Spring Emerges After A Long Winter
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

Spring is teasing us, but the grass is finally showing in at least some parts of the state. After record cold temps and snowfall this winter, it can only get better! Like it or not, Montana's golf season officially started April 1st, so let's hope for a fast thaw!

If you were able to migrate south this winter and play where it's in-season, be sure to post your scores to your Montana record. Better yet, if you have an out-of-state membership, we can import your scores and link your records to eliminate double posting. Please contact us and we'll set you up!

It’s time to renew your MSGA membership through your local club so that your handicap stays current. Encourage your friends to become MSGA members too. A handicap is included, but most of your membership fee helps support course rating, junior golf programs, scholarships, rules & handicap education, greenskeeping & agronomy, state tournaments, and, ultimately, your local course... things that benefit everyone who plays golf! "Continued next page"

April Tournaments

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<td>PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Pro Champ. Missoula area (TBA)</td>
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<td>10th Annual One Club Open Eaglerock GC (Billings)</td>
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<td>Junior Masters Polson Bay GC (Polson)</td>
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<td>Friday Couples 9 Hole W/Dinner Indian Springs Ranch GC (Eureka)</td>
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<td>Casa Scramble Polson Bay GC (Polson)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/21/18</td>
<td>Columbus High School - Varsity Stillwater GC (Columbus)</td>
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2018 vTour Series Dates Announced
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

If you didn't play last year, it's time join in! It's online and it's free! You can win prizes just for playing. And, Sun Mountain has again donated an amazing Grand Prize package: A Pathfinder cart, Sync bag, and umbrella!

How do you play? You golf as usual, but register first. Go to www.msgagolf.org/join-the-vtour for details and to sign up. You will need your MSGA login. Don't know it? Click here to contact us.
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 Billings, Missoula, Flathead valley, and other areas.

Click here to register your son or daughter today!

SPRING ... from previous page

The Tournament Calendar is now online at www.msgagolf.org/tournament-calendar. It includes many more tournaments than on the printed version, and has links for applications to state tournaments. You can also view just junior tournaments at www.msgagolf.org/junior-tournament-calendar. If your club or group would like to post a tournament that is not listed, along with a link for more information, please contact us.

One new feature coming in 2020 with the World Handicap System is DAILY revisions. Sometimes you might forget or put off posting your score for a few days, but with daily revisions, it becomes more important to post your score immediately after your round. Now’s the time to get into that habit! The smartphone app makes it very convenient! The app is user friendly and takes under a minute to get the job done. It’s available in the Apple and Android stores by searching “Montana State Golf Association”. You’ll need your MSGA login. If you don’t know it, we’d be glad to help.

Be sure to stay connected with social media! Share updates on Facebook, and send us your pictures, comments, and stories. If you have cool shots of wildlife on the golf course, we’d love to share them in our newsletter!

Enjoy the warmer temperatures that will probably be here overnight. It is Montana, after all! Have a great season! Feel free to contact us at support@msgagolf.org if you need help.

Grizzlies, Bobcats Move Toward Postseason Play

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

With spring play resuming for Big Sky Conference teams, the University of Montana and Montana State programs are gearing up for their conference tournament.

The Grizzlies picked up a sixth place finish at the Red Rocks Invitational at Oakcreek Country Club in Sedona, Arizona, March 24-25. With 18 teams competing, the Grizzlies opened with rounds of 313 and 323, and closed out the tournament with a 308 that included all four scorers shooting in the 70s.

UM climbed the leaderboard from ninth to sixth to make the top third as a team, thanks to performances by Baylee Barckley (74), Teigan Avery (77), Kari Opatz (78), and Hailey Hoagland (79). Faith D’Ortenzio shot her best round of the tournament (80) as well. Hoagland, who shot the Grizzlies tournament low 69 (-3) in her opening round, tied for 13th to pace UM. Barckley finished T23, Opatz was 31st, Avery was T42. College of Charleston won the tournament by six strokes over Portland State. For complete results, click here.

Next up, Montana had another strong close at the three-day Portland State/Eastern Washington Invitational at the Ocotillo Golf Resort in Chandler, Arizona, with a final round 304, to move into a tie for fourth. ...Continued next page

UM Women’s Team
Photo courtesy of UM

Teigan Avery
Photo courtesy of UM
GRIZZLIES, BOBCATS ... from previous page

The Grizzlies entered the final round in sixth place out of six teams after opening the tournament with scores of 314 and 307. Individually, the Grizzlies had three players in the top-20 with Hoagland (79-75-75, 229) leading the way as Montana's top finisher in 13th. Avery (77-76-77, 230) was T14, Barckley (78-77-76, 231) T17, while Opatz (82-79-76, 237) and D'Ortenzio (80-79-78, 237) tied for 27th. Competing as individuals, Abby Pfeifer (81-83-79, 243) posted her first collegiate round in the 70s with a 79. Caylyn Villatora (82-82-83, 247) finished 34th. Portland State won the tournament, edging out runner-up Seattle (309-306-295) by 40 strokes. For complete results, click here.

