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“JAGA FIRST COAST AMATEUR” ON TRACK FOR FULL FIELD IN ADVANCE OF ENTRY DEADLINE

-Arnold Palmer-designed Hidden Hills Golf Club will host elite amateur golfers Jan. 13-15-

JACKSONVILLE, FL - Entries for the Jacksonville Area Golf Association’s **First Coast Amateur** are well ahead of last year’s pace and tournament officials are anticipating a full field of 78 will be in place prior to the event’s Jan. 8th entry deadline.

The 2018 JAGA First Coast Amateur will be played Jan. 13-15 at the Arnold Palmer-designed Hidden Hills Golf Club in Jacksonville.

The championship is 54 holes of stroke play and ends on Monday, Jan. 15th, the Martin Luther King holiday. All competitors will vie for the First Coast Amateur title. New in 2018 is a mid-amateur competition for those entrants who are age 25 and older.

With the entry deadline still three weeks away almost 60 golfers from around the U.S. and a few from abroad have signed up, which is more than double the number at this time last December. The 2017 First Coast Amateur had 77 entries.

Assuming a full field of 78 is reached, JAGA will create an alternates list, with priority positions allotted based on the time of receipt of a paid entry.

The following colleges (21) are currently represented:

- Barry U.
- Carson-Newman
- Charleston Southern
- College of Charleston
- Flagler
- Florida State
- Georgia College
- Holy Cross
- Huntingdon College
- Indiana U.
- Palm Beach Atlantic
- Purdue
- Saint Leo U.
- Saint Thomas U.
- U. of Alabama-Birmingham
- U. of Memphis
- U. of North Florida
- U. of South Carolina
- U. of South Florida
- U. of Wisconsin
- Wake Forest

Area high schools, Bartram Trail and Bishop Kenny, are also represented.

Currently, players hail from 10 states and five countries outside the United States:

- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Brussels
- Canada
- India
- Italy
- Malaysia

Brandon Mancheno of Jacksonville and now Auburn University captured the inaugural First Coast Amateur at Amelia National Golf Club in January by three shots. He did not record a single bogey in 54 holes of play.

The First Coast Amateur is sponsored and conducted by JAGA, which annually promotes Jacksonville's top-level amateur competitions and has since 1954.

"Quite frankly, the pace of entries has been a very pleasant surprise to us," said co-chairmen **Joel Lamp** and **Jeff Adams**. "It is double what it was last year, when we had a full field despite the slow start. The success and impact of the inaugural First Coast Amateur last January and word of mouth since are clearly working in our favor. We're looking forward to a great year two at Hidden Hills next month and building the championship's profile and stature among elite golfers. In the meantime, we encourage any interested and eligible golfers to submit their entry form and payment as soon as possible."

Players who wish to enter the JAGA First Coast Amateur may do so by going to www.jaxareagolf.org and clicking on the First Coast Amateur link on the home page. The maximum handicap index is 6.0, though very few entries to date exceed 2.0.

Co-chairmen for the 2018 tournament are JAGA directors Joel Lamp and Jeff Adams. **Jim Kavanagh** is overseeing all aspects of tournament set-up, rules and competition.

-JAGA-

ABOUT JAGA

Established in 1954, JAGA celebrates its 64th year in 2017. It is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (4) corporation comprised of over 40-member golf clubs located in the Northeast Florida area. JAGA's mission is to promote golf and goodwill through tournaments and related events and activities. It conducts 10 tournaments, including five championship events and five others that feature team formats. JAGA manages a scholarship program that currently provides college funding for 25 area students. Since 1974 the program has generated approximately \$1.7 million in financial aid to approximately 300 students.

Contact:

Jeff Adams
JAGA, VP-Tournaments
Cell: 904-607-6142
Email: jeffreytadams71@gmail.com