Montana’s Golfing Season Is Finally Here!
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

Parts of the state are still dealing with new snow, but the grass is finally emerging in most of Montana. You are, no doubt, eager to get out there and start playing! But, before you do, let’s review a few important things.

First, if you **played out of state this winter** where it’s in-season, your scores are legal and must be posted to your Montana record (USGA Handicap Manual, section 6-2). If you haven’t already done so, please get these posted as soon as possible so that your record is accurate. Bi-monthly revisions occur year-round to accommodate our snowbirds, so you don’t need to wait until the season starts in Montana to get them posted. If you have an out-of-state membership, we can import your scores and link your records to eliminate your having to post them twice. **Contact us** and we’ll set you up!

Second, 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 important functions of the MSGA, like course rating, junior golf programs, scholarships, rules & handicap education, greens keeping & agronomy, state tournaments, and, ultimately, your local course... things that benefit everyone who plays golf! This is a good thing to remember for those that have multi-state memberships. Thank you for your support!

Third, don’t forget the **USGA Rules of Golf changes**, effective January 1, 2019. If you haven’t already brushed up on the changes, a quick reference chart can be found at [www.msgagolf.org/2019-rules-changes](http://www.msgagolf.org/2019-rules-changes). MSGA members can request a free copy of the Player's Edition of the Rules of Golf from your home club. For more details about the changes, along with videos and reference guides, visit [www.usga.org/rules](http://www.usga.org/rules).

Lastly, please make it a **habit to post your score immediately** after your round, or before the end of the day. A new feature of the World Handicap System coming in 2020 is DAILY revisions. We’ll be providing more detail in coming months why this is important. Don’t worry, if you forget to post at the club kiosk, the ... **Continued next page**
Columbus’ Paul Edwards Named to Hall of Fame

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The Montana Coaches Association has announced their 2019 Hall of Fame inductees and multi-sport golf coach Paul Edwards of Columbus is part of the 2019 class.

Edward’s longevity in coaching spans 32 years with the majority (26 years) at Columbus High School. Edwards began coaching at Reed Point, where he was head coach for Boys’ Basketball and Track & Field.

“Duke” Edwards was head golf coach for 21 years at Columbus as he started the program that would set a Montana High School Association record 5-consecutive state championships. Edwards was voted MCA Coach of the Year 4 times and has been an MCA member for 45 years.

In addition to golf, Edwards was an assistant football coach for 26 years, head Boys’ Basketball for four seasons, and spent six years as athletic director. While assisting football, as the defensive coordinator, the Cougars played for the state championship 6 times, winning 3 titles. During his time as boys’ basketball assistant they played in two title contests, winning one.

Edwards served as District and Divisional President, directed District and Divisional Basketball tournaments, and worked many track and field district and divisional meets. In retirement, Edwards is still actively involved in Columbus athletics.

Bob Howard and the late Terry Bakken join with Edwards in the 2019 MCA Hall of Fame Class.

JUNIORS DATE CHANGE:
The State Juniors Tournament has been moved from June 17-18 to June 24-25. It will still be at the Lake Hills GC.

GOLFING SEASON ... from previous page

smartphone app makes this easy! 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. You can also use the online handicap system at www.msgagolf.org/login.

The 2019 Tournament Calendar is now online at www.msgagolf.org/tournament-calendar. 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’s not listed, along with a link or PDF with more information, please contact us.

One more thing to note: The USGA Network Merge previously scheduled for Spring 2019 has been pushed back to the end of 2019, to allow for additional programming needed by the USGA to make the merge successful. This will coincide with the release of the World Handicap System in 2020.

Enjoy the emerging spring-like weather and have a great season! Feel free to contact us at support@msgagolf.org if you need help.

Juniors Date Change:
The State Juniors Tournament has been moved from June 17-18 to June 24-25. It will still be at the Lake Hills GC.
Montana State Seniors Tournament Heads to Billings

The Montana State Seniors Golf Association (MSSGA) will hold its 2019 State Senior Golf Tournament on August 6-8 in Billings. The tournament annually attracts over 320 golfers. This year players will play one round each at Lake Hills Golf Club, Laurel Golf Club, and Yellowstone Country Club.

