(ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla.) – As part of an industry-wide collaboration to lead the responsible return of golf in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the game's allied organizations have established "Back2Golf," a plan outlining operational guidelines for golf's 16,000-plus facilities that adhere to nationally established protocols and best practices.

After review from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), golf leaders and medical experts, the game's national organizations have adopted a three-phase approach for golf's careful reopening, focused on prolonged social distancing and enhanced sanitization practices. Using measures set by the CDC and The White House "Guidelines for Opening Up America Again" plan, the recommendations will progress at various paces depending on geographic location.

"The Back2Golf Playbook and Guidelines that the PGA of America and golf's allied organizations have put together are both comprehensive in nature and, most importantly, lay out a responsible way to get back on the golf course," said Dr. Bradley Connor, clinical professor of medicine at the Weill Cornell Medical College and an attending physician at the New York Presbyterian Hospital-Cornell campus. "The guidelines emphasize social distancing and other preventative measures in alignment with the plan established by The White House and CDC. Golf is a terrific recreational outlet that offers a number of physical and mental health benefits.

"While we all must remain vigilant and continue to take precautions, this plan allows golf to be played in keeping with social distancing best practices," Dr. Connor continued. "I applaud the golf industry for helping to be part of the solution to get us back outdoors in a healthy and responsible manner."

This industry-wide initiative has been primarily focused on ensuring golf courses that have remained operational or will reopen soon, do so responsibly to protect golfers, employees and all members of the community. Each organization has distributed "Back2Golf Guidelines" and the corresponding "Operations Playbook" to its respective audiences to implement and administer. Updates will be made as interim guidance on COVID-19 is issued by the CDC.

"The importance of social distancing and responsible behavior during this pandemic has become a part of everyone's daily life," says Seth Waugh, CEO of PGA of America, whose team took a leadership role in developing Back2Golf. "Reopening golf responsibly under strict social distancing practices is something we can all unify behind. While we recognize there is no perfect solution and various areas of the country will progress in these phases at a different pace, it is imperative that we reopen golf in a way that prioritizes the health and well being of the entire golf community."

Back2Golf is driven by key stakeholders of WE ARE GOLF, a division of the World Golf Foundation created in 2010 to spearhead initiatives on behalf of the game. Organizations include PGA of America, USGA, PGA TOUR, LPGA, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), and Club Management Association of America (CMAA), among others.

"Golf inherently provides many health and fitness benefits, including the opportunity to spend time outdoors with family and friends, which is needed now more than ever," says Greg McLaughlin, CEO of World Golf Foundation. "It is a sport that naturally lends itself to social distancing and the 'Back2Golf' guidelines. We greatly appreciate the collaboration between all the allied golf organizations. It represents another example of our industry coming together for the greater good as our game has done so many times before."

For more information, please visit www.wearegolf.org/back2golf.

About WE ARE GOLF

Administered by the World Golf Foundation as a coalition of golf's leading organizations, WE ARE GOLF was established to unite the industry and advocate in the game's best interests. Through this platform, WE ARE GOLF promotes engagement and inclusivity among the sport's participants, while ensuring the health and prosperity of the $84 billion golf industry and the more than two million jobs are protected. Participating partners include PGA of America, USGA, PGA TOUR, LPGA, GCSAA, NGCOA and CMAA.

PGA of America

The PGA of America is one of the world's largest sports organizations, with 29,000 professionals who daily work to grow interest and participation in the game of golf.

USGA

Founded in 1894, the USGA is a nonprofit organization that celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf, while conducting many of golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open.

PGA TOUR

The PGA TOUR, headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, co-sanctions more than 130 tournaments on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, Mackenzie Tour-PGA TOUR Canada and PGA TOUR Series-China.

LPGA

The LPGA is the world's leading professional golf organization for women. Founded in 1950 and headquartered in Daytona Beach, Fla., the association celebrates a diverse and storied membership with more than 2,300 Members representing more than 30 countries.

GCSAA

Founded in 1926, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) is the top professional association for the men and women who manage golf courses in the U.S. and worldwide.

NGCOA

The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) is the leading authority on the business of golf course ownership and management.

CMAA

Founded in 1927, the Club Management Association of America (CMAA) is the largest professional association for managers of membership clubs with 6,800 members throughout the US and internationally.

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