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JAGA FIRST COAST AMATEUR ANNOUNCES 2023 TOURNAMENT DETAILS

**-Event returns to Martin Luther King holiday weekend dates, Jan.
14-16;
Hidden Hills GC in Jacksonville will be new site in '23-**

JACKSONVILLE, FL - The Jacksonville Area Golf Association (JAGA) announced today that the JAGA First Coast Amateur will be played on its traditional Martin Luther King holiday weekend dates, Jan. 14-16 in 2023, with the event returning to Hidden Hills Golf Club in Jacksonville, where it was played in 2018 and 2019.

Top finishers in the 54-hole stroke-play championship will once again receive **World Amateur Golf Ranking** points.

Tournament details will be posted on the JAGA website (www.jaxareagolf.org or jax.bluegolf.com) in the coming weeks (by Oct. 1). Entries will open in early November.

Entering its seventh year, the awareness and stature of the First Coast Amateur has grown every year among top amateurs and college players alike looking to launch their new golf year.

In 2022, the 96-player field featured players from 22 states and 36 colleges/ universities and 16 countries. More than 10 schools had multiple entries. Interest in the tournament reached its highest level this past January when an additional 93 players signed on to the waiting list.

The First Coast Amateur is open to male golfers with a verifiable USGA handicap index of 3.0 or better who have reached the age of 16 by January 14, 2023, unless otherwise approved by the Tournament Committee.



Co-chairing the First Coast Amateur beginning in 2023 will be **John Milton** (JAGA director, Jax Beach Golf Club) and **Jeff Johnstone** (JAGA director and JAGA co-VP/ Tournaments, Sawgrass Country Club). Johnstone replaced **Jeff Adams** (JAGA director and current JAGA president, TPC Sawgrass), who co-chaired the event with Milton from 2018 through 2022.

The Conservatory at Hammock Beach Golf Resort and Spa in Palm Coast hosted the First Coast Amateur in 2020-22. Scheduling issues precluded the tournament from returning to The Conservatory in 2023.

“We enjoyed three very successful years at The Conservatory - three years that allowed the JAGA First Coast Amateur to grow to new heights,” said Milton and Johnstone. “We thank The Conservatory and in particular, head professional **Dane Winger**, for their outstanding support and teamwork all three years.

“Hidden Hills is no stranger to hosting the First Coast Amateur,” the co-chairs said. “Russ Libby and his very professional staff welcomed JAGA in year two and year three of the championship and were outstanding partners. Hidden Hills was critical to the FCA’s early acceptance, success and growth. We look forward to returning to the Arnold Palmer-designed course and working with Russ and his people again. We’re in great hands!”

In the early 1970s, Hidden Hills played host to the PGA TOUR’s Greater Jacksonville Open, the forerunner to THE PLAYERS Championship in Northeast Florida. Among the winners at Hidden Hills were **Gary Player**, **Tony Jacklin** and **Don January**.

