



Capital City Golf

"The Exceptional Public Golf Experience"

12.4

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April 22, 2004

City Council
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session

SUBJECT: Golfers with Disabilities Program –
Update by Capital City Golf Division

LOCATION AND COUNCIL DISTRICT: All

RECOMMENDATION:

The purpose of this informational report is to provide the City Council with an update on the programs, activities and equipment that is being provided at Capital City Golf facilities for golfers with disabilities.

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Convention, Culture and Leisure Department

FOR COUNCIL MEETING OF: May 4, 2004

SUMMARY:

Capital City Golf has formed partnerships with Access Leisure, Disabled Sports USA (DSUSA), Special Olympics, Western Amputee Golf Association, SAY Golf, Morton Golf, Swing for the Blind, American Stroke Association and others to provide access, golf equipment and instructional programs for golfers with disabilities. Capital City Golf and Morton Golf have been nationally recognized as leaders in the area of providing programs and equipment for golfers with disabilities.

COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ACTION:

None.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Capital City Golf facilities have long been host to programs and activities geared to providing access to the game of golf for persons with disabilities.

California Eagles Program:

For the past twenty (20) years, Morton Golf and the City of Sacramento have hosted the California Eagles golf program at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex for persons with Cerebral Palsy and Downs Syndrome. Two Sacramento participants in the program, Edward Doane and Cindy Freuher, were gold and bronze medal winners in the World Golf Special Olympic Games. Haggin Oaks has been the home of the Northern California Special Olympics Golf Championship for the past three years. The California Eagles program is now also being offered at the City's William Land Golf Course under the direction of SAY Golf.

Sacramento Area Youth Golf (SAY Golf) & First Tee of Greater Sacramento:

In 2003, SAY Golf adopted the "Swing for the Blind" program from retiring program director, Libby Brand. The program is hosted at the City's William Land and at the County's Campus Commons Golf Course. Since 2002, SAY Golf has collaborated with the Sacramento City Unified School District to provide a golf program for over 60 kids as an adaptive physical education program.

Saving Strokes Program:

In 2000, Capital City Golf partnered with Morton Golf, the County of Sacramento Golf Courses, Northern California Professional Golfers Association (NCPGA), SAY Golf and the American Stroke Association to launch the annual Saving Strokes event. Saving Strokes is an American Stroke Association Project, with medical professionals and community leaders working to raise public awareness about stroke in the Sacramento Area. Area Golf Professionals donate their time to this program and receive professional medical and physical therapy training to learn how to conduct "golf-ready assessments" and golf training to stroke survivors and their caregivers. The Saving Strokes Program allows stroke survivors to keep playing golf, or learn the game for the first time. Golf helps stroke survivors gain strength and flexibility while enjoying a wonderful social outlet. The 1st Annual Saving Strokes Program served eight (8) participants. In just three years the program grew to over 80 participants! The Saving Strokes Program is FREE to participants and their caregivers and is hosted annually at the City's Haggin Oaks Golf Complex on the new 3-hole Golf Academy and Driving Range.

Fore Golf Sacramento/DSUSAFW:

In 1999, Ruben Samaniego, Golf Teaching Professional at the City's Haggin Oaks Golf Complex, worked to gather community support to create Fore Golf Sacramento. Today, Fore Golf Sacramento is a fully inclusive golf instruction program serving over 200 golfers with disabilities each year. The program is offered under the auspices of Disabled Sports USA Far West (DSUSAFW). The program is offered on Saturday afternoons at the City's Haggin Oaks Golf Complex for a nominal fee of \$5.00 per lesson.

Capital City Golf – Adaptive Golf Equipment & Facility/Program Access:

In 2003, Capital City Golf, in cooperation with the City's Public Works Department, hired SZS Consulting to assist in updating the Capital City Golf ADA Transition Work Plan and Self-Evaluation. In addition, SZS provided "ADA Awareness Training" for all Capital City Golf, Morton Golf, SAY Golf and other affiliated groups and volunteers that conduct golf programs at City facilities. Upon hiring SZS Consulting, Capital City Golf made a presentation to the Sacramento Disabilities Advisory Commission (SACDAC) to review the scope of the work and provide information about existing golf programs for persons with disabilities.

Capital City Golf facilities lead the way in purchasing and providing specialized golf equipment for persons with disabilities. Attached please find photographs of some of the equipment that is used by our golfers with disabilities. The City now has a fleet of five (5) single-rider adaptive golf carts, plus one additional single-rider cart that was donated by DSUSAFW for the Fore Golf Sacramento Program.

In 2004, DSUSAFW assisted Capital City Golf in successfully getting a grant from the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) for TTY's that are now installed at the City's golf facilities. The TTY's allow persons with hearing and/or speech impairments to access the golf courses by phone and through the use of a typewriter-like device.

Project GAIN:

In 2000, Sacramento was selected as one of the first sites to host Project GAIN. Project GAIN (Golf: Accessible and Inclusive Networks) is a project of the National Alliance for Accessible Golf. It is a comprehensive program to introduce people with disabilities (and their families and friends) to the game of golf. GAIN is a program designed to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities into the fabric of their community through participation in the game of golf. The goals of Project GAIN are: 1) to serve people with disabilities and people serving as mentors or volunteers through golf lessons and social activities; and 2) develop a "GAIN Preferred Site" program for local golf courses to insure physical access and social inclusion. The program is supported by the USGA Foundation, the

PGA and the PGA Tour. In Sacramento, Project GAIN is provided through a grant to DSUSAFW and Fore Golf Sacramento at the City's Haggin Oaks Golf Complex.

Sacramento Golf Council (SGC):

On Sunday, September 12, 2004, the Sacramento Golf Council (SGC), a volunteer group that conducts amateur golf tournaments and events on behalf of the City and County of Sacramento, will launch its 1st Annual Golfers with Disabilities Championship at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex. The event has already secured over \$20,000 in sponsor support and will serve as an annual fundraiser to support the Fore Golf Sacramento (DSUSAFW) program and to purchase additional equipment for golfers with disabilities.

Access Leisure:

The Access Leisure section of the Department of Parks and Recreation has provided us with great support and technical expertise in our efforts to broaden the availability of golf programs and services to people with disabilities. As you are aware, this section provides a comprehensive array of recreation and sports programs and services for people with disabilities. The Access Leisure Section has partnered with a variety of organizations to maximize the opportunities for participation by people across a wide variety of ability levels.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This report is for information only.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

None.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

None.

