With the “official” golf season coming to an end in Montana, it is a time of reflection for the 2014 season. Overall, as a state, this was a solid year for weather and few schedules and tournaments required delays.

Even though Montana’s season is over, we at the MSGA hope that your golf season isn’t over, just the reporting of scores played in Montana. The off season allows for fluctuations in weather and the resulting conditions. It is conceivable that one could play golf in January, but the hard winter ground and lack of greens keeping wouldn’t allow for true golf scoring conditions.

With this said, scores can and should be reported if you are playing in the winter months in an area that is in-season. November 1st through March 31 is out of season for Montana, but your travels to states (usually southern) that are in-season can and must be entered. When playing out of state, the status of the season at your home club is irrelevant.

A complete listing of regions and their season dates can be found online at: http://www.usga.org/handicapping/education/revision_schedule/Handicap-Revision-Schedule/.

We hope that the 2014 active season was just that for you – active! But, our hope is that although our “off-season” begins November 1, it doesn’t mean your golfing season is over. Hopefully you’ll get a few swings in on a vacation to a warmer climate.

Post Scores at HOME. View Score History. TRACK Stats. Print Your Card. Message FRIENDS.

Receive a FREE Digital Subscription to Golf World.
A major part of the USGA’s mission is to make the game healthy and viable for generations to come, in part by improving pace of play. To that end, the USGA has been accumulating hard data to uncover the root of slow play on golf courses, and preparing to share their findings with golfers, facilities and leaders across the industry. This past summer, through the work of USGA Technical Director Matt Pringle and USGA Research Engineer Scott Mingay, the Association began to gather information using portable GPS devices from thousands of golfers, both recreational and competitive, to help identify pace-of-play issues. Many aspects of this study will be discussed at the USGA’s Pace of Play Symposium, which will be held Nov. 12-13 at Golf House in Far Hills, N.J. Pringle recently discussed this work with USGA Senior Staff Writer David Shefter.

Where are we in terms of the USGA’s pace-of-play study?
Pringle: We’re not at the results phase yet. We’re still in the analysis phase. But I would be shocked if we don’t come out with a number of actionable items. I think this shows the USGA’s commitment to solutions. It seems in golf all anyone wants to do is talk about [issues]. We’re trying to do something about it.

How many courses and people were involved in the study?
Pringle: We recorded data from 5,396 rounds this summer at 135 golf courses. They were private, public and municipal. Most of the rounds were recreational, but there were some state/regional competitions and some [USGA] qualifiers. We had an average of 40 golfers per event and the gender breakdown was 87 percent men and 13 percent women.

Did the USGA develop the program?
Pringle: We went from never having done anything like this to having eight interns stationed around the country and allowing them to plug these GPS units into their computer. The beauty of it is the raw data doesn’t change. It’s just a series of locations and times. But Scott [Mingay] is able to make tweaks to his program to allow us to measure other metrics. It’s a database and statistical analysis. It’s all singing and all dancing.

How big was the device?
Pringle: You stick it in your pocket. They’re like the size of a flash drive. And they just collect [data] from where you are every five seconds. It doesn’t transmit [data], it just collects. It’s time and location. That’s it. And we put a little sticker on them with an identification number. The golfer played with that and gave it back [to the intern].

Where did the eight interns come from?
Pringle: They were all science, engineering or math [college] students. We got them into various parts of the country, places like California, Washington, Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Virginia and Pennsylvania. They went to golf courses three to four times a week.

What other pieces of information did you collect from the golfers?
Pringle: On the first tee, the intern would ask the golfers a handful of questions. We would collect the age, the gender and the handicap if they had one. We asked them how far they drove the ball, how far they hit their 9-iron, walking versus carts, and if they used a caddie. We would collect what tee they hit from. We would collect if it was cart path only, 90 degrees or carts everywhere. All that is in the data sheet. And then they would ask the superintendent for the green about speed, rough height and difficulty of hole locations. Were they easy, medium or difficult? We’d get the weather conditions for that day.

Where did the information go?
Pringle: They were all science, engineering or math [college] students. We got them into various parts of the country, places like California, Washington, Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Virginia and Pennsylvania. They went to golf courses three to four times a week.

