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Hunter Mahan and Aaron Baddeley Commit to Play in 2019 Event

**TWO FORMER CHAMPIONS RECEIVE SPONSOR EXEMPTIONS FOR 2019
WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN PRESENTED BY THE AK-CHIN INDIAN COMMUNITY**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Tournament Chairman Chance Cozby announced today that 2010 WM Phoenix Open Champion Hunter Mahan and 2007 Champion Aaron Baddeley will receive the second and third of five available sponsor exemptions for the upcoming PGA TOUR tournament, which is scheduled to be played January 28 – February 3 at TPC Scottsdale.

“We’re thrilled to bring back two of our past champions,” Cozby said. “Both Aaron and Hunter are incredible players and wonderful ambassadors of our event and we’re excited to give them both another opportunity to play in ‘The People’s Open’”.

A six-time winner on the PGA TOUR, Mahan has appeared in 12 WM Phoenix Opens, earning a win in 2010 and a total of three Top-10s, including a T4 in 2014 and a T9 in his first start in 2005. Mahan ranks in the Top-10 among WM Phoenix Open money winners with \$1.7 million in earnings.

“Being a past champion and a career-long supporter of the event, I am incredibly grateful that the Thunderbirds have guaranteed me the opportunity to return to the Waste Management Phoenix Open again this year. I always look forward to competing at TPC Scottsdale in the incredible atmosphere that the Thunderbirds and Waste Management have created; it is truly an unparalleled experience not only for the fans but for the players as well.”

Mahan is currently in the field, but there is a chance he could get bumped as the field continues to solidify.

“Due to the strength of our fields each year, there is a chance he could move down as we continue to get more commitments,” Cozby said. “As a former champion, we want to make sure he gets the chance to play the WM Phoenix Open so we felt Hunter was more than deserving of an exemption.”

Over his 18-year professional career, Aaron Baddeley has accrued four victories on the PGA TOUR including the 2007 WM Phoenix Open (then known as the FBR Open), and four international victories – all in Australia. Baddeley has played in every WM Phoenix Open since 2003, accruing \$1.34 million in 16 events.

“The WM Phoenix Open is my favorite week of the year, Scottsdale is home and I love playing in front of the awesome crowds and my friends and family,” said Baddeley. “My game is coming around nicely and I’m excited to have this chance to get the year off to a good start. The Thunderbirds do an amazing job with the tournament, being a local, I can appreciate the impact the tournament has on the community and charities throughout the year.”

Cozby and The Thunderbirds have a total of five exemptions to handout for the 2019 Waste Management Phoenix Open. The First exemption went to Oklahoma State All-American, Matthew Wolff. The remaining two exemptions will be announced in the coming weeks leading up to the tournament.

The 2019 Waste Management Phoenix Open Presented by The Ak-Chin Indian Community will be held at TPC Scottsdale January 28 – February 3, 2019. “The People’s Open” was recently tabbed the 2018 Tournament of Year by the PGA TOUR, is the best-attended golf tournament in the world and has gained legendary status for being the most unique events in golf. The 2019 edition will mark the 84th playing of the event (one of the five oldest events on the PGA TOUR) and the 10th as the Waste Management 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 285 “life” members. In 2018 The Thunderbirds raised a record \$12.2 million for charity from proceeds from last year’s tournament and have eclipsed \$134 million in charitable giving since its inception in 1932. For more information on The Thunderbirds or the 2019 Waste Management Phoenix Open, visit www.wmphoenixopen.com.



