PGA Jr League Registration Coming Soon!
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

Step aside Little League Baseball and Football! Make way for Little League Golf, better known as the PGA Jr. League. Since its inception, it has grown tremendously! From 123 teams nationwide in 2012 to 3,400 teams in 2017, a record 42,000 boys and girls played in the league last season!

In 2017, 18 Montana clubs had PGA Jr. Leagues. While 7 were closed to private clubs, 11 were open to the public. They included: Lake Hills GC (Billings), Indian Springs (Eureka), Bill Roberts (Helena), Buffalo Hill (Kalispell), Northern Pines (Kalispell), Village Greens (Kalispell), Missoula CC (Missoula), Larchmont (Missoula), Polson Bay GC (Polson), Double Arrow (Seely Lake), and Whitefish Lake GC (Whitefish). While opportunities seem more abundant in northwestern Montana, the MSGA is encouraging more courses in other parts of the state to join in as well. Parents and kids who are interested should check with their club to see if they are offering a program this season. If not, please express your interest, to help spread the word!

What’s the appeal of Junior League? Teams of around 8 to 12 players of varying skill levels play head-to-head, two-person matches of 3 holes each. The format is best-ball, so the pressure isn’t on any one golfer. Girls and boys play together and get numbered uniforms. Golf can be intimidating if you jump right into junior tournaments. However, this format, with a team and a coach, makes golf fun, while teaching the fundamentals of golf and golf etiquette. Many pros feel it's the best junior program out there, as the “next step” for kids with basic golf skills.

The PGA Jr. League is typically open to any child 13 & under, while some facilities might also offer 16 & under programs. Registration to play runs February through March, with the regular season from April through July. For more information please go to http://www.pgajrleague.com.

2018 - 2019 Drive, Chip, and Putt Qualifying Schedule Released

The USGA, Masters Tournament, and the PGA of America have officially launched the sixth year of Drive, Chip, and Putt by announcing the local and subregional schedule for the 2018-2019 qualifying season.

The schedule includes dates and locations for participants to play in local qualifiers across the country, with the opportunity to advance and earn an invitation to next year’s National Finals at Augusta National Golf Club. The qualifying schedule is available here. Online registration will also be available at drivechipandputt.com, starting Thursday, January 25th.

Drive, Chip, and Putt is a free youth golf development initiative aiming to help younger generations...
DRIVE, CHIP, & PUTT ... from previous page

begin their lifelong connection with golf by providing a fun, interactive platform for participants of all skill levels. Open to boys and girls ages 7-15, local qualifying will take place throughout all 50 states during the months of May, June, July, and August. Top performers at the local level will advance through subregional and regional qualifiers at some of the country's best championship venues in July/August and September, respectively. The top 80 performers – 40 boys and 40 girls – will earn an invitation to the National Finals at Augusta National on Sunday, April 7, the eve of the 2019 Masters.

Missoula’s Canyon River Golf Course will again host the Montana qualifier on July 10th. Entries close July 5th. There is no entry fee, and entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

For a full list of qualifying venues at the local and subregional level, or for more information about Drive, Chip and Putt, including official rules, registration, and ticket information, please visit drivechipandputt.com.

SCORING / COMPETING

1. Each participant will compete in all three skills (Drive, Chip, and Putt). An individual rules sheet for each skill competition is available on drivechipandputt.com.
2. Participants will accumulate points in each skill. The participant with the highest number of accumulated points will be declared the overall champion of their age category.
3. All participants must begin the competition at the local qualifying level.
4. From local qualifying, the three overall point earners in each of the boys and girls divisions from the four age brackets will advance to the subregional qualifying level of the competition.
5. The subregional competition is a new competition with no carryover from the local competition. The top two performers in each of the boys and girls division from the four age categories will advance to the regional qualifiers.
6. The regional competition is a new competition with no carryover from the subregional competition. The top performer in each of the boys and girls division from the four age categories will advance to the National Finals to be held the Sunday before the Masters Tournament (April 7, 2019).
7. The National Finals will take place at Augusta National Golf Club and be staged on its Tournament Practice Facility (Driving / Chipping) and 18th green (Putting). The National Finals is a new competition with no carryover from the regional competition.

Big Sky Conference Coaches’ Poll Has MSU 7th and UM 8th

The Sacramento State Women’s golf team was picked to win the 2018 Big Sky Conference Championship, announced January 30th by the conference office. The coaches’ poll features votes from each head coach in the Big Sky Conference. Coaches were not allowed to vote for their own teams. Flashing back to last year’s championship results, the top five teams remain the same.

Sacramento State picked up 10 first-place votes for a total of 119 points to be selected as the top team. The Hornets, the Big Sky's best team coming out of fall play, according to Golfstat, won the team playoff at the championships last year to earn its first title since 2007.

Idaho received a pair of first-place votes and a total of 109 points for a predicted finish of second place. Junior Sophie Hausmann returns for the Vandals after a second-place showing in 2017. She's the top individual player in the league after fall play.

Montana State completed their 2017 fall schedule with a 303.22 scoring average. Six Bobcats competed for MSU in three events, with the team closing out its fall schedule with a fall best and three-round score of 898. That 54-hole round mark was the fourth best in program history.