Golfers must be MSSGA members to be eligible to play in the tournament. MSSGA membership is open to any male golfer who is age 55 or older on or before July 31 of 2019. Tournament entry forms will be mailed to all current MSSGA members at the end of May.

For more information or to become an MSSGA member, please visit the MSSGA website at http://www.mtseniorgolf.org, or contact Kevin Hayes by email at mtseniorgolf@gmail.com, or by phone or text at (406) 439-0814.

The annual tournament fills quickly once applications are sent out, so if you are interested in playing in the tournament, but are not yet an MSSGA member, please submit your membership form and $45 annual dues as soon as possible in order to receive a tournament entry form.

Handicapping FAQs
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website

Do I Have To Adjust My Score?
Yes, according to the USGA Handicap Manual, section 4-3, ALL scores for handicap purposes, including tournament scores, must be adjusted with Equitable Stroke Control (ESC). This reduces the unusually high hole scores in order to make handicaps more representative of a player’s potential ability. If your score hasn’t been adjusted with ESC, your Handicap index isn’t valid. But, the good news is if you enter your score hole-by-hole, the handicap program will make the ESC adjustment for you!

Have a handicap question? CLICK HERE for help.

EQUITABLE STROKE CONTROL

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ONE NETWORK IN 2020
Regardless of handicap vendor, all Associations will be converted to one network by the end of 2019 (this date has changed).

Here are the benefits:
- ONE network # - multiple states
- ONE handicap record - no linking
- Accessible by anyone in ONE place
- Centralized handicap calculation
- All handicap vendors, same network
- Invisible to golfers, no software or program change

DO YOU HAVE A GHIN# or other record outside the MSGA?
If so, we need to link your records, if this hasn’t been done already! With the merge to one network coming, this needs to be completed soon to eliminate problems and confusion for both you and anyone searching your record.

Just email your information to support@msgagolf.org, and we’ll set you up!

Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

MARCH’S DRAWING:
Branson, Missouri - Susan Haskins, Bozeman
$200 cash - Lance Lundvall, Billings

** APRIL’S TRIP PRIZE is a New Orleans Cooking Class **

msgagolf.org/golf-etiquette-101
Big Sky Conference (NCAA Division I)

March began with a welcomed trip south to St. George, Utah, for the University of Montana at the Lady Thunderbird Invitational. With winter conditions still across the state, a trip south offered a chance to shake off some rust.

Baylee Barckley fired rounds of 79-75 for a 154 total to lead the Griz in T24, followed by Kylie Esh at T57 (81-80, 161), and Brooklyn Van Bebber was T61 (80-82, 162). Next, Allison Sobol posted 85-78 for 163 and T63, followed closely by Teigan Avery, who rebounded from 87 to 77 and 164 total for T65 to round out play for the Grizzlies. U of M finished 10th out of 14 teams in the two-round event after posting 325-310 for a 635 total. California Baptist won by nine shots with a total of 589. For full results, click here.

The U of M and Montana State women's golf teams traveled to Cornville, Arizona, for the Red Rocks Invitational hosted by Northern Arizona University at Agave Highlands Golf Course.

U of M's Barckley closed with a 2-over 73 to tie for eighth overall. She shot rounds of 68-72-73 to finish even par and earn her seventh career top-10 finish. Her three-round total of 213 is the second lowest in program history (212 by Tara Green at 2013 Grizzly Invitational). Barckley's tournament was memorable not only for strong play, but her ace on the par-three 16th hole playing at 162 yards was her first in-competition.

The Grizzlies three-round total of 900 (292-303-305) was the fourth best team effort in program history and placed them 12th out of 18 teams. Kylie Esh posted 75-78-74 to finish at T59 with her 227 total, followed by fellow freshman, Allison Sobol, whose 74-79-78 rounds totaled 231 and T72 positioning. Teigan Avery 81-75-80 and Brooklyn Van Bebber 75-78-83 each totaled 236 and tied for 90th. Competing as an individual, Faith D'Ortenzio shot 77-82-74 for a 233 total and T80.