ESBD CONSIDERATIONS:

This report does not involve the purchase of goods and services.

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Weaver, Golf Manager
Capital City Golf Division

APPROVED:



Barbara E. Bonebrake, Director
Convention, Culture and Leisure Department

RECOMMENDATION APPROVED:



Robert P. Thomas, City Manager

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Is Your Course

Golf courses face new demands
to comply with the Americans
with Disabilities Act.

The good news is that
courses should be able to manage

the changes without too much difficulty

BY BRUCE ALLAR

After word came down last year that golf courses would face new demands to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a common first reaction was apprehension. Course owners and their superintendents worried that the updated ADA guidelines, announced in September 2002, would place costly burdens upon them. But the news so far should be an anxiety-reliever: Compliance may turn out to be neither difficult nor expensive.

Take it from Sam Samuelson, the certified superintendent who maintains the Haggin Oaks Golf Complex, a 36-hole city-owned complex in Sacramento, Calif. The courses,

including an Alister MacKenzie championship-length layout, have already implemented accessibility programs to all parts of the courses for disabled players.

"The funny thing about all this is that so many superintendents are scared about what they'll have to do to comply with the ADA and, to be honest, it's hardly changed anything for us," Samuelson says. "The biggest problem superintendents have is fear. Once you get over that fear factor, it really doesn't affect you."

Haggin Oaks' MacKenzie course, which opened in 1932, was renovated in 2000. That's when the ADA specs were applied to make the course completely accessible. The other 18 holes (one nine opened in 1952 and the other in the early 1960s) are also called "accessible" by Haggin Oaks largely because the

Accessible?

flat terrain in the area allows cars to get on and off tees easily. Also, tight curbing of cart paths was avoided, and bunkers were built with fairly flat entrance and exit points for disabled golfers, who generally hit the ball from moveable seats in their cars.

Five single-rider cars are available for disabled golfers who show up to play at Haggin Oaks. They are shuttled among the three courses as demand dictates.

Morton Golf, which operates the shop and teaching programs at the courses, also runs some programs for disabled golfers, according to Samuelson. As an added service, it's planning to print up a booklet marking any areas on the courses or throughout the Haggin Oaks' complex that might present accessibility problems for disabled players. The booklet would be distributed to disabled golfers when they register for rounds.

"The positives far outweigh the negatives," Samuelson says. "To see the smile on some of these faces when you give them accessibility — it's a wonderful thing."

Not all newly constructed or renovated courses must follow the Haggin Oaks lead, making nearly every playing area accessible to disabled golfers. While some of the details of compliance are yet to be worked out, early signs indicated that course architects and superintendents will be able to manage the changes without too much difficulty.

The rules

The U.S. Access Board, an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR ACCESSIBLE GOLF

disabilities, issued its new guidelines, published in the *Federal Register* on Sept. 3, 2002, to "serve as the basis for standards to be adopted by the Department of Justice for new construction and alterations of recreational facilities covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act." The ADA was passed and signed into law in 1990. But the Access Board later took up modifications for several recreational categories including swimming pools and spas, boating facilities, amusement parks and, of course, golf courses.

Gary Robb, president of the National Al-

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At least 5 percent of practice tees on golf courses must be made accessible to disabled golfers, according to new guidelines.

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Is Your Course Accessible?

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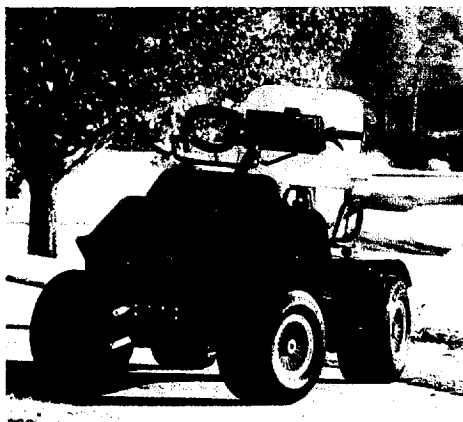
liance for Accessible Golf, headquartered at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., and affiliated with the National Center on Accessibility, helped spur modifications on golf courses.

"Golf was one of the major ones we started to champion, mostly because of my interest in and passion for the game," Robb says. "I've always thought it a game that can be inclusive for people with disabilities."

Robb says that golf course clubhouse areas, buildings and parking lots were covered by the original ADA when it was passed 13 years ago. The new standards apply to the courses themselves. He describes them as "pretty easy to comply with" and says they're designed to make golf



Single-rider cars, such as Club Car's 1-PASS, are a hot topic when it comes to accessible golf. Club Car says its vehicle causes no damage to greens, tees or other sensitive areas on the course.



possible for persons with spinal cord injuries, muscular disorders and other disabilities.

"Individuals with mobility impairments have to be able to get on to fairways, tees and greens — basically so they can play the game like anybody else," Robb says. "It's pretty easy to design courses that way."

Key points

An advisory group to the Access Board began discussing guidelines for golf playing surfaces back in 1993. It took nearly 10 years for the recommendations to crawl through the bureaucracy. "They are still not legally enforceable standards until the Department of Justice turns them into regulations," Robb says.

He adds, however, that golf courses under construction or making modifications in the interim will likely be judged on their use of the "best available information" should they be challenged on their compliance, which is his way of recommending that the guidelines be followed from September 2002 forward.

The guidelines apply to new construction and any major alterations to existing courses such as new greens or adding a tee box. (A major alteration would be a total remake of an element on the golf course.) Any public course is affected, as are all private courses that open themselves to corporate outings or nonmember functions. Here are some key points:

- An accessible route, a minimum of 48-inches wide, must run throughout the golf course and also connect to the car rental area, bag drop, practice tees and greens, and other course amenities. The route need not be paved, but it must be "usable by golf cars." Regular cart paths can be part of the accessible route.

- For holes with two teeing areas, one must be accessible. For holes with three or more tee boxes, at least two must be usable by golfers in "mobility devices," which are often single-player cars. The forward teeing area must be accessible "regardless of the number of teeing grounds per hole." Disabled players must be able to drive their golf cars onto tees and hit their balls from the cars.

- Space must be provided for the mobility devices to enter and exit all greens. These special cars were determined to cause "little or no damage to the putting green surface," according to the Access Board report. But it did not spell out whether courses must allow the

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Is Your Course Accessible?



Disabled golfer Tom Houston has been crusading to promote accessible golf since 1989.

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devices onto the greens so players can putt from them. That decision has been left to the Justice Department, according to Robb.

