

PINEHURST, N.C. (JUNE 9, 2024) – Among the 24 students participating in this year's USGA Pathways Internship Program at the U.S. Open Championship, there are:

- Twenty-four undergraduate and graduate universities represented, including three Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
- Over 10 areas of study represented, including many fields that may not traditionally be considered as avenues in golf.
- Six individuals who were introduced to golf through First Tee, LPGA*USGA Girls Golf or Allied Golf Association junior programs.
- Six students with ties to the Carolinas – reflecting the USGA's commitment to invest into U.S. Open host communities.
- Four peer leaders who are alumni of the program and were hired to support this year's program as peer leaders.

Interns started their journey on Saturday and will continue through next Saturday's session to deliver their final presentations.

As you see the interns pass through the media center or anywhere else on the U.S. Open campus, here's a snapshot of who you'll meet and each person's pathway to the U.S. Open.

STORIES WE LOVE:

Patrick Barnes (Cookeville, Tenn.) is an MBA student at Tennessee Technological University pursuing a degree in Business Intelligence and Analytics. Patrick launched the Birdies and Blessings Golf Co., an apparel company focused on connecting Christian athletes. For more than two years, Patrick has interned with the Small Business Development Center in Cookeville, Tenn., where he helps small businesses get started, spanning 14 counties. He is also a USGA P.J. Boatwright Intern with the Tennessee Golf Association and serves as a data analyst for the Tennessee Tech women's golf program.

Pilar Berchot (Argentina) is a recent MBA graduate of King University who grew up playing golf and considers the game her pathway to the United States. She graduated from North Carolina State University, where she competed and served as captain of the golf team. During her MBA program at King University, she held a role as Golf Graduate Assistant for the men's and women's golf teams. An advocate for social justice, Pilar had the honor of delivering a commencement address during her graduation ceremony.

Esther Etherington (Richmond, Ind.) is a rising junior at Franklin College pursuing a degree in Elementary Education, with a minor in Nonprofit Leadership. Esther has more than eight years of experience in golf as a First Tee participant and national scholar, a pro-shop employee at two courses, a youth coach and a member of the Franklin College women's golf team. Esther is blind in her right eye and spent the first decade of her life in and out of Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis. Through her life experiences, she chose to give back and plans to launch a charitable golf tournament called Esther's One Eyed Open, supporting Riley Children's Hospital and First Tee - Indiana.

Kameron Burris Garofalo (Bakersfield, Calif.) is a rising Junior at Oxnard College pursuing a degree in Business Administration. Garofalo was a collegiate basketball player who turned his passion into an opportunity to coach basketball at Garces Memorial High School and provide one-on-one training sessions through his business, 'Burris Basketball Training.' He also used his sports knowledge to secure roles in ticketing with the Los Angeles Football Club and the LA Clippers, as well as game ambassador for the LA Rams. Garofalo strives to be a role model for his 6-year-old son.

Mekhi Gibson (Seneca, S.C.) is a rising sophomore at the University of South Carolina pursuing a degree in Sport and Entertainment Management. Mekhi is a regular participant in the school's Service Saturday events, where students who want to make an impact in their community volunteer their Saturdays to do various community service projects. While in high school, he established a Distributive Education Club of America (DECA) chapter, providing an outlet for students to

emerge as leaders and entrepreneurs in the business world.

Taylor Harvey (Phoenix, Ariz.) is a recent graduate of Delaware State University with a master's degree in Sports Administration. As a junior golfer, she was a participant in First Tee - Phoenix and has since remained involved in the grow-the-game organization by serving as both a volunteer and intern for chapters in Houston and Delaware. Taylor completed her undergraduate studies at Prairie View A&M University, where she competed on the golf team. While completing her master's, she continued to compete and played in the inaugural Southwest Showcase Invitational last November.

Emily Jones (Cleveland Heights, Ohio) is a recent graduate of the University of Dayton with a degree in Early Childhood Education. Emily was introduced to golf at a young age and instantly fell in love with the game. She currently serves as the program director for the Greater Cleveland Junior Golf Scholarship Fund, a non-profit organization whose mission is to introduce the game of golf to underrepresented children and communities. Emily is currently a PGA WORKS Fellow for the Northern Ohio PGA Section, after interning with the section's Junior Tour last summer.

