May Tournaments

5/1/17
PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am
Hamilton GC (Hamilton)

5/4/17
St. Regis High School Tournament
Trestle Creek GC (St. Regis)

5/5/17
Friday Couples 9 Hole W/Dinner
Indian Springs Ranch GC (Eureka)

5/5/17 - 5/7/17
Lake City Open
Polson Bay GC (Polson)

5/8/17
Absarokee High School - Varsity
Stillwater GC (Columbus)

5/8/17
HS Divisional
Marias Valley GC (Shelby)

5/8/17
PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am
Whitefish Lake GC (Whitefish)

5/8/17
RMSPGA (YC) Pro-Am
Laurel GC (Laurel)

5/13/17
4-Person Scramble
Stillwater GC (Columbus)

5/13/17
Flathead High School Touchdown
Village Greens GC (Kalispell)

5/13/17
Spring Kickoff
Old Works GC (Anaconda)

5/13/17
Spring Scramble
Marias Valley GC (Shelby)

5/15/17
Tom Cote Mem. Masters Pike & Putts
Scobey GC (Scobey)

5/15/17
PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am
Eagle Bend GC (Bigfork)

MSGA Junior Grant Program Renewed For 2017

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

At their Spring Meeting, the MSGA Board of Directors voted to continue the MSGA Junior Instruction Grant Program for the 2017 golf season, after a successful initiation last season.

Last spring, the board allocated a $10,000 budget for the year to develop K-8 golf programs statewide. The new Junior Education budget was intended to fund the first year (2016) as a pilot program for a proposed long-term junior golf development effort.

All high school golf coaches in the state, as well as all MSGA member golf clubs, were sent information and application forms at the beginning of the 2016 golf season. The forms were also published on the MSGA website. The MSGA created a simple, one-page grant application form. The basic requirements, stipulated in the application instructions, are as follows:

1. Funded programs have to be open to the public;
2. No grant funds can be used for private individual compensation due to the MSGA’s 501(c)3 status;
3. The grant program is open to all MSGA member clubs, individual MSGA members, and Montana schools desiring support to include golf in their physical education curriculum;
4. Ideal programs are those that use matching funds from other sources such as civic clubs, golf clubs, and local associations to build more broad-based community support to initiate or expand youth golfer development;
5. All grant recipients are required to provide...

Continued on the next page.

The RAFFLE FUNDRAISER is Back!

The MSGA Trip-of-the-Month Raffle is back for 2017-2018! Twelve great new trips are offered, including Scotland, British Columbia, Hawaii, and a Mexican Riviera Cruise!

Ticket sales are open now and drawings start in September. ALL proceeds go to support Junior golf programs in Montana! Go to www.msgagolf.org/raffle-fundraiser for more information and to download a brochure with application.

Get your ticket today! Thanks for your support!
end-of-program reports as to the use of funds, number of students involved, and anything that might help others promote youth golf in the future.

2016 Junior Grant Program First Year Summary
Eleven programs received funding in communities across the state including: Baker, Billings (Peter Yegen), Bozeman (Wheat Montana Jr. Golf Tour), Ennis, Great Falls, Lewistown, Malta, Missoula (Missoula Jr. Golf Tour), Scobey, Sidney, and St. Ignatius.

At the outset, there was no telling how many applications would be received. None were funded fully, as the Executive Committee attempted to spread the money out (providing $500 to $1000 grants) so each applicant could get some funding. The total funds requested were $23,388.75. That was more than twice the amount budgeted for the first trial year of the new program. The strong response to the first years of the program clearly demonstrates substantial interest statewide in expanding junior golf efforts.

According to the reports filed by the eleven programs noted above, a total of 1,655 juniors participated in the programs in 2016. Each program determined how MSGA funds would be applied to their individual situations. Thus, the MSGA provided support for junior golf camps, new golf-in-the-schools programs (to integrate golf in physical education programs at the middle and elementary school level), and funding for specialized youth golf equipment.

