



Rock Creek Cattle Company

# MSGGA Newsletter

PO Box 4306, Helena MT 59604-4306 (406) 458-3359

May/June 2014

## June Tournaments

June 2

PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am  
Larchmont GC (Missoula)

June 2

RMSPGA (YC) Pro Am  
Bridger Creek GC (Bozeman)

June 5

PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Assistant  
Whitefish Lake GC (Whitefish)

June 6

Ironman  
Old Works GC (Anaconda)

June 6

RMSPGA (YC) Ladies Pro Am  
Yellowstone CC (Billings)

June 6

Rope and Stroke  
Lake Hills (Billings)

June 6

Young Life  
Eaglerock GC (Billings)

June 6-8

Ladies Bud Light Best Ball  
Forsyth CC (Forsyth)

June 7

2 Player Spring Draw  
Big Sky GC (Big Sky)

June 7

Chrome Bar  
Stillwater GC (Columbus)

June 7

Sidney Scramble  
Sidney CC (Sidney)

June 7

WP Firemans 4 Person Red Ball  
Airport GC (Wolf Point)

June 7-8

Charity Classic  
Green Meadow CC (Helena)

June 7-8

CVGC Memorial  
Cabinet View GC (Libby)

## MSGGA vTOUR – Exciting New Member Benefit

Emily Hulsey, MTS Services, Handicapping and Website Coordinator



The MSGGA is excited to announce a new concept in tournament golf...where you compete at your own convenience!

It's called vTOUR. It's for anyone who's looking to add some fun and friendly competition to their normal golf routine.

What's a vTOUR? It's a virtual tournament, powered by Golfnet, and only available to MSGGA Members. There is no charge to compete, and great prizes to be won!

A link for the vTOUR will be placed on the MSGGA website ([www.msggagolf.org](http://www.msggagolf.org)) by the end of May. The MSGGA will host three vTOUR tournaments this summer...one in June, one in July, and one in August. Each tournament will have a set time frame in which to play your round. These will be listed on the vTOUR events page. The vTOUR incorporates the USGA Handicap System, allowing golfers of all abilities to compete. It also eliminates geographic limits of traditional tournaments, because you can play at any course in Montana.

How does it work? FIRST, you must register on the vTOUR page in order

to play in the tournament. SECOND, play your round within the time frame listed, at any Montana course you choose. THIRD, post your score in the handicap system, whether at the Course Kiosk, the Online Handicap System, or with your Smartphone App. THEN, watch the leaderboard on the vTOUR homepage to see how you do!



You must play with another MSGGA Member, and have your

score attested. When you post your score (if you've first registered), the vTOUR system automatically assigns it to the tournament. If you play and post multiple rounds within the tournament time frame, the system will *replace* your current event score with any score that results in a lower net score. What other tournament allows you to better your score?

Ready to have some fun? Watch the MSGGA website for the vTOUR link. Then, remember to REGISTER, PLAY, POST, and see if you're a winner!

Look for more tips and information each month! You can contact Emily at [golf@montana.net](mailto:golf@montana.net).

Scan the QR Code or go to [www.msggagolf.org](http://www.msggagolf.org)



## Why Go With An MSGA Handicap?

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director



The fact that you have come across this newsletter means that more than likely you're an avid golfer and a card-carrying member of the MSGA.

Players aren't physically carrying their handicap cards as often, thanks to the MSGA mobile app and the ease of quickly finding your USGA Index online. The days of waiting for the new handicap cards to be printed and set out by your clubs have changed.

There are many perceived and real barriers to entry in the world of golf and specifically golf is often singled out and seen as a sport rooted in exclusivity. This misnomer has been unfairly perpetrated through various outlets, but the National Golf Foundation's consistent surveying and studies show that 90-percent of golfers are playing on public courses either via membership or of the daily fee variety.

The above-mentioned statistic contrasts the public perception. There is probably no better place in which perception fails to meet reality than the mystification related to handicaps in golf.

By common definitions, handicaps are things usually undesirable or associated purely with gambling. The term handicap aside, there is a consistent misunderstanding and general lack of education surrounding the handicap system. It's true, at times it can be complex mathematically, but much like electricity, you don't have to know exactly how it works to benefit from it.