Azola Martin (Detroit, Mich.) is a rising senior at Morehouse College, an HBCU located in Atlanta, Ga., pursuing a dual degree in Communication Studies and Chinese Studies. Azola joined the Youth Empowerment Initiative as an intern and helped create training modules to assist young Rwandan athletes with digital literacy. During his junior year of high school, he helped start CubCare, a local chapter of the BeNice organization, to help classmates dealing with tragedy to handle the challenges that come from mental health issues.

Jessica McEachin (Greensboro, N.C.) is a rising senior at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro pursuing a degree in Information Systems and Supply Chain Management. Jessica recently completed the UNCG's Spartan Leadership Challenge, which included 30 hours of community service and 15 hours of professional development coaching, giving her the tools to become a next-generation leader after graduation. In 2022, Jessica worked onsite with the food and hospitality team at the U.S. Women's Open at Pine Needles.

Evan McLurkin (Los Angeles, Calif.) is a recent graduate of the University of California - Berkeley with a degree in Business Administration. Evan played cornerback on the Golden Bears football team and is now focused on helping make golf more accessible to underserved communities. He has had previous internships at Score, VersusGame and Red Fox Resources. He has also been actively involved in the Haas Undergraduate Black Business Association (HUBBA), where he mentors and supports fellow black students, contributing to their academic and professional success.

Henry Oelhafen (Raleigh, N.C.) is a rising junior at Vanderbilt University pursuing a degree in Human Organizational Development. Henry is an avid golfer and competed on his high school golf team. He's continuing his love for golf and sports in college as the Deputy Sports Editor for his college newspaper, The Vanderbilt Hustler. He's also worked as a marketing intern for Vanderbilt athletics and serves as the secretary of Vanderbilt Club Golf.

Noble Parker (Bronx, N.Y.) is a rising junior at Southern Connecticut University pursuing a degree in Computer Science. Noble was raised in the Bronx and cites lack of funding and accessibility as barriers in his exposure to golf. A gifted athlete, he earned the New York State Chancellor's Award for Athletics in high school and a college scholarship for track and field. The Pathways Internship program will be Noble's first experience in the golf industry.

Nikelle Pledger (Jacksonville, Fla.) is a rising senior at The Ohio State University pursuing a degree in Strategic Communications. Nikelle's love of the game stemmed from her experiences in the Greater Cleveland Junior Golf Scholarship Foundation program. That introduction led to a series of golf experiences that included caddying, cart operations, interning at TopGolf and coaching juniors at First Tee – North Florida.

Chandler Redfearn (Greensboro, N.C.) is a rising senior at North Carolina A&T, an HBCU in Greensboro, N.C., pursuing a degree in Kinesiology. Chandler worked as a sports medicine student aid in the North Carolina A&T sports medicine facility and participated in the Summer Discovery Program at Duke University. She also recently gained experience as a participant in the BRIDGE UP HBCU Program at the University of Utah. Chandler is an aspiring sports philanthropist with a desire to make an impact on those around her through sports.

Maya Renteria (Salt Lake City, Utah) is a rising junior at George Washington University pursuing a degree in Finance. Maya found her way into the golf world as a USGA P.J. Boatwright Intern with the Utah Golf Association. Renteria is responsible for managing a \$1.3 million budget for 500 undergraduate programs as Senior Legislative Budget Officer within GWU's student government. She also served as an Awareness Coordinator for the Cornelia deLange Syndrome Foundation, where she worked directly with city officials to organize a 5K fundraising event.

Douglas Sherriffe (Los Angeles, Calif.) is a rising senior at California State University - Northridge pursuing a degree in Kinesiology. Douglas began working with the Jr. Clippers, the official youth basketball program of the LA Clippers, in 2023. As part of the program, he traveled around Los Angeles County to every camp and clinic to increase participation among youth in the Hispanic and African American communities.

Henry Stephens IV (Grovettown, Ga.) is a rising junior at Duke University pursuing a degree in Pre-Law. In addition to playing golf in high school, Henry grew up as a participant in the First Tee - Augusta program. As an advocate for equal rights in high school, he founded a club focused on educating underclassmen about disparities in the college admissions process. At Duke University, Henry serves as Vice President of Duke's Black Pre-Law Society, where he works to promote equitable access to pre-law resources.

Cameron Tarrant-McKitt (Huntsville, Ala.) is a rising junior at Tennessee State University, an HBCU located in the heart of Nashville, Tenn., pursuing a degree in Exercise Science. Cameron is part of the honors college at Tennessee State and is President of TigerFit, the human performance and sports science major organization. She recently completed an internship with the National Hockey League's Nashville Predators, as well as the NFL Consortium course with the Tennessee Titans, which provided a comprehensive exploration of various aspects of professional sports.

