

## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Mark D. Berman  
MediaShare Consulting Group  
904.838.4962

### **TY VOTAW TO GIVE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT GATE AMERICAN JUNIOR OPENING CEREMONIES**

***-- NATIONAL ANTHEM BEING SUNG BY LOCAL TEEN REBECCA HEWITT, ATTENDANCE TO  
INCLUDE MANY OF GOLF'S DIGNITARIES --***

(Ponte Vedra Beach, FL) – When the Gate American Junior golf championships hosts the world's top junior golfers on December 19-22, it will also be a preview into the 2016 Olympic Games, the first in which golf will be a medal event.

Today it was announced that Ty Votaw, Executive Vice President of Communications and International Affairs at the PGA TOUR will deliver the keynote address to these players at the event's opening ceremonies. As a person intimately involved in golf's successful bid to become an Olympic sport, Votaw will explain the importance of golf on this global level and provide inspiration for these young athletes, many of whom are traveling to Ponte Vedra with their national teams – and all of them competing at the Gate American Junior already boasting of national pride.



On December 19-22, 2011 many of the world's top junior players -- including the top three boys as ranked by the World Junior Golf Rankings -- will convene at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club for the World Junior Golf Series' **Gate American Junior**. Seventy-eight male and female players from 18 countries will battle it out on the resort's famed Ocean Course, home to five US Open qualifying events. The Gate American Junior is the final event of a four-event series played around the world and a key event in the World Junior Golf Rankings.

The Opening Ceremonies and Introduction of Nations will begin at 6:00 PM on December 19 at the Ponte Vedra Inn & Club's Ballroom. In attendance at the event will be many area and golf industry dignitaries including Steve Mona of the World Golf Foundation; Susanna Rosswag, President of the World Junior Golf Foundation; Herbert Peyton, CEO of title sponsor Gate Petroleum; Jim Awtrey, retired president of the PGA of America; Anders Forsbrand, European Ryder Cup Vice Captain and World Junior Golf Foundation Board member and, of course, Votaw. In addition to Votaw, remarks will be made by Peyton and Rosswag. Each participating player and their representative nations will be introduced.



Local 13 year-old singing sensation, Rebecca Hewitt of Jacksonville Beach (FL) will officially kick off the tournament by performing the United States' National Anthem. A VIP dinner with the players will follow the brief ceremony.

Said Votaw, "A number of these players have a chance to represent their countries in future Olympic Games and we thought it appropriate to communicate how golf and its inherent values align so well with the ideals of the Olympic movement, as does the WJGF mission of using sport as a platform to hopefully develop participants into future leaders who can help make a positive difference in the world."

Competitive rounds will begin at 9:00 AM on December 20 on the first and tenth tees of the Ocean Course. The official practice round will be held on December 19th with tee times beginning at 9:00 AM. Watching the practice round as well as the actual tournament rounds are free to the public.

Included in the Gate American Junior field are **Cody Proveaux** of the United States, who is currently leading the Polo Golf Rankings, Poland's **Adrian Meronck**, who is currently ranked number one in the World Junior Golf Rankings and **Maximillian Rottluf** of Germany, currently ranked number two in the WJGS rankings.

On the girls' side of the draw are Austria's Girls' Junior Champion **Marina Stuetz**, who is currently ranked number four in the World Junior Golf Rankings; South Africa is represented by **Lara Weinstein**, ranked number six in the World Junior Golf Rankings; and the Hungarian Girls Junior Champion, **Csilla Rozsa**, ranked 14th in the World Junior Golf Rankings. There are also expected to be national teams coming from Mexico, Sweden and Germany.

Gate Petroleum Company of Jacksonville (FL) became the title sponsor in October of 2011. Also involved in the event are sponsors CSX, Energy Armor, Florida's First Coast of Golf, the St. John's County Tourist & Development Commission, International Golf Realty, Kermit's Key Lime Pies, Chick Fil A, Bill Casper Golf and The Alhambra Theatre & Dining, who is hosting the players and their families on Wednesday night for a "Traditional American Holiday Celebration" featuring a showing of Christmas Carole. Levy Jewelers at the St. Johns Town Center is also aboard as the Official Jeweler of the Gate American Junior.

Ponte Vedra Beach hosted the event in 2010 at TPC Sawgrass and in 2009 at the Inn & Club. This year's event represents a bigger, stronger field and a more critical event. The World Junior Golf Series is quickly becoming recognized as a key worldwide junior tour. During the Gate American Junior, a WJGS event, boys and girls born in 1992 or later will be competing for 54 holes of championship golf on an historic course. The tour hosts three other events, including tournaments in South Africa, Germany and Poland.



**About the World Junior Golf Series ([www.wjgs.org](http://www.wjgs.org))**

The World Junior Golf Series is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation dedicated to creating a competitive international arena for youth that will promote good citizenship, scholarship, benevolence, competitive spirit and outstanding ethical conduct through a variety of competitive golf-related activities and other organized learning experiences. Under the direction of the WJGS, a series of international tournaments will be held around the world in an endeavor to establish the first World Junior Ranking System and to enhance the competition for prestige play among Junior Golfers. Every tournament will be structured and operated as a major tour event utilizing premiere courses and accommodations enhanced by experienced and caring staff and advisors. The challenging play, competitive spirit, and international camaraderie will culminate in competition to help decide the best junior players in the world.

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