

GUARDIAN CHAMPIONSHIP BRINGING PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S GOLF BACK TO RIVER REGION IN SEPTEMBER


Prattville, Alabama, April 20, 2017 - The Symetra Tour, the official qualifying Tour for the LPGA, announced today the Guardian Championship, a new professional golf tournament coming to the Capitol Hill location on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail September 21 - 24, 2017. The 54-hole tournament will be contested from Friday, September 22 through Sunday, September 24. Guardian Credit Union, based in Montgomery, is sponsoring the Guardian Championship for 2017 and 2018.

Established in 1958, Guardian Credit Union is a member-owned financial cooperative open to anyone that lives, works, or worships in the 13 counties Guardian serves. Guardian holds \$400 million in assets and has more than 41,000 members with a total of 12 locations spanning Montgomery, Prattville, Tallassee, Troy, Wetumpka and Greenville.

The Guardian Championship will feature the top 144 rising stars in the game of women's golf from the United States and 25 plus countries around the globe. Many of the Symetra Tour players have close ties to the State of Alabama, including Montgomery's Karlin Beck, Huntsville's Janie Jackson and University of Alabama's Jennifer Kirby, Emma Talley and Camilla Lennarth.

"We are excited to be a part of the women's golf tradition in Alabama," said Guardian Credit Union CEO Heath Harrell. "As the local credit union, we thrive on community events and the Guardian Championship promises great things for everyone involved. Guardian is looking forward to the partnership with Robert Trent Jones and the golfing community."

The tournament will offer a purse of \$100,000 with winner taking home \$15,000. The top 10 players on the Symetra Tour's Volvik Race for the Card money list at the end of the season earn LPGA Tour membership for 2018.



“We are grateful to partner with Guardian to keep professional women’s golf in Alabama,” said Chief Business Officer, Mike Nichols. “This area has played such an important role in the tradition of women's golf. Lexi Thompson and Ariya Jutanugarn both had their first LPGA wins here in Prattville and have gone on to become international golf sensations, ranking among the Top 5 in the Rolex Women's Golf World Rankings. Now, we are bringing the future stars of the LPGA to the River Region and we know the community will embrace them and take pride in their success when they reach the LPGA.”

A number of talented players on the Symetra Tour have played in previous LPGA tournaments in Prattville include Julieta Granada, Ginger Howard, Nicole Jeray, Lorie Kane, Lisa Ferrero, Mina Hargae, Alison Walshe, Kristy McPherson, Carolina Westrup and several others. Former participants in the Golf Channel's "Big Break" show include Kim Welch, Shannon Fish, Krista Puisite, Selanee Henderson and Jean Chua are currently on the Symetra Tour.

“This will be the 20th year in a row that women's professional golf has been played on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail,” said John Cannon, president of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. “When the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail opened 25 years ago, we wanted to make Alabama a golf destination. Not only have we had nearly 12 million rounds of golf, we have seen legendary women win on the RTJ Trail including Lorena Ochoa, Se Ri Pak, Karrie Webb, Paula Creamer, Christina Kim, Stacy Lewis, Lexi Thompson, Ariya Jutanugarn and several others. We look forward to naming the Guardian Championship winner on September 24.

While tournament play begins on Friday, festivities will begin early in the week. Players will begin arriving on Monday and official practice rounds start on Tuesday. A junior clinic will be held on Wednesday, followed by a pro-am on Thursday.

“Ben Hogan said, ‘the most important shot in golf is the next one,’ and that stands true, not only for these ladies, but for the community in which we live,” stated Prattville Mayor Bill Gillespie, Jr. “The investments made since 1998 in this area have definitely paid dividends. We’re proud to host this tournament and look forward to the arrival of these talented golfers. I wish these ladies the best and hope that their investment in their golf careers takes them to the next level.”

The Guardian Championship requires approximately 150 local volunteers to help run all facets of the tournament including scoring, leaderboards, operations and more.

“The River Region has earned a reputation for hosting stellar athletic events. We’re delighted the Guardian Championship will allow us to once again overwhelm visiting pro golfers and fans with our special brand of Southern hospitality,” said Montgomery mayor Todd Strange. “Along with the positive economic impact of the tournament, our region will enjoy global exposure due to media coverage of highlights from the event and I fully expect each of the golfers will be transformed into River Region ambassadors as they continue their careers.”

For more information about the Guardian Championship, playing in the pro-am and to volunteer, visit www.guardianchampionship.com.

About Guardian.

As the local credit union, Guardian's main goal is to serve the community. Service comes from being rooted in the community through events, volunteer projects, serving on boards of local organizations, and investing in the local people by lending money that will be put back into the local economy. The array of financial products and services offered, benefit those that are just starting out, planning for retirement, or enjoying their life savings. For more information visit MyGuardianCU.com or call (334) 244-9999.

About the Symetra Tour

The Symetra Tour — Road to the LPGA is the official qualifying tour of the LPGA and is in its 37th competitive season in 2017. With the support of its umbrella partner, Symetra, the Tour's mission is to prepare the world's best young women professional golfers for a successful career on the LPGA Tour. Since Symetra's inaugural sponsorship year in 2012, the Symetra Tour has grown from 16 tournaments and \$1.7M in prize money to \$3.25M in prize money awarded over the course of 23 tournaments — the most events in 28 years (1988). With more than 600 alumnae moving on to the LPGA, former Symetra Tour players have won a total of 422 LPGA titles. In 2015, Symetra signed on as the title sponsor of the Tour through the 2021 season. Follow the Symetra Tour on the web at www.SymetraTour.com, Facebook.com/RoadtotheLPGA, Twitter.com/Road2LPGA, and YouTube.com/Road2LPGA.

About Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and Foundation

Capitol Hill is one of 11 facilities of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail that now includes 26 golf courses throughout Alabama. The Trail opened in 1992 with eight facilities, the realization of a grand plan by Dr. David Bronner, CEO of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, to diversify the assets of the state's pension fund and help the state's economy. Bronner selected Robert Trent Jones Sr., the famed golf course architect, and his company to design the series of courses. Capitol Hill has three championship courses - Senator, Judge and Legislator. www.rtjgolf.com.

The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail Foundation, located in Birmingham, Ala., was established in 1998 as a non-profit organization with the purpose of sponsoring professional golf tournaments and related activities to benefit charitable programs and initiatives. The PGA TOUR's Barbasol Championship and the Symetra Tour's Guardian Championship tournaments currently are held at two Golf Trail facilities. Various events for amateurs are also held along the Golf Trail.

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