So, quickly let's discuss in some detail why it is beneficial to have a USGA handicap, provided by the MSGA. First, the original intent of the system is to level the playing field so that players of differing levels are able to compete equally.

Golf and the handicap system offers a unique opportunity. What other sport would allow you the chance to compete against a professional on the same field of play with an equitable scoring system? LeBron James gets 1 point for each made basket and you get 16? This pipe dream is probably not a realistic scenario.

Competition and being eligible for tournament play usually requires a current handicap index. Measurement is always a way to pay more attention and have a better idea of what truly is going on in any endeavor. Handicap indexes offer the chance to have consistent updates (twice monthly e-revisions to your email for MSGA members) and a way to log those hard-fought rounds and see where your game is. An 85 at a wide-open 6,500-yard par-72 course does not equate equally with an 85 at a 7,100 tree-lined par 72 course. Not all scores are created equal, nor should they be treated as such.

But, most importantly, even if you don't compete, you support the game of golf in Montana through obtaining your MSGA handicap and *subsequent membership in the Association*. Your MSGA Membership helps to fund the following:

- Course Rating
- MSGA State Tournaments and The Montana Cup
- Junior Programs and Junior America's Cup
- Rules Education and Rules Officials for Events
- Peaks & Prairies Education (agronomy, greenskeeping)
- University & College Scholarships
- MSGA Hall of Fame

So next time you hear someone ask what a handicap is, or why you have one...help spread the education of the benefits of being an MSGA member and having a handicap, even if you don't carry the card to show them.



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<b>June 7-8</b> Steamboat Two Man Best Ball Signal Point GC (Fort Benton)	<b>June 13</b> Home Builders Association Scramble Lake Hills (Billings)	<b>June 14</b> Mineral County Chamber of Commerce Trestle Creek GC (St. Regis)
<b>June 9</b> Montana State Junior Divisional Dist. 2 Meadow Lark CC (Great Falls)	<b>June 13</b> RMSPGA (YC) Ladies Pro Am Laurel GC (Laurel)	<b>June 14</b> Three Person Scramble Overland GC (Big Timber)
<b>June 9</b> PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am Northern Pines GC (Kalispell)	<b>June 13-15</b> Rocky Mountain Oyster Open Forsyth CC (Forsyth)	<b>June 14</b> US Amateur Public Links Qualifier Mission Mountain GC (Ronan)
<b>June 9</b> RMSPGA (YC) Pro Am Pryor Creek GC (Huntley)	<b>June 14</b> 307 Tourney Stillwater GC (Columbus)	<b>June 14</b> US Open Combined Low Net-Members Missoula CC (Missoula)
<b>June 10</b> Montana State Junior Divisional Dist. 5 Sidney CC (Sidney)	<b>June 14</b> Bud Light Tournament Jawbone Creek GC (Harlowton)	<b>June 14-15</b> Hitchcock Memorial - Lisac's Tire Butte CC (Butte)

<p><b>June 14-15</b> Roundup Plentywood GC (Plentywood)</p> <p><b>June 15</b> Bulldog Open Whitefish Lake GC (Whitefish)</p> <p><b>June 15</b> Father's Day Tournament Deer Park GC (Deer Lodge)</p> <p><b>June 15</b> Father's Day Tournament Missoula CC (Missoula)</p> <p><b>June 15</b> Father's Day Two Person Scramble Polson Bay GC (Polson)</p>	<p><b>June 15</b> Father's Day/US Open Golf &amp; Dinner Indian Springs Ranch GC (Eureka)</p> <p><b>June 15</b> US Open 2-Person Best Ball Livingston GC (Livingston)</p> <p><b>June 16</b> Montana State Junior Divisional Dist. 1 Whitefish Lake GC (Whitefish)</p> <p><b>June 16</b> Montana State Junior Divisional Dist. 3 Riverside CC (Bozeman)</p> <p><b>June 16</b> Montana State Junior Divisional Dist. 4 Pryor Creek GC (Huntley)</p>	<p><b>June 16</b> PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am Polson Bay GC (Polson)</p> <p><b>June 16-17</b> Junior RMSPGA Championship Twin Falls GC (Twin Falls, ID)</p> <p><b>June 17,19,20</b> Polson Junior Camp Polson Bay GC (Polson)</p> <p><b>June 17-26</b> Buffalo Hill GC Junior Golf Camp Buffalo Hill GC (Kalispell)</p> <p><b>June 18</b> PWGA Ladies Invite Polson Bay GC (Polson)</p>
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## The Golf Industry – A very BIG Thing

Pete Grass, CGCS, Hilands Golf Club (Billings)



Whether you like it or not, or I may go so far as to say, whether you even realize it or not, you are part of a really BIG thing, GOLF.