■ At least 5 percent of practice tee areas must be accessible.

■ No additional requirements are involved for spectators with disabilities attending a tournament or competition on a course. However, golfing facilities hosting such play "must comply with all other requirements of the ADA," which the guidelines describe as "the general obligation to provide an equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities to enjoy the services provided."

If these measures worry you now, you should've attended the early meetings on the issue. Architect Dick Phelps of Phelps Golf Course Design in Evergreen, Colo., was a member of the advisory group for the Access Board in the mid-1990s. Advocates for the disabled were thinking players in hand-operated wheelchairs would be rolling themselves up and down fairways, on to greens and even into bunkers.

"When we first started on this thing, it was a whole lot more restrictive than it eventually boiled down to be," Phelps recalls. "It was pretty scary."

Early conversations broached the idea of making every inch of a course accessible. Suggestions included capping cart paths at a 5-percent grade, making all bunkers playable for wheelchair golfers and other difficult course revisions. "The irony was that several of the disabled golfers on the committee were more moderate in their opinions" than others, Phelps says.

On the final guidelines, Phelps adds, "I think they're very fair, more fair than I thought we might have come up with."

He sees potential problems in sandy or swampy areas, where golf car accessibility might be hard to achieve. But in most areas, he says, providing access will not be difficult with today's earth-moving equipment. Single-rider cars — which are manufactured by several companies — have been tested on greens and found to apply no more pressure per square inch than the most popular mowers. "People walking on the green put down more foot-weight pressure than these things do," says Samuelson of the cars.

Since mowers must be driven onto the tees and greens, single-rider cars should be able to follow the same paths. "But tiered greens could be more of a challenge," Phelps notes.

He estimates that complying with the new ADA provisions may run up course-construction costs "a couple of percentage points," but notes that adding length to holes is a greater cost factor for today's course owners.

"I think it's up to the attitude of the architect," Phelps says. "If the architect says, 'Yeah, we can do that,' I don't think it's that difficult and it won't detract from the artistry of the golf course."

Other issues

Don Tolson was certified superintendent during the construction and opening of Fox Hollow, the highly rated public links course in Lakewood, Colo. (he has since moved to Stock Farm Club in Hamilton, Mont.). With Dennis Griffiths & Associates as architects, he helped plan Fox Hollow as a disabled-friendly course soon after ADA passed (it's been the site of an annual disabled golfers' tournament). When the course opened in 1992, at least two tees per hole and all greens were accessible. There were also no curbs on the cart paths to restrict disabled golfers and their cars, except where they were needed for drainage. All grades were set with an eye on access codes.

"If (a tee or green) was on a fairly steep grade, we started farther back with the path," Tolson says. "It didn't change irrigation patterns or mowing patterns or anything."

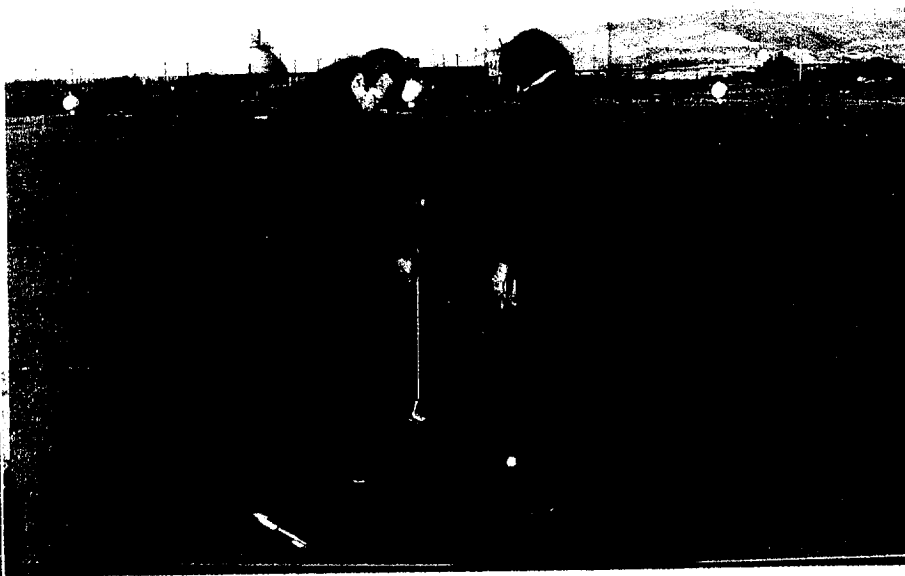
"It never added construction time or cost to the project. One of our goals in the beginning was to [build] it without compromising the quality and aesthetic aspects of the course — and we did that."

Disabled golfer Tom Houston, a 62-year-old 18-handicapper from Merritt Island, Fla., was also on the advisory group for the Access Board. He's been on a crusade to promote accessible golf since 1989 and has cajoled his way onto more than 600 courses in 49 states ("I won't take 'no' for an answer," he says). Houston, paralyzed from the waist down, developed his own wheelchair cart with 6-inch-wide front tires and 3-inch-wide back tires. He says he leaves no marks on tees or greens and can stay on top of most sand.

"I can play the whole game, which is important to me," Houston says. "Golf is a chance for a person with a disability to get out and play a game with able-bodied people and play it by the same rules." He says this is rare since most disabled people must play by "special rules."

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Is Your Course Accessible?



Advocates say golf is an inclusive sport for people with disabilities, including the blind.

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Houston maintains that compliance will not be that burdensome for golf courses, and he argues that the modifications allowing access to greens and tees, which flatten grades, will also benefit the growing number of senior golfers for whom steep grades can be a problem on foot. His biggest quibble with the new guidelines is that they do not stipulate the same access to bunkers. The Access Board reasoned that bunkers are hazards and not desirable places for golfers, but Houston has another take — his score is suffering when he must ask a playing partner to get his ball out of the sand for him. “I’m taking a penalty stroke when I shouldn’t have to take a penalty stroke,” he says.

Tolson says the only place Fox Hollow didn’t succeed in its accessibility was the bunkers. Players there also must get someone else in their group to toss the ball out to them and take a stroke. He used his experience at the Colorado course to help in construction at Stock Farm. Though the Montana track is private and opened in 1999, before the recent new guidelines, it is set up with easy grades to accommodate older golfers with hip problems and other debilities. Tolson views the new ADA provisions as being in harmony with the need for all courses to accommodate the higher number of those golfers today, particularly seniors, who suffer from decreased mobility.

