

Calcavecchia Plays Hazeltine, Says It's 'Strong, Honest' With 'No Trick Holes'

The 1991 U.S. Open makes a round at Hazeltine attractive for the average golfer. It also attracts the interest of the not so average golfer.

Current British Open Champion Mark Calcavecchia played Hazeltine for the first time last fall. Although he played on an unusually cold day, Calcavecchia enjoyed his round and the course. He thought it was "strong, honest—no trick holes." He said the course had no weak areas, requiring consistent playing from start to finish.

Calcavecchia's comments are similar to the views of Grant Spaeth, president of the USGA. Spaeth played Hazeltine in early October of 1989, describing the course as "strong and honest—a big place—very fair—a superb Open course from every standpoint." Early in the season former U.S. Open champion Tommy Bolt toured the course. Although now a super senior, Bolt retains his wonderful shotmaking skills. He was particularly impressed with the putting surfaces, describing them as very fair, yet demanding.

The number of professionals playing Hazeltine will increase in 1990, especially among players who will compete in the 1991 tournament. A number of players have already qualified to be in the '91 Open based on exemptions established by the USGA. They include U.S. Open champions since 1981—David Graham, Tom Watson, Larry Nelson, Fuzzy Zoeller, Andy North, Ray-

mond Floyd, Scott Simpson, Curtis Strange and Hale Irwin; Masters Champions since 1987—Larry Mize, Sandy Lyle and Nick Faldo; PGA Champions since 1986—Bob Tway, Larry Nelson, Jeff Sluman and Payne Stewart; British Open Champions since 1986—Greg Norman, Nick Faldo, Severiano Ballesteros and Mark Calcavecchia.

Also exempt under current rules will be the winner of the 1991 Players Championship, the 1990 Senior Open Champion, the 15 low scores from the 1990 U.S. Open, the 30 leading money winners on the 1990 tour not otherwise exempt, the 1990 U.S. Amateur champion, the ten leading money winners not otherwise exempt on the 1991 tour, plus up to seven foreign players not otherwise exempt.

Missing from the exempt players' list is Jack Nicklaus. His exemption as winner of the 1986 Masters ends with the 1990 Open. Absent a major win in the next year, 1991 will be the first year since he was an amateur that Nicklaus has not been an automatic entry for the Open. However, the USGA reserves the right to issue a maximum of three special exemptions and Nicklaus would certainly be eligible in that category — like 1990 champion Hale Irwin was this year.

USGA Gives Hazeltine Record Number Of Tickets for 1991 U.S. Open

The United States Golf Association recently approved the sale of 40,000 season tickets for the 1991 U.S. Open Golf Championship to be held June 10 through 16 at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska. The figure is a full 5,000 tickets more than ever offered for sale at any U.S. Open Golf Championship leading up to the 1991 tournament.

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