Explain flow rate.
Pringle: It’s just like it is on the New Jersey Turnpike. When you use Google Maps on your iPhone to plan a route, it knows the traffic flow. It doesn’t know where every individual car is, it just knows things are flowing at 40 mph. That’s what we’re looking at. That’s why it isn’t important where exactly they hit their shot, but all that matters is how fast can golfers move around a golf course. If you as a golf course operator try to put more golfers on it than can flow through it, then traffic jams occur.

...Continued on the next page
Have you seen any trends from the raw data?
Pringle: We're in the midst of processing these 5,000 to 6,000 rounds, so we can get the flow rates and now we're going to try and correlate them to all those other variables that we collected. And then we can say here's what affected flow rate. So in 2015, we can actually deliver some actionable advice.

What are some of the culprits of slow play?
Pringle: First and foremost, we're pointing to the fundamentals of tee-sheet management and very few golf courses have an active measurement and control system. I always say at the end of the day a golf course is like a factory that is producing rounds of golf. DuPont doesn't try and run a chemical plant without measurement and control. We shouldn't be running golf factories without measurement and control either. And yet we are. Even if just basic measurements are taken, I think the golf course operator will realize a lot of improvement from that.
The USGA has also developed another piece of technology to help pace of play on the golf course. Can you discuss this innovative flagstick tool and what it can do to improve pace of play?
Pringle: In the hole is a magnet and at the bottom of the flagstick is a sensor. So it can detect when the flagstick comes in and out of the hole. And then that signal goes up into a little computer inside the flagstick. There's a little GPS [unit] in there that tells us where the flagstick is and there's a radio transmitter. That data can be sent back to a central computer, but the beauty of this is it can also talk to the next flagstick. The range doesn't have to be very far. It just has to get to the next flagstick. Just like Google [Maps] is measuring the flow of traffic, this is telling us the flow of golfers. For those golf courses that don't have a sophisticated GPS system or where you don't take carts and walk, this is going to give them a cost-effective way to get the measurement they need to have control of the golf factory.

When will this device become available?
Pringle: We're working with Spectrum Technologies, which is the same company that we licensed the TruFirm (measure firmness of greens) technology to. We're partnering with them to develop this prototype system and they are hopefully going to have a working demo at the Pace of Play Symposium. And then we're targeting February or March to have an 18-hole prototype system to put on a golf course and start fleshing out that this will actually work.

Do you envision every golf course using such a device?
Pringle: We'll walk before we run. I think the logical thing to do would be to put them in the hands of some SRGAs (state and regional golf associations), but we're considering several different business models. Right now, I'm more focused on getting a system that works.

Are golfers educated enough to understand flow?
Pringle: We know how critical it is that groups stay in position with each other. Do individual golfers know that yet? I don't think so, and especially if nobody is telling them. If you go out there as a marshal and tell a group they are 15 minutes behind the group in front of them and you need you to be 10 minutes, and then if he comes back two holes later and you are 20 minutes behind, now that's a problem. But if you are taking steps, OK, now the train is moving again. I'm hopeful that's what the data is going to show us. This is how critical that is.

What is the ideal interval for tee times?
Pringle: Eleven minutes is where we're moving, but the ideal [spacing] is set by the golf course and the golfers. It's all about matching the flow onto the golf course to the flow through the golf course. If a group can flow easily, then you can tee them off eight minutes apart. If the course is difficult or they aren't matched well to the course, and it takes, on average, groups 12 minutes to fall behind, then if you have anything less than a 12-minute interval, then you're going to cause a bottleneck. There's no such thing as ideal. The idea is to balance the flow on to the flow within the golf course. That depends on the golf course and the golfers.

Have you worked with any of the professional tours on this issue?
Pringle: Their organizers have the same problems that golf course operators do trying to balance that flow rate. For example, we worked closely with the LPGA Tour this year. They have taken steps to improve that balance... not going and pointing fingers at their players, but from a policy standpoint. They've lengthened their tee intervals, they've put in new policies to reinforce the notion of keeping pace with the group in front, and those two things have paid huge dividends for them. And they would pay dividends for any course. I think we can hold them up as an example of doing the right thing.
Double – Double – Triple. All bogeys. After only the first three holes in the Bridger Creek Golf Club Championship a couple weekends ago, I was a whopping seven-over par. According to my handicap, that’s about what I should be after nine holes, not three! It was shaping up to be a “good walk spoiled,” as Mark Twain once described golf.

