

# World Golf Hall of Fame Media Conference

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USA

**Mike Whan**

**Greg McLaughlin**

**Governor Roy Cooper**

**Representative Jamie**

**Boles**

**Senator Tom McInnis**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning. It's a beautiful day in Pinehurst. Thank you all for joining us today for a special announcement regarding the visitor experience at golf house Pinehurst. We are honored to be joined today by North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper; Senator Tom McInnis, Representatives Jamie Boles, Ben Moss, and Neale Jackson; Mark Poole, Director, Commerce Finance Center, as well as other representatives from the great state of North Carolina.

We are also thrilled to welcome several friends from Moore County today: Mayor John Strickland of Pinehurst; County Commissioner Chair Frank Quis; Progress and Partners Executive Director Natalie Hawkins; and our friends and partners at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club led by Tom Pashley.

It has been an important and memorable week for our organization as we are hosting the inaugural U.S. Adaptive Open Championship at Pinehurst No. 6. We are deeply grateful for the continuous support of this incredible community.

Now it's my privilege to welcome the chief executive officer of the USGA, Mike Whan.

MIKE WHAN: Okay, Pinehurst. I know you're getting sick of seeing me at a podium, but the good news is, you know, my father called me this morning, and my dad's calls always start with "where are you," because he knows it's never "home," and I said, "Pinehurst," and he said, "Pinehurst." My dad is like Cliff Claven from "Cheers," full of details that may be true. "Funny thing about Pinehurst,"



and I thought, Here we go. "1.125 golfers a year travel through Pinehurst." So of course like any phone call with my dad, had to Google that afterwards, and for once in my lifetime my dad was actually correct.

So why do we keep standing at podiums here? Because this is where the golfing world comes. So thinking about my father, my dad's favorite movie was "Field of Dreams." My dad is from Iowa. He's got this big poster now in his basement, the original Kevin Kostner, and my dad will say a lot to me, "if you build it," he's usually talking about some kind of business idea I have.

If they made that movie about golf, it would have been based here in Pinehurst. If somebody would have said, "If you build it, they will come," I promise you Senator McInnis would have been the one who said it, because we've been building this, and we keep coming.

I said this this morning: There's a lot of reasons I wish I lived in North Carolina. First is to be to vote for all of you guys because you guys are impressive from a businessperson's perspective how you embrace business and welcome people to this community is really special. I just want to make sure you guys knew that.

As you know, about two months ago, we stood at a podium like this about 400 yards from here, maybe a solid par-5 from here, and talked about the opening of Golf House Pinehurst for the USGA, a seven-acre campus that we plan to become part of this community in a much bigger way than we ever have been before, and bringing employees here, bringing business here, and most importantly, as most of you know who are probably renting your house over the next 25 years, bringing a lot of championships here over the next 20, 25 years.

We really do consider Pinehurst the home of American golf, and we think this is really a place where you get in touch with your roots, and nobody respects getting in touch with your roots of this game more than the United States Golf Association.

What we didn't say then, I think if I've even read this quote, I think I was quoted as saying, "This won't be the last time we'll talk about what's coming here," and we pointed to the ground we were on, and I knew that because I knew in a few months we'd be back to tell you this, which is the



second floor of the building closest to us when we complete this at the end of 2023 is going to be committed to the new home of the World Golf Hall of Fame. The World Golf Hall of Fame of golf will be back to the home of golf in the United States here in Pinehurst starting in 2024.

(Applause.)

Some of you may know that the World Golf Hall of Fame was started here 50 years ago. Like a lot of people from the East Coast, spent a little time in Florida, got some sun, enjoyed, and is now returning, like has happened in the pandemic, to home, but most importantly, as most of you know, where Golf House Pinehurst is located, you simply can't get to No. 2 or the cradle or No. 4 or the Carolina Hotel without passing us by, and that's one of the things we love most about this new home for the World Golf Hall of Fame.

With over a million golfers pilgrimaging here a year, we love that idea that part of that visit now will be really revisiting the roots of the greatest in this game. The one thing that we, the World Golf Hall of Fame, and Pinehurst have in common is incredible, almost meticulous attention to history. I've been watching this on-loop TV thing -- you're killing me with this TV channel here at the Carolina because you watch it and then you watch it again.

But when you realize that when Coore & Crenshaw came back to do the redesign of No. 2, as they said in their own words, they'd never been to a project where so much history existed and was protected and kept, and they could really look at what had happened to this golfing community over 50, 60, 70, 100 years.

