

Heading north

Written by TMAC GOLF
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In the latter stages of 2008, the United States was presented with the early stage of an economic recession. In 2009, it jettisoned into a free fall. Corporate America was often heard touting the merits of its business beyond the confines of its domestic borders. As the rest of the world caught up to the economic flu first felt in the land of the brave and free, many companies no longer extolled the virtues of being a global enterprise since the diversification strategy wasn't delivering immunity. Over the course of the past few years littered with harsh conditions, financial sustainability has become a predominate theme.

After lending strategic and financial support to the Canadian Professional Golf Tour in 2012, the PGA TOUR has agreed to assume operational control of what will become PGA TOUR Canada in 2013.

The conversion will begin November 1. The TOUR said it evaluated all aspects of the Canadian Tour business prior to making its decision. "Having gained a thorough understanding of the golf landscape in Canada over the course of the 2012 season, we are confident that by fully dedicating our assets and resources, PGA TOUR Canada will be well positioned to play an increasingly important role in professional golf," PGA TOUR Commissioner Tim Finchem said. "With a solid foundation of existing tournaments along with outstanding opportunities to establish new events, we are confident PGA TOUR Canada will strengthen and grow in the coming years." The PGA TOUR Canada will be a division of the PGA TOUR. It will be managed just as the PGA TOUR Latinoamerica, the Champions TOUR, the PGA TOUR and the [Web.com](#) Tour. The attraction is basically retention of elite player development in Canada. The PGA TOUR has a number of sponsors in Canada, most notably Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) as well as strong fan base in the country. According to an economic impact study, nearly 6 million Canadians play golf, representing 21.5 percent of the population, which is more than double the U.S. participation rate.

Moving forward, the new PGA TOUR division will provide direct access to the [Web.com](#) Tour for its leading money winners, based on the final Order of Merit. The top five players will receive playing privileges on the [Web.com](#) Tour, while the next five will be exempt into the finals of the [Web.com](#) Tour qualifying school. Only the top player on the order of merit will receive a full exemption, while the remaining players will have conditional status. "We view this as a win-win proposition that strengthens an established Tour in a country that absolutely loves golf," Finchem said. "As the Tour continues to develop and grow, charitable contributions and the value provided to

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tournaments sponsors will increase, as well. As for the PGA TOUR, this expands our brand in Canada and gives us geographic integration throughout the Americas in concert with PGA TOUR Latinoamérica.”

PGA TOUR Latinoamérica emerged from collaboration between the PGA TOUR, Tour de las Américas, National Golf Federations, promoters and host clubs throughout Latin America and debuted this fall with 11 tournaments in seven countries. PGA TOUR Latinoamérica’s top five money winners will receive [Web.com](#) Tour playing status in 2013. Between PGA TOUR Latinoamérica’s plan to go to a split spring-fall schedule and PGA TOUR Canada’s summer schedule, players qualifying for both Tours will have the opportunity to play a year-long schedule. Both Tours will conduct their own qualifying tournaments for membership.

PGA TOUR Canada will debut with a minimum of eight tournaments in 2013 offering a minimum purse of \$150,000, with the goal of eventually growing to 12 or 13 events. All tournaments will be held in Canada during the summer month. “This is the logical next step for the Tour’s sustainability and growth,” said Pierre Blouin, Chairman of the Canadian Tour Board of Directors. “The PGA TOUR provided invaluable assistance throughout the 2012 season and through its evaluation process saw strong potential. Golf is incredibly popular in Canada and PGA TOUR Canada will be a very important part of Canada’s sports landscape in the coming years.”

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