“What (golf courses) need to comply with is pretty much standard on most courses anyway — as long as they can comply with the philosophy of where people can drive [a car],” he says.

The biggest current controversy centers on the single-rider cars and their utility for a wide

range of disabilities. Houston calls it “the unresolved part” of the access debate — specifically whether golf facilities must be required to keep single-rider cars in stock to accommodate a disabled golfer should one come to play. That decision lies in the hands of the Department of Justice, which has not made a ruling.

But a court ruling on golf courses operated by the city of Indianapolis took up the issue. In the accessibility settlement brought on by that case, the city was required to purchase and have on hand at least two single-rider cars for golfers who might need them. The two cars can be moved among the various municipal courses so that each one does not have to stock them. This decision may have set the stage for future rulings. “That doesn’t mean it sets a total precedent . . . it’s hard to say,” Houston says.

Robb, the advocate for accessible golf, says that the Justice Department must rule on this and other issues such as whether all courses must allow single-rider cars on putting surfaces. Those rulings have yet to come. He says the department has indicated it will make the call on these access questions, but adds that “it is very possible that litigation will beat them to it.”

Houston maintains that single-rider cars, unless they fit more disabled golfers in the future, are not the answer. He says there are too many individuals that can’t use the cars because of their unique disabilities. “Maybe 10 percent of the paralyzed population could use one of these cars, and that’s not a big enough percentage,” he says. “We have to get to 50 percent.”

Samuelson agrees that no one car can be fitted for every disabled golfer.

Houston suggests that disabled golfers obtain their own equipment and bring it to the courses. This also takes the burden off operators who might be forced to decide who can play safely on their courses or use course-supplied equipment if that is mandated.

“Pretty much everything you hear about single-riders are opinions and not based on any specific research results,” Robb says. “It is a hot topic.”

“Single-rider cars *do* provide greater access and, for some, are the only reasonable way to play. Unfortunately, we still do not have answers as to how many golfers will or could use them, as well as safety and training issues.” ■

Allar is a free-lance writer from Floyd’s Knobs, Ind.

Learn More

For more information on accessibility, email, or contact your state association.

www.accessgolf.org

National Association for Accessible Golf. The site offers a host of job opportunities, information, and support services to assist in improving the accessibility of golf courses to people with disabilities.

www.ncaonline.org

National Center of Accessibility

<http://>

golfcenterdisabilities.usga.org

USGA Resource Center for Individuals with Disabilities

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HELPING THOSE IN NEED

Ruben Samaniego's specialty is teaching golfers with disabilities

By Michael Arkush

Hanging out at a practice range in San Jose, Calif., in 1991, Ruben Samaniego couldn't understand why the facility's teaching professional was having so much trouble getting through to two of his students. When the couple left, Samaniego approached the instructor. The conversation changed his life.

"What do you expect?" the teacher asked. "They were deaf."

That night, Samaniego decided it was time to expect a lot more. He told his wife he was going to quit his job managing an auto parts store, and find a way to teach the game he loved to people with disabilities.

"She almost had a heart attack," says Samaniego, who was elected to PGA membership in 1996. "I had been one of the highest-paid managers on the chain and was going into a business that wasn't high paying."

But, in just over a decade, Samaniego, 56, has profited enormously, and so have the students with disabilities whom he has tutored. After learning how to use sign language, he set up a clinic and began to give lessons to hearing-impaired golfers. He eventually created the American Deaf Golf Education Foundation

"I did what I had to do but now I do what I want to do," says Samaniego, director of clubfitting at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex in Sacramento, Calif. He also does a lot of teaching at the public facility. "I get up in the morning with a smile on my face."

About 30 percent of his students have disabilities and deal with a variety of obstacles. Many have suffered strokes, leaving some form of paralysis. Samaniego is very involved with the Saving Strokes program for the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association. The program is a way for stroke victims – or "victors," as the Association refers to them – to use the game as a form of therapy.

"I can see the changes that happen, not only physically with their golf game but the changes that happen emotionally," Samaniego says. "They

had become sullen and withdrawn and antagonistic after the stroke, but once they started to play golf again, they softened and became more of the man or lady that they used to be. It's a treatment not only of the golf game but of the entire person."

To be sure, teaching golfers with disabilities requires patience. Samaniego has an endless supply. "It just takes time," he says. "You have to allow them to progress at their own rate. You can't force them because it does not work."

It's difficult to overstate Samaniego's impact.

"He's tireless," says Selinda Shontz, senior director of Saving Strokes. "He knows how to

bring them out of themselves to enjoy the game of golf again." Shontz cited the example of a 60-something man who had been unable to walk. The man began working with Samaniego and, six weeks later, "he was swinging the club and crying because he was so excited. He never thought he'd be able to play golf again."

Samaniego, who served as a medical technician in Vietnam, is aware how people shy away from those with disabilities. He embraces them. "Everybody is afraid of people with disabilities," he says. "But becoming a friend to them is much

more important than staying away. For the grace of God, I could be standing in front of them instead of them standing in front of me."

His work in clubfitting is also crucial. "They have parts of their games that are restricted," he says. "So, with fitting clubs, you're fitting them to their disabilities."

It is not difficult to find the inspiration behind Samaniego's sense of compassion. It was his late father, Hiram, an interpreter for the court system. "He was an advocate of the migrant worker," Samaniego says.

Likewise, Samaniego thinks of future advocates.

"I know that what I do today will be carried on by others," he says. □



Samaniego managed an auto parts store before changing careers.

Michael Arkush is a free-lance golf writer from Oakview, Calif.

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FACILITY OPERATIONS

AUDIT YOUR GOLF FACILITY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH ADA

TOUGHEST 4 FEET IS NOT ON YOUR PUTTING GREEN, IT'S FROM PARKING LOT TO TEELINE

BY DOUG SAUNDERS

Golf range operators around the country are entering the New Year with an acute awareness of how the slowdown in the golf industry has affected them. It is clear that the numbers are down, and the myriad of oft-cited reasons – the economy, the 9/11 factor, golf is too expensive, the game takes too long to learn and to play – have all been discussed and considered for months. Understanding the reasons behind the slump is helpful, but many of these factors are situations beyond the facility manager's control.

As the calendar advances, it's a good time to consider things that you can address on your own to control expenses and perhaps generate new sources of income. To this end it is



Putting practice at Haggin Oaks.

important to assess your facility to be sure that you meet all local, state, and federal guidelines. Dealing with regulations is not glamorous duty, but it is as unavoidable as taxes.

