

THE MIDNIGHT GOLFER

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BLIND GOLF NEWS

Winter 2018/2019

Dick Pomo, President

United States Blind Golf Association

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2018 Year in Review & 2019 Events Calendar

Contents include: [Letter from the President](#), 2018 Events; [ISPS Handa US Blind Open](#), [Guiding Eyes Invitational](#), [73rd National Championship](#), [ISPS Handa World Blind Golf Championship](#), 2019 Events; [2019 USGA Rule Changes](#), [2019 Tournament Calendar](#)



Letter from the President

By Dick Pomo

The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) is pleased to reinstate The Midnight Golfer. This publication was first introduced in the early 1990's by then president Bob Andrews and his wife Tina. According to Bob, as interest grew, they often would mail approximately 500 copies to individuals and organizations serving the blind throughout the United States. We hope that by placing the publication on our web site that it can, not only reach our members, but reach out to interested readers and perspective members. This publication will present an overview of activities and achievements over the past year for members and our organization as well.

First of all, from the Board of Directors, I send warm wishes to all for a wonderful holiday season and best wishes for the upcoming year.

"You Don't Have To See It to Tee It" is more than a clever slogan. The USBGA is committed to grow the game of golf for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. We take pride in just having completed our 73rd National Tournament for blind and visually impaired golfers in Nashville, Tennessee at the end of August. We are proud of our efforts to offer opportunities for golfers to participate on several levels.

The USBGA Needs your Help! [Donate Now!](#) or [Volunteer!](#) or [Become a Member!](#)

USBGA Board

President, B1	Dick Pomo
Vice President, B2	Phil Hubbard
B1 Members	Jim Baker & Chad Nesmith
B2/B3 Member	Diane Wilson
B3 Member	Greg Hooper
Sighted Member	Lynne Lazaro
Committee Chairs	Tom Mirus (Rules), Phil Hubbard (Handicaps), Ty Thompson (Communications)



Stroke play is the core of competition since the founding of our organization. Blind and visually impaired golfers possessing golf skills that allow them to compete on a very high level find our organization one that allows them access to competition both within the United States and along with the International Blind Golf Association (IBGA) participate in competition around the world.

It is important for readers to note that the USBGA also recognizes and provides opportunities for individuals who may not be quite ready or who wish not to compete in stroke play but who love the game and look forward to competing on a different level. The Stableford scoring system allows members to take part in competitive opportunities. Based on a point system, players are granted points up to 3 over par. If they are not in the hole by then, they are allowed to pick up and move on to the next hole. Personally, this has kept yours truly in the game and made those playing behind me much happier.

We urge you to check out our web site for specific information relevant to membership, support opportunities and a variety of links relating to history and individual successes of players. If I could leave just one thought as to why golf means so much to so many of us it would be, the course does not care if you're blind or visually impaired, for the time we are on the course, blindness and visual impairment is put in the background and we are simply golfers along with our sighted coaches giving our best efforts and being thankful that there is a nineteenth hole when we are done!!

I wish everyone a happy and healthy golf season for 2019!

Dick

2018 ISPS Handa U.S. Open

By Dick Pomo

The United States Blind Golf Association (USBGA) in partnership with the International Blind Golf Association (IBGA) hosted ISPS Handa 2018 US Open Blind Golf Championship on April 7th/8th at the Haven golf Course in Green Valley Arizona.

According to Dick and Sharon Pomo, tournament coordinators, blind or visually impaired golfers and their sighted coaches representing the United States, Canada, Ireland and Israel took part in the two day tournament. This tournament is among the largest Open tournament held around the world for blind and visually impaired golfers.

Green Valley has hosted seven previous tournaments, with this being the third international competition. The first competitive event held in southern Arizona was held eight years ago at the De Lago Golf Course in Vail, Arizona. Eleven golfers and their coaches from the United States competed. According to the Pomo's, seventeen volunteers mostly from Green Valley helped to carry out the initial tournament. According to Dick, "It was then that we realized if we were going to do it again we needed to bring it home to Green Valley.

2018 Guiding Eyes Invitational – renamed the Pat W. Browne Jr. Memorial Invitational

By Tom Mirus

Mt. Kisco, NY; 10 of the best blind and vision impaired golfers gathered at Mt. Kisco Country Club on June 10 for the 41st **Guiding Eyes For the Blind Golf Classic**. Beginning this year, the tournament known as “The Masters” of blind golf will be renamed the **Pat W. Browne, Jr. Memorial Golf Tournament**. **Pat Browne, Jr.** won this tournament 21 times in his career, so it seems fitting that his name will forever be associated with the tournament.

