



**NEWS**

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**Media Contact:**

Ryan Woodcock

Woody@wmphoenixopen.com, (480) 766-1221

*FIRST SPONSOR EXEMPTION AWARDED IN DECEMBER TO 2021 EUROPEAN RYDER CUP CAPTAIN PADRAIG HARRINGTON*

**RISING STARS WILL ZALATORIS AND DAVIS RILEY RECEIVE SPONSOR EXEMPTIONS FOR 2021 WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN**

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.** – Tournament Chairman Scott Jenkins announced today Will Zalatoris and Davis Riley – two of the PGA TOUR’s young stars in the making – will receive the second and third 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 mark the first appearance at the WM Phoenix Open for both Zalatoris and Riley, who spent many years competing against each other in junior golf and most recently on the 2020 Korn Ferry Tour, where they combined for three wins and 15 Top-10 finishes.

“Anyone who has been following the PGA TOUR this year is aware of Will’s meteoric rise, and with two Korn Ferry Tour wins under his belt this year, Davis is close to an automatic PGA TOUR promotion,” Jenkins said. “What they have been able to do in just a short amount of time is nothing short of remarkable. We’re happy to have them at our event and look forward to seeing them in action in early February.”

Zalatoris was a collegiate standout at Wake Forest, earning ACC Player of the Year and First-Team All-American honors in 2017 before rounding out the year representing the U.S. in the Walker Cup. His outstanding season began in 2020 on the Korn Ferry Tour where he dominated the PGA TOUR’s developmental circuit, winning once and posting 10 top-10s in 16 starts to end the year at No. 1 in points. Zalatoris’ success earned him a spot in the 2020 U.S. Open where he finished T6. His most

impressive accomplishment is his standing in the Official World Golf Rankings where, in one year, he improved 611 spots moving from No. 672 in the world to No. 61.

Former University of Alabama All-American Davis Riley is eyeing a Korn Ferry Tour “Battlefield Promotion” to the PGA TOUR after winning twice during the 2020-2021 combined season at the TPC San Antonio Championship at the Oaks and the Panama Championship. The 23-year-old Mississippi native had an impressive amateur career, qualifying for the 2015 U.S. Open after placing eighth in sectional qualifying. In the same year, Riley also represented the United States at the 2015 Junior Ryder Cup Championship. At the age of 17, Riley became the youngest player to ever win the prestigious Terra Cotta invitational, joining Tiger Woods and Jordan Spieth as the only players to appear in the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship in back-to-back years.

Jenkins and The Thunderbirds have a total of five exemptions to award for the 2021 Waste Management Phoenix Open. The first exemption went to European Ryder Cup Captain and three-time Major champion Pádraig Harrington. The remaining two will be announced leading up to the tournament.

A field of 132 players will vie for the \$7.3 million purse, the \$1,314,000 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 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.wmphoenixopen.com](http://www.wmphoenixopen.com).