One challenging aspect of federal regulations to deal with is the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This broad law was passed in 1990 to provide comprehensive civil rights protection to the 54-million Americans with disabilities, and is separated into five parts, or titles that address many areas including employment, telecommunications, and access to public facilities.

Not Just Guidelines, It's The Law

This legislation has expanded over the past decade to set standards for golf courses and golf ranges that deal with access issues for golfers with disabilities. These guidelines have specifics that ranges must adhere to. For the range owner it is important to understand that the provisions spelled out in ADA are not just guidelines, it is the law of the land.

ADA also strikes fear into managers like no other regulation. The stories are out there of how the teeth of this law can bite the unsuspecting.

Take, for example, the city of Indianapolis, Ind., which was recently sued for denying access to a golfer with a disability at one of its city run courses. This fear can lead to resentment that this is another example of government intrusion that makes it difficult to do business.

This is the furthest thing from the truth. The ideals behind ADA are there to ensure all facets of society are accessible to all citizens, and to encourage the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the fabric of society. By keeping this simple concept in mind it becomes easier to see how compliance to ADA guidelines is more than just adhering to the law – it is also the right thing to do.

A 4-Foot Wide Path Free Of Obstacles

The specifics laid out by ADA are set to create a "path of travel." The guidelines put specifics to basic common sense with the idea of helping to guarantee anyone the ability to get from point A to point B. This path development has to begin in the parking lot by providing sufficient handicap parking spaces, and developing a barrier-free 48-inch wide path to your facility.

ADA guidelines also focus on ease of access within your buildings. You must consider if you have proper ramps for elevated entries, compliant bathroom facilities, and if your shop area has wide aisles to accommodate mobility devices and if merchandise can be reached easily.

The key is to again merely to apply common sense to these issues. Remember to consider them as you set up your shop in a way that it fits the guidelines but still creates an efficient layout for your customer base. Don't look at ADA requirements as restrictions to your layout, use them to enhance your pro shop layout.

Robert "Sam" Samuelson is the Head Superintendent at Haggin Oaks Golf Complex, a 36-hole facility with a practice range that is run by the city of Sacramento, CA. During his three years at the complex he has seen how being proactive about the ADA issues can become an asset to a facility rather than a burden.

Haggin Oaks Takes Proactive Role

"There is so much unfounded fear about ADA and what it means to golf courses and driving ranges," explained Samuelson. "Here at Haggin Oaks we have reached out to the community to encourage people with disabilities to come and learn about the game of golf. We have a series of programs, including Stroke Savers, Project Gain, and the Golden Eagles that provide the opportunity for persons with disabilities to come out to the course. I have seen how this can be such a transforming experience for the participants. Coming out and being involved with golf helps people to break down the barriers that their disability has caused, and helps them be closer to the fabric of the community."

The range at Haggin Oaks features 40 hitting stations and at the far left side of the range are seven stations that are set up

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FACILITY OPERATIONS: AUDIT YOUR GOLF FACILITY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH ADA

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to ADA standards at 10 feet wide, so that a player can bring a mobility cart into the station. Around the back of the teeline, a concrete path 60 inches wide allows for easy access to the stations. The practice area also includes a putting green easily accessible with a modified cart.

The city of Sacramento has taken the bold steps of reaching out to persons with disabilities to make them aware of the programs that they offer. Through the local chapter of the American Heart Association, stroke victims learn about the



Wide access path allows the disabled golfer easy entry

Stroke Savers golf program as a different form of rehabilitation that helps to get patients outside and active again.

Ann Weaver is the Director of Golf for all six of the Sacramento city golf courses. Her efforts to nurture these programs for golfers with disabilities have produced benefits on the bottom line.

"We have found that nearly 10% of our overall business has been generated through these program when you figure in the business in the restaurant and pro shop from the players' support groups. If you want to nurture this segment, you have to let people know that such programs are readily available to them," Weaver explained.

Make An 'Access Audit' A Priority

For range operators who haven't addressed the specifics of ADA at their facility, it is important to take the steps to audit your property in order to identify barriers to path of travel and access issues that need be corrected. Creating an audit that lists the deficiencies and pinpoints a timeframe in which they will be corrected can serve as an insurance policy against litigation.

The ADA guidelines require that 5% of the tee stations should be accessible by providing a minimum 10'x 10' area. If your stations are fixed width, be sure to address this aspect by either creating wide station areas or be sure to have the flexibility to move station areas around to provide such stations if the need arises.

Impact In Miniature Golf Course Planning

These guidelines also affect miniature golf courses and their layouts. Discussions have been held with the miniature golf industry during the last few years to come up with a final solution. Steve Hix is the Executive Director of the Miniature Golf Association and has been helping to shape the impact of

ADA on the industry.

"Our business was looked at differently than the golf industry in that at first the request was to have all areas of each hole accessible. This brought up the problem of trying to determine where barriers could be set. Now the guidelines are calling for 50% of the holes to be accessible, but still the need for 48-inch pathways has to be considered in the design. The challenge of ADA is that the spirit of the law was to set standards to improve the performance for people with disabilities, but some advocacy groups have worked to redefine the law from a total environmental aspect that loses a balance that serves all," Hix said.

Newer facilities must consider these ADA impacts well before construction begins. Architectural firms will take these requirements into consideration while designing the parking areas and buildings, but the location of the range and how to make it barrier-free mandates careful consideration.

Steve Schrader is the General Manager at Harding Park Golf Course, an 18-hole city-owned facility in San Francisco. This course went through a \$16-million upgrade that included the relocation and reconstruction of the driving range.

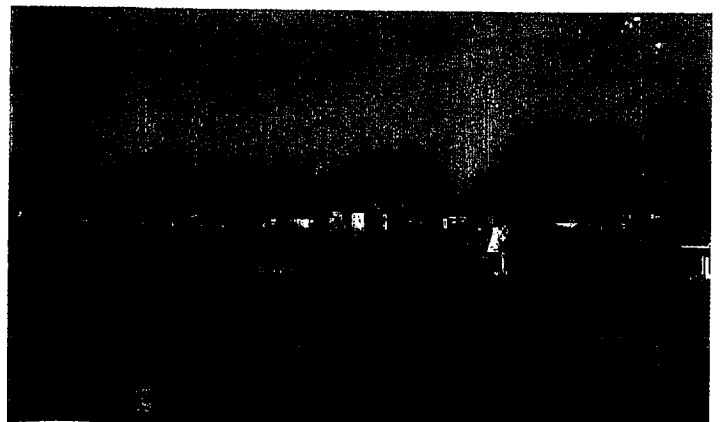
"We positioned the range in a new location that is closer to the new parking area specifically to make it more accessible. The tee area for the new range is large, and we are using a synthetic turf surface. As the hitting stations are marked out by ropes, creating a larger area to accommodate a mobility device is easy to do," Schrader said.

