

NEWS

the Memorial Tournament™

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For Immediate Release
June 2, 2019

Nick Price Selected 2020 Memorial Tournament Honoree; Gene Littler and Ted Ray to be honored posthumously

Dublin, Ohio – The Captains Club today announced that three-time major championship winner and World Golf Hall of Famer Nick Price has been selected the Honoree for the 45th Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide, scheduled for June 1-7, 2020. Fellow Hall of Famer Gene Littler and golf pioneer Ted Ray were selected to be honored posthumously.

Between 1992 and 1994, Price won 16 of the 54 tournaments he played in worldwide, the victories including three major championships and the 1993 PLAYERS Championship. During that zenith, Price won the PGA TOUR and PGA of America Player of the Year Awards twice each, and was the PGA TOUR's leading money winner two times. In all, he won 18 times on the PGA TOUR to go with 24 international victories.

“For a period of time—six or seven years in the 1990s—Nick Price was the best player in the world,” said Jack Nicklaus, founder and host of the Memorial Tournament. “If you look at just that stretch from 1992 to 1994, what he achieved was fantastic. The 16 wins, three major-championship titles, and over 40 straight weeks ranked No. 1 in the world. Nick’s game was very efficient, and he was long off the tee—long and straight.

“More important, Nick Price always gave of himself, to the game and to people. He was always known for being incredibly kind and congenial, and someone everybody liked. Nick has a great family, has always handled himself beautifully, and he has represented the game and himself well. From promoting the game worldwide to his commitment as a three-time Presidents Cup captain, Nick Price has contributed and given back to the game for a very long time. I am delighted the Captains Club selected Nick as the 2020 Memorial Tournament Honoree, and look forward to having him back to Muirfield Village Golf Club.”

“This is such an incredible honor,” said Price, 62. “When I received the call from Jack I nearly fell on the floor. Obviously, this is a huge thing for me, especially when Jack has been one of my idols for so long. For my generation, Jack was the epitome of what we all wanted to be as golfers, and we just revered and idolized the guy. So, to be the Honoree at his Tournament next year is so special that it’s hard to put into words.”

Born in Durban, South Africa, on Jan. 28, 1957, Price was the youngest of three brothers. The family soon moved to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), where at age 8 Price got his start in the game caddying for his older brother. Soon after, he began hitting plastic balls toward a series of tomato cans that were buried in neighborhood lawns. Price remembers playing as many as 144 holes a day in mock tournaments with his friends for a garden variety version of The Open Championship.

In 1974, at age 17, he won the Optimist Junior World at Torrey Pines in San Diego. “I had no idea what I’d done,” he said. “But I knew right then I wanted to make golf my life.”

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In 1978, Price joined the European Tour. Although he would win the 1980 Swiss Open, his largely self-taught swing was not suited to the rigors of professional golf. Searching for an answer, Price in 1982 began working with childhood friend David Leadbetter, who had become a teaching professional in America. Six months later, Price stood on the 13th tee at Troon leading the final round of The Open Championship by three strokes. Although he lost to Tom Watson by one, Price remembers being disappointed but not discouraged.

The very next year he won the World Series of Golf at Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio. The resulting 10-year exemption gave Price the time to indulge his passion, perfecting the golf swing. Although he nearly won The Open Championship again in 1988, losing by one stroke to Seve Ballesteros, Price was gaining a reputation as a competitive threat in the game, yet not always closing. Eight years passed until he recorded his second PGA TOUR win in the 1991 GTE Byron Nelson Classic.

In 1992, he won his first major title, the PGA Championship at Bellerive Country Club in St. Louis. THE PLAYERS Championship and three other titles followed in 1993, setting the stage for his greatest year, 1994, when he rose to No. 1 in the world and held the top spot for 44 weeks.

At The Open at Turnberry, in Scotland, Price trailed Jesper Parnevik by three strokes when he birdied the 16th hole and eagled the 17th hole with a downhill 50-foot putt. When Parnevik bogeyed the 72nd hole, Price's name was engraved on the Claret Jug.

It was Price's most emotional triumph, but the victory he captured three weeks later at the PGA Championship makes him the proudest. Masterfully negotiating the tight doglegs and confounding targets at Southern Hills, in Tulsa, Okla., Price achieved shot-making virtuosity that ranked with the best of his golf idol, Ben Hogan. He opened with a 67 and was never challenged, eventually winning by six strokes.

"I'd always dreamed of playing that way, and I finally did it at Southern Hills," Price said. "It was what my journey was all about."

A three-time captain of the International Team in the Presidents Cup, including 2013 at Muirfield Village Golf Club, Price was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 2003. The Hobe Sound, Fla., resident currently is in his second year serving on the U.S. Golf Association executive committee.

He and his wife Sue have three children: Gregory, Robyn and Kimberly.