I’ve written on the importance of emotional competence, or, how to remain effective in the face of challenging emotions. This experience gave me a wonderful, albeit uninvited, opportunity to walk my talk. It also gave me a chance to reflect on how well my actual behavior was aligned with my ideal self. I don’t mean as the best golfer on the course, but the best expression of myself as a person.

I’m referencing a principle our CEO Doug Lennick calls “living in alignment” (see Moral Intelligence 2.0 by Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel). Reminding myself to live in alignment helps me to be more emotionally competent, while striving to be emotionally competent helps me to live in alignment. They are mutually reinforcing.

Living in alignment starts with the concept of a Moral Compass, which reflects my Ideal Self. My moral compass is made up of universal principles (like integrity, responsibility, compassion and forgiveness) as well as personal values and beliefs that are of my own choosing. For me these include the values of family, health, growth and dependability as well as beliefs like my faith and political perspectives. Together, these principles, values and beliefs help me make daily decisions about how to act, how to spend my time and where to devote my resources. Being clear about my moral compass guides me not only during spoiled walks on the golf course, but also in much more important situations personally and professionally.

Do I always act in alignment with my moral compass? Of course not, I’m only human. That’s where the Real Self of the Alignment Model comes in. The real self is the reality of my behavior: my actual thoughts, feelings and actions. On the golf course the other weekend, I started to get quite frustrated which I’m sure my playing partners noticed and which impacted my concentration. I quickly needed to remind myself of my moral compass so I wasn’t completely emotionally hijacked by my poor playing. While helpful on the course, consider how much more important that compass is when I’m faced with the reality of ethical judgments, parenting choices, and financial decisions.

Finally, living in alignment also means channeling my Ideal Self (moral compass) and Real Self (actual behavior) towards a meaningful purpose, towards goals that are worthy of my best efforts. My golf experience is a somewhat trivial but relevant example. I really do want to be a better golfer. Lowering my handicap from 14 to 9 before I’m sixty is an actual goal of mine. I then need to ask myself if my actual behavior (e.g. sufficient practice?) is moving me towards that goal, and is that goal aligned with my moral compass?

During my recent “good walk spoiled,” I started initially to beat myself up (“I’m lousy at this” and other unprintable words were swirling in my mind), and had strong urges to break some clubs. Instead, I applied the universal principle of compassion to myself (I needed to cut myself some slack) and made an intentional decision to choose behaviors that were more aligned with my moral compass. By being clear about my moral compass and reframing the experience towards my value of growth, I was able to remain reasonably calm around those witnessing my double-double-triple. While I ended up out of contention in the competition, over the remaining 15 holes I was able to lower my bogey rate from 2.3 per hole to just 0.6.

I hope you seldom, if ever, start double-double-triple in life--while golfing or otherwise--and that your moral compass and goals guide you towards living in alignment along the way.

Dave Meldahl is Senior Vice President of Think2Perform. Dave’s mission is to help leaders and teams align their real performance with their ideal performance. (dmeldahl@think2perform.com)
The 11th USGA Men’s State Team Championships were held this past month at the Pete Dye Course at French Lick Resort (French Lick, Ind.) The Treasure State sent golfers Ross Bartell (Great Falls), Brian Beach (Missoula), and Jim Bob Coleman (Billings).

The Men’s State Team Championship consists of 54 holes of stroke play, with the two lowest of three individual scores counting as the team total for the round.

Texas claimed their fourth victory in the event with a four-under-par score of 428. Montana tied for 36th overall with a team total of 456.

Brian Beach of Missoula put together a strong tournament with three rounds in the seventies (77,70, 78, –225) to pace the Montana team.

“I had a great time at the event. I felt pretty good about my performance. I had a really solid second day, but it was just great to get the experience playing in a USGA event like that and competing on a great course with a tremendous field,” Beach said.

The competitors found the Pete Dye Course formidable with immaculate conditions making for a great experience. It also provided a great challenge with fescue just off the fairways, turtleback greens, and tremendous length and numerous bunkers to combat.

“Hitting the fairway was really rewarded. There were spots where if you landed the ball in the right spot, it would funnel and roll out another 50-60 yards, but if you just miss you might have a difficult time finding your ball in the fescue,” Beach said.

The Dye Course will also will act as host to the LPGA Legends Tour Championship (2014) and the 2015 Senior PGA Championship.

This year’s team improved upon the 2012 team finish when Montana placed 44th. The average round of 76 was over two-strokes better than 2012’s 78.2 stroke average at Galloway National Golf Club of New Jersey.