Websites For ADA Information And Golf

Information about ADA and how it affects a golf range facility or golf course can be obtained from the National Alliance for Accessible Golf (www.accessgolf.org) and from the United States Golf Association (www.usga.org).

The important thing for any golf range owner to consider is that if your facility does not meet these guidelines, be sure to draft an audit that defines barriers and offers a time frame to correct the problems.

Just as important is for facility owners to embrace the need for access by encouraging the disabled in their local area to consider golf as a great form of rehabilitation and a great way to expand their world. The rewards received by opening the way for others will be everlasting. □



Series of stations for golfers with disabilities

Photos courtesy of National Alliance for Accessible Golf



Open access

The city of Sacramento, Calif., has laid a road map for making the game of golf ADA compliant.

Doug Saunders

On a perfect afternoon, Walter Hughes of Sacramento, Calif., is honing his swing on the driving range at Haggin Oaks Golf Course, a city-operated complex. Just like other golfers, he is working hard on his tempo to keep his game sharp. The only thing that separates him from others on the range is that Hughes, who is paralyzed from the waist down, is hitting from a modified golf car.

But as you watch him rip his 5-wood 180 yards on a rope and see the smile on his face as he finds a level of consistency, you realize that he is no different from others who love the game of golf. The joy of hitting a perfect shot is a universal feeling.

Hughes is fortunate that in Sacramento, the four city-run facilities have made major efforts to accommodate disabled golfers' special needs. Ann Weaver, CGCS, a 20-year GCSAA member, has been the golf manager for Capital City Golf since 1995 and is responsible for the operation of four golf complexes

and six golf courses. She has a strong understanding of the importance of making public properties inclusive and accessible.

While Weaver understands the implications of the federal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), she also has seen how making golf more accessible to persons with disabilities can be a very rewarding experience for everyone involved with the game.

Nuts and bolts

The Americans with Disabilities Act, enacted in 1990, provides comprehensive civil rights protection to the 54 million Americans with disabilities. The act addresses many aspects, including employment, telecommunications and access to public facilities — and that means public golf courses.

Many golf course managers react with fear when the topic of access for customers with disabilities comes up. Their



Golf is one of the few sports that can accommodate individuals with disabilities.

fears include possible litigation, possible damage to the course and the fear of dealing with the unknown. But when fear leads to inaction, the consequences may be worse. Consider the city of Indianapolis, which was recently involved in a class action lawsuit for denying access to a golfer with a disability at one of its city-operated golf courses.

Weaver had her first encounter with the implications of ADA when she served as an expert witness in a similar case while working at another municipality. She says the experience gave her a firm awareness of ADA, which she brought with her to Sacramento.

"You first have to be aware that it is our job to provide access to all to our facilities. This is not just the right thing to do, it is the law. But with some basic research and educating of your staff, developing a plan to be ADA compliant is not as daunting as it may seem at first glance," Weaver says.

Weaver says it's also important to keep a face to this challenge and to continually ask the question, "Who are the customers with disabilities who may come to my facility?" They may have suffered a stroke, may be amputees, paraplegics, hearing or sight impaired, or may need a mobility device. Yet the golfer with a dis-

ability is a golfer first and should be treated as such when they arrive on the course, she adds.

According to information from the National Center on Accessibility and the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, golf is one of the few sports that can accommodate individuals with disabilities, helping them develop higher self-esteem and bringing them closer to the mainstream of daily life. For the superintendent, watching golf become a vehicle to improve someone's overall life can be a rewarding experience.

Getting started

Weaver's efforts to make the city golf facilities ADA-compliant are tied to the overall efforts of the city. Sacramento is required to create an ADA phased transition plan, and Weaver has been working with a consulting firm to develop an ADA work plan that deals specifically with the city's golf facilities. This plan first evaluates the golf complexes to identify any barriers such as parking spaces, doorways, building accesses, counter heights and restroom facilities. From this audit, a comprehensive plan to address any shortcomings can be outlined for public scrutiny.

"Any public golf facility needs to

understand the access needs of persons with disabilities. By identifying the barriers that may exist, a course can also work on a creating a development plan to deal with inefficiencies that may exist," Weaver explains.

Managers and superintendents can research the ADA guidelines through the GCSAA Web site (www.gcsaa.org). Other excellent sources of information are the USGA (www.usga.org), the National Center on Accessibility (www.ncaonline.org) and the National Alliance for Accessible Golf (www.accessgolf.org).

Identifying barriers is the first step, but removing the barriers that may exist is where the superintendent will become involved. At Capital City Golf, that task falls to Robert Samuelson, CGCS, a 22-year GCSAA member. Samuelson has been at Haggin Oaks for three years and during that time has witnessed the transformation that golf can provide for persons with disabilities. It has changed his outlook.

"We are fortunate here in that it is a flat site where our courses are located, which makes them very accessible to golfers with disabilities," Samuelson says. "I haven't had to do much to make the tees and greens accessible. I have become aware of areas around the parking lots and

clubhouse facilities in order to create an acceptable path of travel.

"Many of the items addressed in the ADA guidelines really are just common sense approaches. You just need to think in terms of 48- and 60-inch widths when you think about positioning benches, ball washers and car paths," he adds.

Samuelson suggests superintendents study the ADA guidelines that deal with course

access. These guidelines detail size of tee areas, access to bunkers and access to greens for mobility devices. They also address fairway access from car paths.

Some golf courses with varied terrain and raised tees may not be able to become truly accessible, but a super can evaluate his facility and draw up a plan to deal with shortcomings. Just having a plan in place is a major step toward ADA compliance, Samuelson says.

New equipment

Capital City Golf addressed the issue of modifying golf cars for disabled players by purchasing six golf cars designed by a local firm, USA Golf Products of Grass Valley, Calif. The cars feature 360-degree swivel seats, supports straps, dual-handle controls and adjustable foot pegs. The cars are designed to place less weight on the tires than a triplex mower so they won't damage the greens when a player is putting.

"Superintendents are worried about damage from modified carts to their greens but when the player has been trained to drive on the greens, the equipment will cause no adverse effect," Samuelson says. "In fact I have noticed here that the golfers with disabilities who play here are very aware of their impact, not only to the golf course, but also are aware of their pace of play."

