VSWGA Junior Golf Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Attending: Lauri Brown, Judith Wine, Darlene Remy, Jen Papillo, Jazz Bruce, Linda Jane Parson, Braedon Fox (VGA)

Judith spoke about the introductory First Tee workshop she led at the VT SHAPE Conference in Killington in the spring. It was agreed that a proposal would be sent to VT SHAPE to hold another First Tee workshop at the 2024 conference with the following changes: Focus on training PE Instructors; Better time slot to boost attendance

Judith shared that VT SHAPE was not receptive to sharing Junior Golf information with their members. Lauri will follow up with Lyn Porter, VT SHAPE President. Regarding Athletic Directors through VT Principal’s Association, Lauren Thomas will share, but only through Friday email blast where it probably doesn’t get read. Lauri will try through Robin Newton, Vergennes PE Instructor (and state PE Instructor of the year!).

Judith recommends calling schools with equipment. She will disseminate to us the list of 100 VT schools/districts with First Tee equipment divided by region. Each of us can take a region, call the contact listed to:

a) get updated contact info;

b) learn whether the current contact is/not active with the First Tee training/equipment/web support; and

c) offer support in locating equipment and getting the contact active with training and web support.

Braedon (and John via text) expressed need to fundraise/find more funding for First Tee equipment and determine need: who, where… it is not limited to schools: it can be used by pros, parks & rec, us, anyone with the equipment and training. All training is done via the First Tee webinars and the program provides ongoing support. The equipment is designed for elementary and middle schools.

Darlene shared that she is in Ludlow and knows they have the equipment but haven’t used it in ~a decade. She is happy to cover calls in that region.

\*Side note: Equipment/account sharing needs pre-approval by First Tee (i.e., very small schools might be able to gain sharing approval).

Jen Papillo shared that she has/can get contact info for all current high school golf coaches. She has a draft email directing high school girl golfers to the VSWGA site for membership and Golf Genius profile creation. She will update it to include boy golfers through VGA website and send it to coaches to disseminate to HS golf team members when membership opens after January 1st. As well, she will work with Braedon/John Goodchild at VGA in the spring to communicate with high school players through coaches in promotion of the 2024 Junior Tour. This will support John’s text that the VGA junior players and high school players be intertwined. Jen explained that there are many HS team members that attend practices, but aren’t always competing in matches (if any) and never qualify for states. Girls matches take 3-4 players, boys 4-5, so coaches try to rotate.

Braedon and John attend a USGA Rules conference annually. They want to create a version for HS coaches, tournament volunteers, etc. VGA would like it to be a requirement of coaches. Judith added that videos are the best learning tool for many.

Braedon shared that the VGA is updating its website and in conjunction (with the same contractor) creating an advertising campaign with TV and Social Media spots. The VGA is hoping to create its own junior golf camps through partnerships with courses regionally. They hope to hold the first one in 2024, possibly at Proctor Pittsford. If successful, they will work on expanding it. As well, they are looking at creating a points system for junior players by which they can qualify for a Ryder Cup style tournament at season’s end. As well, they are building organization partnerships, one of which is with a well-known equipment company, so they may be a pipeline to discounted junior clubs.

Lauri asked Braedon about PGA Junior League and PGA Reach (per John’s text). Braedon is PGA member. Committee needs education on these programs to help promote them.

Darlene shared that she & her husband have a small foundation in the Ludlow/Springfield area that has funded junior initiatives, including clubs. Getting equipment to juniors statewide has been impeded by communication channels to juniors (schools, etc.), as noted – it’s a work in progress.

Judith noted that girl participation in junior events is very low – why and how can this be addressed? John also texted that the girls who did participate were very nervous and timid when it came to competitive golf, echoing that it needs to be addressed. Linda Jane shared that someone at Alburg had started a girls’ program. Was it successful?

Need to improve schedule/meeting coordination. Doodle platform suggested. Other ideas? Anyone willing to take initiative?