finalist Collin Marikawa, La Canada Flintridge (Cal) and Isiah Salinda, San Francisco (Stanford). This is the 14th consecutive year Stanford has placed a golfer on the Hogan Watch List, a record streak that includes Patrick Rodgers ultimately winning the 2014 award.

Another Watch List member, Georgia Tech's Luke Schniederjans, is the younger brother of Ollie Schniederjans who was a semi-finalist in 2015 and finalist in 2014 losing to Rodgers. Notable Hogan Award winners from the past include Rickie Fowler (Oklahoma St.), Kyle Stanley (Clemson), Ryan Moore (UNLV), Bill Haas (Wake Forest), Chris Kirk (Georgia), Hunter Mahan (Oklahoma St.), Patrick Cantlay (UCLA), and Jon Rahm (Arizona St.), the only two time Hogan Award winner.



Sign-up on FOG's social media platforms for real time announcement of the 2019 Ben Hogan Trophy Winner

## 2018 FOG TOURNAMENT DAY





# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## SAL CIMBOLO



Over the years, I've used this space to thank our generous sponsors and our terrific participants that together have allowed FOG to reach more than the \$8 million mark of contributing to the future of golf. However, there's one individual I could never thank enough for everything he's done for the past 40 years and that's Eddie Merrins, our Lil' Pro. Along with the late philanthropist extraordinaire John Anderson, Eddie founded FOG (known then as Friends of College Golf) and has worked tirelessly to ensure our organization's success. He's brought us golf's biggest names to be Honorees from the past, present and even the future when you consider recent Honorees such as Patrick Cantlay and Bryson DeChambeau. He's participated in the Golf Clinic that has become so popular and made sure Honorees, sponsors and participants feel at home and comfortable at Bel-Air on Tournament Day. The Lil' Pro has been a fixture at Bel-Air Country Club since 1962 and doubled as UCLA's Head Golf Coach from 1975-1989. His tenure there included coaching 16 All-Americans and winning the NCAA Championship in 1988. We never want to forget what a treasure we have here. His Bio on Southern California PGA website says, "He is Southern California's greatest golf ambassador and among the most respected and admired individuals in the game."

The Lil' Pro played in over 200 PGA events including six PGA Championships and eight U.S. Opens. Due to his playing and coaching achievements, Eddie has now been inducted into 12 Hall of Fames. I can't imagine there are many individuals in the sporting world that require more than two hands or ten fingers to count how many Hall of Fame memberships they have. On top of all that, Eddie has tutored a Who's Who of celebrities and improved their golfing experience. In spite of that illustrious list, Eddie will tell you his true

passion has always been teaching young golfers. Proof is he's still doing it today through the SCGA Merrins Legacy Program.

Outside of his dozen Hall of Fame inductions, the Lil' Pro has received multiple honors including the American Cancer Society's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012, the 2014 Humanitarian Award from the Catholic Charities/Los Angeles Chapter and had Bel-Air's famous Swinging Bridge dedicated to him in 2015. In an interview with FORE Magazine, Eddie was quoted as saying the only words needed on his gravestone are "He Gave." Take a look at the We Get Letters section of this edition of FOG Horn and you'll understand why those two words remain the cornerstone of the organization he co-founded and so many others have vigorously supported.

### SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



Since 2015, Pratt Industries has been a proud sponsor of the Friends of Golf Annual Golf Tournament. We are honored to be associated with such a worthwhile cause.

From our humble beginnings over 30 years ago, Pratt Industries has become the world's largest privately held 100 percent recycled paper and packaging company. With over 100 facilities in 27 states, our series of corrugating facilities strategically placed throughout the U.S. and Mexico continue to fulfill Pratt's mission to be the best vertically integrated paper, packaging and resource recovery company in the western hemisphere.

At Pratt Industries our primary focus is our customers. We develop custom solutions to meet their packaging and display needs. As our customer's needs have changed, so has our company. We have grown, expanded and adapted our business to keep up with the ever-changing packaging industry.

As we embark on the next 30 years, expansion and acquisition plans continue at unprecedented levels with investment in plants, equipment and technology across all of our facilities.

Through all the growth, what has not changed is our commitment and dedication to the sustainability of the environment. This includes the creation of quality green jobs, an emphasis on paper recovery and recycling, and engagement in the communities in which we live and work.

Taking seriously our role as environmental stewards, we work to ensure we meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

# 19<sup>th</sup> HOLE

By Lil' Pro



At the 2019 Masters, UCLA's Devon Bling became the first Bruin to participate in the prestigious event as an amateur. He earned that distinction by being a finalist in the 2018 U.S. Amateur Championship played at the Pebble Beach Golf Links. Even though I had a lot of great players during my time at UCLA, including seven that are currently playing on the Champions Tour, none of them made the U.S. Amateur Finals or participated in the Masters as an amateur. However, I don't believe any other school can boast having that many alumni on any of the current PGA Tours. Another current Bruin golfer, Harrison Mahon, is the son of one of my former players, Brian Mahon. Brian played for me from 1983-1986 and was on the 1983 PAC-10 Championship team that participated in the NCAA Championships in Fresno.



As of this writing, good friends Johnson and Koepka are ranked #1 and #3 respectively in the Official World Golf Rankings.

Our 2019 Honoree, Brooks Koepka, played at Florida St. before turning pro and beginning his career on the European Challenge Tour. He's a good friend of FOG's 2017 Honoree Dustin Johnson. Dustin had such a wonderful experience, he became a member of Bel-Air even though he hasn't had the opportunity to play the course. When he does, I think he has a chance to break 60. Both Brooks and Dustin are represented by Hambric Sports and Dustin's manager, David Winkle, is friends with Brooks' manager, Blake Smith. Blake is a terrific young man who's been around the game of golf since birth. His father is Randy Smith who is the head pro at Royal Oaks CC in Dallas and the 1996 PGA Professional of the Year.

I've received some publicity recently after being inducted into my 12th Hall of Fame. One of the most recent honors was being inducted into the Metropolitan New York Section PGA Hall of Fame which surprised a number of people who aren't familiar with PGA policies and how I got my start as a teaching pro. The PGA of America has 36 sections and it takes four years to gain Class A membership. I began my teaching career as Assistant Golf Pro at Merion CC located just outside of Philadelphia in 1957. In 1960, I became the Head Pro at Rockaway Hunting Club, located on Long Island and considered the oldest country club in America. I became a Class A member in 1961 following my fourth year, which allowed me to play in PGA sanctioned tournaments. I won the 1961 Metropolitan New York PGA Championship which qualified me for the PGA Championship played that year at Aronimink Golf Club, another course outside Philadelphia. The night before I teed off, I found out that Bel-Air Country Club offered me the job as Head Pro and I accepted. I was so excited about the opportunity and to be representing the club in the PGA Championships, I took an eight on the first hole.

I also won the 1961 Long Island Open which allowed me to qualify for the U.S.



Koepka's younger brother Chase is following the path Brooks took by beginning his career on the European Challenge Tour and already advancing to the European Tour.

Open played at Oakland Hills. I didn't make the cut in either that year, but those performances made me eligible for the section's Hall of Fame. I played in six PGA Championships and made the cut in three of them. Of the Hall of Fames, my proudest would be the World Golf Teachers Hall of Fame. Second would have to be the PGA of America Hall of Fame where I was inducted in 2003 along with Claude Harmon and Harvey Pinnick, some outstanding company.

Special appreciation is extended to our 2019 Sponsors and Prize Donors whose contribution of cash and prizes make our annual tournament such a success. You can show your appreciation of these fine organizations by using their services and products wherever possible.

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