

Tom: Hello. This is Pod for the Course, and I am Tom Cade, the director of communications for Washington Golf. And 2022 is the centennial year for Washington Golf, which started out as the Washington State Golf Association and was founded in 1922, with the playing of the very first Washington State Amateur at the Yakima Country Club in 1922, which at that time was a 9-hole golf course. And 1922 was also the founding year, inaugural year, of the Washington State Women's Golf Association.

And we're very happy to have with us this morning Ann Swanson, and Ann is a nine-time winner of the WSWGGA Amateur Championship. She was also a runner-up nine times, and a medalist 10 times. Ann is a member of the PPGA Hall of Fame. She was inducted in 2007. She is the champion of the inaugural Washington Senior Women's Amateur in 2000. And she repeated as champion in 2001. She was the PPGA Senior Women's Player of the year in 2000, and very happy to have with us this morning, Ann Swanson.

Ann Swanson: Thanks for having me, Tom. And thank you to you for all your contributions, particularly in our Centennial year.

Tom: It is a big year for golf in the state. There's a lot happening this year and really around this time, and I think this speaks about the golf boom that was happening in the early part of the 20th century in our area, a lot going on during that time. And as I mentioned, 1922 was the founding year for the WSGA, but also the Washington State Women's Golf Association.

Ann Swanson: Correct.

Tom: And I'd like to talk with you a little bit about that. I know the Washington State Amateur was held in September. I think it was September 25th through the 30th, in 1922 at Yakima. But the first Washington State Women's Golf Association Championship was held in August of 1922 at Grays Harbor Country Club, over there in Aberdeen, on the coast of Washington. And you, as I understand it, wrote a history book about the WSWGGA. Is that correct, Ann?

Ann Swanson: Yes.

Tom: And that had been a significant project, I think. Yeah?

Ann Swanson: Well, actually through my journey in golf, the older I've gotten, I realized that the history of any organization is a story of its members, the bonds created, the achievements realized, and the memories made to be cherished and handed down. And regardless of the outcome of any one match or tournament or event, I believe that the real value is measured by the friendships made. Remember it says are great battles fought hard and well and the lasting effect of life enriched by having been a part of it. And I really have been very grateful for the opportunity I've had to have a very long journey through golf, and in 2010, I knew that I was going to be president of the WSWGGA in 2012, and I had thought

about writing a history for a very long time, since I grew up on Grays Harbor Country Club.

And that's where the very first WSWGGA championship was founded and started. So when I knew I was going to be president, I thought, this is a great time to do this. I didn't know what I was getting myself into when I did this, as I'm sure, Tom, you've been there. It was a very long process and many of our records and history were lost. And I probably spent more time in the library researching in those two years than I did the whole time I was going to school. But I was very successful in finding a picture of each of our champions, and our missing presidents, and years of runners-up, and names of every medalists, and records of whom had only been kept in the recent years at the time I had written the book.

Tom: So between 2010 and 2012, that was for a two-year long project.

Ann Swanson: A two year period. Yes.

Tom: Wow. So you grew up on Grays Harbor Country Club, is that right? Is that what you said?

Ann Swanson: Well, I grew up in Central Park, which is a suburb of Aberdeen, and lived about 10 minutes from Grays Harbor Country Club, and my sister and I did all the things that our two older brothers did, building tree houses, and playing football, basketball, and baseball for hours, and I just loved sports and dreamed of being a champion at something, but amazingly, it wasn't until I was 17 that I found my true passion in golf. And my parents were social members at Grays Harbor Country Club, and my older brother caddied there for a very short time.

And one day, somebody gave him a couple old persimmon woods, and he brought them home, and sank orange juice cans in our very large backyard and made a makeshift golf course. So my sister and I started hitting balls around the yard, and my mother, who was always supportive of our interest, signed my sister and I up for lessons. So that's how it all started. And I was hooked, the first time I swung the golf club. So my story is pretty similar to so many others, and little did I know that those first swings that I took would bring such amazing experiences, and people to my life. And I'm just very grateful that golf has taken me places I would've never gone.

