

Annual Newsletter

December 2024



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Annual Meeting

The Buffalo Golf Club Board of Directors would like to extend an invitation to all Golf Club Season Pass Holders to the Annual Meeting that will be held at the Club House on **Thursday, December 12th**:

5:30 PM – Doors Open
6:00 PM – Pizza & Wings Served
6:15 PM – Meeting Begins

- Drinks will be available for purchase.
- Many drink specials and \$2 beers (while supplies last).
- Pizza and wings will be available free of charge (while supplies last).

President's Message

Greetings Golfers

As the year draws to a close, we're excited to reflect on another fantastic season at Buffalo Golf Club (BGC). The success of 2024 was made possible by our incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, and, of course, all of you—our passionate golfers. Thank you for supporting and enjoying our excellent golf course in 2024.

A Big Thank You

We couldn't do it without our amazing team:

- **Pro Shop Staff:** For their dedication to supporting our golfers with top-notch service.
- **Grounds Crew:** For keeping our course in pristine condition, rain or shine.
- **Food & Beverage Staff:** For fueling our rounds with delicious meals and warm hospitality.

The Past Few Years: Growth and Positive Change at BGC

The last few years at Buffalo Golf Club have been both exciting and challenging, marked by significant progress and many moving pieces. Here are just a few highlights from the past three years:

- **New Leadership:** We welcomed a new Head Golf Professional, Food and Beverage Manager, and Superintendent, each bringing fresh perspectives and expertise to key areas of the club.
- **In-House Operations:** We transitioned the management of the Pro Shop and Restaurant operations from subcontractors to in-house management and staffing. This shift has allowed us greater control over the golfer's experience, and our team has grown from 12 employees in 2021 (grounds crew only) to now 43 employees.
- **Equipment Investments:** We've dedicated significant resources to maintaining and upgrading our equipment fleet, ensuring our tools meet the demands of maintaining a top-quality course.
- **Infrastructure and Technology Enhancements:** We've made substantial investments in course infrastructure, added new rental golf carts, and implemented new technologies to enhance the golfer experience and improve operational efficiency.

I remind everyone of these accomplishments to emphasize that, after an unorthodox and somewhat erratic few years, we're optimistic about entering a well-deserved period of stability—for both our staff and our patrons. With a great team now firmly in place, we're incredibly excited about what the future holds.

President's Message – Continued

To support this goal of stability, we're thrilled to announce that Dan Ashley will be transitioning into the role we originally envisioned for him—BGC General Manager—where he will oversee all departments. This move is a huge step forward for our operations, bringing greater cohesion between the pro shop, grounds, and food and beverage teams than ever before. Importantly, we've been able to make this transition without increasing payroll, thanks to the strong foundation we've built.

Nik Constantine will be taking over the management of the golf department, joining Dana Ashley and Matt Overton as our department heads. We're excited and fortunate to have Nik coming back.

And don't worry—Dan will still be available for lessons! Book a session with him to sharpen your game or consider giving the gift of lower scores this holiday season with a lesson package for the golfer in your life.

Let's Build a Positive and Fun Environment Together!

We know everyone is passionate about our golf course and the game we love—and that's what makes Buffalo Golf Club special. Like you, our BGC team holds the course to extremely high standards and works tirelessly to maintain healthy turf and exceptional playing conditions. Challenges like the city shutting off our water early for maintenance this year—despite peak course conditions and fall temperatures reaching 85 degrees—are beyond our control, but rest assured, in spite of this setback, the right actions are being taken to promote the long-term health of our course. Also, Dan and Matt work diligently together to ensure the playability of the course is suitable and fun for the wide range of golfers we host.

While we received immense positive feedback this year about the course, we understand that not everyone sees the game and course the same, and that's okay—golf is a game full of personal preferences, and playability is inherently subjective. Some of us love fast greens; others prefer them slower. Some enjoy tighter fairway grass, while others like a little more cushion. Some prefer more rough around the greens, while our "Texas Wedge" enthusiasts appreciate shorter collars and approaches. That's part of the beauty of golf—it's a challenge that encourages us to adapt, embrace the course as it is, and enjoy the journey.