Junior Grant Program Grantee Feedback Reports
Grantees were contacted by email for their end-of-grant reports. The following are excerpts of some comments received. Full reports and pictures will be posted on the MSGA website later this month.

Baker – “Huge thank you to MSGA!!!! Without your support, we would not have been able to make this happen!... We had 51 kids, grades Kindergarten - 8th participate this year.”

Billings – “We would like to thank the MSGA for their generous donation. . . . We had approximately 300 juniors in our golf program this summer [8-week program] and 30 juniors in our winter series [10-week program]... This [MSGA grant] is the first outside funding our camp has ever received. We used the $500 grant to purchase training aids for juniors, which include the orange whip swing trainer, the orange peel, short game targets to improve accuracy, sports cones for drills, and the addition of physical fitness into our golf programs.”

Bozeman – “We are so grateful for your assistance. . . . We have received amazing feedback from parents and junior golfers and are looking forward to growing our program moving forward.”

2017 Grant Application Forms can be found online at www.msgagolf.org/grant-requests. The MSGA has created a permanent endowment to support and expand junior golf efforts statewide. Please contact us if you are interested in making a tax-credit eligible gift, or you can make a tax-deductible gift online.
The Montana State Seniors Golf Association (MSSGA) will be holding its 2017 State Senior Golf Tournament on August 1-3 in Great Falls.

The tournament annually attracts approximately 330 golfers. Past years have seen the tournament conducted over three rounds at three different courses. This year’s participants will play two rounds at Meadow Lark Country Club and one round at Eagle Falls Golf Club.

Golfers must be MSSGA members to be eligible to play in the tournament. Membership is open to any male golfer age 55 or older on or before July 31 of 2017. Tournament applications will be mailed to all current MSSGA members at the end of May.

For more information, or to become an MSSGA member, visit the MSSGA website at www.mtseniorgolf.org.

You can also contact Kevin Hayes by email at mtseniorgolf@gmail.com or by phone at (406) 439-0814.

PGA Junior League Golf is a fun and social opportunity for boys and girls, ages 13 and under, to learn and enjoy the game of golf from PGA Professionals.

Like many other recreational youth sports, participants wear numbered jerseys and play on teams with friends. Teams are already forming in the Billings, Missoula, and Flathead valley.

Click here to register your son or daughter today!

Here is your opportunity to golf at great venues in the region and across the country at a discounted rate!

Rounds4Research is an innovative program aimed at generating resources to fund research and help ensure golf’s future. You can play a round of golf at some of the most celebrated courses in your area and nationwide! Don’t miss the 2017 Rounds 4 Research Silent Auction.

Visit Rounds4Research.com to view all of the great golf packages and place your bid between May 1-7, 2017. The rounds are listed by state (more rounds are being added daily).

Proceeds from the auction rounds benefit the local golf course superintendent chapter and the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG). The proceeds Peaks & Prairies GCSAA will receive from the rounds from this region will benefit our association’s continuing education, research, and scholarship programs.

Bidding opens May 1 and closes May 7.
Collegiate Postseason Recap
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

NCAA

Big Sky – University of Montana & Montana State
Montana and Montana State concluded their seasons as the Big Sky Conference Championships were held at Boulder Creek Golf Club in Boulder City, Nevada.

The University of Montana women’s team finished 8th and Montana State finished 10th. The Grizzlies put together a team total of 949 (328-308-313) led by Kari Opatz, who played her final 36 holes at three over par. Opatz tallied a 230 (83-72-75) and tied for 11th overall, she was the only UM golfer in the top 30. Hailey Hoagland was next at 240 (76-78-86) and 33rd overall. Baylee Barckley was T-37 with 242 (84-81-77), Alexa Schendelman came in at T-45 individually in her final collegiate event with 245 (86-77-82), and Teigan Avery closed out the scoring for UM in T-51 and 249 (85-85-79). The Grizzlies will return their top four scorers next year with Opatz, Hoagland, Avery, and Barckley back, along with three other underclassmen.