Tom: Did you play golf in college, Ann?

Ann Swanson: Yes. I went to Grays Harbor College, and of course they didn't have any women's sports at that time. And I was pretty shy at the time, so I really don't know how I got up enough courage to go ask the athletic director if I could play on the men's golf team. And he said, "Well, they would have to check with the conference officials." So he came back about a week later and said, "Well, if she can play off

the men's tees and qualify, then she can play." So I've always been grateful to Grays Harbor College for that opportunity to play.

It was quite a character-building experience but it certainly had its moments. I can still remember the long looks I got when my opponents found out they had to play a girl because at that time we played matches, and you can imagine the trash talking they got, and their teammates when they found out a girl had beat them when it happened. And of course we had a lot of teasing when we showed up with our team jackets on with the college mascot on the back, coming from logging country, the Grays Harbor College teams were called the Chokers.

So I've always told the golf team, or the teams there that we were probably the only team in the nation where we were proud to be a Choker. I've come full circle now because seven years ago, the golf coaching job came open there, and I'm now for the last seven years, the men's golf coach at Grays Harbor, and it's fun to go back to where my golf all began, and to give back.

Tom: I'm looking at a list of your playing accomplishments, Ann: how did you manage to keep your game at such a high level for such a long time? From Aberdeen and college at Grays Harbor College, where did you go from there?

Ann Swanson: I actually went to Seattle University, after that, I didn't play golf there, but when I came to Seattle, my mother bought me a student membership at Inglewood Golf Club. And so I played with the ladies there, and they were so gracious to me. They invited me in all the games, and then the city team matches, and then the Seattle Women's Golf Association. I got to play in that. I just had a great support group that helped me along the way.

Tom: So, nine victories at the Washington State Women's Golf Association, and in the Seattle Women's Golf Association, looks like you have seven titles. Is that correct?

Ann Swanson: Yes.

Tom: And 11 runner-up finishes?

Ann Swanson: Yes.

Tom: And medalist seven times

Ann Swanson: Yes.

Tom: And in fact, in the Washington State Women's Golf Association, you won it nine times, but you were also runner-up nine times, and medalist 10 times. And in fact, as I understand it, the WSWGGA, is still contested as in a match play format. Is that correct?

Ann Swanson: In 2017, we went from match play to a medal play tournament because it only took three days. Match play took five days.

Tom: Okay.

Ann Swanson: And quite frankly, it was a little bit too long and-

Tom: Sure.

Ann Swanson: ... people's lives are busier than it was 25 years ago. And so we can get it done in three days now.

Tom: So, for the WSWGGA, you wrote and published, I believe as well, their history book, but also you did the same for the Seattle Women's Golf Association history. Is that right?

Ann Swanson: Yes. And-

Tom: So were you-

Ann Swanson: ... that was after I did the book for the WSWGGA, Roxanne Cook, who was the president of the SWGA, said, "Hey, will you do one for the SWGA?" Because she was going to be president in 2014. So I did that for them but actually the SWGA. Those women are so organized, and they had kept records. So that was a little bit easier to put together than the WSWGGA who hadn't kept records.

Tom: What year did the SWGA start? What was its founding year?

Ann Swanson: Well, it was 1927, but they had actually played a city championship as far back as 1923. And they played several city championships. They played a big one. Eton Golf Club is where they used to play the city championship. And so in 1927, women there actually raised something like \$3,000 to put on this big gala affair. And as you know, golf became more and more popular at the turn of the 20th century. And for women, it wasn't just the competition, but that competition for women generated camaraderie, friendship, relaxation, qualities always highly valued by women, and the women put on these big gala affairs, they had putting contests, and tea parties and all this stuff, and they actually even invited men to come for putting contests and mixed tournaments.

So then in 1927, they decided to form their own association for the private clubs because the fields, and it was the same way with the WSWGGA, they just got too big. They would have 160 women come out and try to play. So it was formed, and the first president of the SWGA was Elizabeth Form, who was a high school teacher, and she became the first president, and then they had their very first organized tournament as an association in 1928, which was at Glendale Country Club.

