



USGA Deepens Commitment to Growing Golf Through 2017 PLAY9 Program

Fourth year of PLAY9 shows growth at regional and local level in support of time-friendly playing option

FAR HILLS, N.J. (May 9, 2017) – With a broader focus on golf at the local level, the USGA rolled out plans today in support of the PLAY9™ program.

Launched in 2014, PLAY9 has been educating and rallying golfers and non-golfers around the nine-hole round as an important, yet simple solution that addresses busy lifestyles, often cited as a barrier to the game's participation.

In 2017, the USGA will be working closely with state and regional golf associations and courses throughout the United States that will host and promote local PLAY9 Days between May and October.

The USGA has also created online and printed toolkits for golf courses and facilities that are interested in hosting events. The toolkits offer posters, flyers and social media suggestions to raise awareness. Ideas for innovative themes and playing formats are also included.

"For someone like me, PLAY9 is a great opportunity to include my wife and kids for a fun and quick day out on the golf course", said Troy Andrew, CEO and executive director of the Washington State Golf Association. "It's great to see the USGA's energy behind this program reminding people that being busy doesn't mean that there's no time for golf."

Beginning in 2015, the USGA began to measure perceptions among both golfers and golf courses regarding the nine-hole round and the PLAY9 program.

A 2016 study showed:

- As reported by golfers, nine-hole rounds comprised one-third of rounds played in 2016, Women, casual players and golfers under age 55 appear to be driving the increase in nine-hole rounds.
- Nine-hole scores made up between 8-9 percent of all scores posted to the USGA's GHIN system over the past three years (2014-2016), an increase from an average of 6 percent from 2010-2013.
- Perception of the nine-hole round as a simple, effective and time-friendly option to play the game increased from 46 percent in 2015 to 54 percent in 2016.
- The perception that nine-hole rounds are encouraging people to play the game is particularly strong with women and private club members, with 78 percent of both groups indicating that it is strongly positive.

- As reported by golf facilities, the mean percentage of facility revenue generated by nine-hole rounds increased from 22 percent in 2015 to 27 percent in 2016.
- Facilities have reported that the mean percentage of nine-hole starts increased from 19 percent in 2015 to 23 percent in 2016.
- Forty percent of facilities saw a year-over-year increase in the number of nine-hole rounds played in 2016.

In support of the program, the USGA will utilize usga.org/play9 as the hub for all PLAY9 content. The site features a course finder that identifies nine-hole facilities as well as 18-hole golf courses that offer nine-hole playing options.

“The USGA is proud to support PLAY9 and encourage everyone from newcomers to lapsed golfers to go out and play the game,” said Mike Davis, USGA executive director/CEO. “We are thrilled to see that participation for nine-hole golf is on the rise and we remain committed to programs focused on allowing golfers to play in less time and fit golf into their busy schedules.”

More information and the course finder can be found at www.usga.org/play9.