Delaney Elliott of MSU had a career-best finish for the Bobcats. Elliott posted back-to-back under par rounds (67-68) and held the individual lead heading into the final round. Elliott posted a 74 (+3) to finish at 209 (67-68-74) and tie for second, two shots behind Southern Utah's Chanikan Yongyuan. Elliott's brilliant tournament yielded her first top-five finish in her collegiate career. Her 209 total was the second lowest in program history (Paige Crawford 208 in 2013).

Sofia Rodriguez Todd also had a banner tournament as she posted her best individual round (71) as a Bobcat and best overall tournament finish. Todd fired rounds of 78-76-71 for a 225 total and T80. For the men's team, up first was a trip to Las Vegas hosted by Minot State University at the Beaver Invitational. Played at Aliante Golf Club, Payton Stott rebounded from opening rounds of 80-80 with his best effort to-date, a final round 70 for a 230 total and T15 position. Garrett Woodin was T18 with a total of 232 (81-77-74). Next was Logan... Continued next page
**COLLEGIATE ... from previous page**

Martin who posted 85-87-78 for a 250 total and 42nd place overall. Caleb Trost was T43 with a 251 total (85-83-83) and Riley Kaercher was 49th with a 258 total (87-87-84). The Yellowjackets team total was 963 (331-327-305) to finish 7th out of 10 competing teams. For full results, click here.

Up next, MSUB remained in Las Vegas and battled windy conditions at Stallion Mountain Golf Club, where the Yellowjackets competed for two-rounds at the **Winona State Warrior Invitational**.

Only two players among the field of 76 were able to break 80 as wind consistently was in the 30-40 mile-per-hour range and gusts manipulated the position of resting golf balls throughout the final round. Woodin finished in a tie for 20th place after posting a two-round score of 161 (72-89). Woodin's teammate Caleb Trost tied him at 161 (76-85) and Kaercher posted 76-88 for 164 and T31. Stott was T56 after rounds of 84-91 for a 175 total and Logan Martin rounded out play with a 180 total (82-98) for T66. MSUB finished 8th out of 12 teams with a two-day total of 659 (306-353). For full results, click here.

The third tournament of the month took place in Lakewood, Colorado, at the **Colorado School of Mines Bob Writz Invitational** at Bear Creek Golf Club.

The Yellowjackets finished 7th out of 10 teams, with a two-round total of 637 (321-316). Kaercher was the top individual finisher for MSUB, as he tied for 28th place with a two-round total of 156 (76-80). Stott posted two rounds in the 70s with a 157 (79-78) and T33 positioning. Woodin was next in T36 after rounds of 81-77 for a 158 total. Martin and Trost finished in a tie for 61st place, each with a score of 168. Martin posted 87-81 and Trost managed 85-83. For full results, click here.

On the women's side, MSUB also competed at **The Beaver Invitational** and **Warrior Invitational**. The Yellowjackets put together strong showings in both Las Vegas events.

Shealyn Hafer garnered a second place medal at the Beaver Invitational and led the 'Jackets to a second place team finish as well. Hafer posted rounds of 77-82 for a 159 total, two shots behind individual champion Eryn Ellis of Rocky Mountain College, who shot a 157 (76-81). MSUB finished the event with a team score of 659 (318-341). Fellow Billings school, Rocky Mountain College, edged out MSUB to win the event by four strokes (655), with rounds of 328-327. Renae Heisler, who held the individual lead after round one, tied for fourth place as she shot a 164 (75-89). Tierney Messmer was T6 with a two-round total of 165 (84-81) followed by Kinsey Irvin in T12 position after a total of 171 (82-89). Sarah Schroefel (87-90) and Sydney Rochford (88-89) tied for 17th place, with each shooting a 177. For full results, click here.

