

Ferrari's Big Turnaround | Stellar Venues | Leading By Example

NCGA GOLF

VOLUME 44 | NUMBER 3 | SPRING 2024 | PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA | \$3.95

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA GOLF ASSOCIATION

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Project ROMHOG?

BY JOE HUSTON



We admit it's an unusual project name but within NCGA inner circles, there has been quite a buzz about "ROMHOG" over the last couple of years.

The sound of "ROMHOG" is confusing at first, but it has been a code name that we used for a very special project before it became public. It certainly kept the real project unknown... when my young daughter first heard the name, she asked if people were talking about a romantic comedy (RomCom) with the pigs from "Babe" and "Charlotte's Web." While that would be entertaining, ROMHOG will be far more exciting for NCGA Members.

So, what exactly is ROMHOG? The term is an acronym for the redesign of your NCGA member course Poppy Ridge – "Reinventing Our Members Home Of Golf."


Nearly 30 years after opening, Poppy Ridge's 27 holes needed significant infrastructure improvements, such as new irrigation and bunker and green refurbishment. When we considered this investment, we decided to step back and think if there was an even bigger opportunity to enhance the property for our Members.

After careful deliberation with our Poppy Holding Inc., and NCGA Boards, we expanded the project scope to be a complete redesign so that we could create the best 18-hole golf course that would be able to host elite championships while also being enjoyable for players of all skill levels. The remainder of the property would then be used for player development and growth of the game with an improved practice facility and a shorter nine-hole course. Appealing to a wide range of golfers is critically important to us, as our 200,000+ members play the game from many different tees and yardages and have a varied range of abilities. Also, with the right selection of turf and state-of-the-art irrigation, we will have significantly better playing conditions while using less water.

We have an amazing team for this project, with a great architect, experienced contractors, excellent internal leadership and an outstanding Board of Directors. After a comprehensive process to identify an architect, we are excited to have selected Jay Blasi, who has a great resume of projects and is also an NCGA Member! Jay's routing is exceptional, and he took a very strategic approach to ensure the 18-hole course will be challenging for elite golfers while being enjoyable for players of all skill levels. Jay's innovative design also will result in a fairly walkable golf course – something that is hard to imagine when viewing the current site.

The project is being internally led by our Chief Operating Officer of both golf courses, Steve Schroeder. Steve has over 30 years of industry experience, and before joining the NCGA five years ago, he participated in the construction of dozens of other golf course properties. We are truly fortunate to have this experience on our team.

The construction has officially started, but you can still play golf and practice at Poppy Ridge during the process. We will always have nine holes open, and it will be fun to see the property under construction while you play our revamped composite nine-hole loop. This composite nine includes three new holes and several existing Poppy Ridge holes.

When the new course opens in late spring/early summer next year, you will have even more reasons to call your NCGA golf courses the "home of golf" in Northern California, with Poppy Hills as the "Old Course" and Poppy Ridge as the "New Course." 

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Published for the Northern California Golf Association in cooperation with:

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NCGA Golf (ISSN-1524-4385) is published quarterly by the Northern California Golf Association, 3200 Lopez Road, Pebble Beach, CA 93953. All rights reserved, including right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form. Members pay an annual subscription fee of \$1. Printed in U.S.A. Please send change of address notice on Member Change form (available at your club). Periodical postage paid at Pebble Beach, CA and additional mailing offices. Advertising contained herein does not constitute endorsement by the Northern California Golf Association. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NCGA Golf, P. O. Box NCGA, Pebble Beach, CA 93953-1157.



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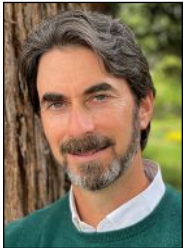
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Leading by Example

BY ALAN SHIPNUCK



Golf always has been a big part of Tim Healea's life. As a kid he spent summers in Venezuela with his father, who was stationed there as an executive at Container Corporation of America. Healea (Hay-lee) learned to play at the country club his father had joined and learned Spanish from the caddies who toiled at the club. In his teens, he worked at Warm Springs Golf Course in Fremont, mostly so, he says, "I could hit as many balls as I wanted for free."

He went on to play for Ohlone College in Fremont before throwing himself into a career as a real estate broker. In 1988, Healea moved to Cameron Park, in the foothills east of Sacramento, and joined the eponymous country club. He whittled his index as low as 2.1, but slowly, agonizingly, his body began to betray him.

"I want to be an example that you can keep going and still do the things you love."

Healea's first love as a young athlete had been baseball, but he had to give up playing catcher when he developed Osgood-Schlatter disease, which causes a painful bump and swelling on the shinbone below the knee, following a teenage growth spurt. The related bone chips and bone spurs were just a precursor to the sudden-onset rheumatoid arthritis that changed his life in 2016, when he was 62.

Healea was out playing golf – of course – when, on the 17th hole, his hands began to stiffen. By the time he finished the round he could barely hold the club. His hands improved with time but soon the arthritis was waging war with his ankles, which "disintegrated" in Healea's telling. Surgery and corrective "Frankenboots" helped keep him on the golf course, but after years of intense pain, Healea made the toughest decision of his life. On Jan. 25, 2021, he had his right leg amputated below the knee.

When he came out of recovery, Healea had a pressing question for the doctor: "When can I play golf?"

He was told autumn at the earliest, but by that

July, Healea had won low net in the second flight at the Sacramento Open. In January '22, he had his left leg amputated below the knee. He was on the golf course seven weeks later. "Things keep changing," he says. "I've had to relearn the game again a few times."

In 2023, Healea competed in eight adaptive tournaments from Tucson to Chicago to Florida to Wisconsin. Playing on courses around 5,800 yards, he won his division five times, with a low score of 81. He is currently the No. 2-ranked player in the country among senior double-amputees. "I'm proud of that," Healea says, "but what means the most to me is being an inspiration to others, seniors in particular. Some of them go through a big medical event and they think everything is over, that they gotta sit at home in a wheelchair and won't ever walk again. They start to give up. I want to be an example that you can keep going and still do the things you love."

In his continued efforts to better himself, Healea recently added prosthetic devices that he calls "high-tech microprocessor ankles."

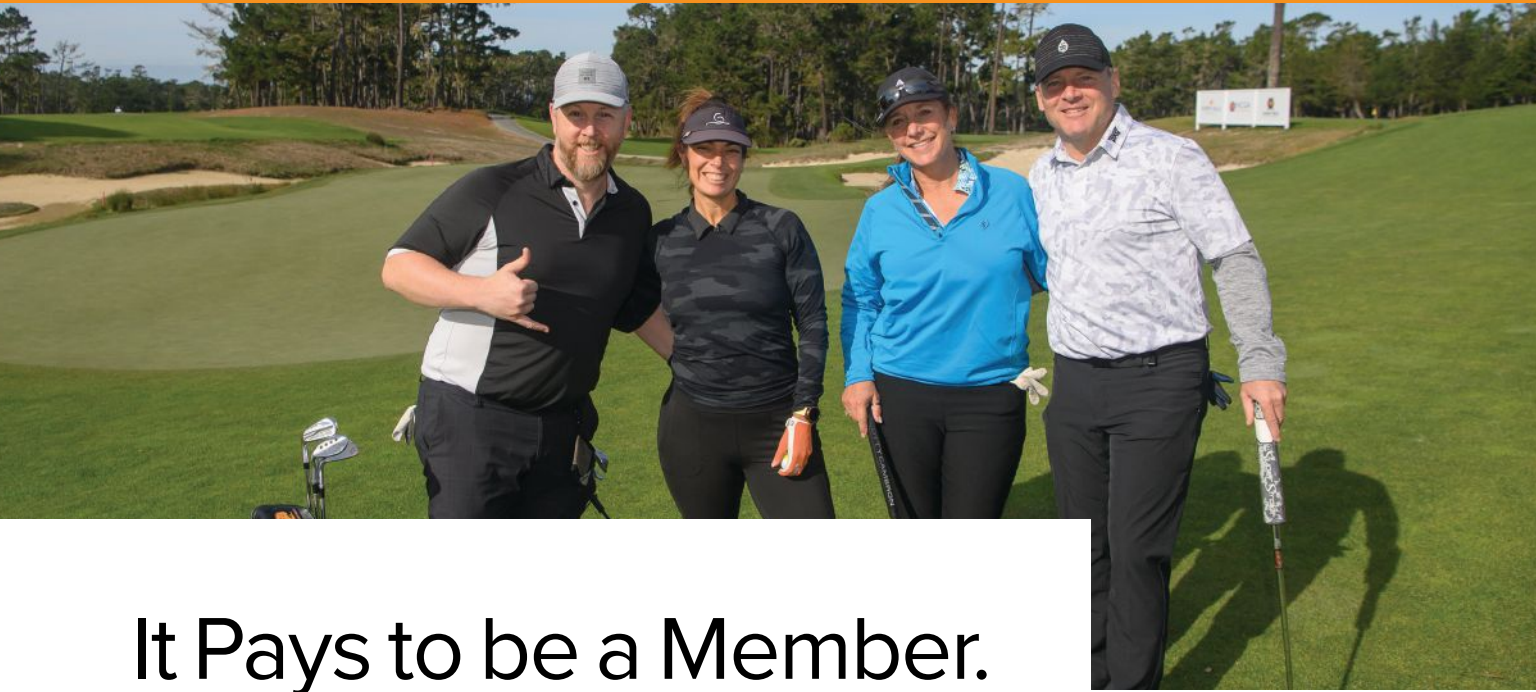
"My feet and ankles now react like human ankles, instead of before, when it was like I was on peg legs," he says. He regained more than 2 inches of height, bumping him back to his old 5-foot, 11-inches, all of which has affected his golf swing. "I'm driving it great but my iron play is terrible," Healea says in a dispirited tone that will be familiar to every golfer.

As he adjusts to his new ankles, Healea is also working to spread the gospel of adaptive golf. He is the driving force behind the creation of the Northern California Amputee and Adaptive Golf Classic, which will debut in March 2025 at Sierra View Country Club in Roseville.

"I meet people all the time on the golf course who say, 'I knew a guy who loved golf, he lost his leg 15 years ago and hasn't played since.' I tell them to grab their phone and take a video of me swinging," Healea says. "I say, 'Show it to him and tell him to get up and try. If I can do it, anyone can do it.'"

For more about adaptive golf, go to wagagolf.org or email Tim directly: adptgolf@yahoo.com.

For more of Carmel Valley resident **Alan Shipnuck's** storytelling, visit FirePitCollective.com.



It Pays to be a Member.

Your NCGA membership gives you access to a variety of exclusive discounts. Some of them are promotions you will hear about by email, however, many of them are available to you everyday. Another example of how NCGA benefits add up.

Benefits that Add Up



EVERYDAY GOLF COURSE DISCOUNTS

- Poppy Hills and Poppy Ridge are your courses – member rates every day!
- Several other courses offer everyday NCGA member discounts, too



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- Great rates at Monterey Bay area hotels
- Hertz rental car discounts
- Exclusive offers for golf stay & play packages in California and beyond



GOLF SERVICES DISCOUNTS

- Member-only offers for apparel, clinics, equipment, memberships and more

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Poppy Ridge Golf Course Renovation Underway

Poppy Holding Inc. Chairperson John Dodsworth, course architect Jay Blasi and 2024 NCGA President Ed Quinn (left to right).

The renovation project at NCGA member course Poppy Ridge Golf Course in Livermore wine country has commenced.

On April 2, a groundbreaking attended by NCGA officials and other Northern California golf dignitaries celebrating the start of the renovation was conducted at the property.

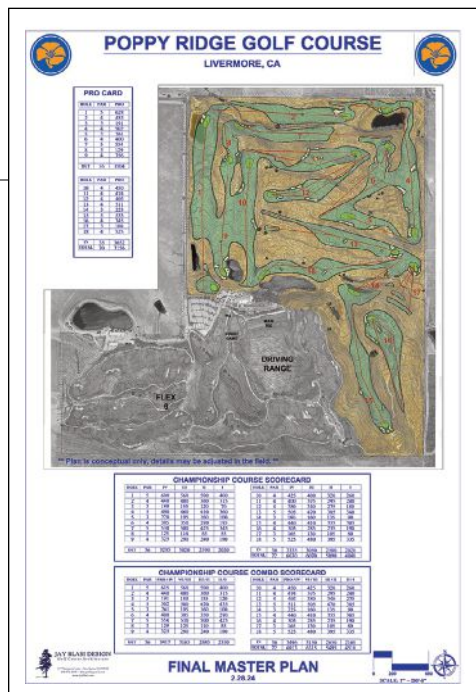
Among the keynote speakers were NCGA CEO Joe Huston, 2024 NCGA President Edward Quinn, Poppy Holding Inc. Chairperson John Dodsworth and local architect Jay Blasi, who will oversee the project.

“Today marks the beginning of a new era for the NCGA, its membership and the Northern California golf community,”

Huston said. “Our goal is to provide inherent value and benefit for all, and we believe this renovation is a major step in providing that objective. We look forward to sharing the finished project with golfers of all abilities.”

Plans for what will be the new Poppy Ridge include the creation of a new 18-hole Championship course, a Composite nine-hole layout featuring interesting holes along with multiple tee box areas, and various improvements to its practice areas. The project, which will also make the two courses much more walkable, is anticipated to be completed in mid-2025.

The original Poppy Ridge site, which opened in 1996, consisted of three separate Nine-hole segments – the Chardonnay, Merlot,



Course Map is Subject to Change

and Zinfandel layouts.

“Because this is the home course of NCGA members, we want to ensure the course is fun and enjoyable for all players,” said Blasi, whose work includes the recently re-designed Golden Gate Park Golf Course in San Francisco. “At the same time, we want to make the course thought-provoking and challenging for the skilled players.”

As per sustainability, Blasi noted the new courses will feature turfgrass that will require less water and be designed to require less day-to-day maintenance.

The Poppy Ridge project was initiated when it became mandatory to replace the course’s aging irrigation system, which was installed upon its original opening.

“Upon extensive review of the property, we saw an inherent opportunity to deliver a new 18-hole Championship course for our valued members and players of all abilities,” Huston said. “Additionally, the possibility existed to further incorporate a 9-hole course that fully supports our mission to ensure that golf is welcoming for people of all ages and skill levels.”

Throughout the project, there will always be nine holes open for play for both NCGA members and the public. The Poppy Ridge site still will be able to host casual group outings, charity outings, weddings and other special events.

In 2014, the NCGA performed a full renovation of Poppy Hills Golf Course in Pebble Beach to rave reviews. 🌿

FAQ's For NCGA and Poppy Ridge Club Members

GREEN FEES/DUES

What will the cost to play be after the renovation?

Green fees will be structured to provide inherent value and benefit for all NCGA Members.

During the renovation, will NCGA members get a discount on the nine-hole course?

NCGA members always receive favorable NCGA green fees as part of their member benefits. And they will receive specialized NCGA member rates on the nine-hole course.

Will golfers be compensated in some way due to less frequency of play and how it impacts the Poppy Rewards program?

Frequency of play is not expected to be an issue at this time. Poppy Hills and Poppy Ridge Club members can continue to accrue loyalty points under the rewards program.

LOYALTY CLUB

Will Poppy Ridge Club memberships be a reduced price since certain services/benefits may not be offered?

Poppy Ridge Club memberships will continue to be available for \$99/year throughout the renovation project. Poppy Ridge Club membership fees will continue to provide access to the full suite of NCGA Member benefits, several tournaments throughout the renovation, as well as the loyalty points program.

PRACTICE FACILITY

Will the practice area be open?

The practice area is planned to be operational for the majority of the period during the project construction. Golfers should check the Poppy Ridge website or contact the property for dates and hours of operation.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Will the clubhouse/restaurant/snack bar remain open during renovation?

Absolutely! All guests are welcome to dine at **The Grill**. It is popular among golfers and non-golfers alike!

Is Poppy Ridge still doing weddings?

Yes, Poppy Ridge is still offering the Clubhouse and outdoor patio for weddings and receptions.

NCGA MEMBERS

Why haven't the Poppy Ridge Club/NCGA members been asked for their opinions/inputs regarding the future plans of the golf course?

The NCGA and Poppy Holding Board Members, along with Senior Management, have completed a long-term, comprehensive study of all golf course components within the property, and believe an opportunity exists to greatly improve the overall golf experience for all NCGA Members, while also addressing the future golf demand marketplace. The results of these studies are further supported by golfer/member input via qualitative and quantitative research and surveys.

Will this cause an increase to NCGA member dues?

NCGA Member dues were increased in 2024 after seven years of no increases. The factors accounting for the increase include the ongoing costs of inflation along with the expansion of NCGA programs and services. The renovation of Poppy Ridge did not factor into the increase. Potential NCGA member dues increases are assessed both annually and periodically, and an increase is not anticipated in 2025.

For more information and updates, please follow our Poppy Ridge Renovation Blog at poppyridgegolf.ncga.org

DAYtrip

Move Over, Reno. Sparks is Spreading its Wings.

BY ALEX HULANICKI

Reno has long touted itself as “The Biggest Little City In the World.” Well, hello, Reno. Here comes Sparks. Just northeast of Reno’s airport is one of the fastest-growing areas in Northern Nevada. Situated east of the Sierra Nevada and below the snowline makes Sparks a great place to play golf, to go whitewater rafting on the Truckee River or just relax in a yoga class.

Red Hawk Golf and Resort, which offers two championship courses and meeting facilities, has become Sparks’ unofficial community center. Both local residents, service clubs and visitors staying on site alike celebrate everything from weddings and quinceañeras for a girl’s 15th birthday at the resort’s **Talon’s Nest** event center. About 3,000 children and their parents show up for Halloween festivities.

“Business is booming,” says John Visconti, Red Hawk’s general manager as a representative of Troon Golf. He notes that post-pandemic closure, the resort has had to expand from 220 to 330 employees, and though last year’s heavy snow closed down the golf courses until May, the number of rounds by the end of the year was projected to be a whopping total of 77,000 on the resort’s public Lakes course, designed by Robert Trent Jones II, and the members’ Hills course, designed by Hale Irwin. Visconti notes that the goal of the resort is to make visitors feel like members, and members to enjoy their perks.



The Lakes layout features natural lake areas, certified as riparian habitat for migrating birds, trophy-size bass and, alas, golf balls. Make sure to watch out for the tricky greens. **The Hills** layout is a bit more forgiving and presents views of the Spanish Hills to the north and Reno to the west. From the highest point, the back tee of the par-five 10th stretches to 700 yards (thankfully) downhill and is suitably named **The Beast**.

East of Sparks, Tesla operates its **Gigafactory** for batteries and electric vehicle parts, and Samsung has posted design teams. Both companies’ executives hold retreats at Red Hawk’s meeting rooms, and enjoy the cuisine and beverages at **David’s Grill**. Don’t skip the tomahawk pork chop with shishito peppers.

