



# PRESS RELEASE

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### **U.S. AMATEUR CHAMPION AND ASU SUN DEVIL JOSELE BALLESTER RECEIVES FIRST SPONSOR EXEMPTION FOR 2025 WM PHOENIX OPEN**

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.** – Tournament Chairman Matt Mooney announced that Arizona State University senior and 2024 U.S. Amateur champion Josele Ballester will receive the first of five available sponsor exemptions for the 2025 WM Phoenix Open, set to tee it up February 3-9 at TPC Scottsdale. Ballester was surprised with the announcement yesterday at the WM Phoenix Open Tee-Off Luncheon at Chase Field.

“The Thunderbirds are thrilled to welcome another Sun Devil to our tradition of showcasing top amateur talent at the WM Phoenix Open,” said Tournament Chairman Matt Mooney. “We are so proud of Josele’s accomplishments and can’t wait to see the 2024 U.S. Amateur champion tee it up at TPC Scottsdale this February.”

A standout golfer for ASU, Ballester has made a name for himself both on the collegiate circuit and in amateur golf globally. A three-time All-American, Ballester capped off an outstanding 2024 season by winning the prestigious U.S. Amateur Championship, becoming the fourth ASU player and first ever Spaniard to claim a U.S. Amateur title. His victory at Hazeltine National Golf Club secured him exemptions to major tournaments, including the Masters, U.S. Open, and British Open in 2025. Earlier in his career, Ballester won the 2023 European Amateur and has consistently ranked among the Top-10 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking.

In collegiate play, Ballester has proven to be a fiery competitor, earning multiple Top-5 finishes and securing his first individual win at the 2024 Olympia Fields Illini Invitational. His impressive

performance included a tournament-record score of 10-under-par 200. His success continues to elevate ASU's rich golf tradition while setting the stage for an exciting professional career. The Sun Devil will be making his first appearance at "The People's Open" in 2025.

The Thunderbirds and WM have a total of five exemptions to award for the 2025 WM Phoenix Open. The remaining four exemptions will be announced leading up to the tournament.

The 2025 WM Phoenix Open will take place Feb. 3-9 at TPC Scottsdale. "The People's Open" has been named Tournament of the Year by the PGA TOUR five times in acknowledgement of the tournament's legendary status as one the most unique events in golf. It also has been recognized as one of the largest zero waste sporting events in the world for 12 consecutive years.

Nick Taylor won in dramatic fashion in 2024 against Charley Hoffman in a two-hole playoff, capping off his fourth career PGA TOUR victory and marking the sixth time in the last nine years the WM Phoenix Open has been decided in a playoff. The 2025 edition will mark the 90th playing of the event and the 16th with WM, North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions, as title sponsor. For more information, visit [www.WMPhoenixOpen.com](http://www.WMPhoenixOpen.com).

The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. The Thunderbirds consist of 55 "active" members and more than 280 "life" members who have helped the tournament eclipse \$208 million in charitable giving since its inception in 1932, with the 2024 WM Phoenix Open raising a single-tournament record \$17.5 million for charity.