The women's team also endured challenging conditions at Stallion Mountain Golf Club, but persevered to finish third as a team with a 686 total (306-380). Only five of the 74 players were able to break a 90 in the final round. Hafer posted a career best opening round 73 and sat in second place, but struggled in her second round to a 97 and a 170 total, finishing in a tie for eighth. Messmer was the Yellowjackets' top finisher at 169 (77-92) good for seventh. Schroefel tied with Hafer for eighth place at 170 (85-95). Heisler was T20 at 181 (81-100) and Rochford was T24 at 183 (82-101), with Irvin rounding out play in T26 position after rounds of 88-96 for a 184 total. For full results, click here.

The Yellowjackets' next scheduled tournament is April 5-6 at the Western New Mexico University Mustang Invitational in Goodyear, Arizona.

**Frontier Conference (NAIA)**

The women of Rocky Mountain College began their spring slate ranked number 10 in the nation after winning every event they played in during their fall campaign. The Battlin' Bears started off the spring in similar fashion picking up a victory in a field of eight teams at the **Beaver Invitational** in Las Vegas. ... **Continued next page**
The Battlin' Bears posted a team total of 655 (328-327), four shots clear of MSU-Billings. Eryn Ellis, the 2018 Frontier Conference Women's Golfer of the Year, earned medalist honors thanks to rounds of 76-81. Her 157 total was two shots better than MSUB's Shealyn Hafer. Morgan O'Neil posted a 163 total (84-79) good for third overall and Anna DeMars' 165 (80-85) was T6. Rounding out the top-ten was Hayden Flohr who shot 170 (88-82). Amanda Conner was T15 with a 175 (84-91) and Kaelyn Volk shot 190 (102-88) for a 26th place finish.

Carroll College also represented the Frontier Conference as the Fighting Saints finished 5th overall with a 727 total (368-359). Cailin Spencer was the top finisher for Carroll at 169 (88-81), good for T8. Caroline Hobson made the top twenty with 179 (92-87) for T19 position, followed by teammates Madison Robischon at 190 (95-95) in T26, Sydnee Nowlen at 193 (93-100) in 29th, and Weslee Nehl at 196 (100-96) who tied for 30th. For full results, click [here](#).

The Battlin' Bears and Fighting Saints' men's teams also competed at the [Beaver Invitational](#).

Rocky put together a strong tournament with a three-round total of 906 (309-300-297), one shot out of second place as the Bears finished third. With six players in the field, Rocky's three individuals place in the top five and four in the top ten. Mitchell Thiessen was fourth overall at 225 (77-73-75) to lead the way, with teammates Reece Nilsen (76-75-75) and Colton Murphy (77-78-71) one shot back at 226 tying for fifth. Michael Tait posted 229 (79-74-76) for T10 and Schaefer Paladichuk managed to post 79 in all three rounds for a total of 237 and T25. HoTae Kim shot 80-80-82 for 242 in T33 position to round out play for Rocky.

Carroll was ninth out of ten teams and led by Joseph Potkonjak who shot 83-80-70 for a 235 total and T21 finish. Next was Samuel Berry at 239 (79-78-82) in 29th, followed by Stephen Santora's 259 (86-86-87) in T50 position, then Ben Gardner at 268 (94-92-82) good for 54th, and Josh Neth posted 277 (96-85-96) finished 58th. For full results, click [here](#).

Rocky participated in the [Winona State Invitational](#) with the men placing fourth overall with a two-round total of 637 (287-350). Michael Tait tied for first overall with Ian Carroll of the University of Indianapolis. Tait posted rounds of 69-80 for 149. Paladichuk was T9 at 157 (77-80) followed by Murphy a shot back in T14 with 158 (70-88). Nilsen was T27 with 163 (73-90), Kim posted 168 (76-92) for T41 and Thiessen shot 180 (75-105) for T66. For full results, click [here](#).