The USGA conducts the championship biennially. The men’s and women’s competitions are held in alternating years. Each state is responsible for selecting its team and the players must reside in that state to be eligible. All 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are represented in the 2014 field.

“Having the teammates I had, Ross and Jim Bob are so funny, we had a blast! We met a lot of teams with great people. To get the chance to have golfers from all the states getting together talking about golf was special.”

The USGA Men’s and Women’s State Team Championships grew out of the celebration of the USGA Centennial in 1995 and the success of the event and enjoyment of the players and pride in representing their respective states led to the event having been retained and held biennially ever since.

Next year, Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau, Mo. will host the USGA Women’s State Team Championships Sept. 10-12.

T36. Montana 158-149-149--456
(Brian Beach, Missoula 77-70-78--225; Jimbob Coleman, Billings 81-79-71--231; Ross Bartell, Great Falls 82-88-82--252)
As we conclude October, the golf weather gods shined upon the prep standouts in the Big Sky State earlier this month, as the Class ‘A and AA’ State Tournaments were held, and a host of familiar names had strong performances.

**Class AA**

Bridger Creek Golf Course played host to the top golfers from Class AA, and some familiar names found themselves at the top of the leaderboard when the final scores were tabulated. Billings West’s two-day score of 608 was 16 better than crosstown rival Billings Senior’s 624, giving the Golden Bears their second consecutive state title. Glacier and C.M. Russell finished tied for third at 632, with Capital High two shots back at 634.

While the Bears collected more team hardware, it was Broncos senior golfer Sean Benson who bested West’s Joey Moore by one shot to claim medalist honors with a two-day 145. Benson’s rounds of 75-70 edged out Moore (72-74, 146) and Payton Stott (73,73, 146) with Bozeman’s Connor Brown coming in fourth at 147, thanks to a tournament-low 69 in the second round. Benson, a lefty, finished in tremendous fashion making three birdies and four pars on the final seven holes to claim his first state title.

Billings West’s girls also won a repeat title with a two-round total of 682. The Golden Bears were 44 shots better than second place Butte High (726) with Missoula Hellgate in third at 731. Glacier’s Teigan Avery was a repeat state champion with a 151 total, but Avery needed a playoff hole this time around to best the Bears’ Hayden Flohr who also finished at 151 after 36 holes. Avery’s par on the first playoff hole was good enough to claim her second individual title. Butte’s Shealyn Hafer was one shot out of the playoff at 152 after leading by five going into round two. West’s Hannah Zwemke (156) and Mike’la Atkinson (158) came in fourth and fifth respectively. Billings Senior’s Kortney McNeil, a two-time champion, placed sixth at 159.

**Class A**

On the boys’ side, Hamilton utilized some home course advantage and overtook Billings Central at Hamilton Golf Club. The Broncs shot a two-day 643 (324-319) to best the Rams by 10 (653), with Whitefish coming in third at 676. The Broncs, who now own six boys titles, captured their first championship hardware since 2011 (back-to-back championships 2010-11).

Followers of MSGA Junior Events will be familiar with the Class A medalists on both the boys and girls divisions as Caleb Stetzner of Anaconda took home top honors with rounds of even-par 72 and 75 for a 147 total. Stetzner, a junior, was six shots better than runner-up Chris Delaney of Frenchtown. Billings Central’s Liam Clancy fired a 148 -- good enough for third place.

No stranger to the top of the leaderboard in junior events this summer, Whitefish junior Coral Schulz took home medalist honors with rounds of 83-88 for a 171 total. Schulz, who finished in the top-3 during her freshman and sophomore seasons in the AA ranks at Capital High School (Helena), moved west to Whitefish with her family and the Bulldogs benefitted from her strong performance capturing the overall team trophy as well.

Schulz was four shots clear of second place individual finisher Morgan O’Neil of Laurel (175) with Hamilton’s Sydni Rose (181) claiming third just ahead of Whitefish’s Katie Fyall (184) and Miles City’s Megan Ryan (184). Whitefish dominated the field with a total of 756 (377-379) more than fifty shots better than second place finisher Laurel at 807 (417-390), Frenchtown finished in third at 838. Whitefish’s perennial dominance on the girls’ side is characterized by 17 overall team championships in girls’ golf, most among all schools in Montana.

**NOTE:** Class B and C golf takes place in the spring