



## A Brief History of “The Cobb”

For nearly 90 years, golfers have participated in The Irvin Cobb Golf Championships in Paducah, Kentucky. They arrive prepared to see how they stack up against the strongest field in the area on a course that requires patience and a variety of shots. But how did The Cobb get its start? The tournament began in 1937 as the Tri-State Amateur Golf Championship and featured 32 amateurs from five states. It was held at the old 9-hole Paducah Municipal Golf Course, now known as Rolling Hills Country Club, with the goal of furthering the game of golf in this area.

In 1940, the tournament moved to what is now Paxton Park, the first 18-hole golf course in Kentucky west of Louisville. The municipal course was established by the Paducah Junior Chamber of Commerce and Edwin J. Paxton to “bring golf to the working men and women of Paducah” and was brought to life by Franklin D. Roosevelt’s depression-era program called the WPA (Works Projects Administration). That same year, a professional division was added and nine pros were in the first field.

In 1941, the event was renamed after Paducahan Irvin S. Cobb, a writer and actor of the time who always said he was from Paducah, even when he moved to New York. By 1953, the Cobb was known as the largest golf tournament in the South, with as many as 319 players in the field. In the mid-50s, the Cobb hosted up to 3,000 spectators and, in the 60s, was described by a player as more of “an institution than a golf tournament.”

In 1960, Cliff Harrington, a black professional golfer who grew up caddying at Pinehurst Country Club, finished in the Cobb’s top 10, before any black pros played in the PGA Tour or were even allowed to play in most pro events. Mr. Harrington went on to win the Cobb twice: in 1961 and 1964. He died in combat in Vietnam in 1965 rather than opting out of the draft to compete professionally. We salute him.

The stewards of this event are incredibly proud of our Cobb players and their success. They inspire a new generation of elite golfers. The Cobb is a stepping stone for many players to their next level of competition, as evidenced by its pedigree. The tournament’s expansion to 54 holes and the qualification for USGA World Amateur Golf Ranking points continues to elevate the competition. We look forward to our newest edition of the tournament and, most of all, we want our players to enjoy their experience. The sportsmanship and character displayed by competitors has always been encouraging to witness and is a tribute to the quality of the field of players. **On behalf of our community, our volunteers and staff, and our sponsors, we hope you enjoy the 2025 edition of the Irvin Cobb Golf Championships.**

## “The Cobb” Fun Facts

Paxton Park was designed by George Davies of the British Isles

The 1938 Champions trophy (the tournament’s second year!) is on display in the Pro Shop, donated by O.H. Shelton, Junior’s family

Cobb alumni tout many professional accolades:

PGA Tour wins:	41 PGA Tour Champions wins:	Qualified for:
PGA Championship	7 majors	8 Ryder Cup
2 U.S. Opens	U.S. Men’s and Women’s Amateur	6 President’s Cup
3 Masters	Men’s and Women’s NCAA Champion	2 Walker Cup teams
	Countless Kentucky Opens	

Many highly skilled players have participated in the Cobb throughout its history. The players listed below have all won their respective state amateur championships, their respective state open titles, qualified or won on the PGA, LPGA, or PGA Champions Tours:\*

Bob Hamilton	Cary Middlecoff	Bob Goalby	Gay Brewer	Hillman Robbins
Jack Ryan	Pete Doll	Frank Beard	Herman Coelho	Ted Hale
Chick Yarbrough	Al Atkins	Bob Stone	Jay Haas	Ralph Landrum
Jerry Haas	Grant Sturgeon	Russ Cochran	Kenny Perry	Jimmy Brown
Tom Wargo	Jeff Cook	John Riegger	Brad Fabel	Danny Green
Rob Long	Aaron Ingalls	Jamie Broce	Rick Cochran	Chris Wilson
Jordan Blann	Buddy Bryant	Kent Bulle	Ben Godwin	Trey Shirley
Chris Osborne	Scott Beard	Fred Myers	J.B. Williams	Patrick Newcomb
Emma Talley	Josh Teater	Tim O’Neal	Ashton Van Horn	Trey Wall

\*Our apologies to anyone we overlooked; the quantity of quality players who have participated in the Cobb probably means we have missed someone inadvertently.