

# Significant Moments of AFRICAN AMERICANS IN GOLF

The African-American golfers who have worked to break down the color barrier in golf needed to be the best in their sport while refusing to let their disadvantages destroy their ambitions. Their lives and personal qualities have inspired people of all races and nationalities, exemplifying what it means to be a true champion—on the playing field and in daily life.

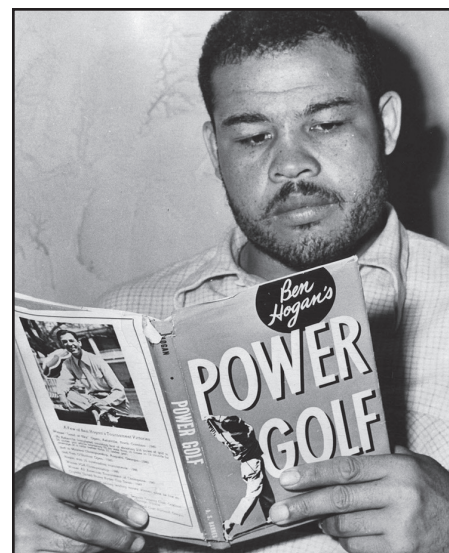
**1896**

John Shippen is the first African American to play in the U.S. Open.



**1921**

African-American owned Progressive Realty Company purchases Westfield Country Club and transforms it into Shady Rest Golf and Country Club, the first documented country club owned by African Americans.



**1952**

Former heavyweight boxing champion, Joe Louis, receives an exemption to play in the San Diego Open as an amateur. He is the first African American to play in a PGA-sanctioned event.

**1956**

Ann Gregory is the first African-American woman to play in a USGA championship, the U.S. Women's Amateur at Meridan Hills Country Club in Indianapolis.



**1961**

The "Caucasian-only" clause is removed from the PGA of America's by-laws.

**1964**

Pete Brown is the first African American to win an official PGA Tour event, the Waco Turner Open in Burneyville, Okla.

**1982**

Alton Duhon defeats Edward Updegraff to win the USGA Senior Amateur at Tucson (Ariz.) Country Club.



**1986**

The National Black Golf Hall of Fame is established by Harold Dunovant.



**2004**

Charlie Sifford is the first African American to be elected into the World Golf Hall of Fame. Sifford had two victories on the PGA Tour and won the UGA National Open six times.

**2009**

The PGA grants posthumous membership to Bill Spiller, Ted Rhodes and John Shippen, as well as an honorary membership to Joe Louis.

1890 - 1899 | 1900 - 1909 | 1910 - 1919 | 1920 - 1929 | 1930 - 1939 | 1940 - 1949 | 1950 - 1959 | 1960 - 1969 | 1970 - 1979 | 1980 - 1989 | 1990 - 1999 | 2000 - PRESENT



**1899**

Dr. George Grant invents the golf tee. But the prominent African-American dentist never markets his invention and another golfer is credited with it 25 years later.



**1925**

The United States Colored Golf Association is founded in Washington, D.C. It is renamed the United Golfers Association in 1929.



**1948**

William and Marcela Powell open Clearview Golf Course in East Canton, Ohio, the first golf course designed, constructed and operated by African Americans.

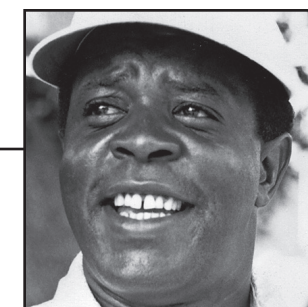
**1963**

Althea Gibson becomes the first African American to join the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour.



**1967**

Renee Powell joins the LPGA Tour. After competing for 13 years and playing in over 250 tournaments, she retires to run Clearview Golf Course.



**1975**

Lee Elder is the first African American to compete in the Masters Tournament.

**1997**



Tiger Woods wins the Masters by 12 strokes. He is the first African American to win one of golf's four major championships. In 2008, Woods claims his ninth USGA championship title, tying Bob Jones for most in USGA history.

## THE UNITED GOLFERS ASSOCIATION (UGA)

The UGA was formed in 1925 by a group of black businessmen to provide equal access and opportunity to the game of golf. The organization operated a series of golf tournaments for blacks during the era of racial segregation. Many talented golfers played on this tour, including Ted Rhodes, Bill Spiller, Pete Brown, Lee Elder, Willie Brown, Jr. and Charlie Sifford.

At the time, the Professional Golfers Association had an article in its by-laws stating that it was "for members of the Caucasian race." When this by-law was repealed in 1961, the United Golfers Association eventually disbanded.

## THE NORTH-SOUTH TOURNAMENT

After World War II, black golfers, especially returning servicemen, wanted opportunities to play. There were few courses and even fewer tournaments for them. Ray Mitchell, founder of a golf school in Harlem, N.Y., came up

with the idea of a mid-winter tournament in Florida.

The North-South Tournament became the largest black-sponsored competition in the

nation. Over the years the tournament attracted top pro golfers such as Charlie Sifford and Althea Gibson. Well-known amateur competitors included Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson.

Entertainers, athletes and businessmen came to see and be seen, bringing 2,000 visitors to Florida.

## Use the News

Make a list of character traits exemplified in the actions of the people in this text. Can you find examples of perseverance, courage, integrity, leadership and ambition?



*People exercise to build stronger muscles, read to become stronger readers or practice to become stronger athletes. But developing stronger character requires a different kind of practice.*

What do you do to build strong character?

How can losing a competition or making a mistake develop character?

Make a list of role models you admire because of their character.