Again, we love everyone's passion for BGC, and we encourage people to share their ideas, thoughts, and opinions—both good and bad—but please do so in a positive and constructive way, as we try to build a more uplifting environment. If you do have concerns, please start by asking questions and seeking to understand why things are done a certain way. Have a conversation, learn, and embrace different opinions—even if we don't all agree.

Let's focus on solutions, celebrate our wins, and show gratitude to the staff and fellow golfers who make our club a wonderful community. Most importantly, let's remember why we're here: to play a game we love, have fun, and enjoy time with friends and family.

On behalf of our dedicated Board of Directors—consisting of Bill Poniatowski, Jason Camino, Sandi Bidonde, Brett McCoy, Barb Hodgson, John Taylor, and myself—thank you for helping us make Buffalo Golf Club a place we're proud to call home.

Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

Adam Michelena
President – Buffalo Golf Club
board@buffalowygolf.com



Pro's Message

Buffalo Golfing Community,

I am happy to say we are coming off a very busy year at Buffalo Golf Club. In 2023 our total rounds of golf were 17,750, and in 2024 we had a total round count of 20,397. For a course that has a fairly limited season, that means we were a very busy golf course, as I am sure many of you could see.

One of our key goals this year was to continue improving the pace of play, and although there are always slower days than we would like, our average round time this year was 3 hours and 47 minutes. This is well below the average for courses with

Pro's Message – Continued

over 20,000 rounds. Considering the amount of play, we are very happy with this average but are constantly working to see those weekend times get better and better. To achieve this, we will be having a course ranger during peak times in 2025, most likely Friday through Sunday.

Regarding staffing, we would like to thank Darian Mehling for her help at the golf course this year, and we wish her the best of luck in Texas, where she recently moved for a full-time Assistant Golf Professional position. Nik Constantine will be back on staff this season and taking on more responsibility in managing the golf department. Keehan Rickett and Wyatt Waller will both be taking on Assistant Golf Professional duties in 2025.

The Junior Program thrived in 2024, with over 65 juniors attending our summer clinics. During the winter months, we brought the game of golf into Cloud Peak Elementary School with our SNAG Golf Equipment. SNAG Golf is a system used to teach golf effectively and safely in an indoor environment. This program was fantastic and put golf clubs in the hands of every third, fourth, and fifth grader in Buffalo. In January/February of this winter, we will be doing the same in Kaycee and look forward to that program being just as successful.

Our PGA Hope Program also grew in 2024; we had 12 graduates from our Buffalo program this season. PGA Hope is a program that brings local veterans to the game of golf and includes 6 weeks of instruction to each veteran. After two seasons, we have had 18 graduates and look forward to growing that number once again.

Zechariah Owens, a graduate of our first program in 2023, has gone on to become a PGA Hope Ambassador for the Colorado Section of the PGA, which includes clubs from Wyoming, Colorado, and South Dakota. This is a great honor for Zec, and it is a shared goal of ours to keep growing this program in Buffalo and throughout the state. At the end of this newsletter, you will find a great article from the PGA, announcing Zec as a PGA Hope Ambassador. There's a link to the article below as well. Last month, the Buffalo Bulletin also published a nice article about Zec, so be sure to check that out too.

Article Link: [Full Article on the Colorado PGA Website](#)

Thank you all for your support and for a great 2024 season.

Dan Ashley
General Manager, PGA Professional
pro@buffalowgolf.com



Bison House Message

Thank you to everyone who came in to eat at the restaurant this year. We really appreciate all of the support.

We plan to reopen on March 15th and will have our St. Patrick's Day meal available that Saturday and Sunday. We will start by only being open a few days a week and will increase the days we are open once the golf course is officially open. We may also add Saturdays as another day that we will serve breakfast. Follow us on Facebook for updates and reminders.