Red Hawk’s spacious guest suites – I got lost in my two-story unit with kitchen and living room – offer a base for visitors seeking hiking and biking at **Rancho San Rafael** and **Golden Eagle** regional parks, disc golf at **Lizard Peak** and just getting away from the San Francisco Bay Area, about a three-hour drive away on Interstate 80.

Of course, there is gambling and resort-style activities in Reno at the nearby **Peppermill** and **Grand Sierra** casinos and spas. And, the **National Automobile Museum** has long been an attraction, especially the popular **Hot August Nights** car events.

I’d rather try my luck on the greens or the challenging lakeside fairways of Red Hawk, or at nine-hole **D’Andrea Park Golf Course**, or par-3, nine-holer **Links at Kiley Ranch**, which also features a 3,500-square-foot practice-putting green.

Much better than the felt of the Blackjack table. 🍀

The gate to Red Hawk Golf and Resort is located just a 20-minute drive from the Reno airport. The Lakes course at Red Hawk serves not only a test of evading the drink, but also provides a natural habitat for birds and fish.





COURTESY OF PARKS AND RECREATION

New Golden Gate Clubhouse

The landscape and turf weren't the only things getting an upgrade at **Golden Gate Park Golf Course**. Also getting a new look was the course's 1,500 square-foot clubhouse. The revamped facility, which features a multifunctional lounge that welcomes players of all ages, has a new pro shop, improved food and beverage concessions and an outdoor patio with seating that overlooks the course.

In 2018, the clubhouse sustained extensive damage in a fire, leading to the building's demolition.

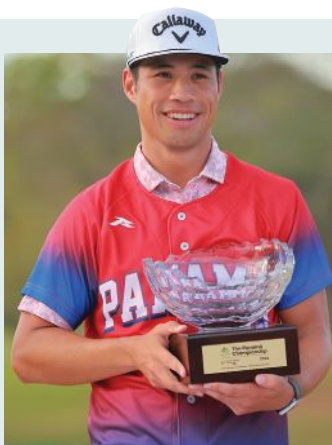
The new clubhouse, financed in part by the Rec and Park Open Space Fund, was constructed on the same footprint as the previous structure.

"I am proud of the investments we have made to ensure San Francisco continues to deliver world-class parks, open spaces, and recreation centers," said Mayor London Breed. "This kind of project is exactly what we need to do to uplift our neighborhoods and ensure our diverse communities have access to enjoy and learn sports and activities they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to."

FirstTee San Francisco, a nonprofit organization that empowers youth with life and social skills through golf, has operated the course for the last decade. The organization provides programming for underserved youth.

"Golden Gate Park Golf Course is an important program location for FirstTee – San Francisco. It has been and will continue to be a vital resource in our ongoing efforts to provide impactful programs for underserved children," said FirstTee – San Francisco Executive Director Dan Burke.

The San Francisco Rec and Park Department maintains six public golf courses, including Lincoln Park, TPC Harding Park, TPC Fleming, Gleneagles, Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and Sharp Park in Pacifica. 🌻



Back-to-Back NorCal Champs

Good friends and fellow NCGA alumni **Isaiah Salinda** (top left) and **Kevin Velo** left an impression during the Korn Ferry Tour's early February winter swing through South America.

Following having his appendix removed in 2023, Salinda, a San Francisco native, made a promise to himself that his first KFT start would be in Panama. Not only did Salinda make the journey, he won the event by eight strokes. The eight strokes tied the fourth-largest margin of victory in KFT history.

"I'm very excited to win here in Panama," said Salinda at the time. "I think the only time I looked at the leaderboard was on No. 9 or 10... it was still pretty stacked. After No. 12 I knew I had a pretty good cushion

and didn't look at any leaderboards after that."

Salinda, who shared the 54-hole lead with Canadian Wil Bateman, closed with a 5-under 65 to come in at 12-under 268. At the 2018 Pacific Coast Amateur at The Olympic Club, Salinda posted a tournament and course-record third-round 62 on the Lake Course that propelled him to victory.

A week after Salinda's win, it was Velo's turn.

Velo notched his first KFT victory, overcoming a four-shot deficit with two holes to play and later defeating Brian Campbell on the first hole of an ensuing playoff to win the KFT Astara Golf Championship at Country Club de Bogota. The 26-year-old Velo closed with three straight birdies to finish with a 66 and added another in the playoff to earn his first KFT win. His 22-under 261 total is the lowest score in tournament history.

"This feels unbelievable," said Velo, of Danville, who was a standout on the Junior Tour of Northern California. "I had a call with my coach on Wednesday afternoon after I was hitting balls and I told him I'm ready to do what Isaiah did. We're super competitive that if I didn't have enough motivation, that fired me up even more. So I'm really happy for him, but I'm glad I got him."

For both players, the wins were testament to not giving up.

Along with recovering from having his appendix removed, Salinda had failed to advance through PGA Tour Q-School. Velo, meanwhile, struggled in his first full season on the Korn Ferry Tour in 2022, missing 13 cuts in 25 starts. 🌻



Warriors Star Steph Curry to Receive Charlie Sifford Award

NBA superstar **Steph Curry** will receive the **Charlie Sifford Award** presented by Southern Company, which honors recipients for their spirit in advancing diversity in golf.

Curry will be presented the award June 10 at the World Golf Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony presented by CME Group held during the 124th U.S. Open at Pinehurst Resort & Country Club. The Charlie Sifford Award was created in 2021 to honor an individual who personifies Sifford's groundbreaking achievements through perseverance, confidence, respect and adaptability. Sifford was the first African American to play on the PGA Tour.

"I'm incredibly honored to be chosen as the recipient of this year's Charlie Sifford Award and am grateful to the World Golf Hall of Fame for the recognition in this sport that I am so passionate about," Curry said. "I believe that we have the opportunity to grow the game of golf by providing equity, access and opportunity to young golfers who have that same passion, dedication and determination as so many of us out on the green."

Curry's golf accomplishments include launching Underrated Golf in 2021, a purpose-driven business endeavor with the overarching commitment to provide equity, access, and opportunity to student-athletes from every community by balancing participation in the sport to truly reflect our society. In 2019 he helped Howard University to compete on the D-1 level by funding the golf team for the next six years. Howard did not have a golf team since the 1970s, and this is the first on the Division 1 level in school history.

"Steph Curry has shown passion and a commitment to giving more opportunities to young people who do not have access to the game of golf," said Greg McLaughlin, CEO, World Golf Hall of Fame. "Steph's dedication in advancing diversity in golf epitomizes the groundbreaking work demonstrated by Charlie Sifford."

The Underrated Tour presented by KPMG is built upon three key pillars – equity: the quality of being just and fair; access: the ability, right or permission to enter; and opportunity: a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. The Underrated Tour utilizes golf as a platform to offer young, overlooked golfers special programming experiences, including an ongoing speaker series and networking events with brands and corporations, allowing them to understand what it means to make connections and build successful careers.

Last summer, Curry won the American Century Championship for celebrity players at Lake Tahoe. 🌟



USGA Museum and Library Receives Dr. Charlie Sifford Memorabilia

The USGA recently announced it has received a donation of memorabilia related to **Dr. Charlie Sifford**, a pioneer of the game who was the first Black player to compete on the PGA Tour and the first Black member inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

As part of the USGA's commitment to preserve and celebrate this critical part of golf history, Dr. Sifford's artifacts will be on display at the **USGA Museum and Library** in Liberty Corner, N.J., and at the **World Golf Hall of Fame** in Pinehurst, N.C.

Dr. Sifford, who died in 2015 at the age of 92, is often compared to baseball's Jackie Robinson thanks to his relentless pursuit of civil rights on the golf course and around the country. Dr. Sifford's desire to play the game and to continue to pave the way for future Black

golfers, despite enduring tireless vitriol, hatred and discrimination during the mid-to-late 20th century, continues to inspire future generations. The collection of more than 200 artifacts related to Dr. Sifford's professional career and personal life includes correspondence, photographs, clothing, medals, awards, golf clubs and personal effects.

"We are honored that Charles Sifford Jr. and his family have entrusted Dr. Charles Sifford's legacy to the USGA," said Hilary Cronheim, senior director of the USGA Golf Museum and Library. "Fundamental to our work is to preserve the story of each legend of the game in a multi-dimensional way, speaking to the breadth and depth of an individual's life, character and impact. Sifford fought tirelessly to desegregate professional golf and paved the way for the future of equity in the sport. This acquisition and partnership with the Sifford family ensures that future generations will appreciate him as a pillar for the game's history and the history of African American advancement in this country." 🌟



Maverick McNealy

JOHN DOST

Faces of the NCGA

Q: You won the NCGA Amateur at Spyglass Hill, how tough can that course be?

MM: It can be really challenging. It's a lot tighter than Pebble off the tee. The greens have a lot of slope. And I think the toughest part about it is you don't have a flat lie all day. You really have to have control of your golf ball and keep it below the hole.

Q: How instrumental was the NCGA in your development?

MM: It was huge. I never got on an airplane to play competitive golf until I got to Stanford. I played all the junior golf I wanted in NorCal including with the JTNC (Junior Tour of Northern California). I was so lucky to have grown up in the region.

Q: What are your most memorable moments as an amateur competing in NorCal?

MM: Winning the NCGA Amateur at Spyglass was really special. I had a lot of family and friends and teammates there, and my dad caddied for me at the event. I would also say qualifying for the U.S. Open at The Olympic Club. That was pretty special. And also just really getting to call Stanford my home course growing up, and also my home course in college. That was really cool.

Q: How is your shoulder injury doing?

MM: My shoulder feels great. It's been one year since I hurt it. I'm fully back to 100% and I'm loving it.

Q: Where is Maverick McNealy in 10 years?

MM: That is a great question (smiles). Hopefully, I'm playing my best golf ever. I love it out here (on the PGA Tour). 🌟

Northern California golf runs through Maverick McNealy's veins. A native of Portola Valley, McNealy grew up playing on the Junior Tour of Northern California before moving on to bigger things.

He'd go on to win the NCGA Amateur at Spyglass Hill in 2016, and over four seasons at Stanford was a three-time All-American who not only tied Tiger Woods and Patrick Rodgers with 11 career wins, but also finished with the lowest Cardinal men's career scoring average (70.13). Accolades earned along the way were Jack Nicklaus and Haskins Awards (2014-15) and Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson Awards (2017).

Since joining the PGA Tour in 2020, McNealy has made 82 of 119 cuts with 13 Top 10 finishes and a pair of runner-up finishes, including the 2021 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

In 2023, while teeing off on the 7th hole at Monterey Peninsula Country Club's Shore Course, McNealy felt a jolt that was the result of him tearing the ligament between his collarbone and sternum. He has since returned to action and is more enthusiastic about his golfing life than ever.

Topgolf Adding Second Bay Area Venue

Topgolf will be adding a second Bay Area location by the end of 2024 with the opening of a facility in Burlingame.

According to **Burlingame Parks and Recreation**, the Topgolf will be located at 250 Anza Blvd. on a 70,000-plus square-foot site near San Francisco International Airport.



The original Topgolf in the Bay Area is located in San Jose. There is also Topgolf in Roseville just outside of Sacramento. In February, the NCGA hosted a special event at both venues where members played for only \$40 per person.

"Burlingame is very excited to partner with Topgolf and we look forward to the strong economic growth, especially with our hotel conferences," Burlingame Mayor Donna Colson told news station KRON.

The facility is expected to feature three floors, 102 climate-controlled hitting bays, a restaurant, outdoor dining and an indoor event space. 🌟

'Cat' Roars on Asian Tour



Sacramento native **John Catlin** earned his fifth and sixth Asian Tour crowns, going back-to-back at the International Series Macau Event in China and the Saudi Open in Saudi Arabia.

At the International Series Macau Event, Catlin, whose previous win had come on the European Tour in 2021, posted an 11-under 59 while competing under preferred lies (lift, clean and place). The 59 is the lowest score in Asian Tour history.

"Yeah, I'm pretty much speechless," Catlin later said, adding that all of his passwords end with 59. "It's pretty crazy. It hasn't totally sunk in yet. Wow. Yeah, the emotions are hitting me for sure. Just everything I've been through over the last two years. To be here. It's pretty special."

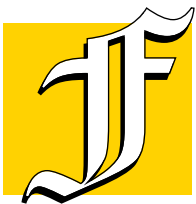
At the Saudi Open, Catlin had a comfy eight-stroke lead following a third-round 62 and never looked back. 🌟



GOLF'S LOST ARTISTS

BY AL BARKOW

Remembering the old-school art of calligraphy and those who turned scoreboards of the past into an art form.



Francis Ouimet’s monumental playoff victory in the 1919 U.S. Open – a local amateur defeating the two best golfers in the world – British professionals Harry Vardon and Ted Ray – gave interest in early-days American golf a huge push forward. Curiously, it also had a down-the-road peripheral impact on how tournament results were presented.

A scorekeeper at that '19 U.S. Open was none other than Fred Corcoran, who became an inventive, aggressive manager of the PGA and LPGA Tours, and Sam Snead’s agent. From the '19 U.S. Open, Corcoran went on to eventually running events for the Massachusetts Golf Association, where he initiated a not insignificant step that would begin a unique-to-golf cottage industry – scoreboard calligraphy. Corcoran’s innovation wasn’t calligraphy in the true definition of the word, but with a box of crayons he gave the numbers colors:

red for a birdie, black for par, and bogey in what he described as “disgusting brown.” It was a feast for the eyes of the time that would carry on with much more elaboration for some five decades, and gave tournament golf a nice human touch before our hyper-tech, electronic age made it a lost art.

The more ornate calligraphy in golf scoreboards took off in 1931 when Charles Kimmel attended that year’s U.S. Amateur Championship in Chicago. There he saw the scorer doing sloppy work. A neat and accurate man, according to his daughter



Marilyn, he felt he could do better and applied for the job to do the board for the Western Open. He was hired and began a 59-year scoreboard calligrapher career until his death in 1990, which included dozens of professional and private tournaments a year. Overall, he did 50 Western Opens, the Masters, U.S. Opens, Ryder Cups, and the King Hassan II Trophée, a tournament held in Morocco. His “signature” was an Old English script or font for the first letter of players’ first and last names. He was also a party to the creation of the ultimate marker instrument. He worked with the founder of Sharpie to develop a self-contained-ink-to-felt-tip pen that

was in the form of a metal tube. It replaced fountain pens and chalk. Even when electronics were introduced at his events, winners would pose for pictures before Kimmel's scoreboard.

By many accounts, the all-time All-Star calligrapher in American golf was Jack Sneiderman, who came to be dubbed “The Michelangelo of the media tent.” He came to this line of work in 1962, when he volunteered to do the scoreboard for the Lady Carling tournament, in his hometown of Sutton, Mass. He turned pro, so to speak, in 1964 and for over 30 years did more than 1,500 tournaments. His fee eventually rose to \$1,500 and expenses per

Terry Wilson (opposite page) worked his magic on NCGA tournament scoreboards for over three decades; the calligraphy of numbers (above) and Old English script or font for the first letter of players’ first and last names dates back nearly a century.





tournament, almost surely the most ever paid a scoreboard marker; and what's more, he had an endorsement deal with a major clothing manufacturer.

Sneiderman's specialty, what set him apart and extended or added to the definition of *golf* calligraphy, was his portraits of the players, one of which was the defending champion of the event he was currently working. He positioned it at the top of the pressroom board. For example he did Nick Price, who in 1995 was defending his PGA championship title. Price was so taken by it he commissioned Sneiderman to do a separate portrait, complete with a miniature leaderboard. Sneiderman also created a bald eagle on a golf cap that he used on the panel showing eagles made.

Others made "artistic" contributions with a bit of levity. John Baudet attached a self-drawn open pair of scissors that he pasted to the cut line of the tournament.

At one time, the PGA Tour ran a

school with classes in golf calligraphy, and had six board markers on staff. They included Ken Everett, a west coaster, Dom Mirandi and Irv Batten. "They were paid a fee, a per diem for their expenses, and mileage on their car until the Tour provided them with one to drive to tourneys," remembers Tom Place, the PGA Tour's press secretary during those years. "They also were given blazers of various colors - raspberry and gray, and a navy blue one for Sunday."