So it's really great to know that we're going to be at a place that respects history the way that we do and a partnership with the World Golf Hall of Fame that actually delivers history in a way that the fans can count on. So by the time we get open in 2024, the World Golf Hall of Fame will be a part of this, as well.

The last thing I'll tell you is when we play the U.S. Open here in 2024, in June of '24, early that week we'll have the next World Golf Hall of Fame induction ceremony that will happen the week of, so like you needed another reason to put more heads in beds that week, but we're coming. We're going to show the world not only this incredible property in 2024 with the U.S. Open but we're going to show the world that the new headquarters and home of the World Golf Hall of Fame is right here in your backyard, as well.

Unfortunately you built it; we just keep on coming. I feel fairly confident to say to you standing here today, this will

not be the last thing we talk about as part of this project, as well. To kind of expand on this unique partnership and being together for the next 50 years, I'm going to introduce you to the CEO of the World Golf Foundation and the World Golf Hall of Fame, Greg McLaughlin.

(Applause.)

GREG McLAUGHLIN: Thank you, Mike. Good morning. Welcome. Thank you all for being with us today. It's a very special day. As Mike said, 1974, the World Golf Hall of Fame launched here in Pinehurst under the leadership of the PGA of America, and in 1998, it moved to northeast Florida, as Mike said, to get some sun under really the leadership of the PGA TOUR, and in 2024, as you all have said and we're all looking now forward, it comes home, back to Pinehurst, under the leadership of the United States Golf Association.

On behalf of our 164 members, our board of directors comprised of the top seven golf organizations in the world, United States Golf Association, PGA TOUR, PGA of America, LPGA Tour, Masters tournament, Royal & Ancient of Scotland and the DP World Tour, we're honored to be coming home here and being part of this community and coming back to Pinehurst where the World Golf Hall of Fame all began.

The World Golf Hall of Fame recognizes individuals really under two categories, the elite game, which would be male and female competitors, and contributors, individuals that have made an indelible mark on the game of golf. In March of 2022, we had our -- I think it was our 19th class. It's a biennial celebration where we recognize individuals, and we recognized and inducted Tiger Woods, Suzy Maxwell burning, former commissioner of the PGA TOUR Tim Finchem and architect Marion Hollins, and as Mike said, we'll be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the World Golf Hall of Fame here Tuesday night of the men's U.S. Open June 2024 as we debut and open the new World Golf Hall of Fame museum here.

The excitement really when Mike approached me last summer about the idea of us coming here, and Mike sits on the board, as I mentioned, and we've had numerous conversations over the last three years about what is the next evolution of the Hall of Fame, and Northeast Florida has been a great home for 25 years.

We talked about a lot of different things, and our members really are the individuals that make up Hall of Fame. I mean, that is Hall of Fame, recognizing these individuals that have made the game what it is today. We owe them all a debt of gratitude, both, again the elite game and the amateur game which occupies so much of what we do as



all individuals in this room, the game we love. For us to come here and recognize our professionals and our contributors here, as Mike said, in really the home of golf in the United States, I can't tell you the excitement in the individuals that I've shared with this privately the last few days.

We've done a great job at really keeping this extremely confidential, which as you know is very hard today, and just media and how things in social media are handled, but there's tremendous excitement really from our members, and I think you'll see that and you'll see on behalf of our team the engagement with the USGA and what we're going to launch in this collaboration over time we think will be great for this community.

In closing, I would like to recognize Mike; the executive committee of the USGA; Stu Francis, who's here; Mike's team; Pinehurst resorts; Pinehurst community for welcoming us back here again; Senator McInnis; the State of North Carolina; Governor Cooper, for your vision and excitement really in making this happen because without all of you, we wouldn't be standing here today.

With that, I would like to introduce and welcome the governor to say a few words. Governor?

(Applause.)

ROY COOPER: What a great day in North Carolina. Thank you, Greg. Thank you for the leadership, Stu. I remember meeting with USGA officials almost three years ago to start talking about this process, and it has continued to blossom and to grow. It's a wonderful thing.

Everybody is contributing to it, so I'm glad to be here today.

North Carolina is the home of golf. You said arguably; no, there's no argument. North Carolina is the home of golf. It is a place for the best golf in the world. Pinehurst is our crown jewel. It's a place for majors, but it's also a place for everyday golfers to have that one shining moment and play that course that they have always dreamed about.

When I brought my father-in-law to North Carolina to play Pinehurst No. 2 and get that picture beside that Payne Stewart statue, it brought me a decade of goodwill, at least. That's the kind of thing that golf does.

You know, bringing the Golf Hall of Fame back to North Carolina means so much. When I think about Arnold Palmer and Davis Love III and Mark O'Meara and Curtis Strange, and of course Donald Ross, who build and designed some of these golf courses, that's the kind of thing that's going to be brought back here with the Hall of

Fame.

