In Part 2 of our series, we will break down the next set Rules of Golf changes for you. These changes go into effect as of January 1, 2019. If you are a snowbird, remember to pay attention to the change date. You can review Part 1 from our November issue on our website at [www.msgagolf.org/newsletter-archive](http://www.msgagolf.org/newsletter-archive).

These changes are also listed in more detail on the [USGA website](http://www.usga.org). You can get your free copy of the [Player’s Edition of the Rules of Golf 2019](http://www.usga.org) by clicking [here](http://www.usga.org). The USGA Rules of Golf 2019 smartphone app is also available for download. A full table of changes will be listed on the MSGA website at the end of this series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULE</th>
<th>New in 2019:</th>
<th>(Old Rule:)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time allowed for ball search</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituting ball when taking relief</td>
<td>Will always be allowed to substitute a ball</td>
<td>Only allowed under certain conditions, like if ball is unrecoverable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where a dropped ball must come to rest</td>
<td>Must come to rest in relief area; if doesn’t after 2 tries, place the ball where first touched ground on 2nd try</td>
<td>Must play where it comes to rest, even if not in relief area, with 9 exceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief for embedded ball</td>
<td>No penalty for ball embedded anywhere in the “general area”, except sand, unless Local Rule restricts to fairway height or less</td>
<td>Relief allowed only in areas cut to fairway height or less (except sand), unless Local Rule allows relief anywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball moves on putting green</td>
<td>Ball must be replaced on original spot, even if moved by wind</td>
<td>Ball replaced only if moved by a player, caddie, animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repairing damage on green</td>
<td>May repair almost any damage, even from spike marks and animals, except for natural imperfections</td>
<td>May repair only ball-marks or old hole plugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching line of play</td>
<td>No penalty for merely touching green</td>
<td>Prohibited, with exceptions, loss of hole/2-stroke penalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2018 marked the third year of the MSGA’s Junior Instruction Grant Program. This year, 21 grant recipients received funds ranging from $500 to $1,000, up from 15 in 2017 and 11 in 2016. The MSGA Board of Directors initiated the program to promote golf instruction to junior golfers across the state, with a focus on grades K-8. Grant applicants provide a description of the programs that will be initiated in each community and are required to provide a report on how grant resources are allocated to execute each program.

The MSGA has identified the necessity of increasing capacity for juniors to not only be introduced to golf, but, importantly, have access to ample equipment, course time, and instruction. With Montana having expansive geography and numerous rural communities, access to instructors and golf courses can vary greatly. Having organized programs can facilitate a “critical mass” to both promote the game and offer important socializing with fellow junior golf enthusiasts, which can be a revelation in smaller communities in the summertime as an added recreational activity.

Grant recipients varied in geography, program scope, and participation. While some recipients utilized funds to plan and create a program with as little as 5 juniors, more established golfing communities had as many as 182 juniors benefit from junior program grant assistance. This year, programs ranged from short summer golf camps to golf-in-the-schools initiatives. Five communities utilized grant funding to bring golf into the physical education curriculum (Ennis, Frenchtown, Missoula, Sidney, and St. Ignatius). Golf curriculum offers a unique opportunity for students with little or no exposure to golf to learn the game in a fun and inclusive setting.

Other examples of Junior Instruction Grants included helping more experienced junior golfers, with an emphasis on tournament play. Missoula has two PGA Junior Leagues that provide organized competition for juniors. In Shelby, the Leavitt Junior Tour included five golf courses from the area. With a regionally organized golf tour for juniors, the more seasoned junior golfers traveled to Shelby, Cut Bank, Choteau, and Conrad during weekdays. This required volunteer efforts to shuttle the juniors to each tournament. Of course, tournament entries and gas money incur costs, but the gains to the junior tournament participants were extraordinary.

It is important to note that many of the junior programs across the state are organized by volunteers who are generously leading the way for golf’s next generation. These stewards of golf have donated valuable time, talent, facilities, and equipment to ensure that junior participants have access to the essentials, to learn and develop an appreciation and love for the game.

