

# Master the Majors with a Look at Golf's Biggest Tournaments



Amid golf's nine-month season and 36 PGA Tour events, there are four tournaments that stand above all others: golf's "majors." The Masters is first on the calendar, each April; then The PGA Championship is held in May; the U.S. Open in June; and the (British) Open Championship in July. Each tournament is structured as 72 holes of stroke play, which span four days, Thursday to Sunday. The lowest score wins.

Only five players have won all four tournaments in their entire careers — known as the career grand slam — and no one has won them all in the same year. The closest is Tiger Woods, who won the final three majors of 2000, then the 2001 Masters, meaning he held all four major trophies at once, just not in the same calendar year. That accomplishment has come to be known as the "Tiger Slam."

This is the perfect time to look at what makes each major special, and why you'll want to watch all the rest of the chips, putts and sand wedges on DIRECTV.

1

Jack Nicklaus holds the record for the most major championships won, with 18 titles, while Woods follows with 15.

## Masters

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The Masters is the only major tournament established by a private club, Augusta National in Georgia, rather than a national golf organization.

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Consequently, the Masters is the sole major played annually on the same course, since its inception in 1934.

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The Masters field is the smallest of the four majors, with an invite-only roster of up to 100 players — including both professionals and amateurs.

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The course was built on land that was previously a flower nursery, and today each hole is named after a tree or shrub. Highlights include Magnolia (Hole 5), Camellia (Hole 10), and Chinese Fir (Hole 14).

6

The Masters champion is awarded a trophy shaped like the clubhouse and a prestigious green blazer (the "green jacket"), symbolizing membership in Augusta National.

## PGA Championship

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Established in 1919, The PGA (Professional Golf Association) Championship was initially a single-elimination match play event until 1958.

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The PGA Championship rotates courses annually, predominantly within the eastern United States. The 2024 venue is Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky.

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Because the PGA Championship does not allow any amateurs on its courses, the tournament is often thought to have the strongest lineup of any golf major.

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The PGA Championship winner is awarded the giant Wanamaker Trophy, named for a businessman who helped establish the PGA. Winners must return the trophy to be used again for the following year's tournament.

## U.S. Open

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Officially the United States Open Championship, the second oldest major tournament was first played in 1895.

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Open to any golfer with a men's USGA Handicap Index at 1.4 or below, PGA Tour players can qualify in a myriad ways; amateurs must graduate through a series of qualifying tournaments.

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The U.S. Open is often played on difficult courses that value accuracy and course management. It's not unusual to see winners finish at or over par for the tournament.

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The winner of the tournament is awarded the U.S. Open Championship Trophy, which mimics the award given at the first tournament in Rhode Island.

## The Open

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The only major to be played abroad, the (British) Open Championship, first teed off in 1860 and is the oldest and sometimes considered the most prestigious of the majors.

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Though it rotates courses across Great Britain and Ireland, winning the Open Championship at Scotland's St. Andrews, the birthplace of golf, is often regarded as golf's highest honor.

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The tournament is played on links courses — wide, rolling courses near the coastline with sandy soil and a lack of trees to act as windbreaks.

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156 players begin this tournament. The winner receives one of golf's most coveted prizes, the Claret Jug, which was first awarded more than 150 years ago.

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to dust off your clubs?  
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