Growing up, my dad was a Wake Forest guy. He went to his Wake Forest class reunion, and everybody stood up and made speeches, and he stood up and said, I'm embarrassed to admit that both my sons attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and I hang my head in shame, sat back down and got a standing ovation.

But dad loved Arnold Palmer, loved, loved Arnold Palmer. I remember growing up and watching him on black and white TV. When I was in college I did an internship in Charlotte and they had the Kemper Open at the time, and Arnie was toward the end of his career, but I remember going out there, and he made a run, and I got to be a part of Arnie's Army for about nine holes.

Talk about an experience, it's one that you never forget.

When we talk about North Carolina, we've got more than 520 golf courses here. Think about the fact that just this past week, North Carolina was ranked as the No. 1 state for business in the country by CNBC. The reason for that No. 1 is the people of the state and the fact that I think success has many parents.

We've got the greatest array of public and private universities in the world in this state, the best community college system in the country, the best workforce in the country. We've got a state legislature that works with the governor's office and local governments who play a role. Golf plays a role in this because it's a recruiting tool.

When I talk to CEOs I usually do a little research on them, and often golf plays a role. A number of times they get from me a framed portrait of Pinehurst No. 2, and it's a treasured gift for them because they know how much it means. Economic impact of golf in the state, more than \$4 billion a year. It also provides mental and physical health for people.

When we went through this pandemic, it was tough on everybody. But golf stayed alive. I can't tell you how many people talked to me about, so glad that golf courses were still open; people were careful when we didn't know much about this virus, and they took steps to protect themselves, but getting out on that golf course and playing made a real difference, not only for people physically but mentally.

I'm grateful for the USGA and the good work you guys are doing to reach out. If there's a problem, it's considered golf being elitist, and USGA is working with a lot of other people to get golf out into communities and to get all different kinds of people playing this amazing sport.

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You've got First Tee that you're working on, and I'm grateful for that, and I'm going to head over to the Adaptive U.S. tournament over there and see these amazing and courageous people who are playing golf and who are having a great time.

This is a partnership, I believe, that will last a long time. I'm proud of what North Carolina has been able to do with this great game. I'm proud to be in Pinehurst today for this great celebration. There's going to be many more days of celebration to come.

I mentioned our legislative partners in all of this. It requires funding, and it requires commitment, and glad to have two members here who have worked on this and other issues with Senator McInnis, but I'm going to introduce to you Representative Jamie Boles. Representative Boles? Do you want to come on up?

JAMIE BOLES: Well, good morning. It's a beautiful day in Pinehurst, and I'm glad I'm the first one to say it. We welcome Governor Cooper, the USGA family, the local community and everyone who loves this great community and the game of golf. We are here today to discount North Carolina's author, Thomas Wolfe's novel, "You Can't Go Home Again," because the Golf Hall of Fame was born in Pinehurst in September of 1974, and now it's back where it belongs, at home here in Pinehurst, the home of American golf.

I want to thank the Governor Cooper, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, House Speaker Tim Moore, President Pro Tem of the Senate, Senator Phil Berger and many others who worked hard to make this project happen. This is an investment in North Carolina's golf industry, which has a huge economic impact in the Sandhills region and in many other communities across the state.

I'm going off script now.

I can remember about three years ago, I got a call from Mr. Pierce, Ernie, and one that we loved here in Pinehurst that passed yesterday, Mr. John Skvarla. Skvarla said, How about you and Tom meet me at my house on Linden Road, and of course when Mr. Skvarla said, Meet me, you don't say, Well, I'm tied up.

But it was a cold, rainy winter day, and we walked in, and Mr. Ernie Pierce was there, Skvarla, and Tom and I, and Mr. Skvarla said, I think we have a great opportunity before us; what do you guys think? And it was a no-brainer.

At that point in time, I had watched -- we had no idea that the World Golf Hall of Fame was even in the equation. We both pinched ourselves and said, We have got to pursue

this. That's how we have gotten to where we are today.

They assured us this would not be the only project by the USGA. A couple of months later, anytime Ernie calls you, you know he's got another project going on, and he told us about the possibility of the Golf Hall of Fame, and that was a no-brainer.

I was reading an article that was printed in 2014, and I'd just like to read a couple of quotes for you. First of all, I'd like to thank -- if you all didn't know, I'd like to thank Peter Stillwell, who became the executive director of the Hall of Fame in 1988 and transferred to Florida. I'd like to thank Peter for taking care of the artifacts that we are bringing back to Pinehurst.

