

Since 1934, players who have combined to win 98 percent of the four currently-accepted major championships (Masters, U.S. Open, British Open, PGA Championship), plus The Players, have competed in Tour events on the First Coast.

With The Players Championship going strong as the most significant event the PGA Tour operates, the best players in the world will continue flocking to the First Coast for years to come.

“Junior golfers in this area have been able to go to a tournament at almost any time over the past century and see the greatest players in the world close-up,” said Jack Aschenbach, director of the North Florida Junior Foundation. “You can’t say that about any other sport.”

It’s also a little-known piece of area golf history that the LPGA played on the First Coast eight times at three courses in the 1950s, with the first three won by founding members Babe Zaharias, Louise Suggs and Patty Berg.

Mickey Wright, touted by many as having the sweetest swing of any player regardless of gender, won the first of her 82 professional victories at the 1956 Jacksonville LPGA Open at Brentwood. She added two more before the Tour left the area for good after her 1959 victory at Hyde Park.

Some came back for more competition late in life.

Sam Snead won four times on the First Coast, twice at the Jacksonville Open at Brentwood and twice at the St. Augustine Pro-Am at the Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine, then returned to compete in the Legends of Golf when it was played at the Golf Club of Amelia.

Gary Player won a Greater Jacksonville Open at Hidden Hills in 1971, won a Senior Players at the Sawgrass Country Club in 1987, and then played in the Legends of Golf, completing a streak of five consecutive decades in which he stepped between the ropes in a First Coast tournament.

Touring golf in the area also is generational.

Tommy Armour, “the Silver Scot,” won the 1926 Winter Pro Championship in St. Augustine. His grandson, Tommy Armour III, played in 11 Players Championships.

Bob Goalby, the 1968 Masters champion, played numerous times in Jacksonville, as did his son-in-law, Jay Haas, and his grandson, Bill Haas.

And on one surreal March day in 1999, Jacksonville native David Duval won The Players, two hours after his father, veteran area club professional Bob Duval, won for the only time in a PGA Tour Champions event in Pensacola.

### **Hagen bested by Doyle**

The first Jacksonville Open on March 18-19, 1918, was 36 holes, for an unknown purse. Despite the presence of World Golf Hall of Fame members such as Hagen, Jim Barnes and Jock Hutchison, a