



The First Tee of Western NY teen selected to play in official PGA TOUR Champions event

Ben Spitz heads to Pebble Beach for PURE Insurance Championship Impacting The First Tee, which is celebrating its 15th Anniversary

Tournament To Air Internationally on Golf Channel this September

CITY, State (July 11, 2018) – The First Tee of Western New York is sending Ben Spitz to compete in the [2018 PURE Insurance Championship Impacting The First Tee](#), an official PGA TOUR Champions event to be contested at Pebble Beach Golf Links and Poppy Hills Golf Course in Pebble Beach, California, September 24-30. The tournament, which is hosted by the Monterey Peninsula Foundation, will be televised internationally on Golf Channel September 28-30.

The PURE Insurance Championship is the only event of its kind in which 81 junior golfers from The First Tee are teamed with 81 PGA TOUR Champions players and 162 amateurs during an official PGA TOUR Champions tournament. Spitz will be competing for the pro-junior title. He will join [80 other participants](#) from The First Tee chapters, selected by a national panel of judges. The participants, which represent 22 states, were selected based on playing ability and application of the Nine Core Values and life skills learned through their involvement with The First Tee's programs.

The junior field was announced this morning on Golf Channel's Morning Drive. The show included surprises from PGA TOUR winner Jason Gore, Web.com Tour member Cameron Champ, Arizona State football coach Herm Edwards, Seattle Mariners manager Scott Servais and Golf Channel's Charlie Rymer.

“We are proud to be a part of such a prestigious event that supports so many deserving young men and women from The First Tee throughout the country,” said Katherine Frattarola, Chief Marketing Officer of the PURE Group of Insurance Companies. “They are what make this tournament so special, and it’s humbling to be a part of something that has such a profound impact on their lives both on and off the course.”

“We are proud of the junior golfers selected to play at this year’s PURE Insurance Championship,” said Keith Dawkins, Chief Executive Officer of The First Tee. “These 81 teens, and the event, embody The First Tee’s beliefs around the importance of fan engagement, diversity and inclusion and having a sense of civic responsibility that is expressed through our Nine Core Values.”

As of July 11, players committed to compete in the PURE Insurance Championship include defending champion and World Golf Hall of Fame member Bernhard Langer, as well as fellow World Golf Hall of Fame members Colin Montgomerie, Mark O'Meara and Sandy Lyle. Players have until Friday, September 21 to commit, with additional commitments to be announced in the coming months.

Ben is an accomplished junior player in Western New York. He competes at a high level in the WNYPGA Junior Tour and is considered one of the top High School golfers in Western NY. Ben plays at Orchard Park High School and won the Section VI title in 2018. He represented Section VI at the NYSPHSAA State Championship where he finished tied for 13th out of 184 players. "Ben has been a pleasure to coach over the years. He has been coachable, respectful, and an amazing team leader. Ben will truly be missed after he graduates this year." Said Nate Leary – Orchard Park High School Golf Coach.

Tim Frank, the Executive Director of The First Tee of Western New York said "The First Tee of Western New York is extremely proud of Ben and everything he has accomplished in our program. He is both a tremendous golfer and a tremendous person. We look forward to seeing him represent our organization at Pebble Beach."

When Ben learned he was selected he said "I am extremely grateful for the opportunity The First Tee of Western New York has given me. I can't wait to learn more from the best and have the experience of a lifetime at one of the best courses in the world".

In this 15th tournament year, more than 870 kids from The First Tee have played in the tournament while learning from PGA TOUR Champions players and amateurs in the field, all while showcasing The First Tee's Nine Core Values and the leadership and life skills they have acquired.

The First Tee of Western New York is one of 150 chapters around the country and world introducing the sport of golf and The First Tee's Nine Core Values to kids, positively impacting their lives. Serving the Western New York Community, thousands of kids have been impacted through our chapter programs, The First Tee National School Program, which is in elementary schools, and The First Tee DRIVE which is at participating youth centers. The organization is engaging the next generation of fans, growing and diversifying the sport and positively impacting millions of kids along the way through The First Tee Nine Core Values™: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment.

To learn more about The First Tee of Western New York, visit <https://www.thefirstteewesternny.org>

For more information on the 2018 PURE Insurance Championship, visit www.pureinsurancechampionship.com. For more information Ben Spitz, to request an interview or photos, please contact Tim Frank – tfrank@thefirstteewny.org