

Senior Open hopes to fill void left by International's demise

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The loss of The International golf tournament likely will be the 2008 U.S. Senior Open's gain. Tickets for the Open, which will be held at The Broadmoor from July 28 to August 3 next year, went on sale Monday, just more than three months after The International was canceled. The International had been held at Castle Pines Golf Club in Castle Rock since 1986 and was the only PGA Tour stop in the state.

"We're hoping these ticket sales (for the Senior Open) are increased because those people that used to go to The

International every summer are going to realize this summer that it's not there and they're going to be real hungry for golf," said Doug Habgood, the 2008 U.S. Senior Open championship director for The Broadmoor, at a Monday news conference. Colorado native Hale Irwin, the honorary chairman of the 2008 U.S. Senior Open who also was at the news conference, said he was "saddened" that his home state lost The International and that Colorado "deserves to have something like that."

But he expressed his excitement about what will be the sixth United States Golf Association championship held at The Broadmoor — the first since the 1995 U.S. Women's Open. "It's going to be a fantastic venue," Irwin said. "We're going to see some unbelievable shot-making, and when I look at the number of players that will be coming on and those that are already on — you just can't say enough how good these guys can play."

In addition to Irwin, others expected to be part of the 156-player field include Seve Ballesteros, Nick Faldo, Greg Norman, Mark O'Meara, Nick Price and Tom Watson.

Habgood said the tournament's goal was to sell upwards of 35,000 tickets. He added the Senior Open has secured the services of many of the volunteers that worked for years at The International and have received "a nice uptick" in corporate sponsors that supported The International.

Bill Hybl, the general cochairman of the 2008 U.S. Senior Open, said the tournament's hospitality sales are ahead of where sales were for the 2005 U.S. Women's Open at Cherry Hills in Denver approximately 13 months before that event. He added that the Senior Open already has 30 local and national sponsors under contract. In addition, Hybl



Colorado native Hale Irwin hit a ceremonial shot from a second-story balcony to a green about 75 yards away Monday at The Broadmoor. He was there to help publicize the 2008 U.S. Senior Open. (MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE)

said the tournament already has 1,700 volunteers committed — about half of what it will need.

The tournament, Habgood said, should have an economic impact of “upwards of \$30 million.”

Notes

The tournament will be contested on The Broadmoor’s east course. The par-72 course will be played as a par 70; the seventh and 17th holes, both par 5s, will be converted to par 4s. Tentatively, it will play to 7,202 yards. . . . Unless the television contract is altered, there will be about 14 hours of live coverage on ESPN and NBC, mostly on the weekend. . . . In case of a tie, the championship will be determined with a three- or fourhole aggregate-score playoff that will begin immediately after the 72nd hole. . . . Irwin hit the ceremonial first shot of the tournament after Monday’s press conference from a balcony to a green about 75 yards away. Irwin’s shot stopped about 6 feet from the hole.

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U.S. SENIOR OPEN TICKETS

Tickets for the 2008 U.S. Senior Open went on sale Monday. All tickets include free parking and free shuttle transportation to the admission gate. They are available through TicketsWest at all participating King Soopers; by phone at 877-281-OPEN; and on the Internet at www.2008ussenioropen.com. Kids ages 17 and under are admitted free with a ticketed adult. Active members of the Armed Forces receive discounts (in parentheses below).

Individual Tickets:

Practice rounds \$20 (\$17);
Thursday/Friday \$40 (\$34);
Saturday/Sunday \$45 (\$39)

Fore Pack: \$135 (\$115) Includes four good-any-one-day championship tickets — allows tickets to be divided up throughout the week or used all in the same day.

Season Pass: \$155 (\$135) Includes one ticket for each day of the championship (Monday through Sunday) and a commemorative championship program.

Trophy Club: \$250 (\$215) Includes seven individual daily tickets and a commemorative championship program. It also provides access to the championship grounds and a tented facility on the third fairway with food and beverages for purchase.

http://www.gazette.com/sports/open_22385_article.html/senior_tournament.html