A golfer can make advance arrangements for a single-rider car at any of the six city courses, and the Capital City staff will make sure that a car is available. Weaver points out that course operators need to consider the impact of golfers with disabilities who may arrive with their own mobility device and have plans to allow them to use their own equipment.

"This issue came up a few years ago here in Sacramento, and the issue of insurance and liability came up. After researching the implications, we do allow players to bring their device. But by purchasing a single-rider cart, a facility can be a step ahead in providing access to all," Weaver says.

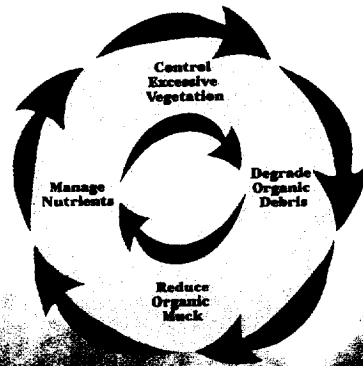
Most courses will face less demand for services for golfers with disabilities than Capital City Golf and must find ways to budget for a single-rider golf car without knowing when it will ever be needed. One solution, the Capital City staff suggests, is to rent the car to single (able-bodied) players in order to generate income from the investment when it is not reserved by golfers with disabilities.

Marketing accessibility

Capital City Golf has made great strides in bringing the game of golf to persons with disabilities. In the last five years, PGA professional Reuben Samaniego has worked on developing various programs to introduce them to golf.

"Many people with disabilities develop barriers in their lives that cause self-imposed limitations. I use golf as a way of breaking down these barriers so that the disabled can

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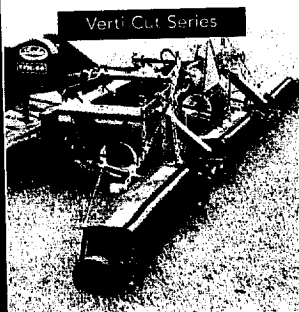
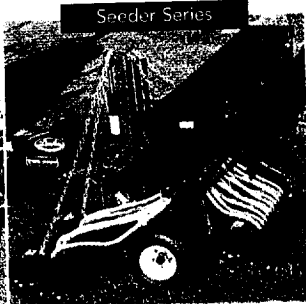
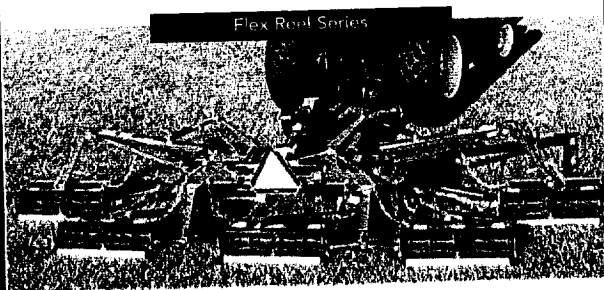
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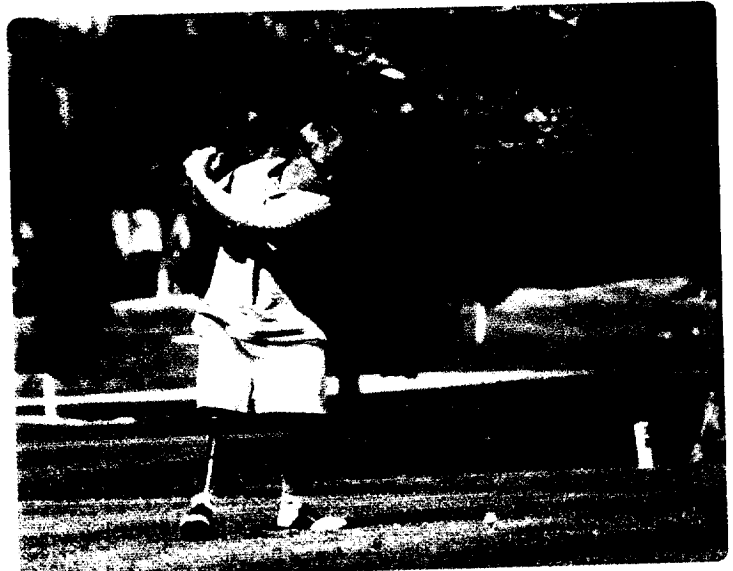
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The ADA protects more than 54 million Americans.

break out of their shells," Samaniego explains. "Just coming to the driving range one day a week can be an invigorating experience that can give these players a stronger sense of self reliance and confidence that is crucial to their overall rehabilitation."

Reuben began his programs with four instructors, seven volunteers and only two participants. Today his programs are offered twice a week with up to 30 participants at a time. He has created relationships with the American Stroke Association to get word about the programs out to stroke survivors.

"The Saving Strokes program is very popular because many stroke survivors may have been golfers before. It helps them to find a way back to something that they enjoyed before for their overall health," Samaniego says.

Samaniego also coordinates the California Eagles program, which is geared toward juniors and adults with Down syndrome and cerebral palsy; works with the Northern California chapter of Special Olympics to host an annual tournament; and oversees Fore Golf Sacramento, which has been chosen as one of five pilot programs for Project Gain, a national effort developed by the National Alliance for Accessible Golf.

"What we have discovered is that this core of golfers are passionate and dedicated about the game of golf," Weaver says. "I would estimate that 10 percent of our business is directly related to the disabled golfers and their immediate families and support groups. This is a segment of golf that needs to be considered by all in the sport."

What's next?

Weaver, Samaniego and Capital City Golf are facing ADA's challenge and achieving their goals with diligent research and a proactive approach. Walter Hughes now plays twice a week and enjoys being able to come to Haggin Oaks as a single and be paired up with other golfers.

"It helps me have a sense of freedom to enjoy the game with others," Hughes says. "There may be a little awkwardness when I come to the first tee, but by the end of the day we all are having a great time on the course. That is the best feeling of all."

Y

Doug Saunders is a free-lance writer living in Truckee, Calif.

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**SACRAMENTO
GOLF COUNCIL**

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Sacramento, CA 95832

www.sacgolfcouncil.org

1st Annual
Golfers with Disabilities Championship
sponsored by JTS Communities

Sunday, September 12, 2004
at the Haggin Oaks Golf Complex
3645 Fulton Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95821

Net proceeds from this event will go to **Disabled Sports USA Far West (DSUSAFW)**, a 501C3 non-profit organization, to support its **Fore Golf Sacramento** program for golfers with disabilities. This document is available in alternate formats. To request an alternate format please contact Ann Weaver, Golf Manager for Capital City Golf, at (916) 433-6315.