Tom: So going over to the WSWGGA again, and its first year in 1922. Again, their first tournament was held in August of 1922, in Aberdeen at Grays Harbor Country Club. And I'm looking at a little caption here that said there were 46 competitors, and they each paid a \$1 entry fee. And there is some thought, and I think about this as well, but the beginning of the WSWGGA was somewhat of an inspiration for the beginning of the WSGA because it was held a month later. And it seems, with all the records that I've gone through, that the WSWGGA, they were organized from the get-go. They had it going on. And the WSGA the Washington State Golf Association, although they started in 1922, it took them a few years, until 1926, so they really got organized, with annual meetings and board of directors and all of that. But the women's in 1922, from the start, they were organized. Is that true?

Ann Swanson: Yes. Actually the first champion, and first president of the WSWGGA was a lady named Mrs. W.J. Patterson, and she was way ahead of the curve for her time. And her first name was actually Frank, and she was a masterful woman as her name implies, and she certainly had a take-charge attitude that served her many interests well. She was president of a bank in Aberdeen, and she was, of course, the leading light for many years at the Grays Harbor Country Club. And it was her instigation that the WSWGGA was founded. And so when they met at Grays Harbor Country Club, I believe they had something like 11 clubs represented, and it was going to be a very unique organization. It was the first women's golf association of its kind in Washington State, solely designed for women and managed by women.

And of course, Frank was elected president of the new association and the first tournament was a resounding success. And they decided to make it an annual event. Now, as far as the WSGA, this was just an article that I found in *The Seattle Times* in 1922. And part of that headline was that Yakima was to stage the men's, and the cue was taken from the women. Who knows, but the article said something to the effect that the men will hold a state championship at Yakima, a WSGA will be formed, and that the credit for starting this goes to the Grays Harbor women, whose idea for a state tournament for women gave the men an idea.

Tom: Yeah.

Ann Swanson: So that was in my research.

Tom: So I know that in that time period, right after World War I, and things were starting to boom, certainly the game of golf was booming during that time, lots of new golf courses, construction, lots of players getting into the game, several municipal courses were started for public players. The private clubs were booming. And I know that for the WSGA, in June of 1922 the PNGA championships were held at Royal Colwood, up in Victoria, B.C. And the BC Golf Association was founded that year in June, at the PNGA championship where they had their first meeting, and there was a group of people who were there

and they said, "We also maybe should do this down in Washington as well." But that was in June.

And then the women's were in August, and the men's were not held until late September. So there was just this massive movement, seems like, for organization of the game. And I think this was because there were so many players coming into the game, and lots of players who wanted to play competitively, maybe not dead-serious competitive, although there was a lot of that, but just competitive as, like you said, for camaraderie to share your experiences with other good players, and just to meet other players in the area. Is that right?

Ann Swanson: Right. Yes. And as early as 1912, the women were very organized in playing team matches. I know the women from Tacoma Country Club, and Seattle Golf Club exchanged matches also with Earlington. And I know I read where the women from Tacoma would even get on the train to come to Seattle Golf Club, and they would spend the night. It wasn't just golf, they had dinner dances and the whole thing.

Tom: Yeah. It was an event.

Ann Swanson: Yes. It was a real event.

Tom: Yeah.

Ann Swanson: And one thing I would like to say about the WSWGGA for people who don't know, that in 1950, *The Seattle Times* wrote about three of our champions, Pat Lesser Harbottle, Edean Ihlanfeldt, Ruth Jessen, Anne Quast, JoAnne Gunderson. They all played at the same time, and went on to win many national titles. So between 1948 and 1959, really a dynasty emerged unlike any around. And I can remember that, I believe in 1954, that Ruth Jessen, beat Anne Quast. And then the next year Anne Quast, beat JoAnne Gunderson for our championship. So we've had some great champions emerge from our association. And I would just like to add that many of our champions have gone on to win the U.S. Women's Amateur, the British Women's Amateur, the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur. They've been Curtis Cup players. They've been champions of the Western, the Trans-Mississippi, and a lot of them have gone on to professional careers in the LPGA.