We will have a new pizza choice available next golf season, and it's going to have ranch on it instead of pizza sauce. We tested it out and it's delicious!

We are thrilled that our experienced day cook will be coming back, but we will need a couple new part time cooks. We need an evening cook, and we also have 1 -2 day shifts available. It is very difficult to find people who want to cook, so if you know of anyone interested, please have them email Dana at bisonhouse@buffalowgolf.com.

We look forward to another golf season with your continued support!

Have a wonderful winter!

Dana Ashley
Bison House – Food & Beverage Manager



Superintendent's Message

A Message from the Superintendent

Now that the 2024 golf season has concluded, I'm proud to share what an exceptional year we've had at Buffalo Golf Club. Despite increased rounds and a rigorous maintenance schedule, the course performed excellently and recovered beautifully. Your patience and support during these efforts were crucial, and I thank you.

Course Performance & Recovery

Managing cultural practices amidst high play volume was challenging but rewarding. Our course achieved the "firm and fast" conditions we aimed for, and the root growth on the greens significantly improved. This is a testament to the hard work of our grounds crew and the strategic practices we implemented.

Water Shutdown and Turf Health

With our irrigation water shut off at the end of September, because of the City's need to make repairs on the system, the course's ability to remain playable for as long as it did is a testament to the importance of prioritizing turf health throughout the season. By carefully managing stress on the turf, we extended playability beyond what would normally be expected.

Turf health remains our top priority—not just for aesthetics, but for the long-term sustainability of the course. While we've made significant progress, this goal is ongoing. We won't rest until we've reached a level of health that ensures durability and consistent playability across all areas of the course.

Looking Ahead: Winter & Next Season

We have several winter projects planned to make the course even better:

- **Infrastructure improvements**
- **Soil conditioning**
- **Addressing playability concerns**

Now that winter is here, the course has been prepared to ensure a strong start next season. Tarps are in place on the greens, and temporary greens are available for play.

Please note, the course is Cart Path Only for the winter, and we kindly ask everyone to stay off the tarps to avoid damage. Rental carts are not available until 2025 opening day. Thanks for your cooperation and understanding.

Next season, our focus will expand from greens to improving fairways, tees, and roughs, aiming to replicate the success we saw with root growth on the greens. Our goal remains firm, fast, and healthy turf across the entire course.

Thank You for a Great Season!

This season was a victory for everyone involved. We've set a high standard, and with your continued support, we'll raise it even further next year.

Enjoy the winter break—we'll see you back on an even better course in the spring!

Sincerely,

Matt Overton

Head Superintendent

Buffalo Golf Club

superintendent@buffalowgolf.com



2025 Season Pass Holder Application

Please mail to: Buffalo Golf Club, Inc.

PO Box 759

Buffalo, WY 82834

Golf Season Pass Holder:

Single punch card: \$550 _____

**(20) 9-hole rounds; weekdays only.*

Single \$750 _____

Couple \$1,100 _____

Family \$1,300 _____

Student (under 25) \$185 _____

Cart Shed Lease: \$500 _____

**Signed lease and fee due by April 1st*

Handicap Fee (per person): \$50 _____

**Please pay handicap fee with your dues.*

Men's League Team Sponsor \$100 _____

**Sponsor only. Captain entry not included. Fill out form on next page.*

Men's League: \$100 _____

**Individual Entry Fee.*

Ladies' League (Cloud Peak): \$100 _____

Ladies' League (Blacktooth): \$30 _____

Season Range Pass:

Single \$190 _____

Couple \$240 _____

Family \$290 _____

Season Cart Pass:

Single \$600 _____

Couple \$750 _____

TOTAL DUE: \$ _____

**No refunds of a golf season pass after June 1st*

Names: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Email Addresses: _____

**Email addresses required for online booking and for club communications.*

As we all know, our nearly century-old clubhouse is nearing the end of its lifecycle, and the need for a new facility that will carry us into the future becomes more pressing each year. Our golf course is among the best around, and we envision a new clubhouse that not only serves as a vibrant community hub, but also offers year-round opportunities for golf and additional recreation for Johnson County residents.