MSU finished their season with their best team score of the spring with 300. The Bobcats finished in 10th place overall with a total of 958 (329-329-300). Freshman Kelly Hooper was the low finisher at 27th overall with a two-round total of 154 (81-73), followed by freshman Delaney Elliott T-34th with a 241 total (81-81-79). Senior Janelle Reali finished her career at MSU with a 242 (88-80-74) and T-37. Jaylee Tait was T-42 with a total of 243 (81-88-74) and freshman Coral Schulz rounded out the scoring in 57th with 262 (85-90-87). After finishing second at the championship six of the last eight years, Sacramento State finally claimed the top spot, defeating defending champion Idaho in a playoff for its first title since 2007. Big Sky Golfer of the Year, Sofia Anokhina of Northern Arizona, earned medalist honors at 2-over 218 (72-71-75). Like the Grizzlies, the Bobcats return most of their roster, with Reali as the exception.

GNAC – MSU-Billings
Montana State University Billings concluded the 2016-17 season at the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championships held at The Coeur d’Alene Resort in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

Women
Kortney McNeil turned in a career performance as the sophomore carded her best round of the year at the right time with a final-round 73 (+2). McNeil’s two-round total of 154 (81-73) was an all-time low score by a Yellowjacket at the conference tournament and her individual 73 was not only a school record for the event, but it was the lowest round of the day among the 30 competitors at the par-71, 5914-yard course. McNeil’s career best helped the MSU-B women tie for third place as a team with a total score of 644 (331-313). Teammates Sammy Walter (81-80) and Shealyn Hafer (83-78) tied for 12th each finishing at 161. Junior Bailee Dexter finished in 19th place at 168 (86-82). Rounding out the Yellowjacket scoring was senior Haley Shackelford who turned in 178 for 24th overall (89-89).

Simon Fraser University (Canada) won the team title, thanks to having the tournaments’ top two finishers. The Clan posted a total score of 616 (305-311), breaking the tournament record they set last year by a single stroke. Emily Leung won medalist honors with a 147 overall (70-77). Teammate Kylie Jack took second place with a 153 (76-77).

Men
The Yellowjackets men’s team finished in sixth place with a total score of 906 over three rounds (297-309-300) at the par-71, 6,803-yard course. MSU-B senior Michael Porter was the top finisher in T-12th by virtue of his 223 total (73-74-76). Fellow senior, Connor Miele also collected a top-20 finish as the lefty came in at 226 (77-76-73) good enough for 19th overall. Porter had two of the tournament’s nine total birdies on the world-famous floating...Continued on the next page
green on the par-3 14th hole. Miele’s final round 73 matched Porter for the lowest single-round score by a Yellowjacket in the tournament. As the seniors fittingly led the way, the future of the MSU-B squad showed that the future is bright as freshman Caleb Stetzner finished T-21st with a score of 228 (74-79-75). Fellow freshman Garrett Woodin finished T-25th and totaled a three-round score of 231 (75-80-76). Rounding out MSUB’s team of five golfers was sophomore Austin Walter who finished 29th with a 235 (75-83-77).

Western Washington University won the team title with a three-round score of 871 (292-289-290), edging out second-place Concordia University by one stroke. Simon Fraser University’s Chris Crisologo claimed the individual title thanks to a three-round score of 208 (70-67-71).

**NAIA FRONTIER CONFERENCE**

Of the six teams that compete in the Frontier Conference, the only non-Montana school picked up a sweep of trophies. Lewis-Clark State College won both the men's and women's conference titles this year at the Frontier Conference Championships held at Arizona State University's Karsten Course.

The Warrior Men shot 893 (305-296-292) and won easily by 22 shots over runner up Montana Tech. The Warrior Women claimed their title by shooting 983 (334-328-321) and were without peer, besting second place Rocky Mountain College by 32 shots.

