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**EUROPEAN RYDER CUP CAPTAIN PADRAIG HARRINGTON RECEIVES FIRST SPONSOR EXEMPTION FOR 2021 WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN**

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.** – Tournament Chairman Scott Jenkins announced today three-time Major winner and 2021 European Ryder Cup captain Padraig Harrington will receive the first of five available sponsor exemptions for the 2021 Waste Management Phoenix Open, which is scheduled to be played February 1-7 at TPC Scottsdale. This will be Harrington’s sixth appearance at the WM Phoenix Open.

“Padraig has had an outstanding career and is an incredible friend of our tournament,” Jenkins said. “He really enjoys the atmosphere at TPC Scottsdale and we’re thrilled to have the current European Ryder Cup captain back at ‘The People’s Open’.”

Hailing from the Republic of Ireland, Harrington has put together a stellar professional golf career since turning pro 25 years ago, earning three Major wins, three additional wins on the PGA TOUR, 12 European Tour victories and 12 additional International wins.

Harrington enjoyed an incredible stretch of success beginning in 2007 when he became the first home player to win the Irish Open since 1982, and two months later, Harrington won his first Open Championship becoming the first Irishman to win a major championship since 1947. Harrington’s impressive play continued in 2008 when he became the first European to defend his Open Championship title in more than a century, and followed that victory with a win at the 2008 PGA Championship just one month later for a total of three major championship titles in six events.

As a result of that impressive run over that 15-month span, Harrington was named both the PGA TOUR Player of the Year and European Tour Golfer of the year in 2008. In August 2016, Harrington represented Ireland at the 2016 Summer Olympics, finishing T-21. He was named captain of the 2020 Ryder Cup in January of 2019, and with the event canceled this year he will lead the European team in 2021.

Jenkins and The Thunderbirds have a total of five exemptions to award for the 2021 Waste Management Phoenix Open. The remaining four will be announced leading up to the tournament.

A field of 132 players will vie for the \$7.5 million purse, the \$1,350,000 first-place check and 500 FedExCup points. PGA TOUR members have until 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 29, to commit to play in the Waste Management Phoenix Open. Eligible players are assigned one of 34 PGA TOUR priority ranking categories based on their past performance on TOUR. The field will continue to change as players with higher priority rankings commit to play in the Open.

The 2021 WM Phoenix Open will be held at TPC Scottsdale February 1-7. “The People’s Open” was named the Tournament of the Year by the PGA TOUR four times in the past six years (2014, 2015, 2018, 2019) to acknowledge the tournament’s legendary status as one of the most unique events in golf. The 2021 edition will mark the 86th playing of the event (one of the five oldest events on the PGA TOUR) and the 12th as the WM Phoenix Open.

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. The Thunderbirds raised a record \$14 million for charity from proceeds from the 2020 WM Phoenix Open and have eclipsed \$161 million in charitable giving since its inception in 1932. For more information on The Thunderbirds or the 2021 WM Phoenix Open, visit [www.wmphenixopen.com](http://www.wmphenixopen.com).