Tom: Yeah. The website for those who want to check it out is thewswga.com. And it will list all of the past champions. Is that right, Ann?

Ann Swanson: Yes.

Tom: Yeah.

Ann Swanson: Yes it does.

Tom: And you're correct. If you look at that list, it's like a who's who of all the great women golfers from this area, and the names you've mentioned already, like Pat Lesser Harbottle, Edean Ihlanfeldt, Anne Quast, JoAnne Gunderson Carner, Ruth Jessen. It just goes on and on. And of course, Ann Swanson, a nine-time winner.

Ann Swanson: No, I can't hold a candle to them.

Tom: So in your research for the history of the WSWGGA, what were some of the surprises? What little factoids that you came across, where you thought, "Well, I didn't know that, that's interesting."

Ann Swanson: Well, my biggest thing was just trying to find all the champions, and being that they never kept records. And I went through the attic at Seattle Golf Club and I was at Tacoma Country and Golf Club, and of course, they had a fire. Grays Harbor Country Club had a fire, so most of their stuff was gone. So I was just glad to be able to put it together for our association because we've had so many great champions. And I would like people to know, and for newer golfers that come into our association to know that.

Tom: So with 2022 being the Centennial year for the WSWGGA, are there specific events that you're going to hold? Or that the Association's going to hold this year? And what will those be?

Ann Swanson: Yep. On July 11th to the 13th we will hold our 100th championship at Overlake Golf and Country Club. Gwen Johnson, from Overlake, will be the president, and we are planning a big gala affair, and a new champion will be crowned.

Tom: And so if folks want to find out more information, they go to the website? Or there's someone to contact?

Ann Swanson: Yes. They can go on the website.

Tom: Okay.

Ann Swanson: And most of the players will find entries at their club to play in this.

Tom: And again, that website address is thewswgga.com for those listeners who want to check that out a little bit further. And again, we have with us today Ann Swanson, and Ann wrote the history book for the Washington State Women's Golf Association, who is celebrating their Centennial history year this year in 2022. She also wrote the history book for the Seattle Women's Golf Association, and Ann, as mentioned, was inducted into the Pacific Northwest Golf Hall of Fame in 2007. She's a two-time champion of the Washington Senior Women's Amateur, among numerous other titles. Ann, any final thoughts about the Centennial year for the Women's Golf Association?

Ann Swanson: Well, we are certainly very excited for both WA Golf and the WSWGGA, looking forward to a great celebration in July. And I would just like to say about the book, the WSWGGA book. Certainly, it is to honor the history and legacy of our association. And one thing that we're very proud of is, shortly after that, that the USGA was putting together a section of women history in golf, and the USGA selected that book about the WSWGGA to be in their library. So we're proud of that because I think it probably helped that we had JoAnne Gunderson Carner and Pat Lesser Harbottle, and Anne Quast, and all of them from our area. So it's something to be proud of.

Tom: It is something to be proud of. And it shows really the great history of golf in our region. Like you mentioned, there was a golden era in the 1950s, and even touched into the '60s, a little bit, for women golfers from this state who really, on the national stage, they were the dominant players of that era. I think there was a stretch of something like, 10 or 11 years, where there was always a Northwest player in the final of the U.S. Women's Amateur, which is really saying something.

Ann Swanson: Yes. And I think Pat Lesser Harbottle was the rock star back then. And she started the women here going, she was the first to go to the national tournaments, and then the rest of them followed.

Tom: Yeah.

Ann Swanson: And it just, wow. It's pretty amazing that they all came from the State of Washington.

Tom: Yeah. Again, Ann Swanson, thanks so much for joining us today. And again, the website for those folks who want to find out a little bit more about the Washington State Women's Golf Association, and their Centennial year here in 2022, that website address is, thewswga.com. And Ann, thanks again so much for being with us today.

Ann Swanson: Thank you, Tom. Appreciate it.

Tom: All right. Talk to you soon.

Ann Swanson: Okay.

Tom: Bye-bye.