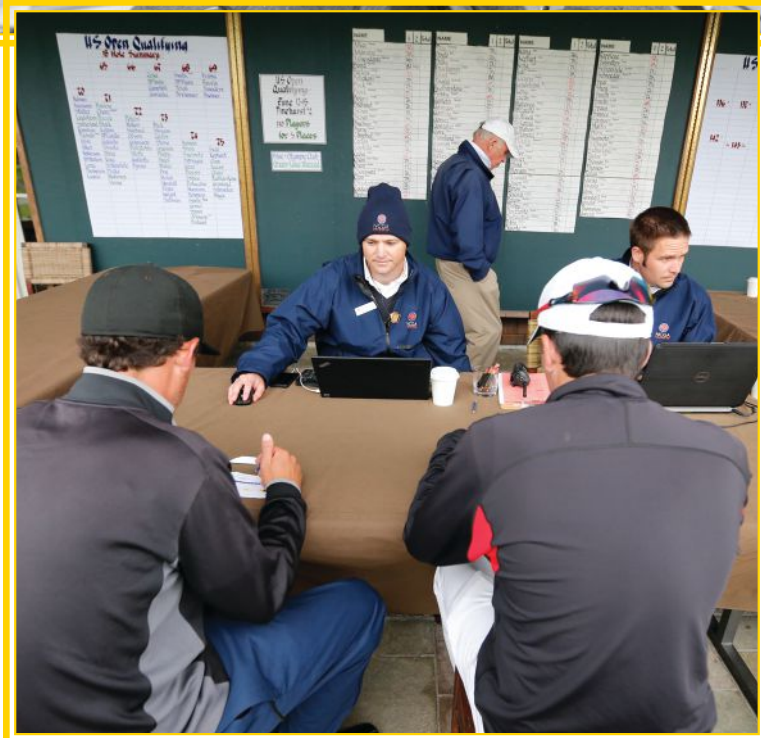
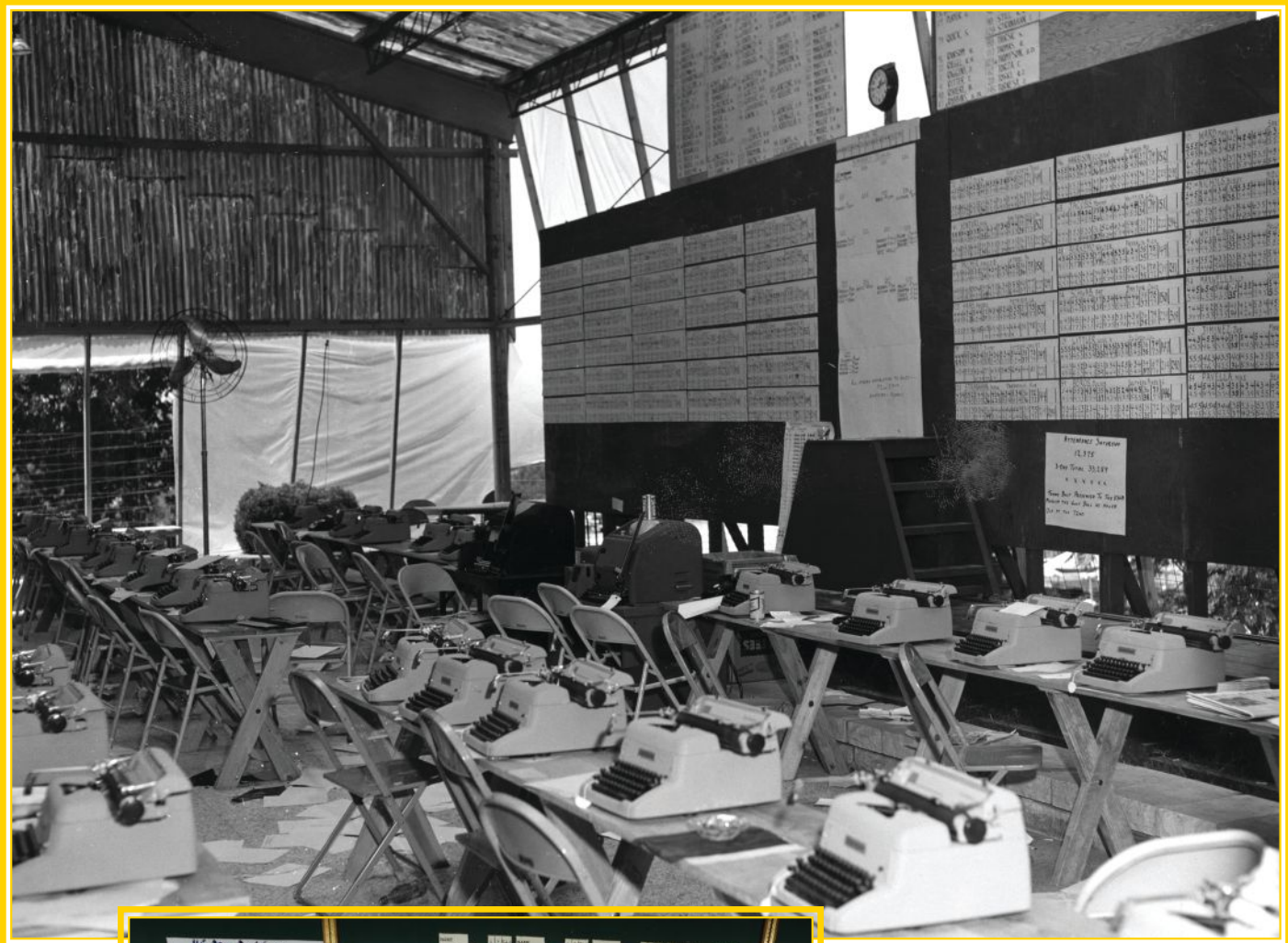
There was a school for markers, too, in San Francisco. Among others, it was attended by Gary Plato, a notable Bay Area club professional. Plato remembered the class was led by the late Steve Caulkins, himself a calligrapher. "We all bought those aluminum tubes with a cap from the Fishstrum Staple Co., in San Francisco," Plato recalls. "I always marked with a down stroke, which made the letters sharper. Another local marker was Jules Issacson, a Spalding salesman who

worked a lot of our tournaments. He did it to make contact with his customers, the club pros. He was paid a hundred dollars for each stint.

At the Crosby Pro-Am (now known as the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am) there was a portrait of the singer on the scoreboard; the same with Andy Williams, in San Diego (now known as the Farmers Insurance Open); and at the Bob Hope (Desert Classic, now known as The American Express) there was one of the comedian, with his ski-nose more than a little exaggerated."

Other calligraphers in the Bay area included Steve Menchinella, and Terry Wilson, who did the boards for almost all the NCGA tournaments over three decades. Tim Morton, himself a calligrapher, remembers his good friend, Wilson, also from Sacramento. "He learned calligraphy from books and did it after he retired because he loved being around the game and the excitement of the competitions," Morton says. "He could get a bit fancy with special fonts for the first and last names of the players. He was one of the best."

Above: Fans gather around the scoreboard at the 1938 U.S. Open at Cherry Hills CC in Colorado; Opposite Page: the scoreboard and media center at the 1958 U.S. Open Championship at Southern Hills CC in Oklahoma; Wilson and NCGA staff (below) working a U.S. Open Final Qualifying event at Lake Merced GC in Daly City.



The calligraphy was fun while being accurate and informative. It added a certain individuality to what is, essentially, a pretty mundane piece of business. The USGA retired calligraphy at its championships in 2018-19, although the 2022 U.S. Senior Women's Amateur employed one in Alaska. The only place it can be found now is at regional tournaments (the Ohio Golf Association, for instance still uses calligraphy at the U.S. Open final qualifying it hosts) or local tournaments; for example, the one for the Bay Area's long-running Commuters Tournament; at many NCGA events, and at some collegiate events. But, except for the The Memorial tournament's pressroom board, the PGA and LPGA Tours now use digital and leaderboard technology that includes LED boards connected to its Shot-Link scoring system.

Alas! 🌸



FERRARI RACES BACK

Once a decorated golfer, Joey Ferrari's life skidded off the rails, but he's rediscovered the joy in the game and simply 'being Joey.' **BY RON KROICHICK**



On one level, Joey Ferrari's 6-foot par putt on the final hole of last year's NCGA Senior Championship didn't seem especially important. He needed it to tie for 18th, in the middle of the pack in the 62nd annual tournament at Poppy Hills.

On another level, Ferrari knew the putt carried special significance. He was locked in a taut duel with close friend Casey Boyns to become NCGA Super Senior Player of the Year. Ferrari correctly figured he had to make the putt to earn the prestigious, season-long award.

And on a deeper level, the putt meant more than most anyone could comprehend.

Ferrari was trying to complete what he called his "road to redemption," a long and challenging personal journey. Once a dec-

orated golfer, Ferrari's life had skidded off the rails—he stopped playing high-level amateur events and began using drugs in the late 1990s. As financial problems mounted, he started dealing drugs, specifically cocaine and methamphetamine.

Then he landed in prison for 10 years.

Now, more than a decade removed from regaining his freedom, Ferrari's long-time goal was within reach. He fervently wanted to win Player of the Year, to prove to himself he could do it, to prove he was his old self again.



to the WINNER'S CIRCLE

He made the putt.

“That capped it off for me,” Ferrari says.

This is a story that stretches far beyond golf, but the game frames his odyssey. He’s 68 now, well into his second act, far removed from the young Joey Ferrari who played his way into elite company.

That incarnation of Ferrari landed NCGA Player-of-the-Year honors in 1992, was a two-time semifinalist in the San Francisco City Championship (1991 and ’95) and reached the finals of the 1993 California Amateur (he lost to Boyns) and U.S. Mid-Amateur. He also qualified for the 1994 U.S. Open at storied Oakmont Country Club outside Pittsburgh, where he played a practice round with Tom Watson and met Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer.

But Ferrari later lost his way, with severe consequences. He was living in Lodi

when his life unraveled in the late ‘90s and early 2000s. He owned three pizza restaurants and one Mexican restaurant, plus a toy company and video-game company. His businesses were doing well.

He’s 68 now, **well into his second act**, far removed from the young Joey Ferrari who played his way into elite company.

He also traveled the world on the amateur golf circuit, playing in the South American Championship in Peru and the British Amateur in Scotland. Ferrari figured he had accomplished all he could

on the course, so he quit playing competitively to focus on his family and businesses – only to soon stray from the plan.

“I got bored and got involved in drugs,” he said in a 2014 interview. “I learned a very tough lesson, which I paid very dearly for.”

Ferrari was released from the Federal Correctional Institution in Lompoc in October 2013. He returned to Stockton, where lifelong friend Kelly Reilly hired him to run one of his car-wash businesses. Ferrari worked there for more than seven years, then bounced to golf jobs at Spanos Park and Forest Meadows in Murphys before semi-retiring last year.

He played in 19 tournaments chasing his player-of-the-year ambitions (“ten more than I did,” Boyns said, unable to resist jabbing his buddy). Now Ferrari has resumed working, buying and selling



cars at auction and also selling them to dealerships.

His life has stabilized to some degree, finally, after a turbulent ride.

“I really feel at peace with it,” he says of his journey. “I had a lot to prove to myself, my friends and my family, that I was back to being Joey. I did stupid crap and I can’t take it back. I had to prove myself. It hasn’t been easy.”

Says Boyns: “It was good to see Joey get his glory. He had kind of a rough spell there with his life, so it’s good to see him turn it around.”

Ferrari and Boyns are prototypical golf pals, frequently needling each other and endlessly competitive. They twice teamed up to win the NCGA Four-Ball, their games nicely complementing each other’s: Ferrari hitting a reliable draw, Boyns leaning on his fade.

At the same time, Ferrari found himself admiring how Boyns, a longtime caddy at Pebble Beach and one of Northern California’s most accomplished amateur golfers ever, had his life together. Ferrari

viewed his friend as an ambassador for the game, saying Boyns motivated him.

Boyns, in turn, respected how Ferrari rebuilt his life after the long prison stay. There’s no magical formula, and inevitably there have been bumps in the road.

“He was repentant – when he first got out, he was very humble,” Boyns says. “I could definitely see a difference. ... In some ways he’s taken a step or two back (now) after 10 steps forward, but he’s still a lot better person than he used to be. He was kind of wild and now he’s not.”

Some of the lessons were profoundly personal and painful. Ferrari (who remarried in 2022) not only lost his businesses, he had to work hard to repair his relationships with his daughters, Christina and Jovanna.

And the connection with son Joey was significantly damaged. Ferrari said their relationship now is cordial, but Joey is “still at bay” in the wake of everything that happened.

Ferrari finds refuge and a release in golf, which he’s played since he was a kid

roaming the fairways at Van Buskirk Park and Swenson Park in Stockton. His grandmother introduced him to the game all those years ago, and then golf became an important tool in his personal comeback.

“It’s helped a lot,” Ferrari says. “Golf always was a big part of my life, and my success propelled me to being one of the best (amateurs) in the country. So when I blew it and threw it all away, that’s what I held onto to get back to being Joey. Golf lit the fire in me.”

He plans to play 10 to 15 tournaments this year, enough to stay competitive but maybe not enough to repeat as Player of the Year. Ferrari is fine with that. He achieved his goal and completed his road to redemption.

“I’m just very appreciative and grateful,” he says. “It’s a complete turnaround (from life in prison). When you’re at that low point, you can only dream to get back to where I am now.” 🌻

Ron Kroichick covers golf for the San Francisco Chronicle.

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Sharing a Love For the Game

The Spectrum of NCGA Clubs

There are nearly 1,000 Associate Clubs in the NCGA and every one of them has a story all its own.

Knowing this, in the Spring 2021 issue of *NCGA Golf Magazine* we decided to dive deeper into what we call the Spectrum of NCGA Clubs. For this issue, we thought we'd hop back into the pool of clubs to share more stories.

To be considered an NCGA Associate club, there are only three basic requirements: the club can't be tied to a golf course facility, it must be organized primarily to enjoy golf, and it must provide an opportunity to join and enjoy the services provided by the NCGA.

From those simple precepts, NCGA Associate Clubs have formed throughout the region based on age, occupation, ethnicity, religious affiliation, marital status, location, and school ties, among others.

This time around, we've chronicled 16 clubs and what makes them special. Some come for the competition, others for the laughs and the 19th hole, but what they all share is a love for the game and a camaraderie and closeness that makes being part of a club something meaningful.

We always look forward to hearing from our clubs. Have a good story about your club you'd like to share? Celebrating a significant anniversary? Let us know! Please email Jerry Stewart at jstewart@ncga.org.





Bridging **Left-Handed** Golfers

BY AL BARKOW



The Norcal Left-Handers Golf Association/Club is part of two national organizations – the Left-Handed Golf Association and World Association of Left-Handed Golfers – both of which had their birth in 1936. That’s when Ben Richter, a golf professional in St. Louis, set out to give left-handers a right and proper place in the world of golf. Mounting a spirited nationwide campaign, he secured the names of 5,000 lefties and, in 1936, 147 of them played the first National Left-Handed Championship in St. Louis.

One might think the reason-for-being was a response to the age-old attitude toward left-handed people – that they are off-kilter, eccentric, even evil (i.e. the Italian word for left is *sinistre*, from which we get *sinister*), but Jim Dalton, Secretary/Treasurer of the NorCal Association and President of the NorCal Club dispels that notion. Better to say, “Being left-handed is unique.”

The NorCal group was established in 1946 and currently has some 60 members. It is a single entity. The club part is a connection with the NCGA, through which members get a Handicap Index and can play in the Association’s events. Total cost per year, \$95. Six to eight one-day, 18-hole Lefty-Guest Best-Ball tournaments are played every year between March and November. The guests are often right-handers, “Which helps increase the fields, and make for more fun,” Dalton says.

The players pay in a greens fee to the club for each event, and the club negotiates a group fee with the host course. The venues tend to be on the upper rung. They have included The Olympic Club, Richmond CC, Gray’s Crossing, Catta Verdera CC, Cinnabar Hills, and Poppy Hills and Poppy Ridge.

The premier feature every year is the Western States Championship, starting the day after Labor Day. This year’s will be its 66th edition. It’s a three-day, two-person Best-Ball teaming a lefty and a righty golfer, with entrants from Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Idaho and, of course, California. This is followed by the Awards Dinner, the one big social get-together of the year. Southpaws are not seated with righties on their left. 🌐

Whiskey Golf Club: **The Perfect Blend**

BY TONY STARKS

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, where restrictions limited social gatherings and outdoor activities, a unique community emerged from the shared love of golf and a good glass of whiskey. Wayne Ford, a member of the Whiskey Golf Club, shares the fascinating journey of how this club came to be, its ethos, and its plans for the future.

The Whiskey Golf Club is a testament to resilience and the power of human connection during challenging times. Born out of necessity in 2020 as individuals sought safe ways to enjoy outdoor activities, it quickly grew from a small gathering of friends to a thriving roster of nearly 50 regulars.

“We were all looking for ways to stay active and connected during the pandemic,” explains Ford, a key member of the club. “Golf seemed like the perfect solution – it offered space, fresh air and the ability to play safely with proper precautions.”

What started as informal meetups at local courses evolved into something much more significant. As Ford describes, “We pieced together different peer groups, merged our circles, and created what we now call the Whiskey Golf Club. Our informal tournaments and gatherings became the heart of our community.”

Recognizing the potential to formalize their group, Ford and other members pursued official club status as pandemic restrictions eased. Just this March they became a sanctioned NCGA club. “We wanted to take things to the next level,” Ford explains. “Becoming a sanctioned club allowed us to organize events more formally and explore opportunities for philanthropy.”

The club’s name carries a story of its own. Ford recounts how one member, known for his extensive whiskey collection, became the inspiration behind the name. “We’d often enjoy a sip of whiskey after a round, raising our glasses to the camaraderie of the club,” Ford says. “It just felt right to honor that tradition in our name.”

Just like one of their favorite post-round bottles, Whiskey Golf Club is a blend of people from different walks of life. Looking ahead, the club aims to maintain its close-knit community while continuing to grow in purpose and impact. “We’re not just another golf club,” Ford asserts. “We’re a family, bonded by our shared passions and values. And that’s something truly special.” 🌐



A Crack In This **Golf-Rich Pipeline**

BY DAN MIROCHA

Greg Peddie was a novice golfer when he joined the Plumbing and Heating Club of Northern California in the early 2000s. But that soon changed after sharpening his skills in the club's competitive environment.

"We used to have six tournaments a year at some of the best clubs in Northern California, and we would sell out a 144-player tournament in a week," Peddie says. "And there was a wait list, too. It was fantastic. I got down to a single-digit handicap."

The club, which dates back to 1928, has served primarily as a social club for individuals associated with the plumbing, heating and cooling industry in Northern California.

Peddie, a board member for 17 years, says the club had as many as 200 members when he first joined, most notably NCGA legend Bob Blomberg. Its events were the perfect place for members to bring their customers to play, even if they were a competitor.

"Nobody was trying to poach," says Peddie, who runs a wholesale distributor of industrial piping products. "I've met a lot of people in the club who are my best friends."

The club and the industry, however, have seen changes. Due to mass consolidation of companies in his industry, Peddie says many larger companies have declined to maintain membership for their employees. The Plumbing and Heating Club is down to 32 members. There's still a weekly Thursday game at Corica Park Golf Course in Alameda, but it's often a struggle to fill two foursomes, Peddie says.

In December, the board voted to keep the club running in 2024.

"I would love to see those glory days come back," Peddie says. "We're coming up on a historic 100 years. If it's ever going to rebound, it would require someone with industry history that could devote a lot of time to it." 🌐



Their Business is **On the Course**

BY BETH ANN NICHOLS



Lin Repola didn't take to golf when she first picked up the game in her early 20s. But in 1999, at age 42, the black belt in martial arts realized that she needed a tamer sport. Repola bought custom golf clubs and took lessons from a pro every week for a year.

She was hooked.

When it came to meeting people, the Indian Valley Business Women's Golf Club made it easy. Every other Saturday Repola, a procurement manager for the City and County of San Francisco, gets together with women who work in a variety of fields for a round at Indian Valley Golf Club in Novato.

The business club, which dates back to 1979, currently has 21 members, reduced after some who retired started to play on Tuesdays in the Indian Valley Women's Golf Club, which has 90 members. Repola serves as captain of the business club but also belongs to the Tuesday club.

"From the first time I walked in until now, I've always felt part of the group," says Repola. "It's very welcoming."

The Indian Valley Business Women's GC relies primarily on word of mouth to recruit new members. Just last year, Repola recalled, tournament chair Mary Sancimino saw a woman sitting at the bar of the club and asked if she played regularly. That's how Peggy Weix became a member. Peggy had a friend named Sue Taggard Damiani, and soon she was a member, too.

While Repola describes Indian Valley as the kind of course that never gets boring, sometimes the group does hit the road. In June, a dozen women will head to Greenhorn Creek Resort in Angels Camp for a three-day outing.

The format each week at Indian Valley varies, but they typically use a Stableford format and play in less than 4½ hours. Members must participate in a minimum of six play dates to compete in the club championship. Year-long prizes are given at an annual Christmas luncheon.

"It feels like home," Repola says. "It's like 'Cheers,' where everyone knows your name." 🌐



The Namesake Course is Gone But Sunol Valley Men's Golf Club Lives On

BY SHANE RYAN



The Sunol Valley Men's Golf Club began in 1969, but when the Sunol Valley Golf Course was on the verge of shutting down in late 2015, the club seemed bound for the same fate. One of their newer members, Lionel Fernandez, a marketing manager from San Ramon, suggested to the board that they should become an associate club rather than die off altogether. The response was tepid; as Fernandez remembers, they were "kind of done." He asked for the members' contact information, and in that moment, almost by default, he became the new club president.