Montana State also made the trip to Ocotillo Golf Club with two Bobcats cracking the top-10. Kelly Hooper finished T7 and Delaney Elliott was 10th. Hooper's solid tournament was helped by a flurry of birdies as she made eight over the three rounds, second in the tournament field on her way to a 223 total (+7). Elliott, a sophomore, was not far behind; two shots back of Hooper (225) and collecting her first top-10 of the season. Jaylee Tait, Lilly Navarre, and Coral Schulz rounded out the Bobcat lineup. Tait finished T14 at 230 (80-71-79). Navarre was T35 at 249 (86-85-78). Schulz posted 270 (91-94-85) placing 39th. Clare Dittemore traveled as an individual and placed 25th at 235 strokes (84-75-76). The Bobcats finished sixth overall with a three-round score of 927 (313-302-312).

Both programs will conclude their spring trips at the Wyoming Cowgirl Classic, which will be played at the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club in Maricopa.

At the beginning of last month (March 5-6), the Bobcats familiarized themselves with the Big Sky Championship venue at Boulder Creek Golf Club for the Battle at Boulder Creek. Tait tied for fifth individually and the Bobcats placed fifth as a team. Tait was within striking distance at 231 (75-79-77), six shots back of medalist Jacquelyn Eleey (225) of Georgetown. For Tait, it was her best overall finish of the season and her second top-10 in her last five tournaments. Hooper was next at T14 with a 237 total (82-75-80), followed by Elliott's T31 at 245 (89-76-80). Rounding out MSU’s lineup were Navarre at 249 (83-80-86) in 39th overall and Coral Schulz at 255 (87-86-82) which was T47. Dittemore, who competed as an individual, shot 259 (90-83-86) which was T53. Montana State's final tally was 956 (327-310-319) fifth of twelve teams. Georgetown, the winner, totaled 916.

The Big Sky Conference Championship is held April 20-22 in Boulder City, Nevada.

Frontier Conference, GNAC Spring Update

Frontier Conference and the Great Northwest Athletic Conference play resumed this spring despite frigid temperatures back home, with teams traveling throughout the south.

With 13 teams competing in Las Vegas at the Winona State University Warrior Invitational (March 12-13), Rocky Mountain College captured the team title with rounds of 286-292, for a 578 total. MSU-Billings placed seventh with 300-310, 610 total. Carroll College tied for 10th with 310-308, 618. For full team results, click here.

In pacing the Battlin' Bears to a team victory, Michael Tait put together a blistering 10-under-par 134, thanks to rounds of 65-69. Tait's teammate, Colton Murphy, was two-over-par with rounds of 73-73, 146, good enough for a T7 finish. Carroll College's Ben Gardner shot 72-75, 147, and Rocky's Mitchell Thieseen 73-74, 147, tied for tenth overall. Garrett Woodin of MSU-B was the top finisher for the Yellowjackets with 77-72, 149, good enough for T15th. One shot back was teammate Caleb Stetzner at 150 (73-77). For full individual results, click here.

MSU-Billings was the only team from Montana to send a women's team to the Warrior Invitational, and the Yellowjackets placed second of nine teams with scores of 319-314, 633. For full team results, click here. ...Continued next page
Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

MARCH’S DRAWING:
Two Airline Tickets - Virginia Olsen, Judith Gap
$200 cash - Kevin Ordahl, Plentywood

** APRIL’S TRIP PRIZE is Sanibel Island, Florida **

Frontier … from previous page

Bailee Dexter notched a top-five finish with rounds of 78-79, 157, two shots ahead of teammate Renae Heisler’s T7 (78-81, 159) and three better than Shealyn Hafer’s T9 (81-79, 160). Sammy Walter was T17 (88-75, 163), Sarah Schroefel T24 (82-86, 168), and Sydney Rochford was 37th (91-92, 182). For full individual results, click here.

The No. 8 Rocky Mountain College women’s golf team picked up a two-shot victory at the MJGA Collegiate Invite held at the Alianta Golf Club in Las Vegas, Nevada. The 36-hole event featured 11 teams, mostly NCAA Division II. Rocky shot rounds of 329-318, 647, for the victory. The Battlin’ Bears were led by Eryn Ellis who tied for third with a total of 157 (77-80). Anna DeMars tied for ninth at 161 (85-76), followed by Hayden Flohr’s T11 at 162, and a 21st finish from Amanda Conner at 167. Morgan O’Neil finished T41 thanks to a 180 total. Emily Aga finished 44th after shooting 181. Rocky’s win is the team’s third of the season. The Battlin’ Bears also brought home the first-place trophy at the MSU-Northern Invite and the Fighting Saints Classic in September.

On the men’s side, Rocky finished second and Carroll College was sixth. For team results, click here.