I'd also like to take a quote from the first executive director, and we all knew him, John Durr. His quote was, about the World Golf Hall of Fame, "Maybe it was ahead of its times or maybe it was behind its times." I always like to think here in Pinehurst we're always ahead of our times, and I'm glad that we were able to acquire this to come back home.

John also quoted that day, it was an exciting day, he was the first director of the Hall of Fame who served as master of ceremonies that day when President Ford came down for the opening. It was also John who made an interesting quote. Bobby Jones suggested that "If we have a Hall of Fame, it ought to be in Pinehurst, not Augusta." Quote-unquote from John.

With that, we are blessed to have the USGA driving this project as part of the Golf House Pinehurst, and we see it as another enhancement to the visitors' experience. We look forward to seeing this world class facility open and hosting visitors before the U.S. Open here in Pinehurst in 2024. Thank you all, and at this point in time, I'd like to introduce my colleague, Senator Tom McInnis.

(Applause.)

TOM McINNIS: Good morning, and welcome to the World Golf Hall of Fame induction, a reunion of opportunity to come back to North Carolina. What a great day this is. Man, I can't believe it.

I remember with great sorrow in my heart, tears in my eyes, when I first learned that the Golf Hall of Fame was leaving the cradle of American golf, the home of American golf. It was a dark day in Pinehurst that day.

I don't know what happened. I don't know why it happened. I was not in office. I was just a lowly member of the club here. But I remember it just like it was yesterday. I said, That can't happen.

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But as the good Lord always tells us, Everything happens for a reason. When one door closes, another one opens.

Today our door opens.

I can only think of what Mr. Tufts and Donald Ross are sitting around on a tee box somewhere in heaven and are talking right now about what has gone on in the last few months and weeks here in Pinehurst. What are they doing down there at my flagship resort? They're bringing the world to our doorstep.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have traveled all over the United States, Canada, the islands, and everywhere I go, I can tell them when they say, Where are you from, I can name a town here and a town there. They've never heard of it. But when you mention the word "Pinehurst," they light up just like a Christmas tree on Christmas morn. Their eyes have a sparkle and a glow because they know we're talking about the opportunity to participate in the greatest game in the world, and that's the game of golf.

I can think about those two gentlemen, and I know they're looking at us with great pride and a big smile.

Folks, this is an opportunity of a homecoming. We've already talked about it leaving, and now we're having a homecoming. We will see the world stage come to our door on many, many, many fronts because of this opportunity.

As Jamie so eloquently stated when we first heard about this thing from Ernie Pierce and David Farrell and John Skvarla, it didn't take us but about three seconds to say, Sold! Let's get this done. Let's make it happen. We went to our leadership, and I want to thank the leadership of the General Assembly and also of the Congress of the United States because we had our local delegation in the United States Congress very supportive of this transaction, these transactions now.

But I can tell you that when the leadership of the Senate and the house heard about this, they too were absolutely blown away and excited that we would have this chance, of all the places under the canopy of heaven, that we would be right here in Pinehurst this morning making this great announcement, and all it took was collaboration and working together, which I want to thank the governor for signing our budget. It's a great budget, and it does a lot of things for North Carolina.

Folks, this is the home of American golf. This is an absolute reunion. I can tell you that within 50 miles of where we sit and stand right now, we have economic

prosperity and expansion happening in our state at a rate never before seen. We have electric vehicles going to be produced; we have electric batteries going to be produced; we have chips that are going to be made and supersonic jet airplanes all within an hour's drive of where we stand right now.

Folks, those people like to play golf, too. So we're going to have them here, I can assure you. The opportunity is unbelievable, and folks, let me tell you, welcome home, World Golf Hall of Fame, to the home of American golf!

Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: The danger in speaking last is that I'm ready to fly off the stage at this point (laughter). Governor Cooper, Representative Boles, Senator McInnis, thank you so much. On behalf of everyone at the USGA, we are deeply appreciative of your commitment to the USGA, to Pinehurst and to the game of golf.

This concludes our program for today. All of our speakers will be available for one-on-one interviews, so please see myself or a member of the USGA team if you'd like to speak to someone. We'd be happy to facilitate that.

Should your schedule allow this afternoon, I would encourage you if possible to make a trip over to Pinehurst No. 6. The U.S. Adaptive Open I think has exceeded our admittedly lofty expectations, and that's in no small part due to all the contributions from this community and everyone at Pinehurst. If you can, please come and join us, we'd like to have you over there. Thanks again for being with us on this moment us day and for this really special announcement. We very much appreciate it. Thank you.

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