He recruited 22 others to form the core of the new associate club, which he likened to being a hermit crab—constantly in search of new courses. As mother nature overran the original Sunol Valley, the club still bearing its name grew under Fernandez's watch, gathering new members from the South Bay, East Bay and Tri Valley. Today, there are 67 members, and while most similar clubs play a new course each month, Fernandez rotates his courses between the three main geographical areas while using a cost averaging system to keep fees to \$85 per month.

For that price, members get one tournament a month, a two-day club championship, and an optional match play event that takes place over the course of the year. He changes up the formats, sorts for handicap flights and stages optional skins games and year-long closest-to-the-pin contests (this year, the leader for most of the season had come 7 inches from an ace, and was pipped on the last day by a player who got within four inches). There's plenty of diversity within his group, especially by age; the youngest member is Fernandez's 30-year-old son, and the oldest is an 86-year-old man who until recently played well enough to remain in the second flight.

"There's a lot of camaraderie," says Fernandez, who makes an effort to golf with new members in the first months after they join. "It's all about having fun and giving guys a great getaway from the everyday grind." 🌿

Firing at Flags When Not Snuffing Out Fires

BY SHANE RYAN

When the previous president of Santa Clara County Firefighters Golf Association, Mike Rosigana, was ready to call it quits, he sent an email out looking for the next in line. Rick Rosenquist, a fire engineer from Ben Lomond who worked out of San Jose until he retired last year, was interested, but only mildly—eight months later, he sent a note asking if anyone had reached out.

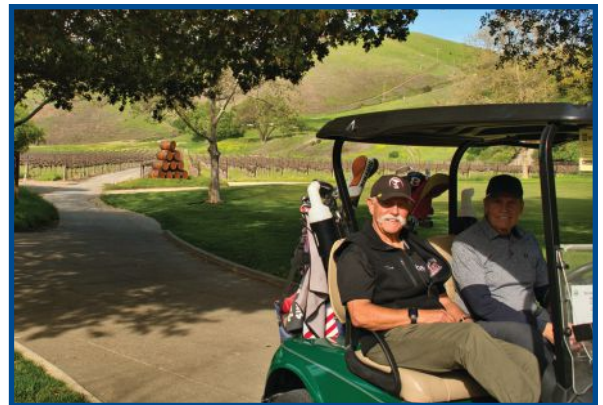
"You're the first," came the reply. Rosenquist—"Rosie"—to his friends—took over in 2014, and a year later his predecessor Rosigana had passed away from lung cancer. As Rosenquist explains, firefighters are many times more likely than average to get cancer because of their exposure to chemicals. In his memory, Rosenquist changed the name of their biggest annual event to the Mike Rosigana Memorial Shootout. That's a symbol of the brotherhood that defines the firefighting profession, and the golf club Rosenquist runs. "As firefighters, we're a very tight-knit group," he says. "The guys that I worked with, you live with them for a third of your life, and they become your brothers."

The club has become not just an outlet for golf, but a way for retired firefighters to keep that brotherhood alive. Rosenquist, a 21 Handicap Index, estimates that over half the members are retired, and they play once a month at courses ranging from San Jose Municipal to more challenging tracks like Pacific Grove Golf Links (San Juan Oaks is one of his favorites). Rosenquist is careful to rotate the tournament times to make sure they're spread equally between the active firefighters' various shifts, and to spread the locations between Pleasanton, Monterey and San Jose.

Most of the 87 current members work (or worked) out of San Jose, like Rosenquist, or Sunnyvale, a unique town where firefighters also work as police officers. One of the club's members is actually a retired police detective, and he and Rosenquist give each other plenty of grief. It's Rosenquist who holds the trump card, though, with his favorite joke:

"What do all cops and firefighters have in common?"

"They all want to be firefighters." 🌿



Irish and Proud of It

BY SHANE RYAN

Joe Browne, of the San Francisco Irish Golf Club, insists that because his group is so small—about 40 members—they don't need titles. Hence, he's neither the president nor the chief executive, just the man who organizes the monthly tournaments and maintains handicaps while Colm Wall, his second-in-command, handles the money. He and his group of "elder statesmen" play everywhere from Poppy Hills to Foxtails North to Diablo Creek to Pebble Beach Golf Links itself, and have done so since the club's formation in 1968.

Browne, 74, has been a member for almost 50 years. He joined in 1976 when he moved to San Francisco. He comes from Castleisland, County Kerry, and as you might have guessed from the name, most of the club's members were also born in Ireland (most, but not all – "We have an odd token, let's put it that way," Browne says). Like Browne, who now lives in Pacifica, many also work in the construction field.

The competitive highlight for the club came in 1988, when they won the NCGA Associate Club Championship at Spyglass Hill, but though that particular glory day is in the rearview mirror, they can still play; Browne, for one, maintains a 9.6 Handicap Index. "I'm trying to stay in the single digits," he says, "but I think my old body is telling me that it's not going to be for long. So I'll enjoy this year while I still have it."

For Browne and his fellow members, the club served as a way to bring Irish immigrants in San Francisco together, to keep a semblance of the "homely ways" of their native island, and even to provide a professional network. According to Browne, a big part of the appeal of the Bay area was the familiar weather.

The club today has about half the members it had at its peak, and newer clubs have attracted younger Irish players, but even now, when Browne and his friends get together, it's the same as when he first joined in the '70s—they all fall right into place. 🍀



The Old-Fashioned Way

BY DAN MIROCHA



Old Fashioned Golf Club has not yet reached its two-year anniversary, but its genesis can be traced back 30 years, says the club's tournament chair Ketki Mathuria.

"Back in India when we were kids, we used to finish our homework after school and then play cricket," Mathuria says. "It was almost the same here (in the U.S.) all these years later. We would finish our work around 2 or 3 p.m. and then the text chain would start, 'Who's ready to play golf?'"

What started as a small group of friends – most of whom moved to Northern California in their 20s and now live in San Jose's Silver Creek neighborhood – has grown to 45 strong. You can find them weekly for a casual game at Cinnabar Golf Club or on weekends for tournaments at San Jose CC and Metropolitan. Many just picked up the game a couple years ago and quickly caught the bug.

Mathuria, a self-proclaimed "hardcore golfer" who recently recruited the club's second female member (after herself), says the competition is both friendly and fierce on the course. But it's the atmosphere off the course that keeps people coming back.

Enter drink mixologist and club president Nikhil Kapur, one of the club's best players and whose tasty old-fashioned inspired the club's name.

"In the early days, I ended up tending the bar more often than not," says Kapur about the club's post-round get-togethers. "There are people who didn't drink before, but now they're drinking my old fashioned."

Mathuria and Kapur say expanding their loops beyond NorCal is what excites them most. Several members and their families recently stayed and played in New Orleans and Palm Springs. In July, a group will travel to Ireland to tackle the links in the country's southwest. Golf adventures in Spain and Portugal may be on the horizon, too.

"We are becoming very close-knit friends," Mathuria says. "We all like to win, so we really compete hard. But, at the end of the round, there are always old fashioned." 🍀



Forging Friendships

BY JULIE WILLIAMS



With golf's growth these past few years, tee sheets are more crowded than ever. Andy Danver knows people who set an alarm for 11:30 p.m., just to book a tee time two weeks away. But Danver also knows there's a better way, and it's one of the many perks of being a member of SIRS, one of the NCGA's largest associate clubs.

"That all goes away with SIRS," says Danver, SIRS state director of marketing and communications. "We have 12-month schedules, we're all signed up and all you have to do is sign up the month before."

SIRS stands for Sons in Retirement, an organization founded in 1958 that encompasses far more than golf and whose membership is no longer limited to retired men. Among nearly 9,000 SIRS members are roughly 2,500 golfers divided among 84 member branches from Fresno to Redding. Danver, a member of the executive committee for Branch 35 (serving the Los Altos area), notes that his group, for example, plays twice weekly and will tee it up at 50 different courses from the Monterey Peninsula to Vallejo throughout the year.

Different SIRS branches, which can number from 25 to 330 members, host recurring outings in a format, frequency and size that fits their membership. Smaller branches may even play together as a unit or a few players from one branch may break off and intermittently play in another branch outing.

Mark Stuart, director of state activities and a member of Branch 98 (serving the Sacramento area), notes that state-level tournaments exist, too.

"You can kind of think of them as travel tournaments," he says. "We go to different venues and we invite everybody in the state to compete and play, including guests as well as partners, spouses."

Options are seemingly endless, and that doesn't just describe SIRS golf. The beauty of the organization is in its diversity of offerings, from bowling to bocce to dining and wine tasting.

"It's just a great opportunity through a common interest, a sport in this case, to enjoy the sport, play the courses and then because of the friendships that you've spawned, to be able to go out and do even more in life," Stuart says. 🌟

Growing Beyond the Game

BY AL BARKOW

In 1963, Fresno's Nash Fernandez had enough of discrimination of Mexican-Americans in golf. His people were struggling to get on public courses in California, as well as Texas and Arizona. In response, he founded the Mexican American Golf Association.

It has been a very successful effort. There are some 2,500 members of MAGA in California - nine chapters of which are based in Northern California. At that, the association is open to all ethnic and racial heritages. And to women; around 100 are members who compete head-to-head against male members in monthly stroke-play tournaments. And, in a "major" championship played every Labor Day weekend.

To become a MAGA member one must join the NCGA in order to obtain an official Handicap Index; the association itself requires a \$60 yearly fee. All the competitions are at stroke play, and are played using Handicap Indexes.

But the good works include more than the pleasures of golf. The association offers academic scholarships. Some 30 have been awarded over the past decade. Applicants who put in for them are interviewed, and are asked to write an essay on what they plan to study. Scholarship students have attended CSU-Monterey Bay, UC Santa Cruz, Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, and UC San Diego, among others.

On Memorial Day weekend there is a Regional Championship. This year it is in Tucson, other times it has been held in Texas and elsewhere in Arizona. There are tournaments within the tournaments - flights for Seniors over 55, Seniors over 65, for those in their Golden 80s, a Past Presidents flight, with tee boxes set to accommodate their ages. Fairness is the goal. The winner of the association's California State Championship has in the past even received an invitation to play in the PGA Tour's AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

Dinner for the Labor Day Championship is invariably Mexican-themed, as is the music. 🌟



Golf Ambassadors and Mentors

BY ALEX HULANICKI

First came the Chinese Golf Club, founded in 1952 at the same time the Bing Maloney Golf Complex opened in Sacramento. It included women members, but since gaining a charter in 1989 the women have left the men in the rough. They have become the ambassadors, mentors of girls and women, young and old in the state's capital.

The 41-member Sacramento Chinese Women's Golf Club (SCWGC) has an age range of 58 to 93, but that doesn't stop them from being competitive on all levels, volunteering with Morton Golf at Bing Maloney and sponsoring the Youth on Course program and lessons for girls and women. The club also volunteers in after-school children's programs, with special Olympians and in high-school adapted physical education play.

"The women just have a great time," says tournament chair Holly Fong Korach. "Our focus is not necessarily on golf."

Some of that focus is on lunch, which the club enjoys after the round at its favorite Chinese restaurants to tally up the result of such games as 18 Mulligans, Fewest Putts, Three-Club Rounds and more serious competition.

The weekly games on Friday mornings are played at Bing Maloney in Sacramento at least twice a month, but the members also play at Alister MacKenzie Golf Course at Haggin Oaks once a month as well as at nearby Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course. The golf season runs from February to November, depending on the weather.

The SCWGC members participate in Pacific Women's Golf Association and NCGA competitions, and some travel to tournaments in British Columbia, Las Vegas, Palm Springs and as far as Hawaii.

Dolly Hom, now an honorary member in her mid-80s, recounts the story in a Haggin Oaks blog post that it was difficult for the women to get a charter for their own club 35 years ago, but that Morton Golf LLC Chair Ken Morton Sr. and his son, Tom, a PGA pro, helped the club to write a charter and become recognized by the city of Sacramento.

And, as Korach says they want to ensure that women enjoy golf in the future in Sacramento and "strengthen their game." 🌸



Dirty Valley Golf Club Enjoys Good-Clean Fun

BY TONY STARKS

Dirty Valley Golf Club's website speaks volumes about this band of golf enthusiasts. A must-see YouTube video edit with a Ric Flair voiceover sets the tone. If Dirty Valley Golf Club were "The Four Horsemen," the famed wrestling team of the 1980s and 1990s, Mark Lynch would be Flair. A veteran of the golf industry, Lynch organized numerous high-end tournaments in Phoenix before moving to California's Central Valley. Now, he channels his expertise into delivering memorable events for his tight-knit group of 21 friends.

This associate club was formed in 2015 after Lynch's buddies got wind of the "Lynch Cup," an annual family competition played against his brothers and dad. Feeling a bit of FOMO (fear of missing out), they pushed Lynch to create their own club, and since then it has grown from six to nearly two dozen members, hosting 15 events a year.

Armed with a custom-made trophy, the friends launched Dirty Valley Golf Club, curating tournaments that blend friendly competition with unique formats. Games range from "Par Three Poker," where players vie for cards by hitting greens on par 3s to "Flag Hunter 33," a season-long competition tallying closest to the pin totals on designated holes throughout the season. At the end of the year, the player with the lowest combined distance claims the pot.

The club's name? "People always think it's worse than it is," Lynch says with a chuckle. "But since we're in the Central Valley, surrounded by industrial farmlands, we embraced it." Hence, Dirty Valley Golf Club. Their logo, a fusion of a skull-and-crossbones with a gas mask, embodies their spirit.

From Chowchilla to Bakersfield, they move up and down the valley seeking 18-hole adventures, even enjoying trips to Las Vegas and Phoenix.

"We're not just about golf; we're about creating fun, unforgettable experiences," Lynch emphasizes. "From quirky par three competitions to epic trips, there's always excitement at Dirty Valley." 🌸





All Gals Own These Saturdays



BY JULIE WILLIAMS

While some members of the All Gals Golf Club have come and gone through the years, the core has remained intact. In many cases, once women join, they tend to stay.

“We don’t put pressure on anybody,” says Linda Moore, club president and rules chair. “We’re just out there to have fun, even though we follow the Rules of Golf in most respects. It’s just a camaraderie.”

Moore, now 70, has played golf with the club since 1998. Informally, the All Gals Golf Club dates to 1987 (there’s still a

member from that initial group, in fact) when it was formed in partnership with the Ausiello Tavern Men’s Golf Club.

“It was the sports bar to go to after you played,” Moore says of the Belmont tavern that sponsored several area teams.

The women who were regulars at Ausiello’s ended up spinning off their own golf group, initially meeting up at nine-hole courses for fun.

By the early 90s, the All Gals Golf Club became affiliated with the NCGA, and now the group plays 18-hole outings on the second Saturday of each month. Several years ago, the club and its men’s counterpart – the Ausiello group re-branded as the All Guys Club – combined forces when booking venues. Their outings are back-to-back, but they remain separate clubs.

Members of the All Gals Golf Club range in age from their 30s to 80s. Some still work and others are retired. Some are beginning players and others are more experienced with lower handicaps. At one point, the All Gals Golf Club numbered 40 women, but now it’s closer to 25.

Naturally, when a group is together so long, gatherings happen off the golf course, too. When someone retires, members celebrate together. There are dinner parties and brunches over the holidays. When one member’s mother turned 100 years old recently, all the members sent her a birthday card.

“We’ll laugh about what happened the week before,” Moore says. “Maybe somebody fell out of a golf cart or slipped in a pond. We just carry those traditional stories with each other. It’s just a lot of fun.”

Revitalization On and Off the Course

BY JULIE WILLIAMS

Even though golf is the thing bringing together members of the upstart Sacramento Betsuin Golf Club, co-president Matt Tokeshi-Nitta hopes the group will bond over a lot more than the game. Tokeshi-Nitta, 32, calls the club a community-first group.

“Golf is what is bringing us together right now,” he says of a group made up of 20- and 30-somethings, “but I think there’s more for us to tie back to our church, our temple, just to get people kind of interested again.”

Tokeshi-Nitta himself is relatively new to golf, having picked up the sport in 2022. During the global pandemic, he and a group of friends ranging in skill from single-digit handicappers to beginners started up a regular game. It became the impetus behind creating a golf group tied to the Sacramento Betsuin Church, one of the main Buddhist churches in Northern California. A conversation about getting NCGA Handicap Indexes through other associate clubs led to the realization that they could just form one of their own. That process began in earnest last fall.

“We’re like, we definitely have enough to start a group, and then it kind of got into more of a, we want to bring people back in that we haven’t seen in awhile and kind of revitalize our Japanese- American community a little bit, especially for the 20-somethings to 30-somethings,” Tokeshi-Nitta says.

The Sacramento Betsuin Golf Club so far consists of about a dozen members, and its first official outing is set for April at Bing Maloney Golf Club in Sacramento. Tokeshi-Nitta hopes the group will continue to play monthly at Bing Maloney or other courses in the Sacramento area. He also hopes the club will continue to grow as word spreads. The goal is for the club to be co-ed, multigenerational and a way to revitalize the community.

“We’re open to anybody joining,” he says. “We’re really aiming toward the young adults.”



Second Act at Dry Creek

BY BETH ANN NICHOLS

The men's club at Dry Creek had essentially, well, dried up when Alan Proctor took over. Participation in the Dry Creek Men's Club in Galt, which had been around for decades, began to dwindle before the pandemic, and while the golf didn't stop for long during COVID, people just didn't want to hang out in groups much, Proctor says.

The semi-retired Proctor and some close friends resurrected the club, which once boasted more than 150 members, back in January. They're up to 30-plus active members now, and Proctor, who serves as president, believes they'll get to around 50 by the end of the year.

They play the third Saturday of every month at Dry Creek Ranch Golf Course, and the format varies from best ball to 6-6-6 or a blind draw, just to name a few. Proctor, who lives about five minutes from the course in Galt, a town of just over 20,000 in Sacramento County, said he prefers the team events. Mondays and Fridays at the club are captain's choice. They pick teams and play nine holes in the afternoon followed by a quick bite. The club's owner, Chris Choe, often joins.

In the summertime, the wine region is flush with outdoor concerts, and the longtime friends and their wives watch rock 'n' roll knock-off bands perform under a canopy of trees.

"We have a blast," says Proctor.

Robert Benson, Proctor's golf partner for 25 years, is the group's Handicap Index chairperson. Pat Hoffman serves as tournament director. Their treasurer, Jerry Trafton, stands about 6-foot-5 and hits the ball 10 miles, according to Proctor. Trafton is a low single-digit Handicap Index whose 6-foot-4-inch wife, Stephanie Brown Trafton, won gold in the discus throw at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. The good people of Galt threw her a parade.

