



Massachusetts Launches State Team as Part of the USGA's U.S. National Development Program

Seven states will participate in the initial pilot phase beginning in 2024

NORTON, Massachusetts (Jan. 17, 2024) – Massachusetts is launching a state junior golf team that will expand the pipeline for elite local golfers into the recently created U.S. National Development Program (USNDP), a new initiative launched last February by the United States Golf Association. Massachusetts is one of seven states that will participate in the initial phase of the state team pilot program kicking off in 2024 with the goal of all states having a team by 2033.

“What an honor it is to serve as one of the pilot states for the U.S. National Development Program’s new State Team program,” said Catherine Carmignani, Mass Golf’s Assistant Executive Director. “Over the years, Massachusetts has produced many talented golfers who have gone on to compete at the highest levels, and a program like this will shed an even brighter light on the competitive golf scene in the Bay State and the great young talent that proudly call it home.

“We have a tremendous opportunity in front of us to support these juniors through their journey in competitive golf by providing the resources necessary to realize their full potential and garner the recognition they deserve.”

The other six participants include California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Ohio and Tennessee. The program will come to fruition through close collaboration between the USGA, its allied golf associations, the PGA of America and its sections and relevant state junior programs.

“This first of its kind state team program will serve as a critical part of the talent identification pathway for the USNDP and provide more opportunities for a diverse population of athletes to receive resources and guidance to compete at the highest levels of the game,” says Heather Daly-Donafrio, USGA managing director, Player Relations and Development. “Additionally, the opportunity to represent their home state will incentivize each region’s best junior golfers to play more in-state competitions, ultimately strengthening the junior golf programming across the country.”

The seven states participating in this initial pilot program will each establish a committee consisting of representatives from major golf entities within the state including any AGAs and PGA of America Sections. Massachusetts’ team committee includes Catherine Carmignani (Mass Golf), Kevin Eldridge (Mass Golf), Jesse Menachem (Mass Golf), Mike Higgins (NEPGA), Brianna Moesch (NEPGA), Alison Walshe (LPGA Tour, Former Curtis Cup Team Member), Candy Hannemann (Former LPGA Tour Member), Mace Foehl (Mass Golf Board of Directors, High School Golf Coach), Dave Adamonis (US Challenge Cup), and Charlie Doar (Administrator/Coach, Independent School League).

The committee will oversee team selection criteria and the operation of the Massachusetts state team program based on guidelines provided by the USGA. Team selection criteria will be published prior to the entry deadline of the first event and may consist of a points structure, ranking or combination of other competitive factors. The committee is targeting late winter/early spring to release selection criteria, with team selections coming in the fall of 2024.

State team roster sizes are calculated by elite junior participation in the state, ranging from a maximum of two boys/two girls to 20 boys/20 girls. Massachusetts expects to have 16 players as part of the initial team. To be eligible to be named to a state team in 2024, a player must be a U.S. Citizen. Each eligible player must be 13 years old by Jan. 1, 2025, have not reached their 19th birthday by July 19, 2025, and must not be enrolled in college for the 2024-2025 school year. A Handicap Index® is also required.

Additional eligibility requirements and FAQs can be found at massgolf.org/competition/team-

massachusetts.

Announced in February of 2023, the USNDP is designed to ensure that American golf is the global leader in the game by focusing on six key pillars: talent identification, access to competition, national teams, athlete resources, player development and relations and athlete financial support. The state team program will focus on creating a developmentally appropriate, aspirational pathway for athletes within each state to compete at higher levels of the game, including an opportunity to represent the United States as a member of the USNDP's National Team led by former Pepperdine Associate Head Coach Chris Zambri.