The entire industry is a \$68.8 BILLION dollar economic engine in the United States. If you are reading this, you are a contributor to that figure. Could it really be \$68.8 billion?

My answer to you is this: Think about how much your individual facility spends. Add up the operating and capital budgets for the golf course, clubhouse, and any other areas that are part of your club's operations due to golf being involved. Include payroll, maintenance, pro shop, food and beverage inventories, and purchases throughout the year, down to the least obvious expenditures, such as utilities and property taxes. Add up the numbers from around Montana and then think about the areas of the country that have thousands of courses and year-round seasons. Considering all of this, it is easier to see how that number comes about.

A superintendent or maintenance staff team member typically works managing your golf facility's greatest asset (in real dollars and player perception), the golf course itself.

Golf teaching professionals, general managers, food and beverage managers, chef, and other employees at a golf facility, exist as a result of there being a golf course as the core business.

If you are an owner, city/county parks council member, club director or committee member, you have direct influence over the dollars spent to operate your golf facility. If you are a golfer, you are the true "root" of the entire industry; without you, none of this would exist. You pay green fees, memberships, buy golf equipment, eat and drink at your facility; you spend money, which in turn provides the capital for the facility to operate.

In my mind, it doesn't matter if your facility creates \$1 or \$5 million as a result of being in existence; you are a part of the overall total. When the We Are Golf coalition goes to Washington DC in May each year for National Golf Day (GCSAA typically has the largest delegation), we're able to tell a great story.

When you're able to demonstrate that the golf industry creates close to one million jobs, \$68.8 billion in economic impact and allows for \$3.9 billion to be raised for charitable contributions, that opens eyes and provides opportunities to have our golf industry issues heard. The responsibility that comes along with being part of such a large industry is to help carry the load.

Recently, the CEO of the World Golf Foundation, Steve Mona, summarized things well: "The heavier the load, the more spokes it takes to support the wheel. Don't be part of the problem, be part of the solution."

We can all play a part, whether large or small, to help this industry of which we love. From as little as keeping current with your education and trends in the industry, to volunteering at a local, state, or national level to help the game of golf in some way, we can all make an impact.

We should all be proud of our involvement with this great game and do everything we can to promote it. Share the word! We are an industry that is a major player in the local and national economy. It provides recreation for millions and environmental benefits to our communities. Take pride in your work and in being part of the wheel that keeps this BIG thing we love, golf, turning.

**Congratulations Peter Grass, CGCS, elected GCSAA Secretary/Treasurer by his peers.**

*(In next month's issue, Pete will share his experience with the We Are Golf coalition in traveling to Washington DC for National Golf Day.)*



## Golfing With Geise

George Geise, MSGA Vice President and retired sports editor for the Great Falls Tribune



It's about time that golf fans across the nation discovered what we Montanans have known for many years -- namely, that Gene Cook is a living legend, and not just in Great Falls.

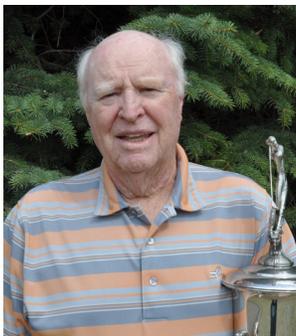
Well, that time has arrived.

More specifically, the May 9 edition of Golfweek magazine has arrived in the mail, and it included a four-page feature headlined "A Salute To Local Legends". There are profiles of five prominent American amateur golfers who have made profound impacts on their communities, their states, and their sport. Cook, the most decorated male amateur golfer in Montana history, with 15 major championships, is one of the golfers recognized by the popular weekly magazine.

Cook, who recently turned 80 years old, was glad to get the national publicity. "At my age, anything you get is a positive," he said. The Golfweek feature was an appropriate tribute to a man who won six State Amateur titles, two State Mid-Amateurs, and seven State Senior crowns in the Treasure State from 1967 through 1996. It mentions that Gene learned the game back in his hometown of Bismarck, N.D., from his grandfather, Tom O'Leary, who urged Cook to "swing from the heels." Obviously, that proved to be great advice, since Cook was the longest hitter of his era, frequently driving the ball more than 300 yards at a time when a 250-yard drive was considered a long poke.

