

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus drives brand awareness via US Open presence

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Jason Day has been a Lexus Golf ambassador since 2011. Image courtesy of Lexus

By STAFF REPORTS

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is helping golf fans find their inner pro through a series of activations at the upcoming U.S. Open Championship.

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Marking its 11th consecutive year as the official automotive partner of the United States Golf Association's competition, Lexus is making its presence at the tournament known through experiences that range from gaming to hospitality. A hobby of the affluent, golf is a popular partner for luxury brands seeking a sport-minded audience.

Swinging simulations

The U.S. Open kicked off June 12 and will run through June 18. For the first time, the event is taking place at Erin Hills in Wisconsin.

Leading up to the tournament, Lexus took a 47-day road trip with the U.S. Open trophy. The 122-year-old trophy made stops at local events and landmarks in the Midwest, giving consumers the opportunity to learn more about the history of the U. S. Open.

Extending the engagement with the award, the Lexus Performance Experience stand at the Open will allow visitors to snap a photo with a trophy replica.



U.S. Open trophy. Image credit: U.S. Open

Also within the display, attendees can try their own hand at the course's ninth hole on a simulator. Those who get a hold in one on the digitized recreation of the par 3 hole will be in the running for a two-year lease of the 2017 Lexus RX 350 sport utility vehicle.

"Lexus Putt Like a Pro Experience" allows guests to step into the shoes of Tiger Woods, the victor of the 2008 U.S. Open at Torrey Pines. Trailing the leader Rocco Mediate by a stroke, he putted the ball about 15 feet to tie up the game and send it into playoff, eventually winning his third U.S. Open title.

In addition to playing pro, fans will have the chance to meet Lexus Golf ambassadors such as Jason Day, Peter Jacobsen, Johnny Miller, Wesley Bryan, Natalie Gulbis and Mark O'Meara at the stand. These personalities will pose for photos with visitors and sign autographs.

While engaging around golf, Lexus is also using its display to feature some of its newest models, such as the 2018 LC 500h and the 2018 LS 500h.

During the length of the tournament, Lexus' LC will be displayed on the course. It will also be using a fleet of 300 vehicles to shuttle players and officials throughout the competition.

"Our ongoing relationship with the USGA marks a continued commitment to Lexus fans and the sport of golf," said Greg Kitzens, general manager, Lexus marketing, in a statement. "From this year's Trophy Tour across the Midwest to autograph sessions with our Lexus golfers at Erin Hills, we look forward to creating a memorable experience for the players and fans."

Lexus frequently aligns with sports events to reach an active and captive audience.

Earlier this year, the automaker reached out to college basketball fans through a sponsorship deal with Yahoo Sports. For the second year, Lexus is hosting a digital game on Yahoo Sports surrounding the 2017 Men's College Basketball Tournament, giving consumers the opportunity to try their luck for a chance at a luxury trip to next year's championship. In addition to its game, Lexus was a presenting sponsor of Yahoo Sports' Tourney Pick'em fantasy platform, giving it a consistent presence throughout March Madness ([see story](#)).