

PRO TO PRO

By Jason Scott Deegan

"Golf For Life" Program Debuts at Medinah



Creating a Structured System for Improvement

*Marty DeAngelo,
PGA Director of Golf,
Medinah (Illinois) Country Club*

Medinah Country Club is trying to engage members and grow the game through a new initiative started by PGA Director of Golf Marty DeAngelo called "Golf For Life."

The program is aimed at getting his members to enjoy the game whatever their age or skill level. DeAngelo's system is simple: When golfers master a set of skills or accomplishments from one set of tees, they move back a set. As they age, and their distance decreases, they move up a set to give them a better chance to score and enjoy the game more.



NICK NOVELLI

DeAngelo says he got the idea after seeing the Longleaf Tee System at the Longleaf Golf & Family Club in Southern Pines, North Carolina, a facility owned by U.S. Kids Golf. He is also using bits and pieces from the USGA's recommendations on yardages for women and the Tee it Forward initiative to pair golfers with the appropriate tees.

Medinah's No. 2 Course (pictured above) has been specifically redesigned for the program. The course, which reopened last month after a year-long, \$3.6 million restoration by Rees Jones, now offers seven tee boxes on each hole, ranging from 6,481 to 1,986 yards.

"What we are really doing is opening up the eyes of golfers that length is overrated," DeAngelo says.



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Hazeltine National Golf Club to host 2019 KPMG Women's PGA Championship

Adding to its long-standing history of holding major championships, Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minnesota, has been selected as the site of the 2019 KPMG Women's PGA Championship.

Scheduled for June 20-23, 2019, this will be the first time the Championship is played in the state of Minnesota. Site of the U.S. Ryder Cup Team's 17-11 victory in over Europe in the 41st Ryder Cup, Hazeltine began its tradition of hosting major championships more than 50 years ago. The Club has hosted the 1966 and '77 U.S. Women's Open; the 1970 and '91 U.S. Open; the 1983 U.S. Senior Open; and the 2002 and '09 PGA Championships.

"The PGA of America is delighted to bring the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, and the greatest women players in the world, to one of our country's great venues and the site of the 2016 Ryder Cup," says PGA CEO Pete Bevacqua. "Hazeltine National Golf Club was built to host majors and its membership, along with the exceptional sports fans throughout Minnesota, embrace golf. We are excited for what lies ahead in 2019 and for our continued relationship of major championship golf at Hazeltine that will continue well into the future."

Along with the 1966 and '77 U.S. Women's Opens, the 2019 KPMG Women's Championship will be the third women's major that Hazeltine has hosted. Minnesota has also been the site of the 1956 and '88 U.S. Women's Opens, plus the 2002 Solheim Cup.



"You don't have to play long courses to be challenged. You don't have to play a long course to be good."

In the early stages, the Golf For Life program includes each member meeting with the golf professional staff for a game evaluation, setting the stage for a structured system for improvement.

DeAngelo says the program kicks off with several special events where golfers are separated into four categories depending upon the color of tees they would normally play from: Gold and silver for highly skilled golfers; white and green for the majority of golfers with double-digit handicaps; yellow and blue for casual golfers with handicaps of 20-plus; and orange for complete beginners.

Medinah — host of the 2012 Ryder Cup, and 1999 and 2006 PGA Championships — will also offer tournaments with a variety of formats using the program. One might have players tee off from the same set of tees, but have each golfer play to a different par depending on their handicaps. For example, the course may play to a par 58 for a gold player on the blue tees, or a 74 for a yellow player on the same tees. Whoever shoots the best score relative to their par will win.

"If you play as a family, a junior or woman making par from their tee will mean just as much as dad at his tee box," DeAngelo says.

He hopes his ideas become a template other clubs can follow: "They can customize it for their members — it would be a great starting kit." ■

Retaining Members Who Have a Ball Beyond Golf

*Jim Dillashaw,
PGA Head Professional,
Greenhorn Creek Resort,
Angels Camp, California*



Member retention is an issue at every golf club. A small investment not involving golf has made a big impact at Greenhorn Creek Resort, a resort facility with a large local membership.

Last spring, the facility transformed a spot outside the clubhouse, near the first tee and 18th green, into a pair of bocce ball courts. The addition has changed the vibe at the entire facility, located two hours away from the Bay area in California's Gold Country.

The courts (pictured next page) have spawned spring and fall leagues. Thursday nights are reserved for a member-guest league, where 40 four-person teams signed up at Greenhorn Creek.

"It's turned into a nice night for our members to come down and hang out," says Jim Dillashaw, the resort's PGA Head Professional. "They like to drink wine and eat appetizers. It has kept a lot of our members engaged, especially those who aren't quite so golf-active. For spouses who have given up the game of golf, it has kept the family as members. It helps keep the club very active."

The resort just added an outdoor