"It's kind of like we're a family," says Proctor, of the small-town club now on its second act. 🌿



(Not) Playing to the Beat of the Bagpipes

BY AL BARKOW



For starters, no one plays the bagpipes. And to be sure, haggis is never served at any of the many outings held every year by the Bagpipers Golf Club, which has taken its name from the ritual bagpipe played every sunset at The Links at Spanish Bay. That is where the Club was founded, in 1990.

The Bagpipers is essentially a social/fitness/golf club. There are some 400 members, including 80 women, who play in as many as 40 one-day Best-Ball and Low Gross tournaments a year at local courses such as Pasatiempo, Spanish Bay, Del Monte, Spyglass Hill and others on the Peninsula and Bay Area. Four or five times a year the members have long-range outings or road trips to The Old Course at St. Andrews in Scotland, Pinehurst (N.C.), Palm Springs and Las Vegas. Given the level of the venues it can be assumed that the cost of membership is rather dear. Indeed, one pays a one-time initiation fee of \$65,000 to the

Pebble Beach Company, and \$20,000 for the Stillwater Club, which is the physical fitness side of a triangle that includes the golf, that fee a mere \$500. The other two membership fees are required to take part in the golf.

When a golf event is played at Spanish Bay, Del Monte, and Spyglass Hill, the members get discounted greens fees. However, that does not apply for the Pebble Beach Golf Links.

These gatherings are not at all hard-nosed dogfights. Indeed, Handicap Indexes are in play for competitions that are meant to be friendly affairs, but there is no sandbagging here, thank you. It is basically an opportunity to enjoy the company of peers at golf and after-golf lunches, cocktail parties, and the occasional dinner, for which ties and tails are not required. And if you are a card player there is always a bridge game. For the more adventurous, poker games can be organized. 🌿

Rivera with his wife Stephanie; the two attended the 2023 U.S. Women's Open at Pebble Beach Golf Links (right); Rivera competed in the 2023 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am (bottom right).



HOME on the Range

Super Bowl-winning linebacker and longtime NFL coach Ron Rivera took a circuitous route back to Monterey and his love of golf. **BY JIM MCCABE**

THIS WAS THE TRAVELOGUE OF AN NFL coach: Philadelphia to Chicago to San Diego to Carolina to Washington.

That's some serious moving around, but Ron Rivera will smile and tell you his upbringing prepared him well. The son of Eugenio Rivera, a Puerto Rican commissioned in the U.S. Army, rattles it off – born Fort Ord in Marina just outside of Monterey, moved to Fort Lewis in Washington, then to Fort Meade in Maryland, onward to Panama, until finally, after his father had made a few different tours in Vietnam, the family returned to Fort Ord.

Maybe you can hear Johnny Cash's "I've Been Everywhere" in the background but know this about Ron Rivera: Monterey Peninsula has always been home. It's where he was born, it's where he owns a home, and it's where he feels connected in a

magical way to the outlet that afforded him "an escape" from the maddening pressure of coaching.

Golf.

"It became a social infrastructure away from football. We had golf friends that my wife (Stephanie) and I met through golf," said Rivera. "My wife's friends and their husbands didn't bug me because I was a coach, we just shared a love of golf. It was so comfortable."

She's a key player in this story, Stephanie (Tamayo) Rivera is. They met while at the University of California (he played football, she played on the women's basketball team) but when they began dating, golf entered the picture. At first, it was Ron playing with Stephanie's father, "but then Stephanie started playing and she fell in love with golf."

The NFL odyssey began in 1984 when Rivera was drafted in

Round 2 by Chicago. For nine years, including 1985 which culminated with the Bears' 46-10 demolition of the Patriots in Super Bowl XX, Rivera was a versatile linebacker and special team's player. (He's the first player of Puerto Rican descent to win a Super Bowl ring.)

But no matter where they lived – Chicago, Philadelphia, San Diego, Charlotte or Northern Virginia – one thing was constant. Stephanie was hooked on golf “and she'd always say to me, ‘Everyone wants you to play.’”

It's not that Ron couldn't play – when he retired from playing after the '92 season and got out frequently, he whittled his handicap index to an 8. But coach's hours don't allow for much free time.

Finally, Stephanie won out. “She loved it so much and she told me, ‘It's the one thing we can do together,’” Ron says.

When he finally relented and joined Stephanie for couples golf and he met her friends and her friends' husbands, Ron's passion for the game reached a new level.

“I can point to the golf friends I have, all through my wife's passion for the game and the trips we went on,” he says.

Given their California roots it's not surprising they made their way back to where Ron grew up and where he first crossed paths with the game of golf.

“At the Ford Ord base, they were right there, Bayonet and Black Horse,” he says of the golf courses on the military base. “Black Horse was the first course I ever played. You could play for \$5 if you were a military dependent.”



“We just fell in love with Pebble Beach,” says Rivera...

Rivera fondly remembers his paper-boy route and how when the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, as the long-running annual PGA Tour event was known as in those days, came to town the papers were thick with advertising inserts. “We'd get a pass for one day and we'd get to go see all the celebrities,” he says.

Funny, but as a kid Rivera wasn't blown away by Pebble Beach. In fact, “I didn't fall in love with Monterey until I left to go to college (1980-84),” he notes.

“I would tell people, ‘I'm from Monterey,’ and they'd tell me how beautiful it is and I started to pay more attention. I realized, ‘you know what, it is pretty cool.’”

Opportunities to play the great courses led to friendships with legends who have since passed – Cypress Point head pro Jim Langley and R.J. Harper, an executive who was affectionately called “Mr. Pebble Beach.”

“We just fell in love with Pebble Beach,” says Rivera, “so we bought a home there so we'd always have a home to go back to.”

Three years ago, Ron and Stephanie became members of Monterey Peninsula CC so their love affair has only flourished – for the area, yes, but especially the golf.

“It's a spectacular game. There's just something about it,” says Rivera, who was fired after the 2023 season by the Washington Commanders. After nine years of playing and 25 years of coaching, Rivera says he'll focus on some radio and TV in 2024, but also on polishing his golf game.

“It challenges me individually and it's not that easy,” says Ron, who counts as one of favorite memories the day Stephanie shot 72 at Pebble.

“I just love it when I hit a great shot or when someone else hits a great shot. Golf has been so great for me.” 🍌



STELLAR VENUES



An all-star roster of courses hosts NorCal’s top amateur events

BY JOE PASSOV

As a player at San Jose State in the mid-1980s, John Kennaday competed in the Western Intercollegiate at Pasatiempo. As coach of the Men’s golf team at his alma mater (host school for the event) since 2005, he well understands the special relationship between players, program and golf course.

“It is a tremendous honor to be able to host at a venue that guarantees lifetime memories for players, volunteers and patrons,” says Kennaday. “Not all college events create that. And that’s something we are in tune with at Pasatiempo, by the golf course, the membership and the Spartan Men’s Golf program.”

The squad members at San Jose State are part of the fortunate group of amateur golfers in Northern California that will contest their most prestigious championships in 2024 at some of the region’s – and nation’s – greatest courses. If there were a

Hall of Fame for NorCal golf courses, the lineup for this 12-month period would be impressively represented.

For a sampling of outstanding architects, start with Pasatiempo, designed by Alister MacKenzie. For more MacKenzie, check out October’s Cypress Point Classic (yes, that Cypress

Peninsula Golf and Country Club will host this year’s California Women’s Amateur Championship. Opposite page: TPC Harding Park, site of the 2020 PGA Championship, hosts the Howard/USF Intercollegiate (top); the Cal Poly Invitational is annually held at the private Preserve Golf Club in Carmel Valley (bottom).

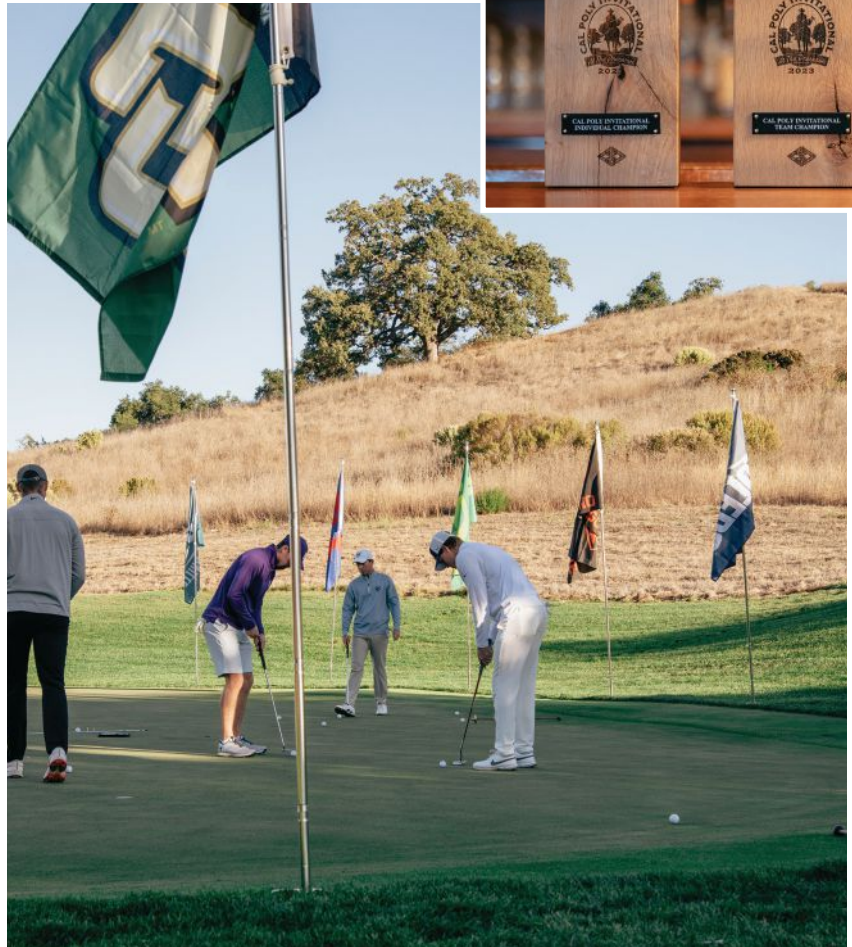


Point), a Walker Cup-style college event hosted by Stanford, or perhaps head to the Meadow Club, MacKenzie's first American design, which is site of the Juli Inkster Invitational, hosted by Cal, in early March. Count Cal coach Nancy McDaniel as a fan of Meadow Club.

There's also Green Hills, a MacKenzie original from 1930, venue for the women's Silicon Valley Showcase, hosted by Santa Clara University and Lake Merced, a final qualifying venue on June 3 for the U.S. Open. Recently restored by Gil Hanse, Lake Merced was designed by Willie Locke in 1923, then substantially redesigned by MacKenzie and his then partner, Robert Hunter in 1928.

Perhaps a rare splash of Donald Ross is in order. One of his only designs west of the Mississippi is The Peninsula Golf & Country Club, which will shine in July as host to the California Women's Amateur Championship.

Tournaments that illuminate the design talents of the modern maestros include the NCGA Four-Ball and Amateur events at Spyglass Hill, one of Robert Trent Jones' greatest creations, October's Cal Poly Invitational at The Preserve, a Tom Fazio masterwork and





Ruby Hill, a Jack Nicklaus Signature effort, which hosts both the U.S. Amateur Final Qualifying and the NCGA Junior Championship.

Walking in famous footsteps offers additional enticement. We all want to play the same courses where history was made. Northern California is the place to make that happen, with elite events in

2024 at Pebble Beach (the Carmel Cup in September, hosted by the Stanford Women), The Olympic Club (Women’s Golf Association of Northern California Legacy Stroke Play), TPC Harding Park (Howard/USF Intercollegiate), Silverado (NCGA Weekend Net Tour and Member Outing) and Del Paso Country Club (double duty as venue for

the UC Davis/Sacramento State Causeway Invitational and the U.S. Four-Ball Qualifying).

Finally, there is a fistful of 2024 tournaments at can’t-miss courses that blend beauty, challenge, design merit and history. This list includes Stanford Golf Course, the 1930 Billy Bell classic which hosts Stanford events and Half Moon Bay’s Old course, a 1973 Arnold Palmer design that played host to the Weekend Net Tour and features one of golf’s best oceanside closing holes.

On the prestige front for collegiate events, nothing outranks the Western Intercollegiate. Dating to 1947, the event has been held every year since at Pasatiempo in Santa Cruz, except for the pandemic-related hiatus in 2020. Past individual champions include major winners Ken Venturi of San Jose State (1951, 1953), Johnny Miller of BYU (1968), Mark O’Meara of Long Beach State (1978) and Scottie Scheffler of Texas (2015). Let’s not forget the team title earned in 1996 by Stanford, which was paced by the 2-3-4 finish of Joel





Kriebel, Tiger Woods and Jerry Chang. San Jose State's Arron Oberholser snagged the individual title that year.

Coach Kennaday asserts that Pasatiempo's quality and history aids in drawing an elite field to the Western Intercollegiate. Hosting and playing that level of competition helps boost his own program's rankings and getting Golf Channel to televise the event beginning in 2019 has provided a further shot in the arm for the tournament, the Spartan Golf program and for the golf course itself, which is currently basking in a well-deserved, well-received restoration by architect Jim Urbina.

Kennaday lauds Pasatiempo as a golf course that's designed to bring out the best of the best in some of college golf's top players. "You're going to need to use every club in your bag," he says. "And you might have to use three different clubs from the same yardage because of the greens and how to position yourself

on the greens to have half a chance. Pasatiempo requires a great deal of thought and precision, and you could have one, but if you don't have both, you're in trouble. That makes it so much fun to play."

What's remarkable about the venue roster for these significant Northern California amateur events is that many of the host clubs are extremely private. Admirably, the current trend revolves around opening their doors and giving back.

"Hosting the Cal Poly Invitational at The Preserve is a great way for us to continue to support amateur golf in a way that's really exciting and fun and participatory for the members," says Phillip DePaul, Chair of The Preserve Golf Club's Board of Directors. "They love to see these young men come out and play the course and excel and then go on and see them rise in different amateur rankings and then potentially end up on tour and having success."

DePaul and his fellow members aim

to deliver a special hospitality experience for players and parents but want to test the young stalwarts as well. "We partner with the NCGA and with the host school, Cal Poly to work on setup, and we want it to be challenging," he says. "Some holes test their length, quite a few test their accuracy and where the greens are at that time of year, north of 12, everybody's short game is tested. The combination of making them hit a lot of different shots and challenging their short games has been successful for us. It's hard, but they enjoy the experience."

In the end, that's precisely what these extraordinary tournament golf courses are designed to do: provide enticement from the prospect of stepping onto the first tee and satisfaction from grappling with the challenges presented. That's the Western Intercollegiate at Pasatiempo in a nutshell.

"The feeling I get when I walk out on that golf course during the Western is unlike anything else I get in the game," says Kennaday. "It's a really special thing – unique in college golf." 🍌

Opposite Page: The NCGA still hosts events at Spyglass Hill; Stanford GC in Palo Alto was once the home of Tiger Woods; Past champions of the Western Intercollegiate at Pasatiempo GC in Santa Cruz include 2015 winner Scottie Scheffler.

INSTRUCTION

PLAY IT AS IT LIES

Here's one PGA pro's fool-proof method for handling the four most common lies in golf.

BY JOSH ZANDER
with Adam Schupak
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT KAUFMAN



Golf is a very variable game. It's not played off a mat into a simulator indoors; it's played off uneven lies. When I give playing lessons, a recurring a-ha moment from my students tends to be how much easier a shot is when they set up correctly for the proper lie.

The key is to adjust your setup to allow your swing to work for each situation. One size does not fit all! Golf is a game of making adjustments. One of the best ways to prac-

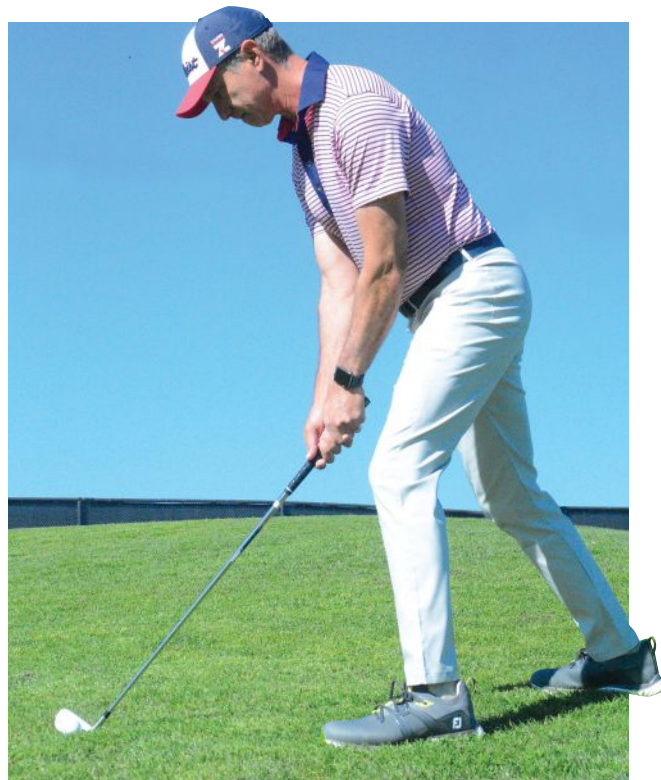
tice this is to go on the golf course with a bunch of balls and hit a bunch of shots, if you have that possibility.

Below, we address the four types of lies and how to play them for the best chance of success. This is going to help you play better. I'm not fixing your golf swing. I'm making sure you can hit shots off of all types of lies. This instruction isn't meant to teach you how to swing; it's designed to help you with how to play.



Whenever playing from a downhill lie, you want to be able to swing along the slope. Ball position is a huge part of that. Start by moving the ball forward in your stance. When you put your club next to the ball it puts your shoulders in position to be parallel to the slope. (Make sure your head is lined up even with the ball; otherwise you're going to hit the ground behind the ball.)

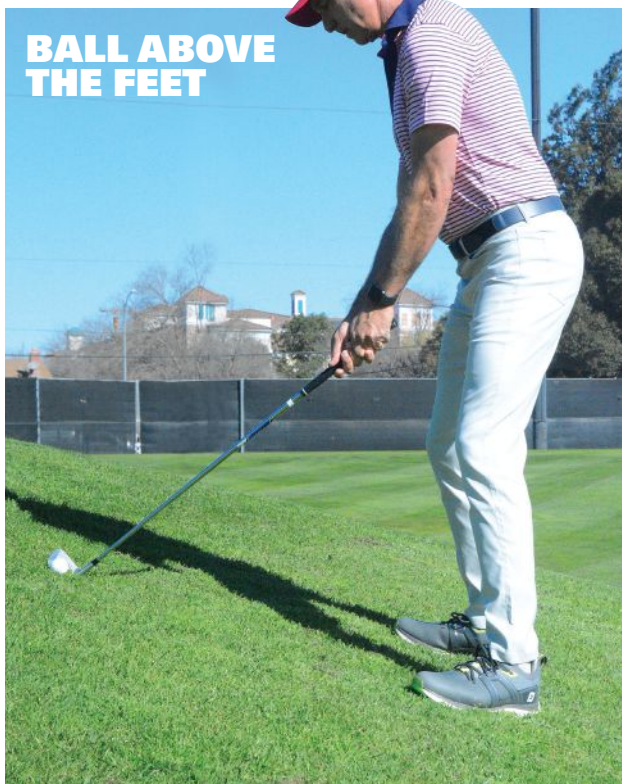
When you are hitting off a downhill lie one of the biggest challenges is to make a full turn because you're fighting gravity. Pulling your trail foot back allows you to make a fuller turn and still hit a long shot even though you're on an uneven or downhill lie. My focus once I get this correct setup position with the ball position forward and my trail foot pulled back, is to swing down the slope. More times than not I will take a step down the slope after I've hit the shot in order to make sure I'm swinging down along the slope. Understand that the ball comes off lower, so adjust your strategy accordingly. If you're looking to get a little more height on the shot, you can actually set the face more open to add loft – just make sure you play for a bit of a fade.





