



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Southwest Airlines Showcase at Cedar Crest Announces First Wave of Athletes Playing the Tournament

Dallas, TX – The Southwest Airlines Showcase at Cedar Crest is ready to take flight here in Dallas come **November 13-15, 2023**. This inaugural golf tournament will be nationally televised on the GOLF Channel and is an amateur invitational spotlighting the talents of top amateur golfers from diverse and historically underrepresented groups. The 54-hole stroke play event will feature concurrent championships for exceptional fields of 21 men and 21 women.

The Southwest Airlines Showcase at Cedar Crest is an unprecedented event coming to the heart of Dallas. Cedar Crest Golf Course, a historic A.W. Tillinghast design that challenges the best of golfers, has been a catalyst for change in the southern Dallas community.

“The player field is shaping up to be even stronger than we originally hoped for,” Chuck Walker, foundation executive director and the lead tournament ambassador with players, coaches and families, said. “With so many top players having committed to play, the competition for the men’s and women’s crowns should be intense and fun to watch.”

Hosting the Southwest Airlines Showcase at Cedar Crest in a community that is representative of these players provides opportunities to highlight diverse and underrepresented student athletes on a national stage. Some of the confirmed players include:

Men’s Group

Gregory Odom Jr., *Memphis, TN, Howard*
Everett Whiten Jr., *Chesapeake, VA, Howard*
Kristopher Stiles, *San Jose, CA, San Jose State*
Marcus Smith, Jr., *Rockford, IL, Howard*
Trey Rusthoven, *St. Peters, MO, Central Michigan University*

Women’s Group

Amari Smith, *McKinney, TX, University of North Georgia*
Morgan Horrell, *Carrollton, TX, Howard*
Shyla Brown, *McKinney, TX, High School (homeschooled)*
Kendall Jackson, *Pearland, TX, Howard*
Allyn Stephens, *Houston, TX, University of Tulsa*

Leading the Men's Field is Greg Odom Jr. who is working to obtain his graduate degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C. where he captains the Steph Curry-funded men's golf team. Greg's career highlights include winning the PGA Works Collegiate Championship in 2021 and 2022, the NEC Championship, the USF-Howard Intercollegiate, and competing in the PGA TOUR's Wells Fargo Championship as well as four Korn Ferry starts.

Leading the Women's Field is Amari Smith who recently transferred from Dallas Baptist University and now is pursuing graduate studies at the University of North Georgia. Locally, Amari has followed up a stellar high school career at McKinney Boyd with multiple high



finishes in collegiate events as well as Golfer of the Week and All-Conference recognitions within the Peach Belt Conference.

“It may not hit them until they are on-site and playing the golf course, but these young amateurs will be walking on the same grounds and in the same footsteps of some of the most famous and trailblazing golfers of all time,” said Dave Ridley, co-founder and chairman of the foundation. “Many of these players will become trailblazers themselves both on and off the golf course later in life. We view this event as a springboard for them.”

The 42-player field will travel to Dallas on Southwest Airlines from 21 different states and with attendance at more than 33 different colleges and universities. In addition, four contestants are nationally ranked high school golfers including Shyla Brown, a high school sophomore from McKinney, TX.

“Shyla is currently 79th in the Rolex AJGA rankings and she’s only 15,” Walker pointed out. She has played several practice rounds at Cedar Crest, and she is someone to watch closely come tournament-time.”

Historic Cedar Crest was chartered in 1919 and designed by famed golf course architect A.W. Tillinghast. Among other significant national tournaments, Cedar Crest hosted the 1927 PGA Championship won by Walter Hagen and the 1954 UGA Negro National Open won by Dr. Charlie Sifford. Tillinghast, Hagen, and Sifford are all members of the World Golf Hall of Fame. The tournament is open to the public free of charge with public parking in close proximity to the golf course entrance. Tournament merchandise, food, and beverages will all be available, and once play is finished at 4:30 p.m. each day, there will be music in Legends Plaza for all to enjoy.

Making the event possible with national television coverage are Southwest Airlines (Title Sponsor), Louis L. Borick Foundation (Cornerstone Sponsor), Chase Bank, UT Southwestern, CBRE (Proud Partners), Omni Hotels & Resorts, Topgolf, Callaway, Summit Brands (Official Sponsors), SMU Cox School of Business, Nike, Charles Schwab, Mr. Cooper, and Bob’s Steak & Chop House (Supporting Sponsors).

Management Partners include Dallas Park & Recreation, Northern Texas PGA Section, and the Salesmanship Club of Dallas, organizers for the CJ Cup Byron Nelson.

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About the I Am a Golfer Foundation

The I AM a Golfer Foundation (IAMGF) was established in 2018 with the mission to be a catalyst for community renewal and transformation in southern Dallas through the programming, preservation, and promotion of the historic Cedar Crest Golf Course. IAMGF’s belief is that the promotion of the sport of golf and the game’s values to diverse and historically underserved communities will have an impact beyond the course and into the daily lives of those reached by its initiatives. Since inception, IAMGF has engaged over 650 area youth in instructional programming, created and hosted 91 paid internship positions for area students, and awarded more than \$200,000 in college and higher education scholarships. Additionally, IAMGF has advocated for and assisted with more than \$1 million in improvements at Cedar Crest and annually conducts the Dallas Amateur Championship, Friends of Cedar Crest Golf Classic, and other events designed to bring increased awareness to the historic course and community. For additional info, visit www.iamgolfer.com.