USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J. (May 5, 2016) – Spurred by the success of its first two years, the United States Golf Association (USGA) is expanding the PLAY9™ program this year, encouraging more golfers to play nine holes during six scheduled "PLAY9 Days" throughout the golf season, beginning on May 9 and occurring on the ninth day of each month through October.

Since 2014, the USGA's PLAY9 program has been actively educating and rallying golfers around the concept of the nine-hole round as a simple yet effective solution to address the challenge of fitting golf into busy days. In its first year, the PLAY9 program sparked a 13 percent year-over-year increase in nine-hole scores posted to the USGA's Golf Handicap and Information Network (GHIN®) for the first two months following the program's launch. Nine-hole scores posted to GHIN increased another 11 percent in 2015.

"What we love about PLAY9 is the opportunity to welcome more people – both recreational golfers and non-golfers alike – to enjoy the great game of golf," said Mike Davis, USGA executive director/CEO. "We're clearly excited about the results we've seen, committed to expanding the program and optimistic about its long-term potential to grow globally."

While 2016 PLAY9 Days will be officially observed on May 9, June 9, July 9, Aug. 9, Sept. 9 and Oct. 9, golf facilities are being encouraged by the USGA to host nine-hole "play" events whenever it is convenient. Working closely with the National Golf Foundation, state and regional golf associations, and allied partners, including The PGA of America, the PGA Tour, the LPGA, The First Tee and AJGA, the USGA has expanded its dedicated PLAY9 microsite (www.usga.org/play9) to include additional PLAY9 content, suggested PLAY9 Day games and activities, and promotional templates in print and digital form.

"We are encouraged by what we have seen from the first two years of the PLAY9 program and fully support the potential of growing the game through this initiative," said Chris Montgomery, director of communications and marketing partnerships for the Arizona Golf Association. "PLAY9 offers a great fit for the fast-paced modern world and allows our members to play the game they love, post their scores, and introduce their friends and family at a lower cost and time commitment."

The nine-hole round is highly regarded for a range of appreciable benefits:

- It involves a lesser time commitment than playing 18 holes.
- It can be a less intimidating format to newcomers in learning the game's fundamentals, along with Rules and etiquette.
- Nine-hole scores are eligible for handicap purposes.
- A nine-hole round is cost-effective.

With nine-hole golf facilities making up more than 30 percent of public courses in the United States, and 90 percent of 18-hole public facilities offering nine-hole rates, the United States Golf Association supports PLAY9 Days as an optimal opportunity to play the great game of a lifetime, and encourage additional participation.

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