

The United States National Development Program (USNDP) today announced that all 50 states have joined the USNDP State Junior Team Program, establishing a nationwide player-development pathway for elite junior golfers well ahead of schedule.

The milestone comes three years after the State Junior Team Program launched with seven pilot states in 2024. Created to expand, strengthen and diversify the pipeline of junior golfers ages 13-18, the program provides athletes with development, competition and talent-identification opportunities within their home states.

In February, Augusta National Golf Club and Masters Tournament Charities committed \$1.5 million over three years to support the expansion of the State Junior Team component of the USNDP, helping accelerate the growth of the program.

"This is a significant moment for the U.S. National Development Program and for junior golf in this country," said Heather Daly-Donofrio, managing director, U.S. National Development Program. "When we launched the State Junior Team Program, the vision was to create meaningful development opportunities for young athletes across the country. Having all 50 states committed to the program brings that vision to life and gives us the foundation for a truly national pathway. Most importantly, it will allow more young golfers to access the resources, coaching and competitive opportunities that can help them reach their full potential."

The State Junior Team Program began with California (Southern), Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Ohio and Tennessee. The initial goal was establishing teams in all 50 states by 2033.

Nine states joined the program in 2025: Idaho, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, Minnesota, Wisconsin and California (Northern).

The program grew to 30 states following the announcement of 14 additional participating states in 2026. Those states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, South Dakota, Texas and Washington and will name their inaugural teams by the end of this year.

With the remaining 20 states now committed to join in 2027 and identify teams by the end of next year, the program has reached nationwide participation five years ahead of the USGA's original 2033 goal.

"It has been incredibly gratifying to see the vision for the USNDP State Junior Team Program come to life, and having all 50 states on board is an amazing milestone," said Scott Nye, director of golf at Merion Golf Club and captain for Team Pennsylvania. "In our first season with Team Pennsylvania, I saw firsthand the pride our players took in representing their state, supporting one another and building friendships that go well beyond the golf course. The support we received from clubs and so many people throughout the state made the experience even more special. Having worked in golf in Pennsylvania since 1990, seeing our team walk onto some great courses with Team Pennsylvania bags and uniforms filled me with tremendous pride and excitement for what the future of this program can become."

State Junior Teams are established through collaboration among the USGA, Allied Golf Associations (AGAs), PGA of America Sections and relevant state junior golf programs. State committees oversee team selection criteria and program operations based on guidelines provided by the USGA.

"Our Allied Golf Associations and PGA of America Sections have been instrumental in bringing this program to life," said Daly-Donofrio. "They understand their junior golf communities better than anyone, and their commitment has helped us

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create a pathway that can identify and support talented athletes across the entire country. Reaching all 50 states is an exciting milestone and opportunity to strengthen these programs and help more juniors pursue their goals in the game."

To be state junior team eligible, a player must be a U.S. citizen, cannot be enrolled in college, must be 13 years old by Jan. 1 and not reach his/her 19th birthday by July 15 of the year in which they would compete on a State Junior Team.

"My experience with Team Southern California was incredibly valuable," said Jaden Soong, former Team Southern California athlete now in his first year on the U.S. National Junior Team. "It's an outstanding program. The resources and opportunities that we had really helped me improve my game on and off the course. Making the jump from the State Junior Team to the National Junior Team is something I worked hard toward. It's great to see that the work you put in pays off, and it motivates me to keep improving and make the most of this opportunity."

Announced in 2023, the USNDP is designed to ensure that American golf is the global leader in the game by focusing on six key pillars: talent identification, access to competition, national teams, athlete resources, player development and relations, and financial support.

The USNDP is supported by founding partners Ally Financial and Sentry Insurance as well as philanthropic giving to fulfill the USGA's commitment to providing pathways to elite levels of the game, regardless of financial situations.

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