

The Atlanta Athletic Club Hosts the 93rd PGA Champion

Bobby Jones's Spirit Lives on at The AAC, Three Time Host of the PGA

By Robin LoRé for The 19th Hole Magazine

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This year the Atlanta Athletic Club, home of Bobby Jones, will have a third jewel in its own triple crown of sorts. The club will be one of only five to have ever hosted the PGA three times. The AAC's first PGA was in 1981; Georgia native Larry Nelson took the Wannamaker Trophy that year. The second time around for the AAC was in 2001; another American, David Toms of Louisiana was the winner. This year, 2011, will give birth to yet another PGA champion in Atlanta.

The AAC is famous for its association with Bobby Jones. Jones began playing there as a child. The AAC was where he honed his astounding golf skills. His spirit is certainly firmly rooted at this prestigious club. The legendary amateur holds the singular honor of having won four major championships in one year. It was in 1930 that Mr. Jones pulled off this startling feat. He was 28 years old. His achievement so rocked the sports world that the press had to come up with a phrase lofty enough to suit its magnificence. Thus the birth of the term "Grand Slam." The modern day equivalent to Bobby Jones's Grand Slam would be winning The Masters, The Open, The US Open and the PGA all in one year. To date, this has not been accomplished by either an amateur or professional golfer. Bobby retired from golf after his Grand Slam win to devote more time to his law practice. However, while he left the game for other pursuits, the game never left him. He later collaborated with Spaulding to create his own line of golf clubs; he also taught golf and produced eighteen golf training movies. His association and loyalty to The AAC never wavered either; he served as the club's president and remained an active member until his death in 1972.

Only the best professionals qualify to play in the PGA Championship. It offers the winner many honors as well as a hefty cash purse. It was the brainchild of businessman Lewis Rodman Wannamaker. The first competition was held in 1916 in Eastchester NY. The department store mogul donated the now celebrated Wannamaker Trophy as a prize to be kept for one year by the current PGA winner. The original 27 pound silver trophy was inadvertently "lost" in 1925 while in the possession of another gifted golf legend, Walter Hagen. It was mysteriously recovered five years later in an unmarked box. However, during its absence, the PGA was forced to create a replica, which has been used as the standard fill-in since its 1925 disappearance. The original is now on display at the PGA Historical Center in Port St. Lucie, Florida. Every year the PGA winner's name is engraved on that original. The replica, however, goes to the current PGA Champion. The 2010 PGA winner was Martin Kaymer from Germany. Who will claim the

coveted Wannamaker prize in August of 2011 at the AAC? If the spirit of Bobby Jones knows, he's not telling.