Golfweek solicited nominations from subscribers for the Legends feature, and received many submissions from across the nation, according to Julie Williams, who interviewed Cook after getting a letter from local pro Connie Cramer-Caouette. "I just thought, who could be better than Gene Cook as a representative of all that's good about Montana golf?" said Cramer-Caouette, who serves as head pro at Eagle Falls and Anaconda Hills golf courses in Great Falls.

Cook made a significant impact on the state sports scene off the golf course, as well, since he was influential as a teacher, coach, mentor and referee. He's also battled (and defeated) cancer at least three times in his life and remains a fierce competitor who hits the ball farther than any 80-year-old in the state.



I thought it was timely for Golfweek to choose Cook for the magazine piece in the same year that Montana lost another legendary figure. Butte native Ed Zemljak passed away earlier this year, and he and Cook were charter members of the Montana State Golf Association Hall of Fame in 1986. Between them, Cook and Zemljak won 12 State Amateur championships between 1957 and 1978 and dominated the Treasure State golf scene during their prime.

The other Legends honored by the magazine were Maggie Scott of Cleveland, Tenn; Mike Booker of Woodland, Texas; Bill Brenner of York, Pa; and Tom Werkmeister of Kentwood, Mich. All have interesting stories to tell. Fans who can't find Golfweek on the newsstand can call (800) 996-4653 to order a copy of the May 9 edition. It has a photo of Arnold Palmer on the cover, and is devoted to amateur golf.

June 18-19

Big "1" Junior State Qualifier  
Bridger Creek GC (Bozeman)

June 19

SuperValu

Lake Hills (Billings)

June 20

2014 Copper Cup – Fundraiser  
Old Works GC (Anaconda)

June 20-21

Charity Classic

Pine Meadows GC (Lewistown)

June 20-22

Jamboree

Laurel GC (Laurel)

June 21

Ag Classic

Plentywood GC (Plentywood)

June 21

City Tournament

Bill Roberts GC (Helena)

June 21

Mixed Couples Chapman/Scramble  
Signal Point GC (Fort Benton)

June 21

Montana Rail Link

Missoula CC (Missoula)

June 21

Pitch, Putt, & Drive

Polson Bay GC (Polson)

June 21-22

Highland View Women's Invitational  
Highland View GC (Butte)

June 21-22

MMGC 2man Team Event

Mission Mountain GC (Ronan)

June 22

Hulen's Swatfest

Madison Meadows (Ennis)

June 22-23

Men's Member Guest

Airport GC (Wolf Point)

June 23

PNWPGA (WMC) Pro-Am

Missoula CC (Missoula)

June 23

RMSPGA (YC) Pro Am

Riverside CC (Bozeman)

June 23-24

Montana State Junior Champ. & Callaway Junior World Qualifier, Laurel GC

June 25

Ladies Invitational

Buffalo Hill GC (Kalispell)

June 25

Ladies Invitational

Plentywood GC (Plentywood)

June 25

MCC WGA Guest Day

Missoula CC (Missoula)

June 25

Pine Meadows Junior Tourney  
Pine Meadows GC (Lewistown)

June 26-28

Cowtown Round Up  
Miles City Town & CC (Miles City)

June 27

Bobcat Scramble  
Signal Point GC (Fort Benton)

June 27

Chamber of Commerce Scramble  
Pine Meadows GC (Lewistown)

June 27

Make-A-Wish Foundation  
Lake Hills (Billings)

June 27-29

Bull Mountain Open  
Pine Ridge GC (Roundup)

June 28

Museum of the Beartooth  
Stillwater GC (Columbus)

June 28

NEMHS Charitable Fundraiser  
Airport GC (Wolf Point)

June 28

The "Bash" – Ladies Invitational  
Briarwood (Billings)

June 28-29

Big Dog  
Livingston GC (Livingston)

June 28-29

Garden City Cup  
Missoula CC (Missoula)

June 28-29

Glacier Bank 2 Person Better Ball  
Polson Bay GC (Polson)