And, for the first time, USBGA vision impaired members were included in the competition. **Scott Wilson, Ty Thompson** and **Phil Hubbard** were the vision impaired members that played. They competed for the **Vision Impaired Trophy** which went to the player with the highest number of net points in our modified Stableford scoring system. **Scott Wilson**, coached by **Vicki Wilson** won the trophy with +35.5, less than 3 points better than **Ty Thompson**, coached by **Doug Kaylor**.

The blind golfers continued to compete for the **Corcoran Cup**. **Chad Nesmith**, coached by **Andy Church**, set a tournament scoring record with a total of 72 Stableford points—a feat that included a birdie and an eagle in his round. **Mario Tobia**, coached by **Frank Hesson** won the **Cribari Trophy** for the second most points with 47—a total that would win in most years. The **McFarland Trophy** for the golfer with the highest number of net points went to **Ron Derry**, coached by **Jane Ahearn** with +28. **Sheila Drummond**, coached by **Keith Drummond** won the **Spoonster Trophy** for the most improved over 2017 with +3. Congratulations to all the winners!

On Monday June 11, the USBGA members played several holes with a number of sponsor groups in the **Guiding Eyes Classic Scramble**. This gives the USBGA members a chance to show their skills and to thank the sponsors for supporting **Guiding Eyes For the Blind**, making the **Pat W. Browne, Jr. Memorial Tournament** possible.

It is always a terrific event. All USBGA members should aspire to compete in this tournament at least once in their blind golf career.

Click here for [Trophy Winners](#)

2018 73rd US National Championship

By Chad Nesmith

How a National Championship Was Conceived

Part One: Decide, “Are we ready to be parents of a newborn?”

When folks ask, “how did a National Championship arrive to be?”, most people think from a stork or that is what we are led to believe. I feel that people are told this because they are not mature enough to know the real truth about the love in the conception of a new and wonderful entity. This diary account is the story of how I was planned, conceived, nurtured, and burst forth onto this Earth. I apologize in advance for no punches pulled and no censorship on the truth, being born is a wonderful event that we should never be embarrassed to witness.

In September of 2017, my parents, Blind Doc as he is affectionally known and Patricia began planning to have their first. As most, planning for the event created a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty. So, instead of trying to cope on their own, my parents talked to others who had been through the same thing. They sought advice from others who had been creators and given birth to a new entity. These individuals included: Andy-PGA Teaching Professional, who has brought forth over 100 entities like me.

All of the questions were posed, answered, and discussed. These included, but not limited to: How will we be able to pay for all of its needs? Who can we count on to help with its rearing? How can we make sure it is strong and vibrant? Where is the best venue for it to be born? How do we acquire all of the items it will need once it is born? How we feed the many who will come to witness the blessed event of my birth? Where will all of the visitors stay before, during and after my arrival? With a solid support system, my parents were led to establishing a commitment from the higher power to provide a blessing of the birth. So, after several weeks of thought, my parents conceived me on November 4, 2017 when the USBGA (United States Blind Golf Association) gave its approval. My parents were so proud. The fear and anxiety were now replaced with a sense of calm. It was happening, I was coming. After a sonogram, my due date was set at August 26, 2018. 7 MONTHS TO MY ARRIVAL

First Trimester: Decide, “How will it be nurtured over the months to come?”

My parents were very diligent. They took their job as parents to be very serious. They spent endless hours each night discussing and praying for guidance. They started with the venue for the occasion. The Hermitage Golf Club in Hermitage, Tennessee was chosen. My parents said that the location had the experts to make sure I arrived on time with little chance for a complicated birth. My parents met with the venue several times a month for check-ups and advice. Most of the advice surrounded how to feed the many who would come and bare witness. The venue provided the expert to help my parents maneuver through the arduous process. Since they had chosen a wonderful venue, there was very little work for them to do on site. The head professional at the club put them at ease when he said, “we have delivered many. We are here to help you through the stress of the event. My parents still engaged in weekly calls, but it was clear to them at each interaction with the venue, there was nothing to worry about from that angle.

Now, where will the many lay their heads? After several trials and errors, a hotel was selected that would be close in proximity as possible to the birth, but at a price that would not harbor ill will for the many travelers to the event. So, venue, experts at the venue to assist, nourishment for the witnesses and participants, and a place to lay down after a long and trying day had been committed to.

Second Trimester: How do we acquire the items needed for the birth?

During this time of my development, my parents had to focus. They had to try and arrange activities and tasks that would make my arrival exciting. They wanted to come up with a special way to get the message out about me. They began calling. With the help of friends, Sports Illustrated, a large media network, agreed to document my arrival. Having coverage of the event is critical. My parents have always said that getting Sports Illustrated was a sign of how special I was going to be. I am sure all parents feel that way, but it feels good to hear it any way.