MSU and UM begin their spring schedule at the Battle at the Rock, hosted by UC Riverside, on February 12. The Bobcats are scheduled to participate in six meets with the Grizzlies participating in five ahead of the ...Continued next page
Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

JANUARY'S DRAWING:
Las Vegas, Nevada - Allan Barth, Baker
$200 cash - Louise Cholette-Haley, Polson

** FEBRUARY'S TRIP is to a Seattle Mariners Baseball game **

 Commissioners Kent Paulson has announced the 2017-18 Frontier Conference Men's and Women's All-Conference Golf teams. The all-conference team is determined by the results of the league's regular season conference tournaments completed in the fall. The top five golfers receive first team honors and the second five receive second team honors. Players are listed alphabetically by school.

On the Women's team, University of Providence's Gina Kowalchuk is Player of the Year for the third straight season. Amanda Conner of Rocky Mountain College is the Freshman of the Year. Rocky's Aaron Pohle is the Women's Coach of the Year for the third year in a row. Players listed in alphabetical order by school.

First Team: Marissa Louder, Lewis-Clark State College, Junior, Fillmore, Utah; Eryn Ellis, Rocky Mountain College, Junior, Casper, Wyoming; Anna DeMars, Rocky Mountain College, Sophomore, Townsend, Montana; Hayden Flohr, Rocky Mountain College, Sophomore, Billings, Montana; Gina Kowalchuk, University of Providence, Senior, Lethbridge, Alberta

Second Team: Blake Greenup, Lewis-Clark State College, Senior, Heppner, Oregon; Kayla Monroe, Lewis-Clark State College, Senior, Tumwater, Washington; Amanda Conner, Rocky Mountain College, Freshman, Irwin, Pennsylvania; Jenna Jensen, MSU-Northern, Junior, Kalispell, Montana; Morgan O'Neil, Rocky Mountain College, Freshman, Laurel, Montana

On the Men's team, Rocky Mountain College's Michael Tate was named Player of the Year. Rocky pulled off a sweep of the individual awards with a pair of Rocky freshmen, Reece Nilsen and Mitchell Thiessen, sharing Freshman of the Year honor. Bears' head coach Aaron Pohle was named Coach of the Year.

First Team: Shaun Harpin, Lewis-Clark State College, Sophomore, Wales, United Kingdom; Tucker Keyes, Lewis-Clark State College, Junior, Arlington, Washington; Hunter Weitze, Lewis-Clark State College, Junior, Colfax, Washington; Sean Benson, Montana Tech, Junior, Billings, Montana; Michael Tate, Rocky Mountain College, Sophomore, Littleton, Colorado

Second Team: Brandon Barnes, Lewis-Clark State, Senior, Vancouver, Washington; Travis Hansen, Lewis-Clark State, Freshman, Clarkson, Washington; HoTae Kim, Rocky Mountain College, Sophomore, Rydalmere, New South Wales; Reece Nilsen, Rocky Mountain College, Freshman, Tucson, Arizona; Mitchell Thiessen, Rocky Mountain College, Freshman, Chilliwack, British Columbia
USGA FORMS NEW ALLIANCE WITH REGIONAL GOLF ASSOCIATIONS

Fifty-nine regional golf associations have entered into a new relationship with the United States Golf Association to enhance the golfer experience at the state and local levels in the United States.

These Allied Golf Associations (AGAs), supported by the USGA’s five existing regional affairs offices, will administer the USGA Handicap and Course Rating Systems within defined geographic areas across the country. In addition, they will serve as the community’s primary resource for USGA services such as championship qualifiers, governance, golf facility support, and programs that help grow and improve the long-term health of the game. The list of official AGAs can be found at [http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/about/allied-golf-associations.html](http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/about/allied-golf-associations.html). In most cases, the AGA’s governing region is its state boundary.

“Regional golf associations are the lifeblood of the golf community and the USGA,” said Mike Davis, USGA CEO. “We felt that now was the best time to formalize this new alliance, in the spirit of working together on grassroots programs, improving how we serve golfers, and providing a healthy foundation from which the entire golf community can grow.”

Newly recognized AGAs were identified through a nearly year-long discovery process that encouraged collaboration among existing golf organizations within each state and region, sharing best practices, and leveraging programs that have made a positive impact.

The resulting relationship will enable AGAs to provide a variety of competitive playing opportunities that engage more golfers of all levels within their region. The AGAs will also serve as local experts for education on topics such as modernizing golf’s rules, the new World Handicap System, and related governance functions.

Each AGA will also have direct access to USGA research, funding for programs such as USGA P.J. Boatwright Internships, data and technology, additional expertise to better serve the health of golf facilities, and support of national grow-the-game initiatives including PLAY9.

One of the alliance’s most significant benefits to golfers will be the centralized computation of USGA Handicap Indexes in the United States to improve efficiency, consistency, and governance oversight. The move to a more modernized, digital platform will also empower Allied Golf Associations to more deeply engage golfers within their community through rich, real-time player data.

An AGA Council has been formed to share information, help ongoing service delivery, and provide continuous feedback directly to the USGA to better serve golfers and golf clubs. The 12-member council consists of AGA executive directors who will represent regions and markets throughout the United States.

The alliance marks the latest step by the USGA to more deeply engage the local and regional golf community. It complements the USGA’s existing presence in all five major golf regions in the United States – Northeast, Great Lakes, Southeast, Central and West – where dedicated Regional Affairs directors currently serve in residence. In addition to its five Regional Affairs directors, the USGA also supports golf clubs and facilities through the USGA Green Section, providing agronomic expertise through 13 regional offices.