The Rocky women held first place after day one at the [Winona State Invitational](#), but placed second overall with a team total of 660 (300-360), seven shots behind Missouri Western St. Ellis was third overall with 164 (73-91), DeMars was a shot back in a tie for fourth after rounds of 73-92 (165). Flohr was sixth with a total of 166 (79-87). Conner shot 173 (75-98) to finish 13th and O'Neil was a shot behind her at 174 (84-90) in T14 position. Volk rounded out the scoring at 195 (91-104) in 35th overall. For full results, click [here](#).

The Battlin' Bears busy spring calendar continued in Primm Valley, Nevada, both teams competing at the [Battle at Primm](#). With a crowded field of 20 teams, the Rocky men's team acquitted themselves well in fourth place with a team total of 839 (279-281-279) one-under for their team score. Tait was the low finisher in T9 position with rounds of 70-69-70 for a 209 total. Kim was one shot behind at 210 (69-75-66), good for T12 along with teammate Nilsen who also posted 210 (71-68-71). Murphy tied for 21st at 213 (69-72-72) and Paladichuk rounded out play with a 220 total (76-72-72) for T57. For full results, click [here](#).

The Rocky women placed third out of 12 teams at Primm with a 613 total (309-304). Ellis tied for the low score, but fell to Esther Lee of the University of British Columbia in a playoff. Ellis shot 145 (73-72). Flohr was the next best finisher at 153 (76-77) in T11 position, followed by Conner one shot back at 154 (78-76) in T13 position. DeMars shot 162 (82-80) to finish T28 along with teammate O'Neil (83-79). For full results, click [here](#).

Next up for the Rocky women, the [Corban Spring Invitational](#) April 8-9 in Salem, Oregon. The Rocky men head to Dalton, Georgia, for the Roadrunner Classic (April 8-9). Both teams along with the rest of the Frontier Conference head to the Frontier Conference Championship in Tempe, Arizona, April 15-16.
For Montana’s capital city, a short golf season meant it was imperative that golf course management and city staff find a new, reliable source of revenue during the months its course was closed. The Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course, which opened as a nine-hole layout in 1925 and expanded to 18 holes in 1976, offers an enjoyable and affordable golf experience in a beautiful setting on the north side of Helena.

The course averages around 45,000 annual rounds-played — placing it among the best performers in the Mountain Region — and generates a net operating income of about ±$200,000 per year. Still, the facility had some constraints beyond the relatively short golf season that put a ceiling on revenues. The most significant were the substandard pro shop and clubhouse buildings that weren’t conducive to merchandise and food & beverage demand, and made Bill Roberts less competitive for golf outings and other events.

In 2016, Helena faced an expenditure of more than $130,000 after the city determined the facility’s aging buildings weren’t compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and needed to improve accessibility. Additional investment was needed for new roofs and other deficiencies. This seeming obstacle turned out to be an opportunity to explore the re-imagination of BRGC’s clubhouse with the goal of enhancing year-round revenue generation and engaging more segments of the Helena community.

During the prior six years, PGA Golf Professional and Golf Course Manager Scott Longenecker installed a simulator in the tight confines of the pro shop building during the winter season and enjoyed growing success at a time when the facility would normally have been completely closed. Between lessons, league play (~95% of recreational use), club-fittings, and open play, the overall utilization rate of the simulator was about 85%. In addition to generating direct revenue of about $20,000, the simulator resulted in increased merchandise, lesson, and beverage revenues, while adding only minimally to staffing costs.

In developing a conceptual idea for the new clubhouse, the city’s Parks & Recreation department worked with Longenecker and other city staff to envision a sports bar-themed destination facility that would have broad appeal for multiple user groups in the Helena area. In addition to a revamped bar & grill area, the proposed building would include an expanded pro shop, multiple golf simulators and gaming machines, state-of-the-art big screen televisions, sports-themed memorabilia, and a corporate meeting room. Backers of the project believed that a new multi-use destination facility would allow BRGC to thrive for twelve months instead of the typical seven, and be the best bet to position BRGC for long-term sustainability.