When you're swinging up the slope you want to make sure that your shoulders are parallel to the slope and your spine angle is perpendicular to the slope. The best way to do this is to position the ball back in your stance. When you put the club next to the ball it puts your shoulders in position to be along the slope. (Make sure your head is lined up over the ball; otherwise you're going to hit the ground behind the ball.)

One of the biggest challenges of an uphill lie is to be able to get to your lead side; the best way to do that is to pull your lead foot back into an open stance, allowing the hips to be more level, which makes it easier for you to finish on your lead side at the end of the swing. Understand that the ball will come off higher off of this lie so take a less-lofted club because the ball will not travel as far. You do have the advantage of that added height helping the ball to stop more quickly when it lands.



When the ball is above your feet, the ball is actually closer to you so you either have to grip down or stand farther away. When the ground is closer to you, the club will bottom out sooner so position the ball more back in your stance. When the ball is above your feet as a right-handed golfer, the clubface points to the left. The advantage of putting the ball back in your stance is it sets the clubface open once you put the club next to the ball. As a right-handed golfer the ball will start right and fall back to the left off of this lie. One thing to understand strategy-wise is oftentimes when the ball is above your feet, you're in the rough and the ball is less likely to curve from the rough. As a result, play for a straighter shot if you have this lie in the rough.



BALL BELOW THE FEET



This is the lie that I see golfers struggle with the most. When the ball is below your feet the ball is farther from you so you must stand closer to the ball. When you're closer to the ball, it will set the club on a more upright plane, which allows the sole of the club to be in line with the ground. The more vertical shaft will point the clubface more open, so the ball will fade off this lie.

Move the ball position forward to help the ball start left before it falls right, if you're a right-handed golfer. When you move your clubhead to the ball with the ball forward in your stance it will naturally point the clubhead left of your target, which will offset the fade. When the ball is below your feet it is challenging to your balance so you may want to take one more club and swing easier or consider a three-quarter swing.

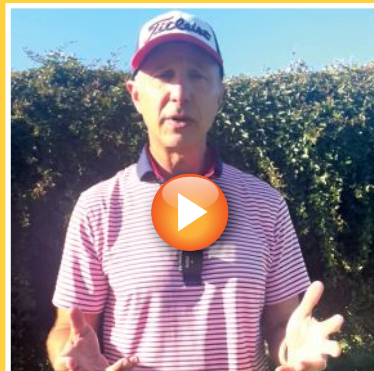
There are ways to help your own swing just by using uneven lies. I often have

students practice from uneven lies to fix mistakes without thinking too technically. If someone is too shallow, for example, I have them hit from a downhill lie. In addition to remembering the importance of ball position and the like, I would hope your big takeaway from this instruction piece will be a better understanding of how to adjust on the golf course and its importance in your success. Follow these steps and you will be able to read your lie and figure out the best plan of attack. 🍌

Josh Zander is a two-time Northern California PGA Teacher of the Year. He also is a *Golf Magazine* Top 100 teacher and splits time teaching at Stanford University Golf Course in Palo Alto and the Spartan Golf Complex in San Jose. He can be reached at zandergolf.com.

DIGITAL BONUS:

Watch Josh Zander provide more tips on the correct set-up for different lies by visiting the NCGA's YouTube Channel at youtube.com/@northerncalgolf/videos



Surf's Up in SoCal

Ride the wave to birdies at these Dana Point and Tustin Ranch golf getaways.

BY DAVE SEANOR

Monarch Beach Golf Links

Dana Point, situated amid the urban sprawl halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego, is best known for its surfing culture. The iconic documentary film “Endless Summer” was conceived there, and *The Surfer’s Journal*, an artsy ode to riding waves, is published in nearby San Clemente. It’s also home to one of a handful of California golf courses actually on the Pacific Ocean, an operation that has fully embraced the surfer vibe. Here’s what longtime golf journalist Dave Seanor learned on a recent visit.

PLAY

Eric Lohman is general manager of **WaldorfAstoria Monarch Beach Golf Links**. His progressive views on growing the game make him something of an outlier among PGA pros, yet in 2012 he was elected president of the Southern California PGA Section. Go to YouTube and watch the PGA of America promo

called “Anthony Anderson AKA MackWeathers interviews Eric Lohman,” and you’ll appreciate why he heartily endorses flip-flops and music (volume within reason) on the golf course.

The Waldorf and a nearby Ritz-Carlton are partners with Monarch Beach Links, which is managed by Troon Golf. The typical tee sheet includes an eclectic roster of hotel guests, Dana Beach residents who belong to the Monarch Beach Club, and daily fee players.

Forty years ago, architect Robert Trent Jones II faced a daunting challenge when he was hired to create a golf course to enhance a Monarch Beach residential development. Not only was he faced with routing the layout through a fledgling neighborhood, but he also had to navigate environmentally sensitive bluffs and ravines. The result is a sporty, par-70 track that’s more pleasurable than punitive. Jones had to shoehorn holes into low areas of the ravines, leaving generous buffers between housing and turf. Nowhere on the course does a player feel claustrophobic – except in the practice area, which comprises a two-station hitting net and small putting green.

First-time visitors to Monarch Beach are well-served to hire a forecaddie. It may be true that all putts break toward the Pacific, but the trick is judging just how much – which is generally a lot more than you think. Hence the value of a forecaddie, who will also likely point out the lavish homes, perched above the course, owned by two Hall of Famers, Sammy Hagar (Rock & Roll) and Magic Johnson (NBA).

The outward nine is quirky. The third hole is a short par 4 – 315 yards at most. Its putting surface has diabolically subtle undulations and a large false front, a combination that produces its share of three- and four-jacks. Next up are back-to-back par 3s. The 7th and 9th are par 5s, the No. 1 and No. 5 handicap holes, respectively.

Tustin Ranch, Hole 2





Tustin Ranch, Hole 11



Monarch Beach Golf Links

Every hole has an ocean view. The two closest to the Pacific, Nos. 3 and 4, were made possible only by an agreement with local government to temporarily detour a small stretch of the Pacific Coast Highway to accommodate construction of those holes as well as an access tunnel beneath the road. The inward nine is more conventional, albeit with three par 3s on the home stretch after the par-5 twelfth.

To truly appreciate the resort's Zen, visit Monarch Beach in Spring, when its namesake butterflies arrive to feast on milkweed and procreate. The distinctive orange and black Monarch is endangered, and the facility is doing its part to stem an assault on the *Danaus plexippus*' habitat by maintaining butterfly gardens throughout the property. Butterflies are said to represent spiritual transformation, and their presence is a reminder that our golf games tend to undergo one metamorphosis after another.

A 20-to-30-minute drive (on a good day) from the Waldorf up I-5 leads to **Tustin Ranch Golf Club**, an upscale daily fee layout designed by the prolific California course architect Ted Robinson and opened in 1989. Tustin Ranch is farther inland than Monarch Beach, meaning Robinson didn't have to jump through as many regulatory hoops. However, the course is hemmed in by housing. It's the challenge, not the views, that makes Tustin Ranch appealing.

Variety is the hallmark of Tustin Ranch, which is also managed by Troon Golf. There are three short – but far from easy – par 4s. Water comes into play on six holes, and dramatically tiered greens on five holes demand precision approach shots. Robinson used bunkers sparingly, but to great effect, especially on the short 4s. There's no sameness to the par 3s, one of which happens to be the layout's No. 7 handicap hole.

STAY

The accommodations, amenities, service and food at Monarch Beach are what you'd expect from a Waldorf Astoria. Better yet, the staff's friendliness and lack of pretension mirrors the vibe that emanates from the golf operation.

Lavish wellness facilities have become obligatory offerings at luxury resorts, and the Waldorf's spa takes advantage of its

seaside location to purge body and soul. This reporter is convinced that a 60-minute sports performance massage after a vexing round at Monarch Beach Links deserves much of the credit for a 13-shot improvement the next day at the more difficult Tustin Ranch GC.

The Waldorf has multiple dining options, with the centerpiece being **Bourbon Steak**, which is part of the esteemed chef Michael Mina's portfolio of 29 upscale eateries. (Dinner there, after the aforementioned massage, further fortified the effort at Tustin Ranch.) Spectacular sunsets complement casual dinners at the Beach Club.

If you're a devotee of the Ritz brand, Monarch Beach has you covered. Whereby the Waldorf is tucked into a valley, the **Ritz – Carlton, Laguna Niguel** sits atop a beachfront bluff, presenting unrivaled views up and down the coastline.

DO

The **Ocean Institute** at Dana Point Harbor offers fun learning experiences for children and adults. Activities include daytime whale and marine life tours and Bioluminescence night cruises aboard the Research Vessel *Sea Explorer*; tide pool hikes; aquarium tours featuring touch tanks; and cruises or dockside tours aboard the schooner *Spirit of Dana Point*, a hand-crafted replica of a 118-foot privateer that was active during the Revolutionary War.

Historians, architecture buffs and bird lovers will enjoy a visit to **San Juan Capistrano**, home of the eponymous Catholic mission that was founded in 1776. Many buildings from the mission era have been restored or replicated. The Los Rios District is said to be the oldest neighborhood in California. Ornithologists are working diligently to restore habitat that attracts the famous cliff swallows whose annual migration from Argentina to San Juan Capistrano was disrupted for nearly 20 years beginning in the early 1990s. 🌸

DIGITAL BONUS:

Go to ncga.org/resources/ncga-golf-magazine and find the digital version of the magazine to see a special travel feature on Myrtle Beach, S.C.



Merry Good Times in Myrtle Beach



9th hole, Dunes Club

JIM MAGGIO OF GOLF TOURISM SOLUTIONS

Often called “the Supermarket of Golf,” Myrtle Beach’s shopping cart overflows with golf options and Travelin’ Joe tells you the best aisles to have a great time. **BY JOE PASSOV**

Named in 2023-24 as the fastest growing city in America by *U.S. News and World Report* – for the third consecutive year – Myrtle Beach, South Carolina is rocking these days. It’s always been a boomtown for golfers, however, with more than 80 courses dotting the Grand Strand, so-called for its 60-mile stretch of beach that extends from the North Carolina border down to Georgetown. With its dizzying array of restaurants, accommodations, and entertainment options, including all that dazzling white sand – it’s the rare vacation destination that’s unbeatable for both golf buddy trips and family getaways.

PLAY

Myrtle Beach is often called “the Supermarket of Golf” because there’s no destination that offers trophy courses and bargain layouts in such abundance. Understandably, with so many choices, it’s tough to narrow down the must-plays. So, I’ll do that for you – with a personal top five.

The old school can’t-miss course is the **Dunes Golf and Beach Club**, a 1948 Robert Trent Jones Sr. creation that dishes out elevated greens and holes that zigzag through mature trees and lovely but lethal marshes. An ocean glimpse arrives at the 221-yard, par-3 ninth, but Jones’ heroic shot values are best expressed at the infamous, unforgettable 640-yard, par-5 13th that doglegs 110 degrees around alligator-filled Singleton Lake. A new Dunes chapter will be written in May, when the semi-private club hosts the PGA Tour’s inaugural Myrtle Beach Classic.

Now 30 years old, **Caledonia Golf & Fish Club** measures just 6,526 yards and plays to a par of 70, but architect Mike Strantz injected every ounce of his design brilliance into its graceful, varied routing among lakes, wetlands and live oaks. An antebellum clubhouse and a par-4 18th hole that edges an old rice plantation and the Waccamaw River capture the historic essence of the Old South.

Tidewater’s 7,044 yards and 148 slope from the Black tees represents the region’s best blend of beauty and brawn. With a fair bit of elevation change for the region, Tidewater’s low-profile, forested holes skirt salt marshes, the Intracoastal Waterway

13th, 14th and 9th holes, True Blue



COURTESY TRUEBLUE GC



11th tee, Caledonia Golf and Fish Club

and the Cherry Grove Inlet.

The sibling to Caledonia on the southern tip of Myrtle Beach, **True Blue** delivers more Mike Strantz magic. A mostly open course, True Blue provides beauty, peril and astonishing variety via lakes, marshland and plenty of scrub-filled natural sandy areas.

I'll cheat on this one because **Barefoot Resort** actually has four worthy courses, by Tom Fazio, Davis Love, Pete Dye and Greg Norman, which are so good, the first three have appeared in different Top 100 lists. I've played and liked all four, but my top pick might surprise you – It's the Love Course, thanks to its Donald Ross-influenced green complexes (turtleback greens, option-laden short-cut areas) and re-created plantation house ruins.

Three Bonus Picks

Tom Fazio created former Senior Tour Championship host **TPC Myrtle Beach** with consulting help from Lanny Wadkins. Flawless service and conditioning, Fazio's typical artful shaping and a watery, risk/reward par-5 18th appeal to all.

The Roger Rulewich-designed **Grande Dunes** deservedly popped back on my radar after a 2022 renovation from former Rulewich associate John A. Harvey. The downhill 220-yard 14th along the Intracoastal, with its massive green and equally massive bunker guarding it is one of the most memorable par 3s in Myrtle Beach.

Prestwick keeps a low profile, but this 7,086-yard, 35-year-old gem from Pete and P.B. Dye is worth seeking out. With undulating greens and mounds to match, the Dyes definitely injected a touch of Scotland into the Lowcountry.

STAY

The **Marina Inn at Grande Dunes** earns my vote as the best hotel in town. Niceties include in-room spa service, rooms that overlook the Intracoastal or the marina and an atmospheric breakfast spot, WaterScapes.

Right next door and equally strong is the **Myrtle Beach Marriott Resort & Spa at Grand Dunes**. A spacious lobby, on-site golf, a fitness facility, the Hibiscus Spa and a right-on-the-beach location are among the attractions.

Ideal for buddy trips, the **Legends Golf Resort** sports com-



Myrtle Beach Pelicans

fortable 2- and 3-bedroom villas, an outstanding practice facility, the superb Ailsa Pub and three courses on-site, including Heathland, Tom Doak's only Myrtle Beach design.

Eat

Toast to a 36-hole day well played with seared meats and premium wines at **New York Prime**. The \$130, 40-oz. Porterhouse is a celebration in itself. A longtime favorite of local boy Dustin Johnson, **Sea Merchants Restaurant** offers land- and sea-based comfort foods in a cozy, nautical-themed environment. For more than 60 years, **Sea Captain's House** has served up the Grand Strand's best seafood, accompanied by ocean views.

Do

If you absolutely crave more golf, there are miniature golf courses on practically every corner as well as a centrally located **Topgolf** facility. Spring and summer visitors can check out minor league baseball's **Myrtle Beach Pelicans**, the Single-A affiliate these days of the Chicago Cubs, which gave professional starts to Jeff Francoeur and Freddie Freeman, among others. And aside from swimming, fishing and boating in the Atlantic Ocean, any kind of entertainment imaginable, from shopping to shows, from go-karts to water parks is available to young and old alike, especially at destinations such as **Barefoot Landing** and **Broadway at the Beach**. 🌸

Big Gains

on the Ground and Through the Air

The latest technology and unique designs help take this year's new golf shoes and drivers farther than ever before **BY DON JOZWIAK**

When you walk to the first tee and size up your playing partners, what are the first things you notice? For me, it's the golf shoes they're wearing, followed by the driver in their hands. If the game of golf tells you a lot about a person, these two items of equipment can often let you see the DNA of their golf personalities in a matter of seconds. And, of course, your driver and your shoes are among your most important pieces of gear – the ones that help you hit the ball a long way, and those that keep you comfortable while finding it.

We've set our sights on shoes and drivers this issue to give you some ideas for taking more long walks in the short grass this season. Play away! 🌿

GOLF SHOES

FootJoy Tour Alpha Carbon Triple BOA

MSRP: \$299.95 | footjoy.com

A collaboration between Carbitex and FootJoy yielded this ultra-premium shoe with a strong and lightweight OmniFlex carbon plate, which optimizes power transfer while adding stability without increasing weight or bulk. A three-dial BOA Fit System enhances the personalized fit and comfort of each pair.



FootJoy Women's Pro/SLX

MSRP: \$219 | footjoy.com

Regarded as one of the most successful product franchises in golf, the all-new Pro/SLX has been totally redesigned and engineered from the ground up to provide advanced traction, control and comfort.



FootJoy Men's Premiere Series

MSRP: \$250 | footjoy.com

Chosen by more of the world's best players than any other shoe, the Premiere Series is inspired by golf shoes of the past, supercharged for today's modern game. The all-new Premiere Series Field LX delivers new style to the leading classic shoe franchise in golf and the overwhelming #1 shoe on the PGA Tour.

DRIVERS

Callaway Paradym Ai Smoke Max

MSRP: \$599.99 | callawaygolf.com

Pushing the company's use of AI even farther than past models, the Paradym Ai Smoke Max is claimed to provide 19 yards of shot shape correction. The company analyzed driver performance and swing dynamics from thousands of players to optimize launch conditions, while the light and strong carbon chassis is reinforced by a new internal titanium structure. Each head has a unique color pattern on the sole, which is just plain cool.



Ping G430 Max 10K

MSRP: \$597 | ping.com

This new extension of Ping's best-selling G430 driver line is the company's most forgiving driver design to date, pushing past the 10,000 g-cm² MOI threshold considered the Holy Grail of forgiveness. A carbon crown and fixed back weight position mass with an optimized center of gravity, and the driver head has the maximum allowable dimensions within the Rules of Golf.



Cobra Darkspeed LS

MSRP: \$549 | cobragolf.com

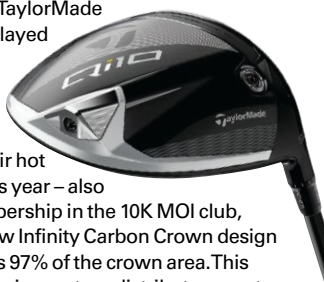
Multiple technologies are pushed to their limits in the Darkspeed's pursuit of speed, and the LS version of the driver maximizes them with forward weighting for low spin. A sleekly aerodynamic profile and updated H.O.T. Face design helps maintain ball speed across the face, helping preserve distance on miss-hits.