Great Falls University’s Gina Kowalchuk had a dominance performance to take home medalist honors on the women’s side. Kowalchuk fired a 221 total (75-75-71) a whopping 18 shots ahead of runners up Eryn Ellis (79-86-74) and LCSC’s Allison Kadinger (83-84-72) who totaled 239. Kowalchuk, who played last year in the NAIA National Championships, earning a birth as an at-large participant, now has no doubt as her win guarantees her a spot in the field to be played in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida the week of May 23-26. Carroll College's low finisher, Katie Goins, finished fourth at 245 (82-80-83). [Click here for final results.]

Kowalchuk will represent UGF and Montana at the National Championships in Florida later this month.

On the men’s side, LCSC’s Chris Lien’s 215 (73-73-69) took home medalist honors and his teammate, Brandon Barnes, finished second at 218 (74-73-71). Carroll College’s low finisher was Austin Egan, who finished third at 225 (74-73-78). Montana Tech’s Sean Benson totaled 227 (73-81-73) and the University of Great Falls’ Jonny Cielak tied for fourth. Cielak fired rounds of 78-75-74. [Click here for final results.]

Barring an at-large selection, the Frontier Conference season has concluded for Montana teams on the men’s side.
USGA AND R&A WORK WITH HANDICAP AUTHORITIES TO DEVELOP A SINGLE WORLD HANDICAP SYSTEM

The USGA and The R&A are working with golf’s handicapping authorities to develop a single World Handicap System for the game. More than 15 million golfers in more than 80 countries currently have a handicap, a numerical index long used as a measure of a golfer’s potential skill level. Today, handicaps are delivered through six systems in various regions of the world.

The aim of the proposed handicap system is to adopt a universal set of principles and procedures that would apply all over the world. An extensive review of existing handicap systems administered by Golf Australia, the Council of National Golf Unions (CONGU) in Great Britain and Ireland, the European Golf Association (EGA), the South African Golf Association (SAGA), the Argentine Golf Association (AGA), and the United States Golf Association (USGA) has been undertaken.

Golf organizations from different parts of the world have also been engaged with the current handicap authorities for the past two years to help shape the proposed system, which takes into account the many inherent golf cultures and most common formats of play. Research conducted to date has also reviewed systems and best practices inherent to handicapping, such as course rating and administration. A joint committee led by the USGA and The R&A has been formed, including representatives from each handicap authority as well as the Japan Golf Association and Golf Canada. The joint committee plans to announce its proposals later this year.

USGA Executive Director/CEO Mike Davis said, “One wonderful aspect of golf that separates it from other sports is the opportunity for players of differing abilities to play on an equitable basis through handicapping. With one global system, golf courses will be rated and handicaps calculated in a consistent manner everywhere in the world. Removing borders to provide an easy way for all to play together is great for the game and golfers everywhere.”

Martin Slumbers, Chief Executive of The R&A, said, “We have been concerned for some time that many golfers find the handicapping landscape to be complicated and can be frustrated when it is not always applied in the same way in different parts of the world. We are working closely with the existing handicapping bodies to benefit from their insights as we try to formulate a system that will be easy to understand and can be applied consistently on a global basis.”

USGA ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF MEN’S & WOMEN’S STATE TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS

The USGA announced the retirement of the Men’s State Team Championship and Women’s State Team Championship, following the completion of the 2017 competitions calendar. “The USGA continually evaluates its championships and the way in which they are conducted,” said Stuart Francis, USGA Championship Committee chairman. “The decision to discontinue the State Team Championships follows a thorough review and analysis, including consultation with representatives from state and regional golf associations.”

The USGA State Team Championships were first conducted in 1995 as part of the Association’s centennial celebration and were originally intended to be one-time only events. The championships, in which each state was represented by non-collegiate, amateur golfers, helped cap the USGA’s year-long festivities. State and regional golf associations sent three-player male and female teams to compete in a stroke-play format similar to the World Amateur Team Championship, in which the best two scores of each state’s three competitors counted on each of the three days of competition. Due to its initial success, the championship continued on a biennial basis and eventually all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia competed.

