



September, 2020

Dear Foundation Member,

We hope that you and your family are well during these challenging times. Allow us to bring you up-to-date with how the FSGA has faced the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

FSGA Operations

The FSGA suspended operations in late March, but we were able to begin operating again in the second half of June. Our staff continues to work remotely and only visits the office immediately before and after conducting competitions. Fortunately, our staff is used to working from hotels and other remote sites, and they have adjusted well. We also divided the staff into teams to limit the risk when traveling or when visiting the office. Throughout the summer, we have continued to provide service to our member clubs, golf professionals, and amateur golfers including our juniors.

When traveling to events around the state, the staff follows strict protocols to ensure that we are operating in a safe and careful manner for everyone's protection. Transportation is one of our biggest challenges, as our staff must travel in separate vehicles and players must ride in separate carts at most events. Cart limitations have resulted in reduced field sizes at some events and players walking at others.



To conduct events in the safest manner possible, the FSGA adopted a set of procedures that were developed by golf's governing bodies and which were reviewed and approved by the CDC. These procedures provided dozens of measures that include social distancing, the use of masks, the reduction of "touch points", and the elimination of most food & beverage operations.

Even with all of the challenges that COVID presents, we remain fortunate that the game of golf allows for social distancing and is a recommended outdoor exercise. The early months of the pandemic were very hard on all businesses and golf was no exception. As most of you have experienced, golf facilities adapted to the changes by modifying their procedures and limiting food & beverage service. The golf industry is still being hurt by the pandemic, but interest in golf has increased this summer. Thankfully golf is considered a safer form of recreation and entertainment. On a positive note, the National Golf Foundation reported that there was a 3% increase in rounds in July over last year.

FSGA Championships Conducted

Despite canceling or postponing approximately 120 events from March to May, the FSGA started operating more regularly in July. The staff worked diligently to rearrange the tournament schedules. Fortunately, we will be able to conduct most of our regularly scheduled championships, including the Amateurs and Opens for men and women, and the Boys and Girl's Junior Championships.

Our oldest championship, the 103rd State Amateur, was rescheduled from June to December as the original dates for local qualifying and the championship fell during the most frantic days of the pandemic. We look forward to concluding the year on a high note by crowning our Amateur Champion at Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto.

The Amateur Championship was not the only event to be postponed. The Mid-Amateur, Senior Amateur, Women's Senior Amateur, and the Women's Amateur were all postponed to the second half of the season.

The Florida Women's Open & Senior Open faced a last minute challenge. Quail Creek Country Club was scheduled to host the championship and due to COVID restraints, the course had to cancel a month prior to the Championship. To say the least, it was a scramble to locate clubs that were willing to host the championship during a pandemic. Fortunately, Bradenton Country Club and Lakewood National Golf Club agreed to host the championship on the same dates and the event was a great success.

Junior Golf

Junior golf has been very active this summer. We conducted very successful Boys' and Girls' Junior Championships and the Florida Junior Tour added events throughout the summer to compensate for events that were cancelled or postponed earlier in the year. We have enjoyed some amazing golf from our juniors and it's been very important to provide juniors and their families a healthy distraction during this terrible summer for kids. Growing up in the middle of this pandemic has to be very scary. The FSGA and our Florida Junior Tour provides our kids some hope, exercise, and a sense of normalcy that is desperately needed.

College Sports Cancelled – The FSGA Reacts

The COVID pandemic also resulted in many college conferences cancelling fall sports, including golf. With dozens of college golf teams idle, the FSGA decided to add some new competitions for college age players in an effort to keep our Florida players sharp through the fall. Beginning in September, we will start a new collegiate schedule of six (6) events for men and women players of college age. These events will also be open to players from Florida who are going to college out of state. Many of these players have competed on our Florida Junior Tour and in our junior championships in the past. We are pleased that we are able to rise to the occasion and provide needed events in this unique year.