TaylorMade Qi10

MSRP: \$599.99 | taylormadegolf.com

The latest TaylorMade drivers – played by Scottie Scheffler and Nelly Korda during their hot streaks this year – also tout membership in the 10K MOI club, using a new Infinity Carbon Crown design that covers 97% of the crown area. This allowed designers to redistribute mass to areas that enhance forgiveness and improve energy transfer, even on off-center hits.



IRONS



Titleist T-Series Irons

MSRP: \$200/each | titleist.com

The Titleist T-Series irons family establishes a new standard in iron engineering, reaffirming Titleist's commitment to creating the world's best irons while providing golfers with optimized performance options from their shortest to longest iron. The tour-proven T-Series models – T100, T150, T200 and T350 – deliver unrivaled feel with effortless turf interaction in four tour-inspired shapes, each designed to maximize the three dimensions of iron performance: distance control, dispersion control and descent angle. The key to unlocking the performance of T-Series is by getting fit and finding the right T-Series model or blended set for your game.

Right Place, Write Time:

A Lifetime of Memories with Sports Legends
By Mark Soltau

\$19.95 | Amazon.com

Longtime Bay Area sportswriter Mark Soltau has released a book chronicling his decades of covering events in the NorCal region. A percentage of each book sale benefits Youth on Course.



OluKai Manele

MSRP: \$150 | olukai.com

Easy and breezy, these Hawaii-inspired kicks are comfy on and off the course. The mesh upper is water- and stain-resistant, and lets your feet breathe during hot rounds. The unique Drop-In Heel design folds down so you can wear these shoes as slip-ons, which is surprisingly refreshing after walking 18 holes. The perfect shoes to go from a round of golf to cocktails on the beach.

Payntr Golf Trainer X 001 MB

MSRP: \$180 | payntrgolf.com

Payntr's unique new trainers also feature a Carbitex plate, but for a different purpose. Designed for golf-specific gym training and workouts, as well as range practice sessions, the GearFlex carbon plate increases stiffness during activities like weightlifting or running, while remaining flexible during cross-training.



Puma x Quiet Golf Avant Saddle

MSRP: \$180 | pumagolf.com

These shoes, part of a collaboration between tech-forward Puma Golf and the contemporary classic aesthetics of Quiet Golf, are based on the comforting colors of the golf course. Deep green and warm white tones provide a timeless palette, while the outsoles offer a unique pattern with more than 100 traction elements to maintain stability through the swing.



Around the NCGA

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In Memoriam: William Paulson

Golf in Northern California and the NCGA lost a great friend with the passing of former NCGA Executive Director Bill Paulson in February at the age of 84.

Having picked up the game at age 10 and later a star at Chico State, Paulson in 1970 won the San Francisco City and in 1971 won the Alameda City.

But it was as an administrator where he really left a legacy.

Paulson joined the NCGA in 1981 and from 1986 to 1996 was executive director in a span that saw him make significant contributions to the growth of the organization.

In 1986 the NCGA opened Poppy Hills, becoming the first Allied Golf Association to own and operate its own course. Later, in 1996 the NCGA added Poppy Ridge as another member course.



Other achievements during his tenure were the hiring of Gail Rogers, who went on to become the first female NCGA president, and the introduction of Associate Clubs, which offered a different avenue to becoming an NCGA member.

After retiring from the NCGA, Paulson helped establish a golf program for CSU-Monterey Bay (CSUMB). A longtime coach there, Paulson was instrumental in helping the team rise from NAIA level to national recognition at the NCAA Division II level.

In 1993, he received the California Golf Writers Association 'John Swanson Good Guy Award' for his contributions to the game. In 2020, he was inducted into the CSUMB Athletic Hall of Fame.

He will be missed. 🌻



2023 NCGA Hole-In-One Sweepstakes Winners

NCGA members Brooke Gongora (*right*) and Rick Wilson (*left*) were the grand prize winners of the 2023 NCGA Hole-In-One Sweepstakes. Each year, the NCGA holds a Hole-In-One Sweepstakes where members can report their ace and be entered into a sweepstakes with the grand prize being a round for four at either NCGA member course Poppy Ridge or Poppy Hills.

Gongora, a Youth on Course member, got her ace on the 169-yard par-3 15th at Poppy Hills using a 5-hybrid. Wilson, an eClub Central Valley member, aced the 147-yard par-3 7th at Tulare GC using an 8-iron.

For 2024 Sweepstakes information and to enter your own hole-in-one, please visit pages.ncga.org/hole-in-one 🌻



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– Lou Leidelmeyer, NCGA member

“

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– Charles and Debra Beckham, NCGA members



108th San Francisco City Championship

March 23-24 | TPC Harding Park

Alamo's **Mikey Burkland** needed all 36 holes to knock off runner-up **A.J. Fitzgerald** of Salinas and win the men's title. On the final hole, Burkland got up-and-down for a par to secure the 1-up victory.

"I knew it was going to be a battle," Burkland told AmateurGolf.com. "The relief when the ball went in the hole was unbelievable."

With the win Burkland joined a list of champions that includes NCGA Hall of Famers Ken Venturi and George Archer.

In the Women's Championship, the finals came down to **Nicola Kaminski** of Los Gatos and **Darla May Dela Torre** of Fairfield, with Kaminski winning, 5 and 4. Kaminski is a former member of the Junior Tour of Northern California. Dela Torre currently competes on the JTNC.

"I am so excited," Kaminski said. "It was such a fun tournament, and I had a great time."

In the Senior Men's Division, NCGA Hall of Famer **Randy Haag** won 'The City' crown for a fourth time, defeating **Mark Sanchez**, 1-up.

The Senior Women's crown went to **Christy Atencio**, who defeated **Lynn Couillard** (4 and 3), while the Super Senior Men's title went to **Matt Vukicevich** following a 3-and-2 win over **Ray Kong**. 🍀



AMATEURGOLF.COM



25th NCGA Senior Four-Ball Championship

March 25-27 | Poppy Hills

Golf Association of Philadelphia Hall of Famer **Chip Lutz** and NCGA Hall of Famer **Randy Haag** reunited to win a record-tying third championship title together.

Lutz and Haag, who originally met at the Coleman Invitational at Seminole back around 2003, posted a final-round 2-under 69 to come in at 13-under 200, defeating co-runners-up **Mark Morgan** and **Mike Rowley** and **Bill Bunce** and **Darin Carlsen** by two strokes.

Lutz, now 69, and Haag, 65, also won the title back-to-back in 2016-17 at Bayonet/Black Horse GC in Seaside. Rob Thompson and Robert Berg won three titles in 2005, '07-08. Haag, who also won a title in 2022 with Robert Funk, is the first individual to win the event four times.

“Our games complement one another beautifully,” Lutz said. “We do a great job of keeping the ball in play, and neither of us is ever out of a hole, so we can at times be aggressive.”

“Playing golf with Chip is like a dream. Spending the week with Chip is super special for me,” Haag said.

The dynamic duo was stuck at even par through 13 holes of the first round when the team made its move. Haag and Lutz birdied Nos. 14 and 17 and made an eagle on 18 to vault into the lead.

“The finish to the first round. That really jump-started us,” Lutz said. “Prior to that we weren’t really doing much.”

A second-round 65 would give them a two-shot cushion entering the final round.

Morgan and Rowley, who were looking to become three-time champions themselves, finished at 207 following a 67. They’d be stung

in the second round when they played the par 5s – Nos. nine and 18 – at 1-over par.

Bunce and Carlsen had the low round of the final day, posting a 66 to move five spots up the leaderboard into a tie for second. They’d earn second place following a card-off win over Morgan and Rowley.

In the Super Senior championship, teammates **Rich Petit** and **Todd Palmaer** made a breathtaking charge over the final three holes of regulation to claim the title.

Petit made a birdie on No.16, sank a 30-foot birdie putt at the 17th and drained a 9-foot birdie on the 18th following a spectacular bunker shot to finish with a 4-under 67 to hold off the runner-up tandem of **Terry Foreman** and **Chuck Richesin**.

Coming to the 18th, there was the possibility of a three-way tie. Foreman and Richesin were in at 202 after a 67 and tied at a total of 11-under with Petit and Palmaer. Also in the running was the brothers tandem of **Jim** and **Doug Williams**, who were at 10-under.

The Williams brothers would settle for a par on 18 and a 69, landing them in third place at 203. Petit, meanwhile, hit a beautiful 35-yard shot out of the greenside bunker to 9 feet of the flagstick. He’d go on to make the putt to put him and Palmaer at 12-under. Their total of 201 set a 54-hole record for the Super Senior portion of the event.

“I knew when I hit it (bunker shot) that it was pretty good,” said Petit, who now has two NCGA titles (2020 Senior Amateur Match Play).

Earlier on the 17th, Petit had sunk a curling 35-footer to tie Foreman and Richesin at a total of 11-under.

“Rich made two great shots to beat us,” Richesin said. 🌻

19th NCGA Women’s Net Amateur

April 5-6 | Poppy Hills



Big Sur Flight
Melissa Spencer, 76-72—148



Golden Gate Flight
Mary Jane Austin, 69-81—150



Yosemite Flight
Marilyn Calciano, 68-74—142



It's the **Hard Card** Life

BY RYAN GREGG, Chief Operations Officer

The NCGA conducts hundreds of days of competitions throughout Northern California for its members, and all operate under the same terms of competition known as the “Hard Card.” This card is made up of specific conditions and local rules approved by the NCGA’s Golf Committee which is comprised of Board members, tournament officials and staff. The card can be found at ncga.org and is also available on all the Tournament Information Pages for each event. It is important to remember, Rule 1.3 requires a player to know the Rules and to apply them – including the NCGA Hard Card Rules. This is a general overview, and players should visit ncga.org to review the Hard Card in its entirety.

Ground Under Repair: The NCGA defines these areas by a white line and considers all French Drains as ground under repair. Players may take relief as prescribed in Rule 16.1.

Seams of Cut Turf (Sod Seams): If a player’s ball lies in a sod seam or is close enough to affect the player’s swing, the player can take relief under Rule 16.1. However, relief is not allowed if the seams interfere with the player’s stance only.

Aeration Holes: As much as the NCGA tries to avoid it, there is a possibility that an event could be hosted soon after a facility has aerated its golf course. The NCGA doesn’t want players to have to play out of those holes. If a player’s ball lies in or touches an aeration hole the player may take relief under Rule 16.1. However, relief is not allowed if interference only exists with the players stance or swing.

Animal Hoof Damage: Any damage caused by animal hoofs is considered ground under repair and players may take relief under Rule 16.1. When the damage is on the putting green the player may repair it.

Integral Objects: There are certain objects on the course a player would normally get free relief. Things like cables, wires, or rods closely attached to a tree are considered integral objects and the player is not entitled to relief if they were to have interference. This includes if a bunker liner interferes with a player’s stance.

Sprinkler Heads in Penalty Areas: Normally a player would not be entitled to relief from an obstruction in a penalty area. However, the NCGA has adopted this local rule to allow the player relief under Rule 16.1 for interference specifically for sprinkler heads. No relief from any other obstructions in penalty areas.

List of Conforming Driver Heads: The NCGA requires all players to use a legal driver when competing. The USGA keeps a list of all conforming driver heads which can be found at usga.org.

Missing Player or Marker Certification: If a player returns a scorecard without the holes being certified by themselves or their marker, they will get the general penalty rather than being disqualified. When digital scoring is used, the players must still verify the scores in the scoring area with the committee.

Playing or Listening to Music: The NCGA prohibits players from playing music. Regardless, if they are listening through headphones or through a speaker. There is no penalty for the first violation. However, multiple violations could result in disqualification.

Discontinuance of Play: The NCGA may have to notify players to stop playing due to weather or other conditions. They will notify them if it is a dangerous situation and must stop immediately and seek shelter by one continuous horn blast. Three consecutive horn blasts let the players know it is a non-dangerous situation and they may continue the play of the hole they’re on but must stop before starting another hole.

NCGA Cart Policy: Spectator carts are prohibited and only two carts are permitted per starting time. Players and caddies may occupy the same cart. Push carts, whether they are motorized, may be used.

NCGA’s Pace of Play: The pace of play policy is on a separate document but is a very important part of the Rules. Players are expected to be in position with the group in front of them and under their expected time to finish each hole. 🍌

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Big Events Coming Soon

A pair of big junior events are starting to approach on the calendar. On June 12–13 at Haggin Oaks, the **Summer Series II Championship** will tee off with two precious spots in this year's PGA Junior National Championship on the line.

Both the winning Summer Series II Girl and Boy players will earn automatic berths into the PGA Junior Girls' Championship and PGA Junior Boys' Championship, both to be held July 30–Aug. 2 at Congressional CC in Maryland. Registration for the Summer Series II Championship opens May 6.

Another can't-miss event for JTNC players is the annual **NCGA Junior Championship**, to be held July 8–9 at The Club at Ruby Hill in Pleasanton (pictured). 🌻

What's the **Junior Tour** of Northern California?

Formed in 2011 when the NCGA and Northern California PGA combined their resources, the JTNC is a competitive tour for girls and boys ages 10–18 with handicap indexes lower than 18.4

The tour annually features 30-plus events consisting of four flights – Girls'

Championship, Boys' Championship, Girls' First Flight Championship and Boys' First Flight Championship – using different sets of tees.

The average cost is \$168 (includes golf and range balls for two days) for most events, albeit fees may vary depending on venue. An

\$85 annual membership fee is also required.

Past players who honed their skills on the JTNC include major winner Bryson DeChambeau, PGA Tour member Justin Suh and LPGA Tour member Yealimi Noh. 🌻

For more information, please visit jtnc.org



Ian Gilligan



Brian Ma

USGA/JUSTIN WALKER

JTNC Alums

Ian Gilligan, the winner of the 2022 NCGA Amateur at Spyglass Hill who overcame childhood cancer, won the Southern Highlands Collegiate, one of the top college golf tournaments of the year in February.

With the victory, Gilligan, now a junior at University of Florida, earned an exemption into the PGA Tour's Shriners Children's Open at TPC Summerlin, to be held this October.

Stanford men's golf announced that **Brian Ma** was joining the Cardinal for the 2024–25 season after transferring from Harvard. Ma, a Milpitas native, registered the lowest single-season scoring average in Harvard history last season with an average score of 69.55.

In 2017, he became the third youngest winner of the San Francisco City Championship. 🌻

Talley Named to U.S. National Junior Team



The USGA recently announced the establishment of the inaugural U.S. National Junior Team, and JTNC superstar **Asterisk Talley** is a member.

The U.S. National Junior Team is the newest milestone for the U.S. National Development Program, which launched last year 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.

Composed initially of 10 girls and eight boys, the 18-player roster represents the country's elite junior golf talent who will embark on a unified pathway designed to nurture the potential of America's top players.

Talley, still just 15 years old and a freshman in high school, has already won 26 JTNC events as of March 26. She is only three wins shy of the all-time JTNC win record held by Sabrina Iqbal.

Other accolades include winning the 2023 American Junior Golf Association's Rolex Girls' Championship and the recent Junior Invitational at Sage Valley GC. 🌻



The Clock is Ticking!

BY JIM COWAN, Chief Governance Officer

Once every four years the USGA requires each and every club in the country to step up and put their money where their mouth is in terms of the World Handicap System (WHS). That is, they require each club to have a representative demonstrate their knowledge of the inner workings of the WHS via a quiz in which a score of 80 or above must be achieved.

2024 is such a year ... and the deadline to satisfy this requirement is the end of June.

The consequences of failing to secure a passing score could not be higher.

Pass ... and the club can continue to issue WHS Handicap Index to their membership.

Fail ... and the club forfeits their ability to issue WHS Handicap Index to their membership starting this July.

The genesis of this so-called Handicap Certification program harkens back to the early 2000's. The NCGA, fed up with the same golfers/same clubs excelling in NCGA net events, initiated an educational program in which each club was required to have a representative attend a half-day seminar in person on the subject of the USGA Handicap System. Those clubs that failed to satisfy this requirement were denied entry into NCGA tournaments.

The hope was that clubs would learn how to take care of their own "problem" golfers before they appeared in an NCGA event. As time went on, an online version of the Certification program was substituted for in-person attendance.

The success of this program, and that of the

SCGA's, did not escape the watchful eyes of the USGA. Eventually the USGA made such education AND a passing quiz score a requirement for a club to gain authorization to issue USGA handicaps ... and, eventually, WHS handicaps.

As of April 22, only around 33% of NCGA clubs have satisfied the requirement ... which is very concerning.

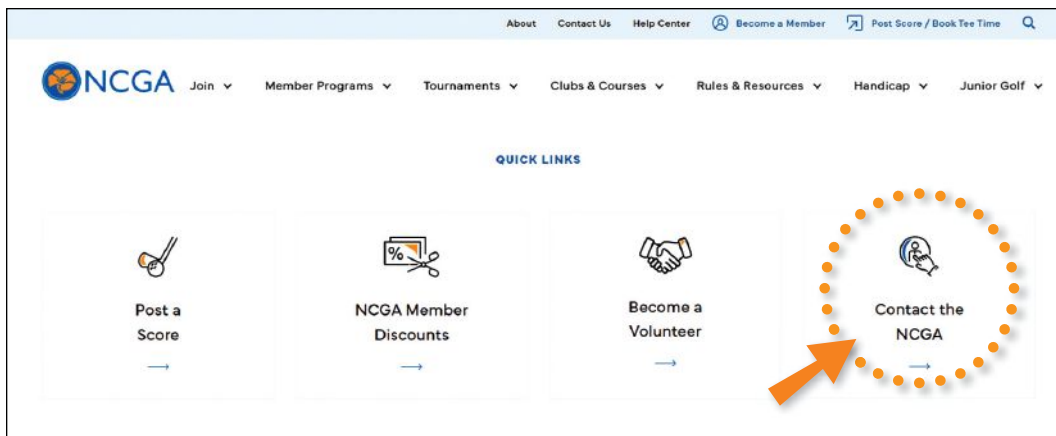
A unique "link" coded to each NCGA club has been forwarded to the individual that last completed the "USGA Assessment" on behalf of their club in 2023 or earlier. The link can only be used once/a club need only have one representative pass the quiz.

For reasons unknown, the USGA requirement is facing a lot of resistance this year ... much more resistance than when a longer time commitment was required to secure authorization.

There are clubs trying to deny that they bear any responsibility for the issuance of handicaps ... wrong! Who else but "the club" can ensure that their members are posting their scores and doing so accurately?

And we have even heard rumors that some clubs are not taking the quiz and the June 30 deadline seriously ... they think the USGA is bluffing when it comes to revoking handicaps. All I can say is that such clubs are in for a nasty surprise in early July when they find their handicaps identified with letters (*NH - No Handicap*), rather than numbers!