The city of Helena brought in NGF Consulting to conduct an independent third party operations review and feasibility study as part of its due diligence. NGF stakeholder surveys showed strong support for a new clubhouse. Provided a description of the proposed program, 6 in 10 respondents indicated they would patronize BRGC more often with the new building, and 1 in 5 said they would use the facility “much more often.” A financial model was created to analyze the viability of the proposed program for the new building, including the projected financial return on investment, which would be a key part of Bill Roberts’ $3 million in improvements for the subsequent 10 years.

NGF modeled the expected effect on relevant revenue centers and projected incremental stabilized net revenues, after cost of sales and other expenses, to be $162,000. This was sufficient to justify a building expenditure of about $2.5 million, based on the 20-year financing terms provided by the city. The fact that the city had to address the ADA issues and replace the roofs made the decision to fund the new building an easy one, and the City Commission approved a 20-year, $2.1 million bank loan for the project.

Construction began in late 2017, and the remodeled clubhouse opened in May 2018. The rest of ... Continued next page
MUNI ... from previous page

the building, including Muni’s Sports Grille, was completed in the Fall. The naming of the new venue has an interesting back story. For years, some in the city wanted to shy away from the word “municipal” in the name of the golf course, or even change the name entirely. During the planning sessions for the clubhouse, the thinking evolved 180 degrees to the idea of embracing the association between the golf course and its clubhouse to municipal golf. In other words, the fact that Bill Roberts was a municipal facility to be enjoyed by all citizens was a badge of honor, and not something to shy away from.

The new building includes a grill room with a 120-person capacity, a separate quiet dining area that seats about 24, a corporate meeting room, three Full Swing simulators (Wii is hooked up to one, Xbox to another), three video poker gaming machines, state-of-the-art televisions (including one 80-inch set), and a fireplace. Programming has included over 100 teams for the winter simulator league, multiple fantasy football leagues, and a new beginner 3-person scramble simulator league that is positioned as a “relaxed pace, fun, and simple format” on-boarding program to rid non-golfers of the anxiety of learning golf out on the course. Bill Roberts Golf Course also hosted a cross country ski race that had more than 400 participants.

Longenecker reports strong early success for the re-imagined clubhouse. In addition to very high utilization of the simulators, there has been strong demand for meeting space, and non-golf related food & beverage sales have increased to about 50% of the total since the facility opened. That's up from “virtually nothing” when the restaurant was open only during the golf season. Now, everyone from neighborhood residents to the cross-country skiers who frequent the golf course during winter have a place to go for a meal or beverage. The revamped pro shop has more room for display and storage, offers improved sight-lines to the golf course and is much more inviting. Longenecker reports a “big uptick in club sales and club fitting.”

Amy Teegarden, who retired as Helena's Director of Parks & Recreation at the end of 2018, was instrumental in bringing the new building to fruition and recently reflected on the process. “Learning that we needed to invest more than $100,000 to make our existing building ADA-compliant — in addition to replacing the roofs — was really the pivot point for us in terms of conceiving the new clubhouse,” she said.

“For the beginning, it was a very thoughtful, well-planned process that culminated in the clubhouse renovation/expansion and the opening of Muni’s. All the major stakeholders — city and golf course staff, the Golf Advisory Board and the City Commission — worked closely together to create a vision for what we wanted the new building to be: a community hub where there was something for everyone, golfers and non-golfers alike. The final stage in the feasibility process was obtaining an independent expert's opinion on the viability of what we were planning. We chose National Golf Foundation Consulting and were very pleased with the thoroughness and professionalism of their analysis. Their expertise was invaluable as we finalized the conceptual program and financial projections for presentation to the commissioners.”

For many golf courses in northern climates whose revenues are constrained by the season, finding a way to generate winter revenues and broaden the appeal of the golf facility to the non-golfing community can be a winning formula. In the case of Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course in Helena, the new clubhouse building has been a big early success and should help ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the golf operation — long after the capital investment is paid off.

(Reprint from www.thengfq.com. For the full article, click here.)