While grant recipients reported statistics and outlines of programmatic work, as always, the anecdotal stories leave the most lasting impressions. The community of Fairfield recounted a synergistic story of how, along with support from Harvest Hills Golf Course and generous business partners, 38 junior golfers were introduced to golf, with nine students participating in regional junior golf tournaments. All summer long on Tuesdays, members of the junior program had 2.5 hours of instruction focusing on their swings, short game work with chipping and putting, and etiquette lessons. In addition to the free instruction to the junior participants, Fairfield leveraged their MSGA grant to provide access during the summer program for any of the juniors to play and/or practice to their heart’s content for the duration of the program. With community support and MSGA grant funds, additional sets of clubs were available for those juniors who did not have their own clubs. Volunteers emphasized the value of having additional appropriate-sized sets available to juniors, to lower the barrier to not only entry, but also ability, to participate more regularly and gain valuable practice and playing time. A majority of the 30-plus participants did not...
own their own sets of golf clubs, and having access to both share clubs and utilize them during non-instruction dates was instrumental in seeing consistent participation and having juniors as regulars at the golf course.

Not only did the majority of junior participants gain valuable instruction and introduction to the game, but one Fairfield junior golfer collected the often-pursued, but rarely attained, feat of a hole-in-one. Thanks to his ace, in competition, the following tournament culminated in the junior’s first tournament victory and personal best round. Many junior players experience their first opportunities to play with new competitors, who become friends on new courses and encourage golf as an enjoyable recreation, regardless of competitive aspirations. There are no guarantees that every junior exposed to golf will end up becoming a lifelong golfer, but as many of the stories shared illustrate, there are unforgettable moments to be had on the links, and lifelong friendships to be cemented, with summers spent having fun and learning out among Montana’s verdant playgrounds.

MSGA members are undoubtedly, and oftentimes unabashedly, positive about the opportunities that golf has presented for lifetime friendships, recreation, and promoting values of integrity, sportsmanship, and etiquette, among others. But, like many athletic recreations, the barrier to entry may be steep with equipment prices, access to courses, and availability to quality instruction. This can add up to the difference between “opting in” or having more limited options during the crucial K-8 ages, where introductions to new pastimes and activities are most numerous and provide an opportunity to develop affinities as youth and beyond. As we look back on another season of golf and the memories made on the course, it is a great time to take inventory of the opportunities that led each of us to enjoy the game we love today.

The MSGA Junior Instruction Grant Program has been a very successful program with numerous grant applications, wonderful stories, and encouraging growth among golf’s next generation, but there is still much work to be done. Whether it is donating equipment, volunteering time, or supporting financially, we can all help. And, we all benefit from a vibrant golf community in Montana. Our juniors bring not only a bright future, but add a wonderful element to our golfing community.

The MSGA will continue its granting efforts in 2019. To ensure continued success of the program and increase grants in both size and scope, we would be grateful for your support. If you are inspired to support the MSGA’s ongoing efforts to promote, steward, and serve the game of golf and golfers across Montana, please consider supporting our operations through the following options:

• Encourage a friend to become an MSGA Member. Click here for more information.
• Purchase a specialty license plate. For more information, click here. Plates can be obtained from your county treasurer.
• Consider a gift to the MSGA Endowment. Montana is one of few states that allow a credit (i.e. a dollar-for-dollar Montana income tax reduction) on certain gifts to qualified charitable endowments. The Montana Endowment Tax Credit allows a credit of 40% of a qualifying planned gift’s federal charitable deduction, up to a maximum of $10,000 per year, per individual, or 20% of a businesses direct charitable contribution (also a maximum of $10,000 per year). Click here to give now, or contact us to learn more.
• Become a volunteer. Click here for more information.
• Purchase a Trip-of-the-Month Raffle Ticket, click here.

We wish you a wonderful finish to 2018, and thank you for your membership and continued support of golf in Montana!

Special thanks to MSGA Board Member Jim Redmond for his generosity of time in compiling and organizing the 2018 grant reporting. A complete list of each year’s grant recipients can be found at http://www.msgagolf.org/grant-program-feedback.
Polson Bay’s Milton Received Honor
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

In the September newsletter, we highlighted that Cameron Milton of Polson Bay Golf Course was honored with the 2018 Professional Golfers’ Association Youth Player Development Award.

The charismatic and passionate professional was presented with well-deserved recognition in November at the 2018 Annual PGA Meeting in Indian Wells, California. The PGA bestows the honor to a professional who displays “extraordinary and exemplary contributions and achievement in the area of youth player development.”

Milton's recognition was highlighted by his commitment to creating an inclusive environment at Polson Bay and developing and implementing youth programming that both alleviates financial barriers and encourages kids from all backgrounds to experience the game.

“I couldn't be on the stage today if it wasn't for a whole litany of folks back in Polson,” Milton said during the award ceremony. “It’s an award for the whole town and community, as far as I am concerned.”

