

ISPS Handa Golf Tournaments

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Tournaments for sports charity, revitalizing golf

As the fate of many sporting events — the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games chief among them — are up in the air, the International Sports Promotion Society plans to sponsor four golf tournaments by September.

The sports charity, also known as ISPS Handa, was founded by and is chaired by Japanese philanthropist Haruhisa Handa.

At the July 15 ISPS Handa and the Professional Golfers' Association of Japan press conference in Shinjuku, Handa said, "I want to encourage professional golfers, revitalize the golf industry and win the battle against the coronavirus at the same time."

The senior tournament to be held at Asagiri Country Club in Shizuoka Prefecture from July 30 will be the first professional golf tournament during the 2020 season where a gallery is able to attend. Two of the four tournaments are for charity and support health care workers engaged in the fight against the coronavirus.

This commitment to goodwill is part of ISPS Handa's founding principles as the organization was originally founded to help those with disabilities enjoy and participate in sports. Throughout the 14 years since its establishment, ISPS Handa has grown into

an international charity that supports an array of organizations and events in Japan and abroad based on the belief that sports have the power to change society, unite people and contribute to the pursuit of world peace.

Among these sports is golf; ISPS Handa has successfully increased the number of senior tours from three to 19 and sponsored 42 matches over the years. Handa actually announced last year that the foundation was withdrawing from sponsoring senior tours because it had already achieved significant contributions. However, Handa ISPS has chosen to continue providing support in response to the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic that has resulted in the postponement and cancellation of events and competitions as well as a situation rife with uncertainty that extends beyond the world of sports.

Handa also said the foundation would be happy to assist if, for any reason, the number of senior tour matches drops again.

"I hope that the success of the first tournament with the attendance of the gallery this year will encourage other golf tournament organizers to follow suit," he said.

PGA Chairman Masahiro Kuramoto said,

"We are grateful for the support. Many professional golfers are hungry for matches. We will take the best possible measures to ensure the safety of all participants."

Gallery members are to be admitted to all four of the tournaments free of charge and will be given a set of infection prevention items. These include a face shield, mask and a pair of plastic gloves. Event staff dressed up as police officers wearing masks designed in the likeness of Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike will also patrol the golf course, reminding the gallery to be mindful and practice proper social distancing.

Masashi "Jumbo" Ozaki, a renowned Japanese professional golfer who will co-sponsor and participate in one of the coronavirus charity tournaments, attended the press conference online and said, "I hope that each participant will think hard (about) what he or she can do about the current situation. I want to see highly motivated young talents compete with each other."

Shiho Oyama, who has won a number of professional women's tournaments and donated much of her prize money to disaster-hit areas such as Miyagi and Kumamoto prefectures, will also participate in the



women's charity tournament. She sent a video message to the press conference that expressed her appreciation and respect for medical workers who are tackling the coronavirus situation and said, "I hope I can empower people by doing my best in the match."

Following the first senior tournament that kicks off today, another ISPS-spon-



Left: Professional golfer Masashi Ozaki joined the press conference for the charity event online. Above: Haruhisa Handa (middle) with representative of ATP Golf Tour Yuichi Tokita (left), and PGA Chairman Masahiro Kuramoto (right) at the press conference.

sored senior tournament is scheduled to take place at the Akagi Golf Club in Gunma Prefecture from Aug. 21.

The women's charity tournaments are to be held on Aug. 3 and 4, while the men's tournament is expected to take place on

Sept. 14 and 15. The total prize money amounts to ¥30 million each. All or part of the prize money of the women's tournament and 20 percent of the prize money of the men's tournament is to be donated to medical institutions.