

## **LPGA Symetra Tour now set for late August stop in Beaumont:**

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Last week Morongo Golf Club at Tukwet Canyon's Champions Course in Beaumont was scheduled to host round two of twenty one on the LPGA Symetra Tour. However tour officials decided to postpone the event along with their next four events due to coronavirus concerns. A scheduled stop in Windsor, CA was also cancelled for the coming season. Thursday morning Tukwet Canyon officials along with those from the tour announced that the IOA Championship will be tentatively rescheduled for August 21-23. This event takes the place of LPGA Qualifying School Stage I, originally scheduled for courses in the Palm Desert area. Defending champion Jillian Hollis earned her LPGA tour card and will not be back to defend her title.

Golf courses start tournament preparations almost as soon as one year's event is done for the following year. Tukwet Canyon, led by Director of Golf Henry Liaw, is no different and I had a chance via email to ask him about that process. My first question was how hard it will be to keep the venue tournament ready for an extra four months and Liaw said "It will definitely be difficult but we will find a way to make it happen. Luckily golf courses are allowed to perform maintenance during the shutdown so we're ready to go whenever we reopen. Our most difficult task in running this event during late August will be dealing with the heat & making sure the course is adequately watered/rested heading into the week."

Next I asked how hard it was to find an agreeable date with the tour and Liaw remarked "It was quite difficult to find an acceptable date with the tour. Our courses host 245 events a year which didn't give us a lot of wiggle room but since we were able to move other events we found a spot for the tournament."

One of the toughest parts of this process is the fact that a Symetra Tour event requires booking that course for an entire week (practice rounds Mon-Thurs & competition Fri-Sun).

In a traditional schedule the tour's other California stop in Windsor would follow a trip to Beaumont. However that stop was canceled for this year and will return in 2021. This year the IOA Championship is currently part of a three event West Coast swing which will include stops in Worley, Idaho & Hurricane, Utah. Combined prize money for these three weeks is \$550,000.

Professional golf tournaments such as this rely on local volunteers. Liaw stated about the volunteer situation "As of now we are good to go with volunteers but are always looking to add more to our roster."

If you are reading this and interested in serving please visit [www.ioachampionship.com](http://www.ioachampionship.com) for further information. HS coaches, I know they usually need help with standard bearers during the Sunday round.

Symetra Tour CBO (Chief Business Officer) Mike Nichols remarked in a statement released via email "The Symetra Tour is only as good as its partners. We are grateful for IOA, Morongo Casino Resort & Spa, and the City of Beaumont being willing to work with us in finding a time that works to bring professional golf to the area. They've kept the dream alive for players, as there's no 'Road to the LPGA' if there's no competition. We couldn't be more thankful for their loyalty to the Symetra Tour & complete dedication to women's professional golf."