Free donations were the next task. This is hard because asking people for free items for an event that they may not have direct involvement can be very humbling. However, my parents never stopped. Over the next three months they acquired several thousand dollars in monies, food, and gifts. You must count on help from the village to help a successful new birth.

Lastly, my parents and their friends and family had to organize how it would all go when the date arrived. A step-by-step plan was designed. It laid out where each person needed to be and when. It provided for exact times that items were to be set up and used. This was the most tedious part I have heard my parents state on numerous occasions. "What if we forget something like....?", it could ruin him, I heard my parents say during this long second trimester of my development.

Last Trimester: How to get the village

One of the most essential parts of bringing a new entity to be is the need for the village. That is, the village needs to help for the occasion to be a blessed event. My parents started out asking for volunteers for the event through word of mouth. Then, they moved to local service and community organizations. They distributed pamphlets at local businesses and similar venues. As the village started to contact my parents, a person whom they had delegated took the responsibility for organizing tasks to villager's specific skill set. The areas included: greeting community, photograph committee, dog sitters for those with seeing eye dogs, scorers, and hostesses for handing out water and cold towels to help deal with the excitement of the event.

The last week before my arrival date was small meetings with family and friends to discuss everything. To make sure no detail had been overlooked. To make sure people had been contacted and they knew where to be and when. The excitement became palpable.

Due Date: I'M Here!

I am proud to say that I arrived in this world with no tragic episodes. Oh sure, like all newbies-I had hiccups-but they were minor. Everyone enjoyed being around me and sharing the venue of my birth. The Hermitage Golf Club was perfect. I was sad when the village left three days after my birth. However, due to photos and videos, I will always be able to look, back and see the joy that each person had by being associated with me, a National Championship.

Chick here for [Trophy Winners](#)

2018 ISPS Handa World Championship

By Linda Port

Nesmith, Poincenot, Marks, Port & Tobia

Lead competitors from around the world in Rome, Italy

We arrived in Rome and jumped on the 'get-on/get off' tour bus. We were there two days early, met some fellow competitors and headed to downtown Rome for a reminder of the glories of that city and the history it shares with the world. Followed by incredible pasta and even more incredible gelato ... our competition was off to a great start. And ... it only got better.

The Welcome Party at the Parco de Medici was a great kickoff. Yes the food was good and the Italian wine matched. But the real joy was meeting competitors from around the world, sharing on and off-course war stories and trying to find someone who knew the course and could give us some hints. I must say ... there was a wonderful sense of family as we gathered. Our sight might be a challenge ... but it is also the glue that builds our lifelong friendships.

The practice round informed ... oh my, did it inform – this was going to be a real test of golf. It had every kind of condition you can imagine: from a wide fairway to a very narrow fairway, from a hole free from water to a hole which seems almost in the water, from blue skies and a gentle breeze to an instant rain bath, from what seemed an easy par or bogie to what was an almost impossible-to-achieve triple. We all learned that course management was the most important skill; no matter how tempting ... there were just some shots you shouldn't try (unless of course you were desperate).

The first day reminded us of the lessons from practice: a great shot followed by an "oh no ... water on three sides". There was a crew on the course filming for Italian television and periodic watchers and family members cheering on their golfers. You have to love the 'cheers' and 'oh no's' from the course as players and coaches celebrated or winced. We ended day one with even more lessons learned about how to play each hole ... and a speculation from the local weatherman ... "rain expected on and off during tomorrow with occasional downpours, maybe."

The final day set the stage for our USBGA competitors: Chad, Jeremy, Tom, Linda and Mario. Our teammates did a great job. Mario shot 74 net on the final day. Linda defended her Ladies B-3 World Championship with a run on the final 9 holes -- 5 pars and a birdie. Tom played well (83 and 80) against a remarkable recent addition to blind golf – Kiefer Jones from Canada (his gross for the two days was 151). Jeremy was on his game once again with a two-day gross of 170 and a victory margin of 9 strokes. The match between Chad and Zohar (Israel) was one for the ages. Going into 18 and to quote Zohar [after the match: "I thought Chad was going to win" (because he was so far ahead)]. But then 'golf' arrived – a downpour, a sand trap, a surrounding lake – and Zohar has eked out the B-1 Championship. We gathered around the final green and when the tension was over ... tears arrived. We hugged Chad and Pat for a remarkable competition and we headed to the bar.

