



Mark Newell: *Leading with Impact* Presidential Address

Miami Beach, FLA., Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018

Good afternoon. I'd like to begin by saying thank you:

- To Jim Hyler and the USGA Nominating Committee;
- To my colleagues on the USGA Executive Committee, past and present;
- To our CEO Mike Davis, his leadership team and our wonderful staff;
- To all of you ... our great volunteers and friends; and
- To my family - especially to you, Jo Ann, for tolerating my rather unusual definition of "retirement."

I greatly appreciate the opportunity and fully accept the responsibility to serve the game of golf as the USGA's next president.

I'm excited at the chance to work with all of you, and I'll do all I can to justify your trust and confidence.

I'd like to take a moment to give special thanks to Diana Murphy for her outstanding service in seven years on the Executive Committee, and most especially as the USGA's 64th president.

Much has been accomplished in recent years through an extraordinary team effort by so many at the USGA. And an indispensable part of that, Diana, has been your terrific guidance and unwavering support for this association, for both its purpose and its people.

On behalf of all of us ... thank you for your leadership as our president.

I'd also like to recognize the other retiring members of the Executive Committee. Sheila, Tom, George and Bob, thank you for your excellent service to this association and to golf, and for being exceptional colleagues. We know you will continue on to do many things to support this great game.

It's my pleasure as well to welcome our new Executive Committee members. The volunteer members of our Committee bring many years of service and expertise from a wide range of perspectives in golf – as players, as referees, as committee members and as leaders of clubs, associations and other organizations.

And this is certainly true of Paul, Kendra, Nick, Sharon and Dick - thank you for agreeing to contribute your time and many talents to service on this Committee.

And finally, I'd like to recognize and thank both the retiring and incoming members of the Women's Committee. The dedicated members of that committee, led by chair Pam Murray, contribute remarkable passion and skill in helping to conduct our women's championships. We thank all of you for your outstanding service to the USGA.

As I hope you've seen from what you heard earlier today, the USGA:

- Is led by dedicated, expert and professional management and staff;
- Is bold and comprehensive in its thinking and perspective;
- Is guided by an ambitious long-term strategic plan; and
- Is committed to working together and building ever-stronger relationships with our partners and allies here and throughout the world, including with so many of you, from our golf associations, host sites and member clubs, and from our irreplaceable network of USGA volunteers.

I hope you were as inspired as I was by the earlier remarks and videos, and especially by Mike's thoughtful summary about the state of the game, and about our vision for its future and our plans to help make it better.

My responsibility as president is to lead our Executive Committee in working together to do all we can to support Mike, the management team and the entire USGA staff in aggressively pursuing those plans, and to hold ourselves accountable to work toward, and achieve, that vision.

The USGA's agenda is comprehensive because as a non-profit association not limited to any one part of the golf community, we focus on the health of the game everywhere it is played: in the United States and around the world, and at golf courses, clubs and facilities of every type, both public and private.

And, we focus on the health of the game at all levels of play, from elite professional and amateur golf, to competitive club play, to recreational golf, to play by beginners and juniors.

Our special role is to address the game's well-being in all respects:

- To define it through the rules,
- To showcase it through championships,
- To improve, grow and sustain it through research and innovation, and
- To preserve its history and spirit for all who play and love the game.

As illustrated in the opening video, in a world where change happens so rapidly and with greater scope than ever before, both the challenges for golf - and the opportunities - are also greater than ever before.

We've seen this in our unprecedented and far-reaching work with The R&A to modernize the Rules of Golf and to create a first-ever World Handicap System.

And we've seen it in our strengthened relationships with our 59 allied golf associations, which will allow us to work together better than ever to serve both golf clubs and golfers in this country.

And as Mike indicated, one area of special focus will continue to be the environmental and economic sustainability of golf course facilities:

- This includes our serious concerns about ever-larger golf course footprints, the resulting increase in use of water and other resources, and the potentially negative effects on cost and the golfer experience.
- And it includes the difficult, but timely and highly important issue of distance.
- Addressing these challenges will not be easy, but that only makes us more determined to find a way to do so.

So, my commitment to you on behalf of the USGA – with the full support of the Executive Committee - is the same you've heard from Diana and from Mike and his team:

- We will continue to put our resources back into the game to support and improve the many things in golf that are healthy and strong;
- And when there are important issues facing golf, we will tackle those issues head on, in a comprehensive and fact-based way that focuses on the long-term health and needs of the game as a whole.
- We'll do so in collaboration with others throughout the golf community, because we recognize the value of learning from and bringing together all the many people and organizations who care passionately about the future of golf.
- And we will find innovative solutions that promote and sustain the long-term health of this game we all love.

As we work together toward these goals, it's important to remember how special our sport is.

Of course it's a game for golfers with fabulous talent, but it's also for those (like me) with less talent.

Every one of us shares in the joy:

- Of a well-struck shot,
- Of being outdoors in a beautiful setting,
- Of the spirit of competition, whether played for great prizes ... or to win a dollar from your buddy Jack,

- And of being able to share a few special hours with friends and family in an all-too-harried world.

I love golf for many reasons, but probably most because of who I get to play it with, including:

- My high school pals long ago,
- My fellow golf addicts who met every Saturday at 6 am for 20 years to head out to play at a local muni,
- My wife who picked up the game only a few years ago,
- The great friends she and I travel the world with in search of more amazing courses to play,
- And very soon, I hope, I will join with my son in introducing my two little grandsons to golf.

All of this is why the greatness of the game truly does bring out the best in all of us, and why the USGA will never stop working to serve golf in all the ways and in all the places it's played.

It's a game for us all, and it's a game for a lifetime.

Thank you for all you do for the USGA and for golf; and thanks again for your support. I look forward to working with all of you.

Thank you.