Milton spearheaded the establishment of the non-profit Mission Valley Junior Golf Association. The association has been instrumental in launching the Golf in Schools program, which introduces the game to more than 400 middle school students in Polson each year. Additionally, the PGA Junior League has grown 650 percent in three years at Polson Bay. Notably, the Polson Bay Junior Camp provides more than 100 juniors with three days of golf education and play, with no cost to the juniors.

Milton has been a PGA member for 10 years, has served as past president of the Pacific Northwest PGA Section’s Western Montana Chapter, and is a three-time recipient of the Pacific Northwest PGA Section Youth Player Development Award. The MSGA applauds the efforts of the entire Polson golf community and appreciates the demonstrated commitment to growing junior golf. Congratulations to Cameron Milton, and the state looks forward to his continued innovation and service to the game we love!

2018-19 Raffle Tickets on Sale Now!

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.

Twelve great trips are offered, including Barcelona-Spain, San Diego-Legoland & Sea Life, Six Flags over Texas, New Orleans-cooking class, and more! Don’t want to go it alone? Share a ticket with a friend. With only 300 tickets sold, and 2 winners a month, your chances are good for a return on the cost of the ticket.

And, ultimately, it goes toward a great cause... our kids, the future golfers of Montana. Get your ticket today!

Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

NOVEMBER’S DRAWING:
Mesa, AZ / Golf School - Linda Jacobson, Billings
$200 cash - Tyson Bickford, Billings

** DECEMBER’S TRIP PRIZE is Golf in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho **

Handicapping FAQs
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website

What Does The “L” Mean?
The “L” next to your handicap means that it is for Local use only, if allowed by your home course. A Trend handicap falls into this category, and so do handicaps that exceed the maximum allowed by the USGA.

Have a handicap question? CLICK HERE for help.

Montana’s Official Golf Season:
April 1 to October 31
Off-season scores played in Montana should not be posted. Scores played where it is in-season are valid and should be posted, via the online handicap system, smartphone app, or membership linking.
Prep Golfers Commit to Billings Schools
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Two prep standouts recently inked letters of intent to commit to continue golfing at the collegiate level.

Paul O’Neil of Laurel has signed on to play for the Montana State Billings men’s golf team. O’Neil, a key contributor to Laurel’s back-to-back Class A State Championships, will join a growing list of Montana prep standouts playing for MSUB’s Kevin Woodin. O’Neil was a two-time Eastern Class A medalist and four-time All-State Honoree. During his illustrious time for the Locomotives, O’Neil led the team in scoring average all four seasons, captured 10 tournament titles, and twice was a Montana State Junior Champion.

While O’Neil is staying close to home, Manhattan Christian’s Jillian Frye is headed further down I-90, as Frye committed to Rocky Mountain College to join the Battlin’ Bears successful squad. Frye is the defending Class C state champion and led the Eagles to wins in the past two state championships. Rocky Mountain College, the reigning Frontier Conference champions, have boasted an impressive collection of golfers, and Frye will join the fray next fall to play for coach Aaron Pohle. Frye will compete this spring during the Class C season and looks to add more hardware to her impressive collection and lead the Eagles to a three-peat.

McIver’s Quest for Web.com Tour Card Ends at Stage Two
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Following some impressive golf through Web.com Tour qualifying, Billings native Brandon McIver will have to wait another year for his chance at joining what serves as the PGA Tour’s minor league.

McIver finished stage two of Web.com qualifying at 3-under-par at the TPC Craig Ranch in McKinney, Texas. He was T43 and six shots outside the top 19 players who advance to December’s final round of qualifying. McIver posted even-par 72 the first two rounds and closed with a three-under 69. William Kropp of Edmond, Oklahoma, won the qualifier by two strokes at 19-under-par.

McIver, the 2013 and 2014 Montana State Amateur Champion, finished fourth last month at the opening stage of qualifying in Utah.

Congratulations to our newest Ace Club Members!

Did you get a hole-in-one? Go to www.msgagolf.org to see how to get your MSGA Hole-in-One Certificate!

Tess Lind, 10/26/18, Larchmont GC, Hole #17, 140 yds, 6 Iron
Robert Lerum, 9/14/18, Northern Pines GC, Hole #4, 148 yds, 7 Iron
Ken Kallem, 9/7/18, Yellowstone CC, Hole #8, 143 yds, Pitching Wedge

Try the MSGA Smartphone APP. Available in the Apple or Android Stores.

Have you logged in online? Post scores and view your record from home. Don’t know your login? Contact us at support@msgagolf.org.

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