2018 ISPS Handa World Championship continued

The awards dinner was great fun with Cowboy Hats and champions aplenty. Here comes more Italian cuisine and music. Every table from many countries, had stories of the shot that 'almost made it over the water' or 'hit the tree' or 'went in the hole and then out'. It was a real celebration with laughter and Italian music filling the background. As the awards were given, there was a surprise with the presentation of two Calgary Stampede Cowboy Hats (our friends from Canada brought them.) Andrea Calcaterra, the President of the IBGA, donned his new chapeau as he presented awards. Another blind golf event ended with hugs and 'see you in (fill in the country)', as our teammates from around the world headed home.

Finally, the next World Championship is set for South Africa in 2020.

And yes, once again our bonds of friendship were renewed.

Linda Port

2019 Dennis Walters – ING Award

By Dick Pomo

It is with great pleasure that the USBGA announced that Tom Mirus is the winner of the Dennis Walters ING Courage Award. This award is presented by ING--the International Network of Golf. It was established in 1994 and has been presented 13 times before this year. It is awarded to an individual who has overcome great odds to participate in and contribute to the game of golf. Bob Andrews received this award in 1997. Tom Mirus is thrilled to win this award that bears the name of the newest member of the World Golf Hall of Fame. It will be presented to Tom in May 2019 at the ING Spring Conference in Sebring, Florida.

2019 USGA Rule Changes to Know

By the Book

By Tom Mirus, USBGA Senior Rules Official

2019 will bring the most comprehensive change to the Rules of Golf in many years. I encourage everyone to get a copy of the 2019 Rules of Golf, download the app or read the rules online before you compete in any tournament in 2019.

Following are the major changes in the rules beginning on January 1, 2019. These will help you with the most common things you may encounter in your round. But it does not take the place of being familiar with the rules. A rule that did not change is that the player is responsible for knowing the rules, recognizing when he has breached a rule, and applying the rules honestly.

I will be happy to try and answer any question you might have this winter regarding the new rules for 2019. Just drop me an email with your question and I will get back to you.

Major Changes to the USGA Rules of Golf For 2019

BALL AT REST

There is no penalty if a player moves his her ball during a search for it.

There is no penalty if a player accidentally moves his / her ball or ball marker on the putting green.

BALL IN MOTION

There is no penalty for a ball in motion that is accidentally deflected by a player or his / her equipment. The ball is played where it lies.

TAKING RELIEF

Fixed Distance to be Used for Measuring: A fixed distance of the longest club in your bag, other than your putter, will be used for measuring.

Measuring the Size of the Relief Area Where a Ball Must Be Dropped and Played. Your relief area for dropping a ball will be a fixed size of either one or two club-lengths using the longest club in your bag, other than your putter.

New Procedure For Dropping a Ball: Your ball must be let go from knee height and fall through the air without touching any part of your body or equipment.

Where a Dropped Ball Must Come to Rest: Your ball must come to rest in the relief area where it was dropped, or else it must be redropped.

By the Book continued

Time For Search Before Ball is Lost: Your ball is lost if not found in three minutes (reduced from five minutes).

Substitution of Ball Always Allowed When Taking Relief: You may always substitute a ball when taking relief.

PUTTING GREEN

Repairing Damage on the Putting Green: A Player may repair almost any kind of damage to the putting green such as ball marks, spike marks, animal damage, etc. It does not include aeration holes.

There is no penalty for touching your line of play on the putting green so long as doing so does not improve the conditions for your stroke.

There is no penalty if your ball played from the putting green (or anywhere else) hits the unattended flagstick in the hole.

PENALTY AREA

Touching Loose Impediments or Ground in Penalty Areas: There is no penalty for moving loose impediments, touching the ground or grounding your club in a Penalty Area (previously called a water hazard).

Eliminating Opposite Side Relief For Red Penalty Areas: Relief from a Red Penalty Area is no longer allowed from the opposite side from where the ball last entered the penalty area.

BUNKER

There is no penalty for moving or touching loose impediments in a bunker.

Unplayable Ball in Bunker: A new option has been added beginning in 2019. Under penalty of 2 strokes, a player may drop a ball outside a bunker on a line back from the flagstick through where the ball lay in the bunker.

EQUIPMENT

Use of Clubs Damaged During Round: You are allowed to continue to use a club damaged during your round, even if you damaged it in anger.

A player may not replace a club damaged during a round if he was responsible for the damage.

Ball Accidentally Struck More Than Once During a Stroke: If your club accidentally strikes your ball more than once during a stroke, there is no penalty and the ball will be played where it lies.

