

Historical facts and figures about golf

Some interesting facts on golf's origins:

- Golf has no clear recorded origins
- A form of the game can be traced back to Roman times
- The Dutch game of 'kolven' is often suggested as the forerunner to golf
- The first documented mention of golf was an 1457 Act of the Scottish Parliament banning the game of 'gowf'
- Mary, Queen of Scots was known to play golf in the middle of the 16th century
- The earliest known instruction for playing the game was in 1687 in Edinburgh
- The oldest surviving rules of golf were written in 1744 by the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, who played at Leith Links in Edinburgh

The Oldest Major – Did you Know about The Open Championship?

- The first 12 Opens were played at Prestwick Golf Club in Scotland
- Willie Park Snr won the first Open on 17th October 1860, playing the 12-hole layout three times in the same day
- Park's son, Willie Jnr, also won The Open
- Eight of those first 12 Opens were won by either Tom Morris Snr or his son, Tom Jnr. They won four titles apiece
- The largest margin of victory in The Open was 13 strokes, by Tom Morris Senior in 1862
- Harry Vardon won most titles – six.
- In the modern era, Tom Watson won five, four of them in Scotland.
- Gene Sarazen was the oldest competitor aged 74 years, 4 months and 9 days at Royal Birkdale in 1976
- Royal Portrush in Northern Ireland is the only venue outside Scotland or England to stage The Open
- The biggest last round comeback was achieved by Scotland's Paul Lawrie, who made up a ten shot deficit to win after a play-off at Carnoustie in 1999
- Ian Baker-Finch of Australia is the only winner to have a hyphenated surname

The Other Majors – Did you Know?

- Only five players have won all four majors: Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Tiger Woods
- Only Nicklaus has won all four at least three times
- Tiger Woods is the only player to win the US PGA over the same course (Medinah No.3)
- The Masters at Augusta National is the only major to award a jacket as the trophy
- In the 1980 US Open, American Hubert Green made eight consecutive threes
- The inaugural Masters in 1934 was played in a different order to today, with the 10th being used as the first tee
- The US PGA Championship was a match play event from 1916 until 1957
- Gene Sarazen made the first albatross (double eagle) at the 15th at Augusta National on his way to winning the 1935 Masters
- Englishman Horace Rawlins earned \$150 for winning the first US Open in 1895
- Lanny Wadkins won the first sudden-death play-off winner in the 1977 US PGA
- John J McDermott was the first native-born winner of the US Open in 1911
- The largest margin of victory in the US Open was 15 shots by Tiger Woods at Pebble Beach in 2000

Women's golf – historical background

- Mary, Queen of Scots – arguably the first woman to play golf – coined the phrase 'caddie' by calling his assistants 'cadets'
- The first recorded women's golf tournament was held on New Year's Day, 1811, at Musselburgh in Scotland
- The first Ladies Golf Club was formed in St Andrews in 1867
- In 1932, the USA beat Great Britain and Ireland in the first Curtis Cup match for amateurs
- Patty Berg won the US Women's Amateur in 1938 at the age of 20
- The Women's Professional Golf Association was founded in 1944, to be replaced by the LPGA six years later
- The LPGA schedule in 1950 had 14 tournaments worth \$50 each
- The US Women's Open was the first nationally televised women's event in 1950
- The Ladies European Tour was formed as the WPGA in 1978
- The first Solheim Cup between Europe and USA professionals was played at Lake Nona in Florida
- Judy Bell became the first woman President of the USGA in 1996
- Augusta National admitted its first female members in 2012
- The Royal and Ancient Golf Club voted to accept female members in 2014

Did you Know?

- American Babe Zaharias completed the 'Grand Slam' at all three (at the time) women's majors in 1950
- Zaharias (nee Didrikson) won two gold medals (hurdles and javelin) and one silver (high jump) in the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics
- She was named Mildred, but earned the 'Babe' moniker after hitting five home runs in a baseball game
- Patty Berg holds the record for most major titles with 15
- Cathy Panton, daughter of British Ryder Cup player John, won the first Order of Merit on the Ladies European Tour in 1979
- Sweden's Annika Sorenstam is the most successful European in history with 10 majors and 93 titles worldwide before retiring in 2008
- Laura Davies, England's greatest golfer, was made a Dame of the British Empire in 2014
- Lorena Ochoa won the first women's tournament to be played over the Old Course at St Andrews in the 2007 Women's British Open