June 28-29

Old Works Amateur  
Old Works GC (Anaconda)

June 28-29

Subaru Three Person Scramble  
Bill Roberts GC (Helena)

June 29

Stillwater Open  
Stillwater GC (Columbus)

June 30

PNWPGA (WMC) Ladies Pro-Am  
Glacier View GC (West Glacier)

June 30

RMSPGA (YC) Pro Am  
Briarwood (Billings)

## Rules Talk – Rules Myths To Bust

Mary Bryson, MSWGA Board Member and Rules Enthusiast



Last month we busted the "line of flight" rule myth. While we learned how NOT to apply this, I set out to find a practical use for the "Line of

Flight" concept.

To begin, it helps us to determine where to drop our ball when we encounter a water hazard. Depending on the course you play and your given successes or failures, you may have to work with (or against) a variety of hazards.

At my home course, Green Meadow Country Club (Helena), there are 13 holes marked water hazards. That, of course, means the odds are good (even if the results are not) that eventually my ball may find the hazard... but let's hope not!

Now, what is a water hazard? The Rules provide that a water hazard is any "sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch, or other open water course and anything of similar nature on the course." For our purposes, any area of the golf course marked with either red (for a lateral water hazard) or yellow stakes constitutes a water hazard.

Okay, what if our ball finds itself in one of these clearly staked areas? The rules provide that we can drop a ball somewhere behind the

hazard (and by definition no nearer the hole), apply a one-stroke penalty, and continue playing the hole. So, at what point does the "line of flight" concept factor in? I would suggest that it comes in to play when we're trying to determine where to drop our ball.

Rule 26 "Water Hazards" is specific about the "point" where our errant ball last crossed the line marking the hazard.

- We must use that point to determine where to drop our ball AND
- We must keep that point between the hole and us.

Once we encounter this too-often reality of negotiating a hazard, we can use the line of flight path to determine where our ball last crossed the line marking the hazard.

For example, at my home course, the par-five hole eight has a pond that normally a second shot may require hitting over. Additionally, the pond

...Continued on the next page

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## Support Junior Golf



### MSWGA Events

- May 24-26 - Barnett Memorial, Missoula CC, Missoula
- May 31 - Relay for Life, Pryor Creek GC, Huntley
- June 6-8 - Ladies Bud Light 4-Person Best Ball, Forsyth GC, Forsyth
- June 6 - Ladies Pro Am, Yellowstone CC, Billings
- June 7 - Golfing for a Cure, Prairie Farms GC, Havre
- June 8 - 2-Lady Best Ball, Canyon River GC, Missoula



## **RULES**...continued from previous page

continues jetting out to the right and alongside the fairway towards the green. An errant bounce or a mis-hit shot may initially clear the pond, but continue beyond and still find the hazard further on (the right side). In an example like this, we can utilize the “line of flight” concept to help us determine the approximate spot where our ball crossed the line into the hazard – this is not the point where you find your ball, but rather the point where it crossed the margin of the hazard. It’s important to note, that we don’t drop our ball along the “line of flight” – we merely use line of flight to determine where to drop our ball.

Given that we’ve determined where our ball last crossed the line of the water hazard, what are our options? Well, remember from last month that we always have the option under the provisions in the Rules of Golf--we can play the ball from the original point (stroke and distance); OR we have another option for water hazards marked with yellow stakes: keep the point where our ball entered the hazard between us and the hole and then drop our ball as far back on that line as we want. For water hazards marked with red stakes (lateral water hazards) we have one more additional option from those previously outlined. We can drop a ball (on either side of the hazard) within two club lengths (use that longest club!) of the point where it last crossed the line of the hazard. As with our “unplayable” rule, we apply a one-stroke penalty under all of these scenarios.

See you on the green! Remember to keep it on the cut grass (and out of those water hazards).



## **Team Games In Golf**

*Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director*

Golf is inherently viewed as an individual sport, with each player pursuing their own successes and dealing with the innate challenges of the game we love (and love to hate).

Even at the high school and college levels, the “team game” is some variation of several players competing individually and throwing out a high score or two to determine the team total.

Competition is at the heart of tournament golf, competing with oneself, the course, and the field.

Most sports fans started with a love of

competition from team sports. While a great many avenues are available to participate throughout life in team sports, golf is one of the few lifetime sports that allows players to compete well into their golden years, often times with an improvement in skill level.

