

LPGA Tour veteran gets 2nd chance to be rookie

STAFF REPORT

Michelle McGann admits it is odd to think of herself as a rookie after 21 years on the LPGA Tour.

But McGann, who turned 45 in December, will make her debut on the LPGA Legends Tour in March at the Walgreens Charity Championship in Sun City West.

The season-opening event is set for March 6-8, with 50 Legends Tour members competing for a prize purse of \$250,000 at Grandview Golf Course.

"Nobody ever wants to get older, but this is the one exception to the rule," said McGann, who won seven LPGA tournaments, posted 69 top-10 finishes and earned more than \$3.29 million in her LPGA career.

"I'm looking forward to playing again because I've been out of competition for a while," said McGann, whose last LPGA tournament was in 2010. "And, it's going to be fun to be a part of that group called 'The Legends' because I spent my career with all of these ladies."

McGann, who qualified for the LPGA Tour in 1988 at age 18 out of high school, was a popular Florida professional who attracted fans with her booming drives and colorful large-brimmed hats.

She also was one of the first LPGA Tour players to compete while wearing an insulin pump in 1999.

McGann went on to found the Michelle McGann Golf Classic to benefit the Diabe-

tes Research Institute.

Health concerns sidelined McGann in 2005.

She played in only nine LPGA tournaments that year and posted a season-best tie for 19th at the 2006 ShopRite LPGA Classic.

Her last full season was in 2008, with 21 tournaments. Gradually, she opted to play in corporate outings and charity events, rather than globetrotting on the LPGA circuit.

In May 2010, she married Jonathan Satter and the couple settled in West Palm Beach, Fla., a few miles from where McGann grew up playing junior golf and winning three Florida State Junior Championships.

While she hasn't competed on tour for several years, McGann never stopped playing golf. She admits she began counting down the years until she was eligible to compete on the LPGA's official senior tour for players 45-over.

"In the back of my mind, I always knew 45 was the number," she said. "This is kind of like Phase 3 of my career — including juniors, LPGA and now the Legends Tour."

The event's official charity partners will be the Phoenix Children's Hospital and the American Diabetes Association, for which McGann hopes she can lend support during tournament week.

"It's all about awareness," she said of her charitable work. "We haven't ended diabetes yet, but one of these days, we'll find a cure."

As for her signature hats during competition, McGann said she's not sure if the line of hats she once designed will follow her to the Legends Tour.

But the Legends Tour rookie says she is looking forward to this next chapter in her career.

"I'm going to play in some Florida mini-tour tournaments and try to get ready," she said. "Most of all, I want to have some fun competing with the people I grew up playing."

Competition at the fourth annual Walgreens Charity Championship starts at 9 a.m. March 7 and March 8. The pro-am tournament on March 6 starts at 9:30 a.m.

Tickets are \$15 per day at the gate and are now available at Sun City West golf shops.

Advance tickets also will be sold for \$10 per day at area Walgreens stores. Kids under 13, as well as active military with an ID, will be admitted free of charge.

For more information, visit www.thelegendstour.com.

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Walgreens Charity Championship

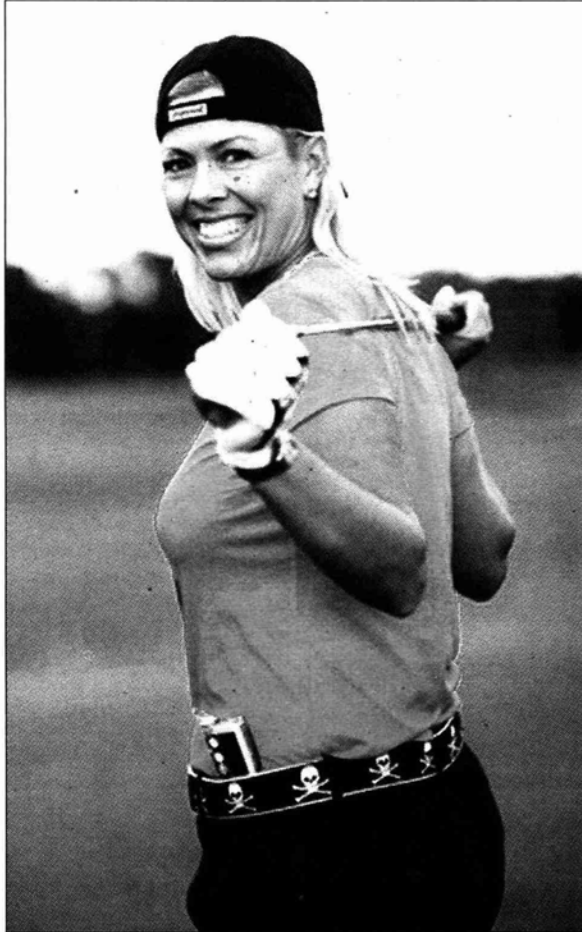
WHEN: March 6-8

WHERE: Grandview Golf Course, 14260 Meeker Blvd., Sun City West

TICKETS: Tickets are \$15 per day at the gate and are now available at Sun City West golf shops. Starting Feb. 5, advance tickets will be sold for \$10 per day at area Walgreens stores. Kids under 13, as well as active military with an ID, will be admitted free of charge.

INFO: www.thelegendstour.com.





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