LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Feb. 24, 2023) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) today launched the U.S. National Development Program, creating the country's first unified pathway to nurture the potential of America's top players, starting in competitive junior golf and progressing to the pinnacles of the sport.

The U.S. National Development Program will identify, train, develop, fund and support the nation's most promising junior players – regardless of cultural, geographical or financial background – to ensure that American golf is the global leader in the game. The program's elite juniors, amateurs and young professionals will be invited to join one of three national teams with dedicated staff and resources and compete internationally under the U.S. flag. There will also be a demonstrated commitment to reach players from underrepresented communities and ensure they have the resources to progress within the sport's strongest competitive and developmental opportunities.

"Today, nearly every other competitive golf country in the world offers a national development program to foster and develop its elite junior talent. The United States is at a huge competitive disadvantage in this regard, as we simply ask our athletes, parents and coaches to forge their own path, without any unified national guidance or financial support," said USGA CEO Mike Whan. "Golf is the only major sport in the U.S. without a national development program. Today, that ends. Today, we start building a junior development program that will ensure a stronger American pipeline of diverse, high-potential talent."

The program will create a sustainable grant program to financially assist identified talent with entry fees, travel, coaching costs, golf course access, equipment and more. Starting in 2023, the program will fund 50 juniors. That number will grow each year and by 2027 the program aims to fund 1,000 juniors across the country and impact thousands more.

"The journey from junior golf to elite competition has become complicated and cost-prohibitive for many families," said Heather Daly-Donofrio, USGA managing director of Player Relations and Development. "It is our duty to unify and simplify the process by removing any barriers that prevent the most promising juniors from reaching their full potential. The success of this program will not only support and elevate the talent of today's top players, but also diversify and strengthen the next generation of great American golfers."

Through strategic alliances with several leading golf organizations, the program will work within the current golf ecosystem to provide supplemental support and fill in gaps within the industry. The program will utilize existing American Junior Golf Association (AJGA) events as part of a pathway for players to progress from state- and regional-level competition to USGA championships, including the introduction of more automatic exemptions into AJGA events at appropriate levels. The program will also bring player development and parent education to the AJGA.

In addition, the USGA has received commitments from both the PGA of America and LPGA Professionals to support the program through coaching and player development and has utilized the Golf Coaches Association of America and Women's Golf Coaches Association as key resources as the program takes shape.

The U.S. National Development Program will focus on six key pillars:

Talent Identification

Create a process and pipeline to identify the country's most promising juniors by developing a data-driven procedure that goes beyond scoring averages to recognize, track and measure talent. The program will conduct regular in-person evaluations and camps around the country as well as engage grassroots partners, junior tours, Allied Golf Associations and PGA of America Sections to assist in identifying the nation's top talent.

Access to Competition

Partner with Allied Golf Associations, PGA of America Sections and the AJGA to develop a unified pathway for players to progress from state-level competition to appropriate level AJGA events and into USGA championships, including the introduction of more automatic exemptions.

National Teams

For the game's elite, the program will create and fund junior, amateur and young professional national teams. Members of the teams will receive access to year-round support, participate at bi-annual camps and compete internationally.

Athlete Resources

Members of the national teams will receive world-class coaching and analysis, sports psychology, nutritional guidance and resources necessary to develop the physical, mental and life skills to reach their full potential. To help junior golfers navigate the competitive landscape and track their progress, the program will offer a range of resources, including statistical platforms and partnerships as well as creating its own ranking system.

Player Development and Relations

In partnership with the PGA of America and LPGA Professionals and under the framework of the American Development Model philosophy, develop a programming structure and culture for the national teams that includes training with world-class coaches and specialists to apply an elevated and standardized approach to player development. Members of the national teams will receive mentoring from USGA champions and other athletes.

Athlete Financial Support

Build a robust and sustainable grant program to assist identified talent from a financial perspective, including entry fees, travel, coaching fees, golf course access, equipment and more.

Upcoming Timeline

Year	Milestone
2023	• Announce U.S. National Development Program and build the foundation with Allied Golf Associations, the AJGA, PGA of America and LPGA Professionals. Foundation includes building a staff, player development philosophy, grant program, data strategy for talent identification and state-level strategy that aligns with the national road map • Launch Grant Program and fund 50 juniors
2024	• Launch Junior National Team • Grant Program funding 250 juniors

2025	• Launch Amateur National Team • Launch Regional Championships • Grant program funding 500 juniors
2026	• Launch Young Professional National Team • Launch Regional Camps • Grant program funding 750 juniors
2027	• Grant Program funding 1,000 juniors

About the USGA

The USGA is a nonprofit organization that celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf. Founded in 1894, we conduct many of golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open Presented by ProMedica. With The R&A, we govern the sport via a global set of playing, equipment, handicapping and amateur status rules. The USGA campus in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, is home to the Association's Research and Test Center, where science and innovation are fueling a healthy and sustainable game for the future. The campus is also home to the USGA Golf Museum, where we honor the game by curating the world's most comprehensive archive of golf artifacts. To learn more, visit usga.org.

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