Cristian Tavarez (Marietta, Ga.) is a recent graduate of William Paterson University of New Jersey with a degree in Sport Management and a minor in Business Administration. Cristian initially began studying sports management to pursue a career in basketball but fell in love with golf along the way. He developed a passion for the game and is an avid golfer with a long-term goal of opening a grassroots golf facility for children within his community.

Claudia Comas Torres (San Juan, P.R.) is a graduate student at Emerson College pursuing a master's degree in Sports Communication. Claudia grew up uninterested in sports because she thought she wouldn't be accepted, but during the COVID-19 pandemic, she seized an opportunity to enter the industry. She went on to earn a certification in Event Production and a professional diploma in Digital Marketing, Sponsorship, and Communication in Sports from the FC Barcelona Barça Innovation Hub before starting graduate studies at Emerson. She continued to expand her role in sports by volunteering with the Puerto Rico Olympic Committee and will now expand into golf through the Pathways Internship.

Sandhya Vaikuntam (Springfield, Ore.) is a rising senior at Quinnipiac University pursuing a degree in Applied Business and Sports Studies. A member of the Quinnipiac women's golf team, Sandhya first started playing golf at age 9 and has competed in a number of USGA qualifying events. She is also a Youth on Course member, Special Olympics volunteer coach and served on the PGA/LPGA Gen Z Council for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality.

Savita Wilson (Seattle, Wash.) is a graduate student at Columbia University with plans to graduate in December with a master's degree in Sports Management. She interned with Wasserman and Just Women's Sports in addition to her role as Camps Lead for the Portland Timbers and Portland Thorn football clubs. She has also participated in international community service trips through Woza Soccer. Savita graduated with a degree in Business from Pacific University, where she competed on the soccer team.

Avery Wright (Valley, Neb.) is a rising junior at Arizona State University pursuing a degree in Sports Business and Marketing. Avery has been around sports her entire life, from playing volleyball in high school and joining the rugby team at Arizona State, to helping lead research on a human rights report for FIFA regarding the 2026 World Cup, which then brought her to the golf industry. Her love of the community generated by sports has driven her to pursue a career in the field. Avery has also completed more than 650 hours of community service, including work with several leading sports organizations.

Ashley Yen (Houston, Texas) is a rising junior at Yale University pursuing a degree in Data Science and Statistics. Ashley has been competing in golf for more than 11 years and is a current member of the Yale women's golf team. Through her personal experiences in golf, she gained a desire to make an impact and inspire others like herself to get into the game. In high school, she established Kits 2 Kids, a nonprofit organization aimed to provide underrepresented kids with exposure to STEM.

Peer Leaders

Skylar Graham (Los Angeles, Calif.) is a 2022 Lee Elder Internship alumnus and an associate in the golf division at Excel Sports Management. Skylar graduated from the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. A former Southern California Golf Association Junior Scholar recipient, Skylar has always had a passion for the game, including volunteering at the Genesis Invitational, where she received the Volunteer of the Year award.

Morgan Horrell (Dallas, TX.) is a 2023 Pathways alumnus and rising junior at Howard University studying marketing. While in high school, Morgan participated in Steph Curry's Underrated Golf Tour and was most recently featured on the ESPN/Hulu documentary "Why Not Us," based on Curry's commitment to improving the game at Howard University. Having served as the captain of her high school golf team, her passion for giving back to the game developed while serving as a PGA Camp Counselor. This summer she is also serving as head sales intern for Dunning Golf and Greg Norman in New York and assisting PGM Intern for Somerset Hills Country Club in New Jersey.

Angel Reyes (Miami, FL.) is a 2022 Lee Elder alumnus and an associate financial planner at Citizens Wealth Management . Angel has always had a passion for volunteerism, including participating in the Association of Latino Professionals for America's (ALPFA) coaching and mentoring program in Boston. He holds both a bachelor's degree in psychology and MBA from Lasell University.

Andy Smith (Orlando, Fla.) is a 2023 Pathways alumnus and recent graduate from the University of Central Florida with an MBA in Sports Business Management and a master's in Sport Business Management. Smith's journey in golf began as a participant in the Fairways to Leadership program at UCF, an initiative that helps young individuals develop skills they can later apply to the business world. Currently, Smith is a Membership Service Representative for Madison Square Garden Sports Corp.

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