



LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Oct. 16, 2024) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) today announced the expansion of the State Junior Team Program that will support the pipeline for elite junior golfers ages 13-18 into the U.S. National Development Program (USNDP). Nine new teams will be established in 2025, joining the seven teams launched earlier this year and advancing the USGA’s goal of all 50 states having a team by 2033.

In 2025, the team program will be rolled out in California (Northern), Delaware, Idaho, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and West Virginia through the USGA’s close collaboration with its allied golf associations (AGAs) and the PGA of America. Rosters for these nine teams will be released late next year.

“In just under a year since piloting the State Team Program, we’ve seen the significant impact and support toward our goal of identifying and nurturing our country’s top junior talent at the state level,” said Heather Daly-Donofrio, USGA managing director, Player Relations and Development. “We’re truly fortunate to have great partners in this endeavor who share our mission for creating opportunities for these talented young golfers and for laying the foundation for this program’s long-term success.”

The seven previously announced teams will release rosters as well as captains/coaches starting with Tennessee in late-October and followed by California (Southern), Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts and Ohio throughout the remainder of 2024. Each of the seven states used their own criteria to determine their rosters. All players named to a state team will receive two days of in-person athlete development per year, access to USNDP statistical platforms, consideration for USNDP exemptions into various junior tournaments and a streamlined grant application process for families demonstrating financial need, among other benefits.

“The overwhelmingly positive response of the State Junior Team Program is cause for optimism not just for the future of the USNDP but the future of competitive golf in America,” said Chris Zambri, head coach of the U.S. National Development Program. “There is such a deep talent pool of promising young golfers across the country, and building this state-level network to support them through dedicated development and access to resources will be a game-changer.”

In his role, Zambri, a former standout at the University of Southern California who qualified for a pair of U.S. Opens, oversees and leads the day-to-day coaching operation of the national teams, and plays a key role in developing a network of qualified coaches at the regional and state levels. Zambri works closely with Senior Athlete Development Specialist Dr. Beth Brown to develop coaches and create an elite golf program curriculum designed to expose athletes to the physical, technical and mental loads required to compete successfully at the top national and international levels.

The nine states participating in the second wave of the program will each establish a committee consisting of representatives from major golf organizations within the state, including any AGAs and PGA of America Sections. The committees will oversee team selection criteria and the operation of the state program based on guidelines provided by the USGA. Team selection criteria will vary by state and may consist of a points structure, ranking or combination of other competitive factors. Selection criteria from all nine states will be published prior to the entry deadline of the first counting

event of their 2025 championship season. State team roster sizes will be calculated by elite junior participation in the state, ranging from two boys/two girls to 20 boys/20 girls.

To be eligible, a player must be a U.S. citizen. Each eligible player cannot be enrolled in college, must be 13 years old by January 1 and not reach their 19th birthday by July 19 of the year in which they would compete on a State Junior Team. State-specific team information can be found at [usga.org/USNDP](https://usga.org/USNDP).

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 athlete financial support. The State Junior Team Program focuses on creating a developmentally appropriate, aspirational pathway for athletes within each state to compete at higher levels of the game, including an opportunity to represent the United States as a member of the USNDP's National Junior Team led by Zambri.

The U.S. National Development Program is supported by philanthropic giving and secured resources to fulfill the USGA's commitment to providing pathways to elite levels of the game, regardless of financial situations. For more, visit [www.usga.org/give\\_usndp](https://www.usga.org/give_usndp).

#### **About the USGA**

The USGA is a mission-based golf organization whose purpose is to unify the golf community through handicapping and grassroots programs; to showcase the game's best talent through the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open Presented by Ally and 13 other national championships and our museum; to provide unbiased global governance with The R&A through the playing, equipment and Amateur Status rules; and to advance issues important to golf's future, with a focus on driving sustainability, accessibility and inclusion. As a nonprofit association, our work and our team are driven to act for the good of the game. For more, visit [usga.org](https://usga.org).

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