Michael Tait again paced Rocky with a second place finish with a one-under-par effort 73-69-73, 216. Murphy’s T7 at 225 (76-76-73) added another top-10 to Rocky’s strong spring. Leading the way for Carroll’s Fighting Saints were Gardner and Potkonjak who tied for 11th at 228. For full individual results, click here.

To make the most of their time south, Rocky Mountain College men’s golf team held a duel match with Carroll College. The Battlin’ Bears claimed a 4-1 victory in the Duel in the Desert at the Alianta Golf Club in Las Vegas, Nevada, on March 8th. No.1 - Michael Tait (RMC) Def. Austin Egan(CC) 4&3, No. 2 - Colton Murphy (RMC) Def. Ben Gardner (CC) 4&3, No. 3 - Mitchell Thiessen (RMC) Def. Greg Jones (CC) 8&6, No. 4 – Joseph Potkonjak (CC) Def. Reece Nilson (RMC) 4&3, No. 5 - HoTae Kim (RMC) wins unopposed. Rocky Mountain defeated Carroll College 4-1.

The Frontier Conference Championships will be held April 23-24 at the Arizona State Karsten Golf Course in Tempe, Arizona.

MSUB also competed in Monterey, California, at the Cal State University Monterey Bay Invitational at Poppy Hills Golf Club. The Yellowjackets finished with a team score of 338 (20th place) and the second round was cancelled due to severe rain. Dexter led the way with a 78 (+7), followed by Hafer at 84, Walter at 86, Schroefel shot 90, and Heisler rounded play out with 91. MSUB travels in April to Western New Mexico followed by hosting the Yellowjacket Invitational and then off to the GNAC Championships.
USGA LAUNCHES “DRIVING GOLF FORWARD” CAMPAIGN

As part of its commitment to ensuring a healthy future for golf, the USGA is launching “Driving Golf Forward”, a multi-year campaign focused on four key impact areas. USGA CEO/Executive Director Mike Davis introduced the campaign during the organization’s Annual Meeting in Miami Beach, Florida.

“The health and future of golf are fueled by strong leadership, resources, and meaningful initiatives,” said Davis. “This campaign will support and develop programs that positively impact our game and create new opportunities for golf to grow and endure.”

The campaign will help fund cutting-edge innovation and industry-leading research designed to improve the golfer experience and help golf facilities reduce their reliance on critical resources such as water, nutrients, chemicals, and energy by 25 percent by 2025. The planned increases in investment include the development of global forums to better connect the worldwide golf community and produce positive, collaborative change.

It will also support the USGA’s long-term goal of boosting inclusivity in the sport through increases in participation by juniors, as well as broadly supporting accessibility and adaptive golf, improving golfer experiences in the game. Efforts that provide workplace training and meaningful pathways to employment for new leaders in the golf industry, such as the P.J. Boatwright Jr. Internship Program, USGA Learning Science Through Golf, and others will be expanded. Creating a diverse generation of emerging professionals and volunteers will spur a healthier future for the game.

Preserving and sharing golf’s historical record, artifacts, and data requires investments in technology, resources, and public programs. The largest and most comprehensive collection of the game’s stories is housed at the USGA Golf Museum, providing researchers and visitors with access to authoritative information and extensive collections. The program intends to build programs and resources that will inspire a deep appreciation of the game’s rich history among future generations.

“Golf has an active community of individuals who support efforts to grow the game and we’ve heard they want to do even more,” said Sarah Brady, head of the USGA Foundation. “‘Driving Golf Forward’ provides an opportunity to play a direct role in the future of golf and invest in important programs that will make a difference.”

ANNUAL DISTANCE REPORT REVEALS SIZABLE JUMP ACROSS MAJOR TOURS

The R&A and the USGA have completed the annual review of driving distance in golf, producing a research report that documents and evaluates important findings from the 2017 season. Introduced in 2015, the annual report examines driving distance data from seven of the major worldwide professional golf tours, based on nearly 300,000 drives per year. The data from studies of male and female amateur golfers is also included.

As noted in previous annual reports, variability in driving distance of 4 or more yards from season to season on any one tour is not uncommon. However, the level of increase in 2017 across so many tours in a single season is unusual and concerning, and requires closer inspection and monitoring to fully understand the causes and effects.

Increases in distance can contribute to demands for longer, tougher, and more resource-intensive golf courses at all levels of the game. These trends can impact the costs to operate golf courses and put additional pressures on golf courses in their local environmental landscape. The effect of increasing distance on the balance between skill and technology is also a key consideration. Maintaining this balance is paramount to preserving the integrity of golf.

Building on the extensive research we have undertaken in recent years, we will conduct a thoughtful conversation about the effects of distance prior to making any specific proposals. We remain open-minded and our absolute priority is to ensure that all key stakeholders are involved in an open and inclusive process, and that we move forward together in the best interests of golf at all levels.

The R&A and USGA remain steadfastly committed to ensuring a sustainable and enjoyable future for golf.