Putting

Challenge:

Held on the main practice putting green from 8:00am to 1:00pm, and is open to all amateur golfers. Entry fee is \$7.00 per round; enter as many times as you want for a chance to win cash and prizes. Putting Challenge sponsored by USA Golf. An optional lunch will be available for an additional fee of \$20 per person.

3-hole

Challenge:

Held on the Golf Academy, located behind the driving range beginning at 8:00am. Open to all amateur golfers with disabilities. Scramble format with four players per team. Players may have an assistant or coach on the course with them to facilitate play. Maximum field is 48 players. Established golf handicap not required. Entry fee is \$25 per player, includes green fee, lunch and awards Cart not included – please note, a limited number of single-rider adaptive carts are available to rent.

9-hole

Challenge:

Held on the front 9 of the Arcade Creek Golf Course. Open to all amateur golfers with disabilities and guests. Play will start at 8:00am. Format is individual play; flights will be determined by score total after 4 holes are played. Two flights will earn awards to fifth place each. Guests are encouraged to play, and will compete in Callaway format. Players may have a player assistant or coach on the course with them to facilitate play. Maximum field is 60 players. Established golf handicap not required. Entry fee is \$40, includes green fee, lunch and awards Cart not included – please note, a limited number of single-rider adaptive carts are available to rent.

18-hole

Challenge:

Open to all amateur golfers. Play is 18-holes on the Alister MacKenzie course. Format is 4-person teams – players will be entered in the Callaway, blind bogey or handicap golf divisions. Players may have a player assistant or coach on the course with them to facilitate play. Maximum field is 144 players, shotgun start at 7:00am. Established golf handicap is not required. Entry fee is \$95 per player, and includes green fee, cart, lunch and awards. Please note, a limited number of single-rider adaptive golf carts are available to rent.

Rules &

Information:

The 3-hole, 9-hole and 18-hole challenge entry fees are due September 3rd – no refunds offered after this date. There will be a \$20 service charge for all returned checks. Player must check-in and register at least 30 minutes prior to the start of play. Start times for 9-hole challenge will be posted in the golf shop and posted on the SGC website at www.sacgolfcouncil.org on September 6, 2004. Please contact Lainie Case, SGC Tournament Director, at 916-487-1610 with your questions. Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call the TTY line at (916) 481-2253. For **hotel reservation** information call Jane Siebers of *Golf Sacramento* at (866) 790-3978.

Single-rider adaptive carts are in limited supply and will be rented on a first-come, first serve basis. If you wish to reserve a single-rider adaptive cart, please submit your \$8.50 fee with your registration and check the box on the form below. Golfers with disabilities planning to bring their own single-rider cart or assistive device should contact Ann Weaver, Golf Manager at 916-433-6315 or by e-mail at aweaver@cityofsacramento.org by September 3rd.

Play will be governed by the USGA Rules of Golf and its decisions. Modification of Rules for Golfers with Disabilities will apply. Local Rules will be provided to contestants at registration on the day of play. Contestants are responsible for being ready to play when called for their starting time. The use of cellular phones or pagers during the event is generally prohibited.

Please contact Ann Weaver at 916-433-6315 regarding sponsor opportunities.

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**1st Annual Golfers with Disabilities Championship presented by JTS Communities
2004 OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM - PLEASE PRINT**

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____
First Last MI

Mailing Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Your average 9-hole golf score: _____ Your average 18-hole golf score: _____

- I am planning to bring a player assistant or coach to facilitate play.
- Please reserve a single-rider adaptive cart (add \$8.50 to your entry fee), rented on a first-come, first serve basis.
- Yes, I plan to bring and use my own single-rider adaptive cart or assistive device – please contact Ann Weaver, Golf Manager at 916-433-6315 or via e-mail at aweaver@cityofsacramento.org by September 3rd.

Indicate which event you wish to enter Indicate your physical disability:

Additional lunch ____ @ \$20 ea = \$ _____ Heart/Stroke survivor Muscular disease

3-hole challenge \$25 Hearing/Speech impaired Developmental disability

9-hole medal play \$40 Amputee Other disability

18-hole best-ball \$95 Visually impaired

*Entry fee for the 3-hole, 9-hole or 18-hole event includes lunch.

For use by persons without disabilities playing in the 9-hole or 18-hole challenge, please provide information:

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____
First Last MI

Mailing Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Your average 9-hole golf score: _____ Your average 18-hole golf score: _____

Indicate which event you wish to enter:

Additional lunch ____ @ \$20 ea = \$ _____

9-hole medal play \$40

18-hole best-ball \$95 *Entry fee for 9-hole & 18-hole event includes lunch.

Mail check in US dollars and this form to: Lainie Case, Tournament Director,
3540 Valwood Court, Sacramento, CA 95821 Phone: (916) 487-1610

Make check payable to: Sacramento Golf Council

Entry Deadline: 5:00pm on September 3rd – NO REFUNDS after this date.

Email address for information: rmartin@sacgolfcouncil.org

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Bob McBee
 Neil Orchard
 Dewey Sutton
 Betty Thomas
 Dorothy Trevethick
 Mike Woods

Thom Oliver, Parks & Recreation, County of Sacramento
 Ann Weaver, Capital City Golf, City of Sacramento

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Contact List

<u>Program</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Contact Number</u>
California Eagles – Haggin Oaks G.C. William. Land G.C.	Lainie Case, SGC Director Mike Nichols, SAY Golf Program Mgr.	916-487-1610 916-277-1213
Swing for the Blind	Mike Nichols, SAY Golf Program Mgr.	916-277-1213
Saving Strokes	Selinda Shontz, American Heart Assoc.	916-446-6505
Fore Golf Sacramento	Melanie Clouse, DSUSAFW	916-722-6447
CCG ADA Transition Plan/Self Evaluation		916-433-6307
Project Gain	Melanie Clouse, DSUSAFW	916-722-6447
1 st Annual Golfers with Disabilities Championship	Lainie Case, SGC Director	916-487-1610

Capital City Golf TTY Numbers:

Bartley Cavanaugh Golf Course	916-665-3637
Bing Maloney Golf Complex	916-391-8006
Haggin Oaks Golf Complex	916-481-2253
William Land Golf Course	916-277-1207
Capital City Golf Administration	916-433-6294

