

# THE FOG HORN

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## BEN HOGAN FOUNDATION ESTABLISHES EDDIE MERRINS AWARD



*The Eddie Merrins Award will be given annually to an individual who has made significant and lasting contributions to college and amateur golf.*

In conjunction with the Golf Coaches Association of America and Friends of Golf (FOG), the Ben Hogan Award Foundation has created the Eddie Merrins Award. According to the Foundation, the award will be presented annually to an individual who has contributed to college and amateur golf while upholding the highest standards, values, and ethics of the game. The award will be presented each year at Colonial Country Club in Ft. Worth, TX during the Ben Hogan

Trophy Award presentation. As a fitting tribute to the award's namesake, the Lil' Pro was the inaugural recipient. Merrins' accomplishments and dedication to the game of golf are legendary. He's a member of 13 Hall of Fames, was the NCAA Individual runner-up in 1952, won a national championship as UCLA's coach in 1988, played in over 200 PGA Tour events, and has been instrumental in the Ben Hogan Trophy since its inception in 1990.

### FOG TOURNAMENT RETURNS TO BEL-AIR

Following a tournament hiatus in 2020 due to the pandemic and a year at Riviera Country Club, the home course for the 2028 LA Olympics, the Friends of Golf (FOG) Tournament returns to historic Bel-Air Country Club. Along with the return to Bel-Air, two Los Angeles natives will be feted. Collin Morikawa, who was born in Los Angeles and attended La Canada High School, will be FOG's 42nd Honoree. This year's Ken Venturi Spirit of Giving Award goes to Al Michaels. The legendary broadcaster was born in Brooklyn, but his family moved to Los Angeles in 1958, the same year as the Dodgers. He graduated from L.A.'s Alexander Hamilton High School in 1962 and the football stadium bears his name. Since twice being a Ben Hogan Trophy finalist during his time at Cal/Berkeley, Morikawa has experienced early success on the PGA Tour. Still only 25, he has won close to \$19 million, and his five wins include two major golf championships: the 2020 PGA Championship and the 2021 British Open. He's already played on the 2021 U.S. Ryder Cup team and the most



*Morikawa earned a degree in Business Administration from UC/Berkeley in 2019. This January, he got engaged to Katherine Zhu who earned All-America honors playing golf at Pepperdine.*

recent U.S. President's Cup team. Michaels broadcast achievements are too numerous to mention in this space, but he will always be remembered for his call, "Do you believe in miracles?" when a U.S. hockey team of amateurs defeated a highly experienced Soviet Union team in the semi-finals of the 1980 Olympics. Michaels initially broke into the television industry

*(Continued on pg. 2)*

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





(FOG Tournament Returns...story cont.)

selecting women for The Dating Game before being hired as a color commentator for the Los Angeles Lakers where he worked alongside another legendary broadcaster, Chick Hearn. Since then, his travels took him to Hawaii, Cincinnati, and San Francisco before landing network jobs. Over the years, Michaels has announced, hockey, baseball, football, basketball, boxing, a variety of Olympic sports, horse racing and golf. The Arizona St. graduate has received many awards including five Emmys and The Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism. This year, Michaels will do play-by-play for Amazon Prime's Thursday Night Football alongside Kirk Herbstreit.

## 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 economic realities. FOG's support is the primary reason their programs survive. It should also be noted that in spite of the FOG Tournament not being played in 2020 and a reduced number of participants

in 2021, FOG was still able to make annual donations to the many youth golf organizations it supports.

*"Friends of Golf is an incredible organization giving back to the community and we thank you for your continued generosity. Your donation conveys that you understand the value of golf for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Here's what our golf program means to our student-athletes:*

- The boys golf team became league champions this season.
- Five of the six boys on the Varsity team had never touched a golf club before this year
- None of the six players had ever won a significant sports title before their win this year.