“The USGA expresses its gratitude to all the champions and competitors of the USGA State Team Championships, as well as the host clubs and the hundreds of volunteers who contributed their time and efforts,” said John Bodenhamer, USGA senior managing director, Championships and Governance. “In our reviews and discussions, it became quite clear that the conditions of competition had evolved, and there were significant differences in the respective team selection processes. After considering the matter for more than a year, the review supported increased focus toward other areas of USGA competition, both present and future, including the continued enhancement of the local and sectional qualifying experience for players across all USGA championships.”
NEW RULES OF GOLF DECISION LIMITS USE OF VIDEO REVIEW

The USGA and The R&A have issued a new Decision on the Rules of Golf to limit the use of video evidence in the game, effective immediately. The two organizations have also established a working group of LPGA, PGA Tour, PGA European Tour, Ladies European Tour, and PGA of America representatives to immediately begin a comprehensive review of broader video issues, including viewer call-ins, which arise in televised competitions.

New Decision 34-3/10 implements two standards for Rules committees to limit the use of video: 1) when video reveals evidence that could not reasonably be seen with the “naked eye,” and 2) when players use their “reasonable judgment” to determine a specific location when applying the Rules. The full language of the Decision can be found here.

The first standard states, “The use of video technology can make it possible to identify things that could not be seen with the naked eye.” An example includes a player who unknowingly touches a few grains of sand in taking a backswing with a club in a bunker when making a stroke. If the committee concludes that such facts could not reasonably have been seen with the naked eye and the player was not otherwise aware of the potential breach, the player will be deemed not to have breached the Rules, even when video technology shows otherwise. This is an extension of the provision on ball-at-rest-moved cases, which was introduced in 2014.

The second standard applies when a player determines a spot, point, position, line, area, distance, or other location in applying the Rules, and recognizes that a player should not be held to the degree of precision that can sometimes be provided by video technology. Examples include determining the nearest point of relief or replacing a lifted ball. So long as the player does what can reasonably be expected under the circumstances to make an accurate determination, the player’s reasonable judgment will be accepted, even if later shown to be inaccurate by the use of video evidence.

Both of these standards have been extensively discussed as part of the Rules modernization initiative. The USGA and The R&A have decided to enact this Decision immediately because of the many difficult issues arising from video review in televised golf. The standards in the Decision do not change any of the current requirements in the Rules, as the player must still act with care, report all known breaches of the Rules, and try to do what is reasonably expected in making an accurate determination when applying the Rules. Video-related topics that require a deeper evaluation by the working group include the use of information from sources other than participants such as phone calls, email, or social media, and the application of penalties after a score card has been returned.

USGA Executive Director/CEO Mike Davis said, “This important first step provides officials with tools that can have a direct and positive impact on the game. We recognize there is more work to be done. Advancements in video technology are enhancing the viewing experience for fans, but can also significantly affect the competition. We need to balance those advances with what is fair for all players when applying the Rules.” Martin Slumbers, Chief Executive of The R&A, said, “We have been considering the impact of video review on the game and feel it is important to introduce a Decision to give greater clarity in this area. Golf has always been a game of integrity and we want to ensure that the emphasis remains as much as possible on the reasonable judgment of the player rather than on what video technology can show.”

The USGA and The R&A will consider additional modifications recommended by the working group for implementation in advance of Jan. 1, 2019, when the new code resulting from the collaborative work to modernize golf’s Rules takes effect.

NEWPORT COUNTRY CLUB AWARDED 2020 U.S. SENIOR OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

The USGA announced Newport (R.I.) Country Club as the host site for the 41st U.S. Senior Open Championship. The dates of the championship are June 25-28, 2020.

“Newport Country Club and its membership helped to lay the foundation upon which the USGA was built more than a century ago, and we are pleased to continue our rich history with the club,” said Stuart Francis, USGA Championship Committee chairman.