Around this time of year, fundraising tournaments and corporate events are kicking off and running throughout the summer. You have undoubtedly played in at least one tournament of this sort, usually playing on a team.

As any fan of the great cyclical golf events like the President’s, Solheim, or Ryder Cups would attest, there’s something both inspiring and exciting

about watching the individual team-up and share the enthusiasm within a team dynamic.

### **The Scramble – Everyone’s Darling**

The most often employed format in team events has become the scramble—and for good reason, who doesn’t like to tee it high and let it fly?

Teams of four to five players all hit a shot and select the best one, move to the next shot, rinse, and repeat.

Pressure is usually at a low, or a great high, depending upon whether you’re the first to hit, or the last to putt, and this format is fantastic for golfers of

*...Continued on the next page*



### MSGA Smartphone APP "MSGAGOLF"

**TEAM**...continued from previous page  
varying skill levels and interest.

Some of the benefits of the scramble format are keeping a brisk pace of play (at least you hope), having many players contribute, and the generally low-key atmosphere it creates.

#### **Four-Ball – The Main Team Game (sort of)**

While scrambles rely on a best-shot approach, the often mis-termed best-ball, or more correctly deemed four-ball, is a better ball format where teams (usually of two) hole out individually and then are scored based on the player with the lowest amount of strokes. Bob makes a four and Sandra makes a three, the team's four ball score is three.

This format is popular and found in many member-guest tournaments. While it offers the opportunity to root for a teammate, you're on an island with your own ball most of the time.

Next year will mark the introduction of the USGA Amateur Four-Ball Championships. The men's championship will take place in San Francisco at the historic Olympic Club and the women's will be held at the famed Bandon Dunes Golf Resort in Oregon.

<http://www.usga.org/news/2013/July/U-S--Amateur-Four-Ball-Sites-Announced/>

Excitement for the introduction of this championship builds on the

popular format known to many tournament golfers.

While many of you will compete this summer in team scrambles, some in four-ball events, there are a number of other formats that the greater golfing community would be well served in incorporating to mix the fun of playing in teams whether in the tournament setting or a casual weekend round to mix things up.

Let's introduce some of the lesser-played formats you might want to experiment with this season....

#### **Alternate Shot – Easy to Define, Hard to Master**

Without question, a favorite of post-tournament derby action, alternate shot offers teams the ultimate task in teamwork, patience, and encouragement.

Think standing over a punch shot under a tree and over a bunker is fun to begin with? It's a lose-lose when your teammate has to hit it and you're the reason they're trying to execute the miracle shot.

This format makes the big leagues in the bigger stage team events (Ryder Cup etc.) and offers a great challenge. One side benefit – a very quick round, two can play at the speed of one!

#### **Chapman – Golfing's Frankenstein**

A blend of the previously outlined formats, on two-player teams, both players hit tee-shots, then switch balls. Player A plays from Player B's tee shot, and vice-versa. Each player hits their second shot, then they select the best position after the second shots.

At that point the team abandons the "less-good" shot, and the selected ball is played out by alternate shot method until it is holed. The player who did not hit the best second shot would hit

the third shot since it is alternate shot at that point.

It's a terrific format that utilizes a little of everything.

#### **Variety Can Be the Spice of Golf**

All of the above games can be played either as stroke play or match play.

Many of the lesser known or utilized types outlined, like Chapman, also come with a variety of different names: Chapman, to many, is also known as Pinehurst, or American Foursomes.

Take the scramble, for example. One variation, sometimes referred to as the Florida Scramble, Dropout Scramble, or Step Aside, brings in the twist that the player whose shot was previously selected cannot hit the next shot. This adds some intrigue.

Take it one step further...a true dropout scramble would offer teams the challenge of allowing, say, all five to hit the first shot, select it, and then you're down to four players hitting shots, then only three players eligible to hit, and so on.

We don't always have the longest golf season in Montana, but that doesn't mean it can't be full of fun! And, sometimes, the most fun on the golf course is playing with a partner or on a team.

**Do you have a favorite format that your friends like to play?** Let us know and, in a following issue, we'll share your favorite team or group games.

**Do you want something in the newsletter?**

Contact Nick Dietzen at:  
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(406) 459-3459