

NSW Open Championship History

The NSW Open Golf Championship has had a rich tradition dating back to 1931. At one stage, it was the championship all the players wanted to win. Such was its popularity, that it ranked in the top three golf tournament in the country behind only the Australian Open and later, the Australian Masters.

The event in its 'closed' form (open only to New South Welshmen) from 1931 to 1957 boasted winners of legendary status - the likes of Jim Ferrier (who won five times as an amateur prior to the outbreak of World War 2), Norman Von Nida (a six time winner between 1939 and 1954) and Kel Nagle (whose first success in 1951 was emulated twice, the final time some 17 years later in 1968).

When in 1958 the tournament became open to all comers, the NSW Open annually attracted the cream of Australia's golfing talent along with a sprinkling of world class international talent.

Many of Australia's greatest players can lay claim to winning this prestigious title:-

- Peter Thomson - 1961;
- Billy Dunk - 1967 and 1971;
- Jack Newton - 1976 and 1979;
- Greg Norman - 1978, 1983, 1985 and 1988;
- Bob Shearer - 1982;
- Ian Baker-Finch - 1984;
- Ian Stanley - 1985
- Craig Parry - 1987 and 1992; and
- Peter Lonard - 2004

Due to economic hardships across many sports in the early 1990s, coupled with the significant escalation of prizemoney offered to leading professionals on international tours in the US, Europe and Japan, the tournament was unable to secure key sponsorship revenue to maintain its financial viability.

However, in late 2000 the NSW Golf Association was approached by the PGA with the intention to resurrect the Open as part of its development tour. This concept was designed as a breeding ground for young Australian professionals as a stepping stone process from the pro-am circuit to the full Australasian Tour.

The resurrection concept became a reality when, after many discussions with a variety of prospective venue partners, Horizons Golf Resort at Salamander Bay approached the PGA expressing an interest in hosting and underwriting the event.

When Horizons took on a separate event and then faced some financial difficulties, the tournament was moved to firstly Macquarie Links Golf Club, then Liverpool Golf Club and Moore Park Golf Club - as a result, the tournament again breathed life.

In another innovative move during 2007, the owners of The Vintage Golf Club in the Hunter Valley, saw a great and unique opportunity to stage the tournament.

This Greg Norman designed layout is acknowledged as one of the best public access courses in Australia. The course is extremely challenging for public, member and professional golfer alike.

To further bring greater appeal to the tournament, NSWGA, in conjunction with The Vintage, approached the PGA to introduce an entirely different format to the tournament – one which has proven extremely popular and successful on the USPGA Tour at Pebble Beach. The format sees the introduction of a Team Challenge Pro-Am as a part of the tournament.

The championship itself remains a 4 round, 72 hole tournament. As in normal tournament conditions, after the completion of Rounds 1 and 2, the traditional 36 hole 'cut' is made. The players making the 'cut' continue to compete for the title of NSW Open Champion, but the final 36 holes are also held in conjunction with the Team Challenge Pro-Am.

The Team Challenge Pro-Am sees amateur golfers being paired with players making the 36 hole cut and participating in a best ball stableford over the final 36 holes – this format is exclusive to an event in Australia and resembles the Pebble Beach Pro-Am tournament.

In its first year under this new format, 2007, the tournament proved its popularity amongst professionals and amateurs alike and will continue to be marketed as "Our Pebble Beach".

The NSW Open Championship will be held on Thursday 13th November through to Sunday 16th November 2008.

NSW Open Championship Honour Board

1931	C Gray	1958	L Wilson	1980	G Serhan
1932	V Richardson	1959	H Kershaw	1981	B Rogers
1933	J Ferrier (A)	1960	F Phillips	1982	B Shearer
1934	V Richardson	1961	P Thomson	1983	G Norman
1935	J Ferrier (A)	1962	F Phillips	1984	I Baker-Finch
1936	J Ferrier (A)	1963	P Mills	1985	I Stanley
1937	J Ferrier (A)	1964	E Ball	1986	G Norman
1938	J Ferrier (A)	1965	C McGregor	1987	C Parry
1939	N Von Nida	1966	F Phillips	1988	G Norman
1940-1945	Not held due to WWII	1967	E Dunk	1989	R Davis
1946	N Von Nida	1968	K Nagle	1990	K Trimble
1947	N Von Nida	1969	Not Played	1991	Not held
1948	N Von Nida	1970	F Phillips	1992	C Parry
1949	E Cremin	1971	E Dunk	1993	Not held
1950	E Cremin	1972	O Beldham (A)	1994	D Chivas
1951	K Nagle	1973	E Sneed	1995-01	Not held
1952	J Moran	1974	E Ball	2002	TPrice
1953	N Von Nida	1975	A Gresham (A)	2003	C Carmichael
1954	N Von Nida	1976	J Newton	2004	PLonard
1955	R Swinbourne	1977	T MacDonald	2005	M Wright
1956	F Phillips	1978	G Norman	2006	RKulacz
1957	K Nagle	1979	J Newton	2007	J Norris

NB: This event was played as the New South Wales Close Championship until 1957 (inclusive).