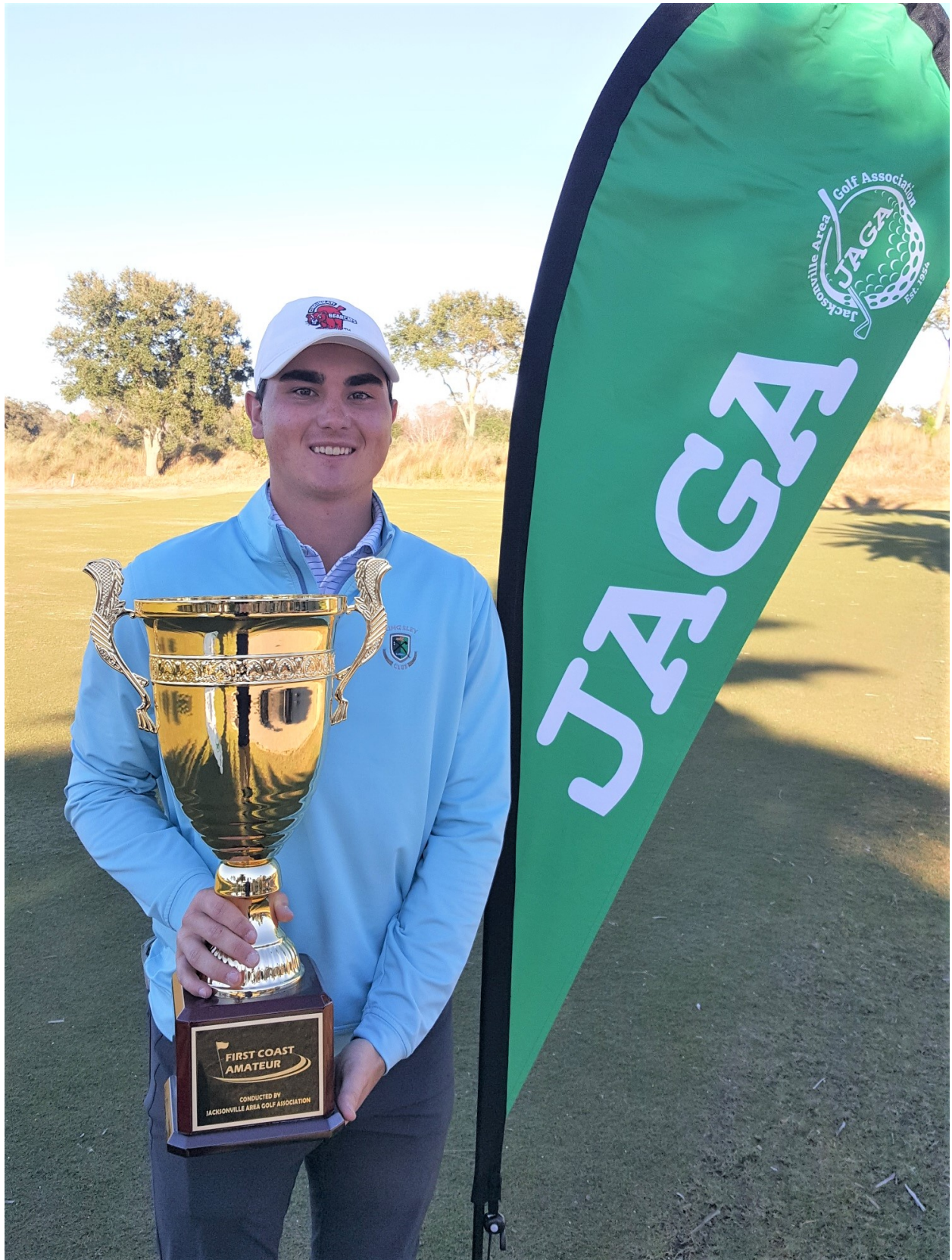
Hidden Hills stretches to 6,900 yards and is known for its elevation and intriguing curves, contours and rolling fairways, a setting unique in Florida. The fairways are lined by majestic pines and oaks. The owner and general manager of Hidden Hills is PGA Professional **Russ Libby**, who served as president of the Northern Chapter, NFPGA in 1999-2000 and again in 2017-18. He also was president of the North Florida PGA in 2003-05 and is an incoming Board Member of the PGA of America.

Other Details:

- There will be three categories of eligibility - Exempt, Non-Exempt and Committee Exemptions. Details are being finalized.
- The winners of the first six First Coast Amateurs were:

2017 - **Brandon Mancheno** (Jacksonville, Fla.)

2018 & 2020 - Cole Bradley (Purdue University)
2019 - Stephen Shepard (Huntingdon College)
2021 - Trevor Hulbert (East Tennessee State)
2022 - Ty Gingerich (U. of Cincinnati)



2022 First Coast Amateur champion Ty Gingerich of Carmel, Ind.

- Past results can be found at: www.jaxareagolf.org (“Tournaments” tab > “Tournament Results”)
- The First Coast Amateur is sponsored and conducted by **JAGA**, which annually promotes Jacksonville’s top-level amateur competitions and has since 1954. It is the only JAGA-run event that is promoted nationally and features multi-state and multi-national participants.



-JAGA-

ABOUT JAGA

Established in 1954, JAGA celebrates its 69th year in 2022. It is a not-for-profit corporation comprised of approximately 40-member golf clubs located in Northeast Florida. JAGA’s mission is to promote golf, goodwill and community through tournaments and related events and activities. It conducts 12 tournaments, including six championship events and six others that feature team formats. JAGA also manages a college scholarship program that maintains financial aid for as many as 35 deserving students per year. Since 1974, the program has generated approximately \$1.8 million in financial aid to approximately 375 students. Each year approximately 10 new scholarships are awarded.

Anyone interested in receiving monthly JAGA's "Northeast Florida Golf News" and announcements about JAGA and its tournaments via email may do so by [clicking here.](#)

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