Number of Wins by Tour

- PGA TOUR: 18
- Japan Golf Tour: 1
- PGA TOUR Champions: 4
- Other: 20

Best Results in Major Championships

- Masters Tournament: 5th (1986)
- U.S. Open: 4th (1992, 1998)
- The Open Championship: Won (1994)
- PGA Championship: Won (1992, 1994)

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Achievements and Awards

- PGA Player of the Year 1993, 1994
- PGA Tour Player of the Year 1993, 1994
- PGA Tour leading money winner 1993, 1994
- Vardon Trophy 1993, 1997
- Byron Nelson Award 1997
- World Golf Hall of Fame 2003
- Payne Stewart Award 2002
- Bob Jones Award 2005
- Old Tom Morris Award 2011
- Presidents Cup captain 2013, 2015, 2017

Gene Littler and Ted Ray

Gene Littler

A World Golf Hall of Fame inductee in 1990, Littler captured 29 PGA TOUR titles, including the 1961 U.S. Open, was a stalwart in the Ryder Cup across two decades, and was a dominant force in the early years of the PGA TOUR Champions. Only once during the quarter century from 1954 to 1979 did he finish out of the top 60 on the money list on the PGA TOUR, and that was in 1972 when he was sidelined by surgery to remove a cancerous lymph node. Littler bounced back to win three tournaments and finish fifth on the money list in 1975 at the age of 45, and two years later he won again at 47.

Littler was born in San Diego, Calif., in 1930 and first attracted national notice at the age of 23, when he sank an 18-foot birdie putt on the 18th green at the Oklahoma Country Club to win the U.S. Amateur Championship, 1 up, over Dale Morey. Four months later, Littler won the San Diego Open as an amateur, and two days after that, he turned pro. The following year he won four times, earning the nickname "Gene the Machine" for his remarkably consistent ball striking. In 1980, Littler became eligible for the PGA TOUR Champions and proceeded to win three of his first five tournaments.

Born: July 21, 1930 (San Diego, Calif.)

Died: February 15, 2019 (San Diego; age 88)

Number of Wins by Tour

- PGA TOUR: 29
- Japan Golf Tour: 2
- PGA TOUR Champions: 8
- Other: 13

Best Results in Major Championships

- Masters Tournament: 2nd (1970)
- U.S. Open: Won (1961)
- The Open Championship: T-18th (1974)
- PGA Championship: 2nd (1977)

Achievements and Awards

- U.S. Amateur champion 1953
- Bob Jones Award 1973
- World Golf Hall of Fame 1990

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Ted Ray

With a career in golf that began at the age of 17 as club maker, England's Ted Ray went on to enjoy a remarkable tournament career highlighted by his outstanding performance in golf's major championships. He won the Open Championship at Muirfield in 1912, leading after every round, finishing four strokes ahead of Harry Vardon and eight clear of James Braid. He was also runner-up, in 1913 and 1925, and had nine other Open finishes in the top-10. His last top-10 finish was in 1925 when, at the age of 48, he finished second, one shot behind Jim Barnes. In all, Ray competed in a remarkable 29 consecutive Open Championships from 1899 and 1932. Ray's last appearance was in 1937, just after his 60th birthday.

A fine club maker who turned professional at age 17 in 1894, Ray also competed in three U.S. Opens, and is best known for being in a playoff for the U.S. Open in 1913 with Harry Vardon and American amateur Francis Ouimet, who completed a remarkable upset over the two established major champions. Ray joined Vardon on an extensive tour of North America in 1913 and 1920, partnering in exhibition matches against the top players in each area they visited to promote growth and interest in the game.

Ray won the U.S. Open at Inverness in 1920, his second appearances in the championship. That victory, at 43 years, 129 days, made Ray the oldest U.S. Open champion, a record he held until Raymond Floyd, a few months older, won in 1986. At age 50 he was selected to compete for Great Britain in the inaugural Ryder Cup in 1927 in Worcester, Mass. When captain Abe Mitchell fell ill and was unable to travel, Ray served as playing captain.

Born: April 6, 1877 (Bailiwick of Jersey, England)

Died: August 26, 1943 (Watford, England; age 66)

Professional Wins: 46

Best Results in Major Championships

- Masters: DNP
- U.S. Open: Won (1920) Inverness Club (Toledo, Ohio)
- The Open Championship: Won (1912) Muirfield (Gullane, Scotland); runner-up (1913, 1925)
- PGA Championship: DNP

Achievements and Awards

- Captain of the British team in the inaugural Ryder Cup in 1927 at Worcester Country Club in Massachusetts.
- Won the U.S. Open at Inverness in 1920 and held the record as the oldest U.S. Open champion for 66 years (aged 43 years, 129 days).
- Selected for the England team every year in the England-Scotland Professional Match, the most important professional team competition prior to World War I.

About the Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide

The Memorial Tournament presented by Nationwide is held annually at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus. The Tournament, founded and hosted by Jack Nicklaus, is conducted each year with three goals in mind: to honor the memory of individuals living and deceased who have distinguished themselves in the game of golf; to showcase the world's best golfers competing on one of the most challenging venues in the world for the enjoyment of spectators; and to benefit many Greater Columbus Charities in alliance with the Nicklaus Children's Healthcare Foundation, Nationwide Children's Hospital and numerous other local organizations. For more information, visit www.thememorialtournament.com or call 614-889-6700.

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About Nationwide

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