Please contact the NCGA Governance Department with any questions ... and get cracking! 🏌️



You've Got Questions—We've Got Answers

Member Area

As an NCGA member, you probably have questions from time to time such as “I’m not sure what all my NCGA benefits really are?” or “Yay, I just got a hole-in-one, where do I sign up for the NCGA recognition?” or “How do I learn more about volunteering for NCGA tournaments?”

You can always start with the Member Area on our website ([NCGA.org/member-area](https://www.ncga.org/member-area)). Still can’t find what you are looking for? Use the Contact Us link located on the top area of the home page.

Benefits That Add Up

For NCGA benefit information, you can go directly to our Member Benefits web page ([NCGA.org/join/member-benefits](https://www.ncga.org/join/member-benefits)). Learn more about Handicaps, Exclusive Discounts, NCGA Events and how to stay in the know about NorCal golf with our news and information services and publications.

Member Club Resources

If you’re one of those involved with projects or duties associated with managing your NCGA club, you can always turn to our Member Club Resources web

page ([NCGA.org/clubs-courses/member-club-resources](https://www.ncga.org/clubs-courses/member-club-resources)) as a place to start.

There you’ll find resources for getting access to the club software tools (USGA GHIN Admin Portal, memberplanet, BlueGolf etc.), the Renewal Hub, signing up club contact info, registering for club teams (Zones, Associate Club Championship, Player’s League and Team Match), billing credits and much more.

Still can’t find what you are looking for? Use the Contact Us link on the Member Area home page (see above) and select the ‘Contact the NCGA’ option or go to the Contact Us button at the top of the page. 🌟

We Want to Hear from You!

We ask for and act on member feedback to improve our overall NCGA benefit offerings and communications.

For the past five years, we have emailed an annual member satisfaction survey to get feedback. This year, we are transitioning from once a year to monthly pulses.

You may be receiving one – it comes from our partner, Players 1st. **It is not a scam, it is legitimate** – so please fill it out, we want to hear how we’re doing and how we could be doing better. Members are chosen at random and the responses are anonymous. 🌟

Don't Forget the NCGA's Online Course Directory

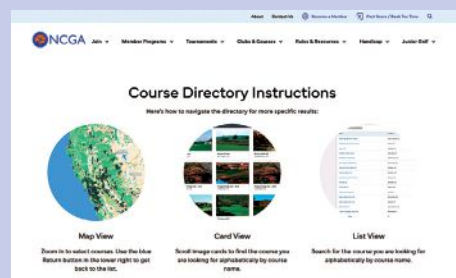
Looking for some new courses to play? Searching for that course you loved but can only remember the town? Want to know the 10 courses nearest to you?

Don't forget the NCGA Online Course Directory. The Directory includes over 400 courses with detailed course maps as well as general info such as yardage/slope/rating for each set of tees, course contact info and more.

Find it on our website under the Clubs and Courses tab on the homepage of [NCGA.org](https://www.ncga.org) or go direct to [ncga.org/course-directory](https://www.ncga.org/course-directory).

Once there, it's simple to search. Just search for the course on our interactive map or search via the name or location of the course. There's also a downloadable PDF so you can have a physical copy of the Directory.

Explore other regions and play more golf! 🌟



Registration Reminder for the 2024 Season

Get Out and Enjoy Golf More!

A reminder that the third and final registration window for 2024 – for events scheduled September–December – opens July 15. Whatever kind of tournament you're looking for, we're sure to have something that will match your interest and playing ability.

Why play in an NCGA event?

- **Fun:** Want to compete in an event with your spouse or best friend? You can do that in one of our team events. Exchanging high-fives with other players in your foursome? That can happen too.
- **Friendly:** Whether you're playing as an individual or as a team, you'll be sharing your love for the game with others who feel the same way. It's not just about the competition. It's also about the camaraderie and friends you'll make along the way.
- **Fair:** You can rest assured that the NCGA is always doing its best to promote fair play. From Rules infractions to Handicap Index issues, we protect the field.

Please visit [NCGA.org/tournament-schedule-registration-operations](https://www.ncga.org/tournament-schedule-registration-operations) for more information. 🌻



On the Road With the NCGA | Member Trips

Returning by popular demand, the NCGA will be making a third trip to **Bandon Dunes** from Dec. 8–12. Spend some holidays time at one of America's most popular golf destinations.

Also coming this December will be an NCGA trip to the Big Island of Hawaii.

Be sure to keep your eyes on the NCGA Member Trips page on our website ([ncga.org/member-trips](https://www.ncga.org/member-trips)) for updates and registration info!

Want to stay in the loop for all things regarding NCGA travel opportunities? Sign up for our *Insider Member Trips and Travel* newsletter at [ncga.org/member-trips](https://www.ncga.org/member-trips). 🌻



New Courses to Play | Weekend Net Tour and Senior Series

We're always looking to provide our members with new experiences, and that can include offering new venues.

For 2024, the Weekend Net Tour has 16 new venues including Alta Sierra CC in Grass Valley (May 18), Grizzly Ranch in Portola and Plumas Pines in Graeagle (June 29–30) and Pine Mountain Lake in Groveland and Teleli in Sonora (Sept. 21–22), just to mention a few.

The Weekend Net Tour is a series of one-day, weekend-only competitions held at some of the best courses in the NorCal region. All events are on Saturdays or Sunday mornings and consist of both individual and team competitions with a wide range of formats, including Individual Net, Four-Ball Net, Stableford and Chicago points, Two-Person Scramble, and optional skins games. This year we have also added two more formats - Two-Person Chapman and 6-6-6 (6 holes -best ball; 6 holes alternate shot and 6-hole scramble).

Back for 2024, for some select team events, we are allowing singles to register! We'll pair you up with another player or do a blind draw.

For the Senior Series, we've also added 16 new venues including Apple Mountain Golf Resort in Camino (May 20), Lincoln Hills GC in Lincoln (June 3), and Schaffer's Mill (pictured) and Tahoe Donner in Truckee (Sept. 16–17).

There too, we are allowing singles to register.

The Senior Series is a series of tournaments specifically for women ages 50-over and men ages 55-over of all handicap levels. Events are held on weekdays and feature two divisions based on age for the individual tournaments. There are also prize funds, closest-to-the-hole and an optional skins games.

For more information on the Weekend Net Tour, please visit [NCGA.org/weekend-net-tour](https://www.ncga.org/weekend-net-tour). For more info on the Senior Series, please go to [NCGA.org/senior-series](https://www.ncga.org/senior-series). 🌻

New Courses and New Players to Meet | Mixed Team Series

The Mixed Team Series, which features teams of one female and one male, is back with new venues and opportunities to meet new friends.

There are six new venues for 2024 including Bennett Valley GC in Santa Rosa (May 24), Boulder Ridge GC in San Jose (June 10), Corica Park GC (pictured) in Alameda (July 19) and Almaden CC in San Jose (Sept. 3), just to mention a few.

The Mixed Team is a series of 8 one-day mixed team competitions held at some of the finest golf courses in Northern California. The events will typically be held on a Friday or a Monday with a wide range of formats, including

Chapman, Four-Ball Net, Four-Ball Stableford and Closest-to-the-Hole contests within the tournaments.

A season-long points system allows teams to earn entry into the Mixed Team Series Championship, a two-day event held at Poppy Hills in November. The top two teams on the points list after the final regular season event will receive free entry into the Championship.

For more information on the Mixed Team Series, please visit [NCGA.org/mixed-team-series](https://www.ncga.org/mixed-team-series). 🌻





What's Happening at Poppy Hills

BY EMILY VAN BUSKIRK

In addition to the significant improvements made to the course over the past two winters, Poppy Hills has several other new, exciting things going on around the property.

With golf season officially underway, the opportunity to improve your game is readily available through our strategic partners at Titleist. Our instructional staff on property can provide advice and assistance with the selection of equipment, including custom wedge fittings designed to take your game to the next level. Visit our website at poppyhillsgolf.ncga.org to book a fitting or schedule a lesson.

For those enjoying some late-afternoon golf, Porter's Grill has debuted updated hours and a new twilight menu. Porter's is now open from 7 a.m.–

4 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday (bar open until 5:30 p.m.) and 7 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday (bar open until 6 p.m.). The new Twilight menu features items like chicken wings and both classic and signature pizzas – hand-tossed and tasty and available for takeout! Food orders will be accepted until 5:30 p.m. on those days.

More of a morning person? Try delicious breakfast items like Chicken Fried Steak or the Monterey Bay Calamari on the lunch menu. Pair it with a local beer or a Prickly Pear Margarita. Cheers! 🍷



You Say It's Your Birthday!

The NCGA wishes a happy birthday to all of the courses that are celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2024. 🎂

100 Year Club

- Crystal Spring Golf Club
- McInnis Park Golf Club
- Orinda Country Club
- Richmond Country Club
- Turlock Golf and Country Club
- William Land Park Golf Club
- Woodbridge Golf & Country Club

Half Moon Bay Golf Links



50 Year Club

- Diablo Hills Golf Club
- Half Moon Bay Golf Links (Old Course)
- Lake Shastina Golf Club
- Lake Oroville Golf and Events Center
- Moraga Country Club
- Porterville Golf Club
- Pleasanton Golf Center
- Rancho Murieta Country Club (South)

NCGA MEMBER OFFERS

Don't forget—NCGA members always enjoy easy access to a wide range of exclusive offers from various organizations.

To take advantage of all of these offers, please visit ncga.org/member-discounts.



Carmel Lodge - NCGA members receive 10% off lowest published rate depending on availability and excluding holidays and events.



Canyon Ranch - Receive \$200 in resort credit for your 3+ night stay



Carmel Mission Inn - NCGA members receive 15% off the best available room rate for that day.



Hertz - NCGA members can take advantage of multiple discount options when booking a rental car through Hertz



Hotel Abrego - NCGA members receive 20% off the best available rate of the day.



Hotel Pacific - NCGA members receive 20% off the best available rate of the day.



In-Shape Health Clubs - NCGA members can purchase a one-year membership at the annual three-year membership discounted rate.



Inns by the Sea - NCGA members discount ranges from 20-30% off standard rates Sunday through Thursday, subject to availability.



Inns of Monterey - Check out NCGA 'corporate rates' at Inns of Monterey



Lighthouse Lodge & Cottages - NCGA members receive 20% off best available rate of the day.



Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa - NCGA members receive an exclusive 20% discount.



Oars + Alps - Members receive a 15% discount.



Portola Hotel & Spa - Monterey - NCGA members receive preferred rates ranging from \$189.00 (Sun.-Thurs.) - \$229.00 (Fri.-Sat.) - based on availability and subject to blackout dates.



Ship Sticks - NCGA members receive 10% off their shipment with Ship Sticks.



Tradewinds Carmel - NCGA members receive 10% off lowest published rate depending on availability and excluding holidays and events.



Verizon Wireless - NCGA members are eligible for a discount of 12% or more off qualifying Verizon Wireless pricing plans (limited data plans only, unlimited data plans are not discounted). To enroll in this program, visit your local Verizon Wireless company store

Golf Courses with everyday discounts for NCGA members



Bayonet & Black Horse
NCGA Member Tee Times, up to 49% off



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Carmel Valley Ranch
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Coyote Moon
\$20 off any tee time



Graeagle Meadows
\$80 w/ cart after 1 p.m. 7 days a week.



Whitehawk Ranch
\$20 discount 7 days a week after 1 p.m.



Visit ncga.org/member-discounts
Log in to the Member Area for access to your exclusive discounts.



NCGA

Deeds Not Words is Haggin Oaks' Mantra

BY BRIAN MURPHY



Grow the game,” they say in the golf world. “That’s what we’ve been doing for years and years and years, and will keep doing in the future” – is the answer that comes from the actions of the good people at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex in Sacramento.

This is particularly true in the field of adaptive golf, which the U.S. Adaptive Golf Association defines as programs to make golf accessible “regardless of current health, physical, mental, sensory, coping and well-being status.”

Deeds, not words, is the mantra up at Haggin Oaks, where the Morton brothers – Tom and Ken, Jr. – have inherited a sense of giving back from their Dad, the legendary retired PGA Master Professional Ken Morton, Sr.

“Grow the game is an often misunderstood phrase,” says Tom Morton, director of coaching and development at Haggin Oaks. “The mainstream market, yes, that’s a segment. But what about all the other segments?”

“We’ve always been in this business of wanting to help out sections of our community.”

To Morton, adaptive golf is defined as for any person who may have a need that is more challenging to play the game than the mainstream golfer.

As such, Haggin Oaks is involved in:

- **California Eagles:** Since 1983, California Eagles has made golf available to those with Down Syndrome, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, deaf, blind, or those recovering from heart attacks and strokes. The group meets on weeknight evenings from April to September, and even has tournaments, putting contests and social events. There are some talented players among them. Multiple California Eagles have won gold medals at national Special Olympics events.
- **Golf Fore Health:** Participants include those who have post-traumatic stress disorder or multiple sclerosis or have had a stroke or heart attack or even missing a limb.
- **PGA Hope:** A six-week golf program for veterans, in conjunction with the PGA of

America, designed to get them outdoors and on the course learning the game.

- **Adaptive P.E.:** In April of 2024, the Morton Golf Foundation cut the ribbon at its latest prize in adaptive golf – the Hiram Johnson Golf Facility, built on the campus of Hiram Johnson High School in Sacramento. Instead of asking kids to travel to golf courses, the idea is to bring golf to the kids. The facility will feature a giant putting green, bunkers, chipping areas and a cage to simulate hitting range balls.

“The idea is to bring a segment of our community closer to the game,” Morton says, acknowledging that convincing kids to go from school to the golf course is a challenge.

So, bring the game to them is the answer.

In addition, Haggin Oaks property William Land Golf Course, in the middle of Sacramento’s William Land Park, is used for elementary and middle schools for a P.E. class. Morton says that when they asked schools what better way to reach kids, connecting them to the golf course was an answer. The First Tee helps fund rides for the kids to see the course.

Put it all together, and you put the lie to the notion that golf is an elitist game.

“The ‘why’ is simple,” Morton says. “We believe it’s our obligation to the game, the city of Sacramento, as a public facility open to everyone, that if we really do follow the values of diversity and inclusion in our company, this fits.

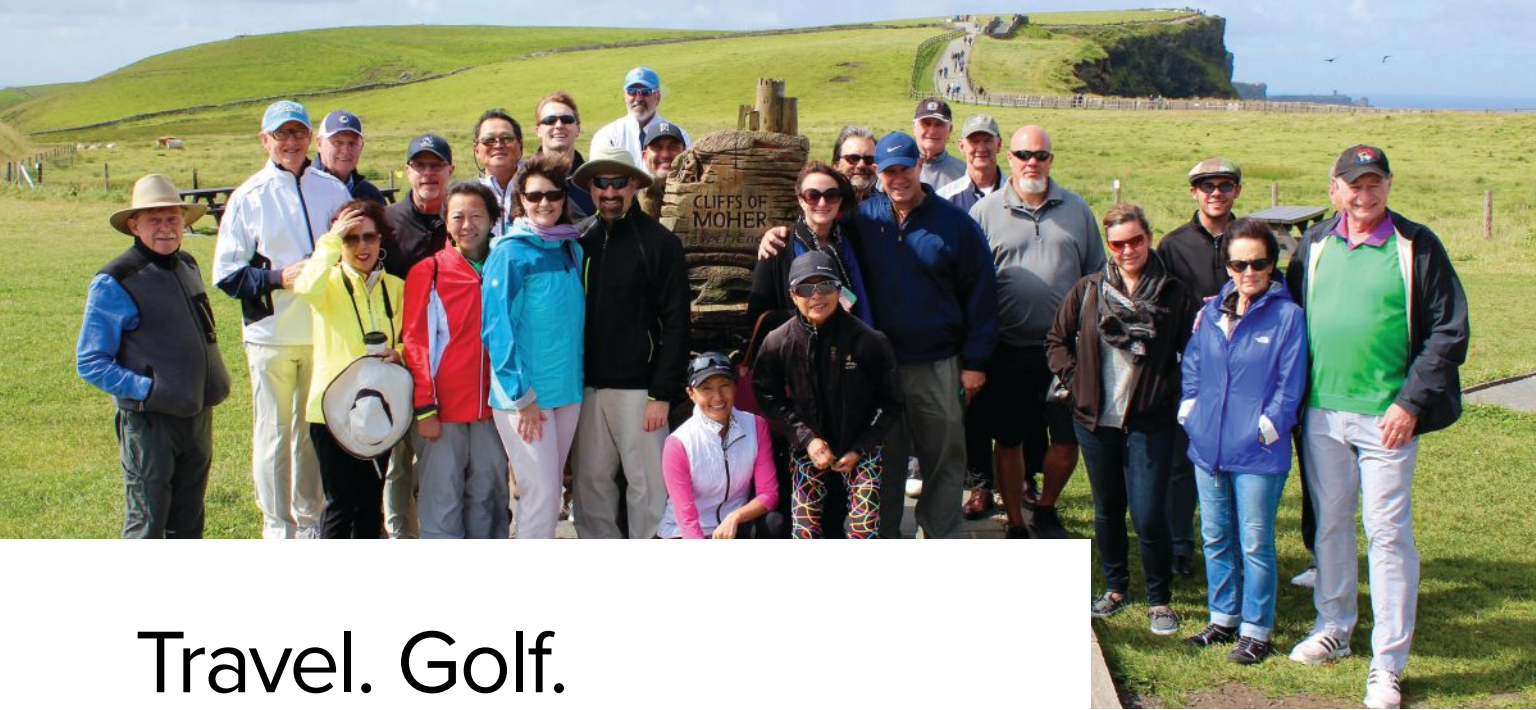
“We’ve always been in this business of wanting to help out sections of our community.”

Springtime in golf always conjures up visions of the Masters, and undeniably the verdant beauty of Augusta National is a potent lure. It’s an exclusive pleasure, to be sure. But back at Haggin Oaks, the boots – or golf spikes – on the ground are a little more down-to-earth.

Morton notes during this interview that Haggin Oaks isn’t in this for publicity or a pat on the back. It gets back to the phrase “grow the game.”

“It’s used a little too much, and sometimes people aren’t sure what it means,” he says. “We do all this because we know what this game can do for all humans, regardless of where they’re from or what they’re going through.

“We want to make sure to open it to everyone.” 🌟



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NCGA MEMBER TRIPS

Got a wish-list of golf destinations but not enough time to organize all the details? Check out our NCGA Member Trips. We go to the best courses and take care of all the details from arrival to departure.

Where do we go? Bandon Dunes, Scotland, Ireland, England, Pinehurst, Palm Springs, Hawaii and more.

Be the first to know about all of our upcoming trips! Go to ncga.org/member-trips and sign up for the NCGA Golf Travel list.

“

Well thought out. Well planned. Well executed. Great experience!”

– Gary Masuoka, NCGA member

“

We have made many new friends on NCGA golf trips.”

– Mary Norfleet, NCGA member




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Add Up*



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