LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Oct. 9, 2025) – The United States Golf Association (USGA) today announced the launch of the State Junior Team Program in 14 states that will support the pipeline for elite junior golfers ages 13-18 into the U.S. National Development Program (USNDP).

The 14 states added to the program are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, South Dakota, Texas and Washington. Teams are created through the USGA's close collaboration with its Allied Golf Associations (AGAs) and the PGA of America Sections. Rosters for these 14 teams will be released after the conclusion of the 2026 season.

"This program represents an important step in building the national player pathway," said Heather Daly-Donofrio, USGA managing director, Player Relations and Development. "We're already seeing that states with teams up and running are thriving, as juniors are taking advantage of new opportunities to develop. By creating state junior teams, we're not only opening doors for more juniors to access resources and development opportunities, but also instilling pride in representing their home state. That combination will help elevate competition locally and deepen the overall pool of talent nationwide."

These additions bring the State Junior Team Program up to 30 states. Teams from the initial seven pilot states announced in March 2024 now include 116 junior athletes, many of whom have participated in state camps, webinars and other training programs. The second wave of participating states, announced last October, will announce their inaugural rosters by the end of the year.

Each of the states use their own criteria to determine their rosters. All athletes named to a state team will receive at least two days of in-person athlete development per year, access to webinars led by the USNDP's coaching and athlete development team, consideration for USNDP exemptions into various junior tournaments and a streamlined grant application process for families demonstrating financial need, among other benefits.

The USGA is aiming for all 50 states to have a team by 2033.

"It has been awesome to create friendships based on a game that we all love," said Ella Scott, a high school junior who joined Team Colorado in 2025. "We get so much encouragement and support from not only fellow teammates, but also our committee members and the Colorado Golf Association as a whole. It is really cool to know that in such an individual game, so many people have my back and are supporting me. Being able to proudly display my Team Colorado bag at the U.S. Girls' Junior in Atlanta this past summer was awesome. I was especially proud because I was representing the CGA as their state junior champion."

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 financial support.

"The webinars that the USNDP offers for all national development members have been extremely beneficial to learning more about on and off-course factors of the game," Scott said. "Knowing that we have many of the same resources as the national team is unparalleled."

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The reigning U.S. Amateur and U.S. Junior champion both hail from Team Georgia. Mason Howell, of Thomasville, Ga., became the third-youngest U.S. Amateur champion when he defeated Jackson Herrington 7 and 6 at The Olympic Club in August.

Hamilton Coleman, of Augusta, Ga., took home the U.S. Junior Amateur title at Trinity Forest Golf Club in July. The future University of Georgia Bulldog needed 25 holes – the longest U.S. Junior Amateur match in 23 years – to oust his Round-of-64 foe, then defeated three consecutive lefties with remarkable résumés before outdueling world No. 52 Minh Nguyen, of Vietnam, in the 36-hole final, 2 and 1.

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. 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.

To be eligible, a player must be a U.S. citizen, cannot be enrolled in college, must be 13 years old by Jan. 1 and not reach his/her 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.

For further information: Will Redmond: wredmond@usga.org; (314) 288-8190