Tyler Strafaci Wins 120th U.S. Amateur



The U.S. Amateur Championship at Bandon Dunes was extremely exciting. Tyler Strafaci, a former FSGA Junior Champion, won the final match, by coming back from a 5-down deficit to capture the championship on the 36th hole. Tyler fought bravely all week and won his last four matches on the final hole.

Tyler's father Frank, caddied every hole during that special week. Frank Strafaci, who has won several FSGA Championships, has been a longstanding supporter of the FSGA and served as the FSGA President in 2017. The U.S. Amateur Championship proved to be a family affair as Tyler walked down the fairways followed by his mother Jill, and older brother, Trent. Making this win that much more heartfelt, Frank Strafaci Sr., Tyler's grandfather, won the U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship 85 years ago.

The entire Strafaci family has competed in FSGA championships through the years and Trent spent a season working for the FSGA as a PGA Boatwright Intern. Trent and Tyler have teamed up to play in several Four-Ball Championships and Tyler won the FSGA Boy's Junior Championship in 2014.



We are very proud of Tyler's success and look forward to following his progress at Georgia Tech and at next year's Masters, U.S. Open and British Open Championships!

FSGA Success Stories During COVID



Futures Championship (Juniors 9-12)

Our young juniors are out of this world impressive! Jessy Huebner, defended his title of Futures Champion, after finishing 10-under after two rounds in the 11-12 division. At 5,600 yards, the same yardages that our senior events are played, Huebner carded rounds of 68-66! In the Girls' 11-12 division, Bella Dovhey, playing 5,000 yards, posted two under-par rounds to finish at 4-under 140. Not only do they display amazing golf skills, our juniors make the FSGA proud by conducting themselves in an appropriate manner on and off of the course. It is going to be fun to watch the young players grow through our programs.

Amateur Public Links

Fred Biondi won his first amateur championship outside of the junior circuit at the Amateur Public Links. A strong junior player, winning the Boys' Junior Championship in 2016 and 2017, Biondi posted three rounds of 68 to capture the victory by two-strokes! Biondi participated in every Junior Championship and many FJT events en route to a position on the University of Florida's golf team.

Four-Ball Championship

Two 17 year olds, that are avid Florida Junior Tour (FJT) players, captured the Four-Ball Championship. Brendan Valdes, past FJT winner, and Frankie Harris posted two impressive scores of 64 to hoist the trophy at Streamsong Resort. The duo won by two strokes at 18-under 128.

FSGA Scholars

This year we have added 16 additional scholars to our list of current scholars. Thanks to your generosity, we now have 46 FSGA scholars attending college and we are excited to watch their progress. Additions from the class of 2020:

Scholar	College Represented
Nicholas Dimitroff, Pensacola	Coastal Alabama Community College
Nicholas Gabrelcik, Trinity	University of North Florida
Madyson Gold, Bonita Springs	University of North Carolina - Asheville
Vivian Guite, Naples	University of South Florida
Kayla Holden, Coral Springs	University of Tennessee
Natalia Jimenez, Pembroke Pines	Rollins College
Mark Kaneko, Rotonda West	Florida Atlantic University
Mitchell Nolan, Clearwater	Palm Beach Atlantic University
Gabrielle Perlstein, Lake Mary	University of North Florida
Thomas Salanito, Palm Harbor	Florida Gulf Coast University
Sophie Shrader, Naples	University of West Florida
Faith Silverman, Belle Isle	University of Central Florida
Joshua Siplin, Orlando	Howard University
Emily Staples, Orlando	University of Missouri
Maclean Whitworth, Lutz	University of Central Florida
Amelia Williams, Gainesville	James Madison University
John Wright, Orlando	University of Oregon

Thinking of You

The FSGA hopes that you and your family remain safe during this very challenging time. We hope that you will continue to enjoy our great game and use golf as a refuge from the troubled world around us. Most of all, thank you for your support and for making these wonderful success stories possible.

Sincerely,

Jim Demick, Executive Director

Emily VanEtten, Program Director