*You genuinely understand the role golf can play in developing a young adult's social understanding, sense of competition, and cognitive abilities, relieving stress and improving student health with little risk of traumatic injury. Donations like yours help make our golf program a genuine success, ensure our students have modern equipment, have sufficient training materials, and guarantee that we can foster a deep love for the game of golf."*

**Christopher Behymer, Teacher and Golf Coach, Santa Ana Valley High School**

*"I would like to thank Friends of Golf for their generous donation to our golf*

*program. Many of our boys and girls are new to golf and the money provided by FOG gives the players an opportunity to practice and improve their skills. The money donated will make it easier for some of the players who have struggled to cover the costs associated with playing golf. With school funding for our program continually being reduced, your donation has helped make up the deficit that would have otherwise reduced the opportunities for our students to play golf."*

**Hal Evans, Head Golf Coach, Los Altos High School, Hacienda Heights, CA**

*"I would like to thank your organization on behalf of my team and school for your generous donation to support our golf programs here in Hemet. As you are well aware, high school programs like ours have very limited budgets. Due to your generosity, my teams will be able to spend a little more time focused on their games and school instead of additional fundraising activity. Many of my young people are not wealthy and your organization's gift is a tremendous help. I admire the goal of your organization to help so many programs like ours to grow the game of golf and the young people that participate in the sport."*

**Gary Romeril, Girls/Boys Golf Coach, Hemet High School, Hemet, CA**

## SCPGA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS SHOW FUTURE OF GOLF IS SOLID

FOG is a Proud Partner of the Southern California PGA's Foundation which provides scholarships tailored toward at-risk and underprivileged youth. It's difficult to know where to begin when praising all the SCPGA Scholarship applicants. Here's only a taste of that exceptionalism exhibited by the two recipients: Catherine Rao, who is attending Princeton this year to study Economics and Jaxson Kenzo, who is attending Texas Southern University to earn a degree in Kinesiology.



### Catherine Rao, Camarillo

- Oaks Christian High Valedictorian
- Weighted GPA: 4.79
- 3rd Place CIF State Championships
- 2022 Ventura County Player of the Year
- 2021 & 2022 Marmonte League MVP
- Two-time SCPGA Toyota Tour Cup Champions
- Two-time Rolex Junior All-American
- Rolex Scholastic All-American
- 2021 Junior Solheim Cup Member



### Jaxson Kenzo, Santa Monica

- Santa Monica High Team Captain
- Plus 1 Handicap
- 2022 CIF Bay League Champion (1 under)
- 2022 Bay League Player of the Year
- First Place (4 under) SCPGA Encino Spring Classic
- 2019 Los Angeles County Junior Champion (Boys 14-15)
- Member of SCPGA Toyota Tour Cup, The First Tee & SCGA Youth

## • RIVIERA CC HOSTS 2021 FOG TOURNAMENT •



# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## SAL CIMBOLO



This past year, FOG lost an individual who had been one of the primary reasons for the organization's success, Win "The Commander" Uebel. As a member of FOG's Board of Directors, Win was responsible for soliciting and maintaining relationships with FOG's key sponsors and prize donors. Over the years I've thanked sponsors, participants, and others in this space, but I don't believe I could ever thank my Board of Directors enough. Except for a small administrative staff, FOG is an all-volunteer organization spearheaded by a board that has accomplished incredible results throughout the years, especially during my tenure as FOG President and Chairman. Board members have provided their valuable time to line up sponsors, prizes, live and silent auction items, enlist players, secure volunteers, donate money, and much, much more. This year, we have a passing of the torch with Peter Best succeeding John Hoffman as FOG President. Peter is a great organization guy. He is a past-President of Bel-Air and was extremely instrumental in the success of the Senior U.S. Amateur when the club hosted it in 2004. As much as I look forward to working with Peter, I want to thank John for the incredible job he did as FOG President and before that Tournament Chair. He's been extremely instrumental in helping FOG become what it is today.

I'm excited for the tournament returning to Bel-Air this year following a wonderful experience for all at Riviera Country Club. With his two major golf championships, the 25-year-old Collin Morikawa, adds to the 130-

plus majors won by FOG Honorees over the years. Plus, I'm thrilled to have my friend Al Michaels receive the Ken Venturi Spirit of Giving Award. Al has been a big supporter of FOG throughout the years and along with Jim Nantz, been involved in our dinner and interviewing our Honoree.

### SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT



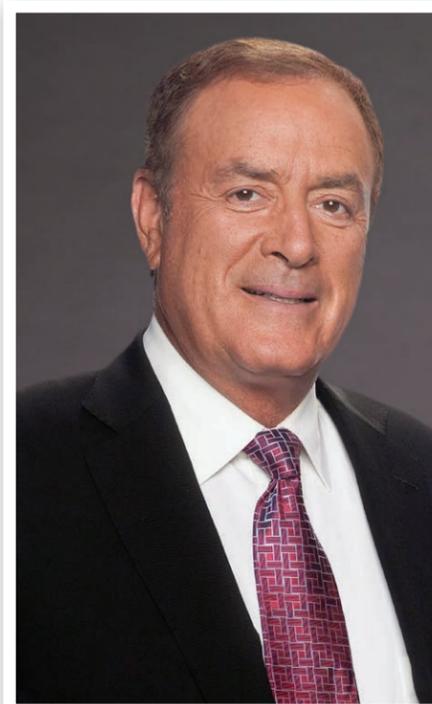
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# 19<sup>th</sup> HOLE

By Lil' Pro



*Michaels was lead announcer for horse racing's Triple Crown (Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, Belmont Stakes) from 1986-2000.*

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Hogan Trophy award ceremonies this year due to a bad back incurred during my April visit to Augusta for The Masters. It was the first year the committee implemented the Eddie Merrins Trophy and made me the inaugural recipient. The trophy is a Waterford crystal with my image on it and will be awarded annually to an individual for career accomplishments and for giving back to the game of golf. I'm extremely honored by the acknowledgment as I am being inducted into 13 Halls of Fame. Every one of them means a lot to me.

All three of this year's Hogan finalists came from the Southwest with Texas A & M, Oklahoma St. and Texas Tech

represented. The winner was Texas Tech's Ludwig Aberg, a native of Sweden who will receive an exemption into next year's PGA tournament at Colonial. Our Honoree this year is Collin Morikawa, who was very enthusiastic about being named FOG's 2022 Honoree. During his career at Cal/Berkeley, he twice finished as a Hogan Trophy runner-up. He lost to Doug Ghim in 2018 and Victor Hovland in 2019. He was also a Semi-finalist in 2017 when Maverick McNealy won.

This year's U.S. Open brought back a lot of memories. I was at The Country Club outside of Boston for the 1999 Ryder Cup when Justin Leonard made a 45-foot putt. Despite the celebration that included the players' wives rushing out on the green, Jose Maria Olazabal still had a putt to tie the hole. When he missed, Leonard went 1-up and was guaranteed a half which gave the U.S. team a 14 ½ to 13 ½ victory. I had a role in the event when the U.S. captain, Ben Crenshaw, asked me to use my celebrity contacts to line-up Celine Dion to sing. The thought was since she's Canadian, the entertainment would be neutral. Of course, The Country Club is also famous due to Francis Ouimet's famous 1913 U.S. Open upset. Ouimet, who lived across the street from the course, stunned the golf world by defeating the game's greatest, including two world-renowned British golfers, Harry Vardon and Ted Ray, in an 18-hole playoff. The historical achievement was later documented by author, Mark Frost, in his book, *The Greatest Game Ever Played*. It was later made into a movie. A key part of the story was Ouimet's caddie, a 10-year-old Eddie Lowery.

Lowery, who later became a successful car dealer in San Francisco, had another link to author Frost. While attending an event celebrating Byron Nelson's 11 consecutive victories in 1945, I heard about a story of a match in 1956 that pitted two pros, Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson against two amateurs, Ken Venturi and Harvie

Ward at Cypress Point. Lowery had been instrumental in arranging the event. I had helped Frost, who was also a writer on the TV show, *Hill Street Blues* and co-creator of *Twin Peaks*, with his first two books about golf, so I relayed the story to him. His writing skill turned the unknown event into a terrific 255-page book entitled, *The Match*. I highly recommend it to any fan of golf.

Al Michaels will be our Ken Venturi Spirit of Giving recipient this year. Al has had one of the greatest announcing careers of all time and has given a lot to the game of golf.

**Friends of Golf is pleased to welcome guest interviewer, Rick Neuheisel, to the 42nd Annual FOG Charity Golf Tournament Evening Gala and Awards Presentation on October 3rd.**



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