USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J. (May 20, 2015) – The United States Golf Association (USGA), in partnership with American Express, today announced plans for the second annual PLAY9™ Day, scheduled for Wednesday, July 29.

The USGA will recognize and celebrate the many virtues of the nine-hole round. Coming off a successful first year, the initiative will broaden to include more facilities and more golfers as it continues to gain momentum and popularity as a convenient way to enjoy and experience the game we all love.

In support of the PLAY9 initiative, the USGA will deploy a national awareness-building campaign to encourage participation from golf clubs and golfers alike. The multi-channel campaign is designed to rally golfers of all skill and interest levels around PLAY9 Day.

The campaign is highlighted by:

• Distribution of PLAY9 toolkits to USGA Member Clubs
• Extensive digital promotion
• An engaging social-media campaign
• Significant state and regional golf association support

PLAY9 toolkits will be downloadable at www.usga.org/play9 and will include a user guide, posters, tent card and customizable cart plate.

Golfers will find extensive engagement opportunities online and via social media. Facilities and golfers will be encouraged to share their photos and success stories from PLAY9 Day, and the USGA will feature these across its many platforms. Within social media circles, all participants will be encouraged to promote the day via the use of #Play9Golf.

“Of paramount importance to the USGA is researching solutions and promoting initiatives to encourage participation while sustaining the health of golf for future generations,” said Mike Davis, executive director of the USGA. “PLAY9 Day addresses the time barrier to the game that some face. By expanding our efforts through outreach with USGA Member Clubs and state and regional golf associations, we anticipate a steady uptick from last year’s program, affirming the merits of playing golf when time does not permit an 18-hole round. We encourage everyone to play golf on July 29th, and to bring friends and family along to enjoy the experience.”

With nine-hole facilities making up more than 30 percent of public courses in the U.S. and 90 percent of courses offering a nine-hole rate, July 29 provides an optimal opportunity to play golf and encourage additional participation.

Among the many benefits of the nine-hole round:

• It involves less of a time commitment than playing 18 holes.
• It can be less intimidating to newcomers as they learn the Rules, etiquette and fundamentals of the game.
• It is friendlier on the wallet.
• Nine-hole scores are eligible for handicap purposes.

The 2014 program helped to educate golfers that nine-hole scores are eligible for handicap purposes. In 2014, the USGA’s Golf Handicap and Information Network (GHIN®) recorded a 13 percent increase from 2013 in nine-hole rounds posted in the two months after the program’s launch. Golfers can visit www.usga.org/play9 to find more information on posting a nine-hole score.

Additionally, a USGA consumer study conducted by Sports & Leisure Research Group has shown that 60 percent of golfers see nine-hole rounds as an engaging way to introduce people to the game. Whether for new players or experienced players, PLAY9 Day is designed to encourage everyone to find the time to play more of the game we all love.

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