

The Perfect Swing

Retired
Oakmont golf pro
Bob Ford
receives USGA's
highest honor.

By Jennifer Brozak



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After a lifetime on the links, longtime Oakmont Country Club professional Bob Ford will receive the USGA's highest honor this June.

At a ceremony to take place on June 13 during the 117th U.S. Open Championship in Erin, Wisconsin, Ford will receive the Bob Jones Award, which recognizes individuals who demonstrate the spirit, personal character and respect for the game exhibited by Jones, winner of nine USGA championships.

Ford served 42 years at Oakmont—37 as the head professional—before retiring this past October. Widely considered one of the game's greatest ambassadors and often identified as a "pro's pro," he still works in a similar role at the private Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, FL, a job he's held since 2000.

"I'm incredibly honored and humbled to be recognized in this capacity," Ford says.

Ford, a native of Philadelphia, began his Oakmont career in 1975, when he served as an assistant to 1947 U.S. Open Champion Lew Worsham. According to a statement released by the USGA, Ford played a valuable role in helping to bring the U.S. Open to Oakmont on four separate occasions, including last summer.

During his time at Oakmont, Ford served as a mentor to more than 100 golf professionals. He's also an accomplished player who qualified for three U.S. Opens, two U.S. Senior Opens and 10 PGA Championships. He's a former president of the Tri-State PGA, and over the years received four national awards: the 1985 and 1997 PGA National Merchandiser of the Year, 1987 PGA National Professional of the Year and 1988 National Club Professional of the Year. He was inducted into the PGA Hall of Fame in 2005, and Pittsburgh City Council also acknowledged Ford's contribution to the community during the 2016 U.S. Open by declaring it "Bob Ford Week."

Ford, who will be the 64th recipient of the Bob Jones Award, says he is delighted and honored to be named alongside past winners like Arnold Palmer (1971), Jack Nicklaus (1975), Fred Brand, Jr. (1997) and Carol Semple Thompson (2003). The award has been presented annually since 1955.

"Being selected as the first club professional to receive the award makes it incredibly special," adds Ford. "It's not just about me; it's an acknowledgement of the work that all PGA golf professionals do."

Even though he's retired from Oakmont and spends his winters in Florida, Ford still considers Oakmont his home. He plans to return to Oakmont Country Club—but this time as a regular member.

"I held two jobs at once for a while," he says with a laugh. "I'll be back home from June through October." ■