

## Championship History

In April 1977, when entries for the first U.S. Women's Amateur Public Links Championship began to trickle in, there was concern.

Would the first national championship ever staged for women who play the country's public courses attract enough players to fill the field? Did it justify the effort to set up 27 qualifying sites around the country?

By May, the trickle of entries had become a steady stream. When the June deadline for entries arrived and the results were tallied, the astonishing reality was that this championship had attracted a field of 686 players — more than the combined fields of the 1977 Women's Amateur, Women's Open, Senior Women's Amateur and Girls' Junior.

The entry figure was amazing for several reasons. First, this was a new championship that would need time to build interest. Second, some states didn't even have organizations to assist women public-course players, conduct sectional qualifying or raise funds, and the 686 entries were drawn from only 24 states.

The 1977 championship was played on the East Course of Yahara Hills Golf Course in Madison, Wis. Kelly Fuiks, 19, of Phoenix, Ariz., was the first champion. In fact, for the first four years, the championship was the personal property of two outstanding players. Fuiks won again in 1978 before turning professional. Lori Castillo won in 1979 and 1980, and at one time held or shared every individual record in the championship.

Castillo won 11 consecutive matches before losing in the second round in 1981.

The championship received a boost when Castillo was selected as a member of the 1980 USA Curtis Cup Team. By that year, the Women's Amateur Public Links was regarded as a highly competitive arena for some of the best amateurs in the country. Since then, Heather Farr, Danielle Ammacapane, Cindy Schreyer, Tracy Kerdyk, Pearl Sinn, Tracy Hanson, Amy Fruhwirth, Jill McGill, Jo Jo Robertson, Annie Thurman (Young), Michelle Wie, Tiffany Joh and Mina Harigae, all WAPL champions, also have been named to Curtis Cup Teams.

Pearl Sinn accomplished a unique double in 1988 when she won the Women's Amateur as well as the Women's Amateur Public Links. When she repeated as WAPL champion in 1989, she and Curtis Strange, who won the U.S. Open, were the only two to repeat as USGA champions that year. Jennifer Song also won both titles in 2009.

McGill also achieved the double win. She was the holder of the 1993 U.S. Women's Amateur title when she won the 1994 Women's Amateur Public Links Championship.

In 2003, Wie became the youngest winner of an "adult" USGA championship at the age of 13.

The championship also was noteworthy because of its team trophy, which was captured a record five times by teams from Phoenix, Ariz., and Murietta, Calif. The team championship was discontinued following the 2008 championship.

In 2002, the final was played over 36 holes for the first time. In 2005, a Handicap Index limit of 18.4 was established.



*Thirteen-year-old Casie Cathrea advanced to the quarterfinals, where she lost to eventual champion Jennifer Song.*