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Golf notebook: NCGA attracting new members

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For many golfers, the return of daylight savings time and what has been warmer temperatures have already been good reasons to get back on the course.

Now, there's another one.

Recently, the Northern California Golf Association, the largest regional golf association in the country, announced that it is launching an introductory membership April 1 in an effort to increase participation and ensure members enjoy golf for a reasonable price.

For a mere \$36, which includes a \$5 donation to the NCGA Foundation, new members will have all the benefits of NCGA membership including greatly reduced rates at Poppy Hills in Pebble Beach and Poppy Ridge in Livermore, benefits and discounts at nearly 80 courses that are part of the NCGA Member Advantage program, special exclusive offers from area resorts and courses such as Pebble Beach Golf Links, Pasatiempo or Cordevalle, free lessons and clinics and much more.

The introductory membership is only available through the NCGA's website, ncga.org, and is accessible to golfers who have not been an NCGA member for at least three years.

"This new membership is an opportunity to work together with our clubs to help grow the golf landscape in Northern California," said NCGA CEO Lyn Nelson. "We are excited by the opportunity to introduce the incredible value of NCGA membership to a new generation of golfers."

Introductory memberships will conclude at the end of the year and then the Association will assist new members in finding an established NCGA club at a golf course or from the more than 800 associate (non-real estate) clubs. The Association will set up events where club officials can recruit engaged golfers as well as gain contact information for prospective members.

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There are currently more than 1,250 NCGA members clubs throughout NorCal and into Nevada.

Otters make history

The No. 8-ranked CSUMB women's golf team made history Tuesday, shooting a final round team score of 304 to win their own GolfMart/Lady Otter Invitational at Black Horse GC. The Otters finished the two-day event at 22-over 606, beating runner-up Sonoma State by 13 strokes.

"It was great to finally get a win on our home course," said CSUMB head coach Teri Greene. "The team has worked hard to reach this goal."

Senior Cicilia Chudivan, playing in her final Otters Invite, won the individual medalist title after finishing with an even-par 146 on the par-73, 5,810 yard layout. In the final round, Chudivan had four birdies en route to a 72. Junior Darcy Lake placed second at 150 after a final round 76.

Other 36-hole Otter scores were Courtney Soekland (154), Leticia Halas (156) and Melissa Conroy (164).

Next up for CSUMB is the Grand Canyon Invite starting Monday in Arizona. Following that, the team will have a break until the NCAA Regionals, starting May 3.

Foundation flourishes

The NCGA Foundation concluded an impressive 2009 that saw the 20-year-old non-profit arm of the NCGA subsidize more than 90,000 buckets of range balls and 60,000 rounds of golf for deserving youth.

Partnering with more than 115 facilities across Northern California, the Foundation's Youth on Course program, which was the first of its kind to make a connection between clinics for beginners and developing full-fledged players, allows certified kids to play for as low as \$2.

In 2009, the Foundation invested more than \$1 million in deserving youth alone with approximately 90 percent of funds raised directly supporting youth.

"We've really focused on deserving youth and a by-product of that has been the tremendous growth of the game and life skills it teaches," NCGA Foundation Executive Director Adam Heieck said.

For 2010, the Foundation is increasing its focus on deserving youth in underserved communities through clinics, scholarships and job opportunities. More than 70 clinics are scheduled for this year.

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