

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Dec. 19, 2024) – As 2024 draws to a close, the United States Golf Association (USGA) celebrates advancements made by the USGA Green Section and U.S. National Development Program as well as organizational investments in national junior golf programs and career development that helped propel golf forward.

Capitalizing on the incredible growth and momentum the game is experiencing and an appetite for innovation across the industry, the USGA proactively addressed issues important to golf's future, with a focus on driving sustainability, accessibility and inclusion.

"This has been a landmark year for both the USGA and the game, as we've seen continued growth in the number of people who play, excitement for our national championships, investments in golf course venues and a renewed commitment to ensuring the future is even stronger than our past," said Mike Whan, USGA CEO. "From developmental pipelines that help shape tomorrow's leaders – both on the course and in the boardroom – to serving as the industry's trusted advisor on water and sustainability, to making the game more accessible and diverse, the efforts put forth by the USGA and those that support us have achieved levels we've never reached before."

With 45 million people who play golf in the U.S., and millions more who are involved with the game through employment, volunteerism and fandom, the work put forth by the USGA impacts nearly every individual connected to the game, helping to ensure its vitality.

Key highlights from 2024 include:

Launch of U.S. National Development Program (USNDP) to expand access for top talent:

- 72 athletes and their families received 2024 grants through USNDP, totaling more than \$650,000.
- An 18-player U.S. National Junior Team was established in March 2024, representing the country's elite junior golf talent and providing them financial support and resources to reach the highest levels of the sport.
- With our Allied Golf Associations and the PGA of America, announced the State Junior Team Program to provide a pathway for athletes within each state to compete at higher levels of the game.

Leading the Way on Golf Course Sustainability and Innovation:

- With 47 projects in the pipeline focused on water conservation and sustainability, the USGA Green Section is proactively addressing golf's usage of water, designed to arm golf courses with additional ways to manage resources more effectively.
- Named for the former USGA CEO, the Mike Davis Program for Advancing Golf Course Management develops and supports independent research for a healthier environment, community and playing conditions for the game of golf. Over \$50 million has been invested across 800+ projects since 1983, with \$1.6 million directed toward 88 current projects in 2024.
- Continued rollout and adoption of GS3, the Smartest Ball in Golf, giving superintendents more robust data to improve playing conditions by measuring putting green speed, trueness, smoothness and firmness through one easy-to-use device.

Expanding career opportunities as a pipeline to foster greater inclusion and diversity in the game:

- Buoyed by community engagement support at the 2024 U.S. Open Championship, the second cohort of the Greenkeeper Apprenticeship Program wrapped up in late December with 14 new graduates earning their Journey Worker Cards. Also, a graduate of last year's inaugural cohort, aspiring actor turned assistant in training at Pinehurst No. 2 Erik "Locksley" Blanchard continued his career development in golf course maintenance.
- More than 338 individuals from a broad range of academic areas of study and backgrounds pursued USGA-supported internships this year, including the Pathways Internship Program, P.J. Boatwright Jr. Internship Program and supporting championship, merchandising and other USGA functions.

Continued investment in national junior golf programs to grow the game :

- USGA IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility) Grant funding helped 28 First Tee chapters break down barriers of entry into the game within their communities, including individuals like John Long, a coach at First Tee – South Dakota doing door-to-door outreach on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.
- LPGA*USGA Girls Golf celebrated a year with more women and girls in the game than ever, surpassing the milestone of one million girls impacted by the program and the global expansion of program sites.

Adaptive Golf inspires accessibility across the game:

- Spurred by the success of the U.S. Adaptive Open, seven states now offer a state championship for elite adaptive players.
- With the increased awareness of golf being accessible to players of all abilities, more First Tee chapters and Allied Golf Associations are offering recreational clinics as an entry point, including First Tee chapters in Ohio, Virginia and Kansas who used IDEA grant funding to do so.
- To support these efforts, Allied Golf Associations have hired full-time staff and interns dedicated to launching adaptive programs, including Tyler Cashman at the Golf Association of Philadelphia and Max Togisala at the Utah Golf Association– both of whom were competitors in the 2024 U.S. Adaptive Open.

A mission-driven, nonprofit organization, the USGA invests 100 percent of its revenue back into golf. A record-setting U.S. Open Championship at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club in June helped bolster the financial gain that helps fuel efforts impacting every golfer.

Among the USGA's revenue-driving areas, the USGA Foundation and Members Program deepened engagement with key stakeholders to drive their support toward initiatives that advance sustainability and playing opportunities.

On Dec. 22, 2024, the USGA will celebrate the 130th anniversary of its founding – the latest milestone in an organization that was established to provide a common set of rules, conduct national championships, and provide a long-term, unbiased perspective for an even better future for our game – a common purpose that still guides our mission today.

The USGA will celebrate additional 2024 milestones and share its 2025 strategic initiatives at its Annual Meeting on March 1, 2025, in the Village of Pinehurst, N.C.

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