



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO PLAYERS RECEIVE SPONSOR EXEMPTIONS FOR THE 2026 FOUR WINDS INVITATIONAL

Katelyn Huber and Bella Simões Set to Join the Field

SOUTH BEND, Ind. – June 29, 2026 – The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and its Four Winds® Casinos are pleased to announce that Katelyn Huber and Bella Simões have received sponsor exemptions to play in the 2026 Four Winds Invitational. Sponsor exemptions are used to give amateurs and up-and-coming players the opportunity to play in tournaments and compete against the next generation of LPGA stars. The Four Winds Invitational is part of the Epson Tour, which entered its 46th year of structured competition in 2026 and is the most established women’s qualifying tour in the world as the “Road to the LPGA.” The tournament will take place from Friday, July 10 through Sunday, July 12 at Blackthorn Golf Club. Proceeds from the tournament will be donated to Beacon Children’s Hospital.

Commenting on the sponsor exemption selections, Matthew Wesaw, Chairman of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan and Indiana said, “The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and its Four Winds Casinos are excited to have selected Katelyn Huber and Bella Simões as our sponsor exempt players for the 2026 Four Winds Invitational. We are proud that we have created an opportunity for so many young female golfers to pursue their dreams of playing professional golf. Several past winners have earned their LPGA Tour cards and found success on the LPGA Tour. While others have used the prize money to advance their careers and education in their chosen fields.”

Mary Smith, President and CEO of Four Winds Casinos said, “Katelyn and Bella are rising stars and represent the high level of talent competing on the LPGA’s Epson Tour. We are excited to welcome them to the 2026 Four Winds Invitational and wish them the best of luck. Not only does the tournament provide young ladies with professional development opportunities through golf, but it also supports Beacon Children’s Hospital’s efforts to provide vital healthcare resources to children and families in the region.”

Tim Firestone, CEO of Blackthorn Operating Group added, “Katelyn and Bella have a passion for the sport and proven tournament performance to compete with the best players on the LPGA’s Epson Tour. We look forward to welcoming them to Blackthorn Golf Club, along with the rest of the field, for a very competitive tournament.”

Katelyn Huber is a rising sophomore on the University of Florida women’s golf team and one of the top young amateur golfers in the country. During her freshman season, Huber earned SEC All-Freshman Team honors and was named SEC Freshman of the Week after posting one of the most successful debut campaigns in program

history. Huber competed in all 12 tournaments for the Gators during the 2025-26 season, recording six top-10 finishes and nine top-25 finishes while maintaining a 72.44 scoring average – the second-lowest by a freshman in University of Florida women’s golf history. She opened her collegiate career with a bogey-free 67 and posted a season-best fourth-place finish at the Cougar Classic. Huber also led Florida at the NCAA Tallahassee Regional with a sixth-place finish and won both of her matches at the SEC Championship. A highly accomplished amateur competitor, Huber reached the semifinals of the 2026 U.S. Women’s Amateur Four-Ball Championship, finished fourth at the 2026 Sally Amateur, and captured the prestigious 97th Florida Women’s Amateur Championship in June 2026. Her victory at the Florida Women’s Amateur added to an already impressive resume that includes two AJGA victories, two FJT Tour Championship titles, qualification for the 2023 & 2025 U.S. Girls’ Junior Championship, a third-place finish at the 2024 Pete & Alice Dye Junior Invitational, a fourth-place finish at the 2024 Arnold Palmer Invitational Junior, and a tie for third at the 2024 AJGA Junior at Innisbrook. More information on Katelyn Huber can be found at <https://www.instagram.com/katelynhuber06> or <https://www.instagram.com/katelynhuberamateur>.

Bella Simões is an exceptionally talented elite junior golfer based in the Miami/Lake Worth, Florida area. She is a five-time U.S. Kids World Champion, Under Armour World Championship winner, and Drive, Chip & Putt National Champion. Bella has already competed on some of the biggest junior golf stages in the country, including the USGA Girls’ Junior Championship at only 11 years old and again at 12 years old, as well as elite AJGA events and South Florida PGA tournaments. At just 9 years old, she also became one of the youngest players to attempt to qualify for the U.S. Women’s Open. She is also part of FSGA Team Florida, where she is the youngest member. Bella regularly competes in FSGA events throughout Florida, often playing against girls up to 18 years old, demonstrating her ability to compete at a high level beyond her age group. In 2026, she advanced to match play at the Florida Women’s Amateur Championship, earning a spot in the Round of 32 from a field of 90 players. Bella has competed in major junior tournaments across Florida, North Carolina, Texas, Georgia, Illinois, and Missouri. More information about Bella Simões can be found on her Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bellasimoes/?hl=en>.

Volunteers are still needed to fill a variety of roles including assisting with scoring duties and serving as building attendants, caddies, cart drivers, driving range attendants, food and beverage servers, marshals and spotters, parking attendants, standard bearers, shuttle drivers, and more. For more information and to complete the volunteer application, please visit <http://fourwindsinvitational.com/volunteer/>.

For questions regarding volunteer opportunities, please contact Cathy Wallisch, Four Winds Invitational Volunteer Coordinator at cathy@blackthorngolf.com.

About the Four Winds Invitational

The Four Winds® Invitational was established in 2012 as part of the Road to the LPGA® and is sponsored by the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians and its Four Winds® Casinos. The tournament features a field of professional women golfers from around the world. More information is available at: <http://fourwindsinvitational.com/>.

About The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan and Indiana

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi’s sovereignty was reaffirmed under legislation signed into law by President Clinton in September of 1994. The Pokagon Band is dedicated to providing community development initiatives such as housing, education, family services, medical care, and cultural

preservation for its more than 6,400 citizens. The Pokagon Band's ten-county service area includes four counties in Southwestern Michigan and six in Northern Indiana. Its main administrative offices are located in Dowagiac, Mich., with a satellite office in South Bend, Ind. In 2007, it opened Four Winds Casino Resort in New Buffalo, Mich., followed by Four Winds Hartford in 2011, Four Winds Dowagiac in 2013 and Four Winds South Bend in 2018. The Pokagon Band operates a variety of non-gaming businesses through its investment enterprises, Mno-Bmadsen and the Pokagon Development Authority. More information is available at www.pokagonband-nsn.gov, www.fourwindscasino.com and www.mno-bmadsen.com.

About the Epson Tour

The Epson Tour is the Official Qualifying Tour of the LPGA and enters its 46th competitive season in 2026. With the support of entitlement partner [Seiko Epson Corporation](http://www.seikoepson.com), the Tour's mission is to prepare the world's best female professional golfers for a successful career on the LPGA Tour. In the last decade, the Epson Tour has grown from 15 tournaments and \$1.6 million in prize money to \$5 million awarded across 20 events in 2025. In all, over 400 LPGA Tour titles have been won by Epson Tour alumni, including over 50 major championships. Follow the Epson Tour at www.epson.com, as well as [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/epsonlpgatour), [X](https://www.x.com/epsonlpgatour), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/epsonlpgatour).

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