Editor's Note:

Tom states that if you want more information, the USBGA has a video and audio series to explain the new rules and their changes for 2019. Simply go to this web link;

<http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub.html>

[The 2018 ISPS Handa US Open Awards](#)

Stroke Play

B1 - Champion	Zohar Sharon	Israel
B1 - Second Place	Chad Nesmith	USA
B2 - Champion	Ty Thompson	USA
B2 - Second Place	Derrick Kibblewhite	Canada
B3 - Champion	Scott Wilson	USA
B3 - Second Place (tie)	Art Beauregard & Doug Penner	USA
Men's Net Champion	Frank Musso	USA
Women's Net Champion	Jan Dinsdale	USA
Stableford Champion	Joe Ferber	Canada
Second Place	Millard Reed	USA

[The 2018 73rd National Championship Awards](#)

PAT BROWNE TROPHY

B1 Champion Chad Nesmith & coach Andy Church

BOSWELL AWARD

B1 Mario Tobia & coach Dylan Kelley

LAZARO AWARD

B1 Jim Baker & coach Joe Taggert

B2 CHAMPION

Jeremy Poincenot & coach Lionel Poincenot

B2 2ND PLACE

Ty Thompson & coach Doug Kaylor

B3 CHAMPION

Tom Marks & coach Bob Marks

B3 2ND PLACE

Scott Wilson & coach Ryan Wilson

B2 & B3 COMBINED - LOW NET

Chris Schmidt & coach Jon Moore

B2 & B3 COMBINED - MOST IMPROVED

Larry Rhinehart & coach Carol Rhinehart

SENIOR NET

Harry Hester & coach Randy Nutt

STABLEFORD DIVISION

BILL MCMAHON AWARD

Champion Millard Reed & coach Jay Carter

SECOND PLACE

Jack Collins & coach Craig Templeton

[41st Annual Guiding Eyes Classic](#)

Corcoran Cup - Chad Nesmith coached by Andy Church

Cribari Trophy - Mario Tobia coached by Frank Hessin

McFarland Trophy - Ron Derry coached by Jane Ahearn

Spoonster Trophy - Sheila Drummond coached by Keith Drummond

Vision Impaired Award - Scott Wilson coached by Vicky Wilson

2018 IBGA Blind Golf World Championship

Men's Gross

B1: Sharon, Zohar - Israel [HCP: 25 - SCORE: 197]

B2: Poincenot, Jeremy - USA [HCP: 18 - SCORE: 183]

B3: Jones, Kiefer - CAN [HCP: 6 - SCORE: 157]

Men's Nett

First: Marks, Tom - USA [HCP: 14 - SCORE: 132]

Second: Furber, Joe - CAN [HCP: 53 - SCORE: 136]

Women's

Gross: McCallum, Jenny - AUS [HCP: 33 - SCORE: 204]

Nett: Watts, Michele - AUS [HCP: 42 - SCORE: 128]

2019 USBGA Blind Golf Events

2019 ISPS Handa U.S. Open Championship

April 4-8, 2019

9th Annual AZ Regional

Green Valley, Arizona

[Haven Golf Course](#)

Hosted by Dick and Sharon Pomo

2019 Guiding Eyes Classic now named –

Pat W. Browne Jr. Memorial Invitational Tournament

June 9-10, 2019

42nd Annual Invitational

Mount Kisco, New York

Hosted by Guiding Eye for the Blind

2019 USBGA National Championship

September 9–11, 2019

74th Annual

Las Vegas, Nevada

[Las Vegas Golf Club](#)

Hosted by Jon Moore

[2019 Canadian Blind Golf Events](#)

Western Canadian Open Blind Golf Championships

Bootleg Gap Golf-Kimberley, BC

Entry Fee: \$250 Canadian Funds

Practice Round- July 8th

2 days of competition-July 9th & July 10th

ISPS Handa Canadian Open Blind Golf Championships

St. Eugene Mission Golf Resort- Cranbrook, BC

Entry Fee: \$250 Canadian Funds

Practice Round & Ice Breaker Tourney July 11th

2 days of competition-July 12th & July 13th

Brian MacLeod Memorial Nova Scotia Open

The Mountain Course, Truro, Nova Scotia

Entry Fee: \$200 Canadian Funds

Practice Round & Ice Breaker Tourney August 18th

2 days of competition-August 19-20th

[2019 IBGA Blind Golf Events](#)

Click on the link below for a list of all other world events:

<https://www.internationalblindgolf.com/news-2019.htmlz>

As is IBGA practice, this year is an odd number year and IBGA will have a Vision Cup, which is a Ryder Cup like format between the US and Canada versus the rest of the world. It will be held in Dublin, Ireland in mid-June.