Fundraising to achieve this ambitious goal is well underway and continues to build momentum. A dedicated savings account through the Buffalo Golf Course Foundation, Inc. has been established, and thanks to your generous support, the fund has grown to \$382,944.91.

Would you like to contribute to the new clubhouse fund and help bring this vision to life? Every donation makes a difference!

YES ___ **\$10** ___ **\$25** ___ **\$100** ___ **Other** _____

DEFINITIONS

- Single Season Pass Holders shall be persons over 18 years of age.
- Couple Season Pass Holders shall consist of any married couple.
- Family Season Pass Holders shall consist of any married couples or single parents with household children less than 18 years of age, or married couples or single parents with full-time students through 24 years of age.
- Student memberships shall consist of persons under the age of 25 who attend school on a full-time basis.



MEN'S LEAGUE TEAM SPONSOR FORM 2025

SPONSOR/TEAM NAME: _____ \$100.00

Please indicate below if sponsor is paying for Captain and/or Additional Players

Team Captain Name: _____ \$100.00

Team Captain Email Address: _____

Additional Player: _____ \$100.00

Additional Player: _____ \$100.00

TOTAL DUE \$ _____

****All Men's League participants must have an active GHIN handicap****

Please Remit Payment To:

Buffalo Golf Club

P.O. Box 759

Buffalo, WY 82834

Men's League Draft: THURSDAY, APRIL 24th @ 7:00 PM in the Clubhouse
League Play Begins Thursday, May 1st



REACH FOUNDATION

COLORADO



COLORADO

PGA of America Hosts PGA HOPE National Golf & Wellness Week – Honoring Veterans at Congressional Country Club, Including 4th PGA HOPE Ambassador from the Colorado Section, Zechariah Owens

Zec Recently Returned Home from the PGA HOPE National Golf and Wellness October 10-14 at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland



Larkspur, CO — October 14, 2025 – The PGA REACH Colorado Foundation is proud to announce the selection of Army Veteran Zec Owens as the fourth PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) Colorado Section Ambassador since 2019. This appointment underscores the foundation's commitment to enhancing the lives of veterans through golf and community support.

The PGA of America REACH Foundation—the 501(c)(3) charitable foundation of the PGA of America hosted 19 Veterans and two Veteran squad leaders at PGA HOPE National Golf & Wellness Week, presented by ConocoPhillips and T-Mobile, October 10-14 at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland. Included in that exclusive group was Zec Owens, who is a 2023 Graduate of the PGA HOPE Buffalo Wyoming Chapter, led by PGA of America Golf Professional Dan Ashley, at Buffalo Golf Club.

The participating Veterans, all graduates of their local PGA HOPE (Helping Our Patriots Everywhere) programs, participated in an immersive five-day event that included advanced golf instruction from PGA of America Golf Professionals and wellness training from the Cohen Veterans Network - covering topics including social media, public speaking, stress management, and mental health.

A special highlight of the week, PGA of America REACH Foundation Trustee and record 18-time major champion Jack Nicklaus, made a surprise visit, joining the Veterans for a putting contest on Sunday and a fireside chat with the award-winning reporter and PGA of America REACH Foundation Trustee, Bret Baier. Nicklaus, who was joined by his wife Barbara—the 2019 winner of the PGA of America's Distinguished Service Award—is a renowned global ambassador, course designer, businessman, and philanthropist, who continues to use his success as a platform to help others.



Zec Owens, a dedicated advocate for veterans' wellness, joins the ranks of previous local PGA HOPE Colorado ambassadors Jay Millar (2023), Chris Cordova (2022), and Joseph Robinson (2019) who have helped bridge the gap between military service and civilian life through the therapeutic benefits of golf. His unique experiences and passion for helping fellow veterans make him a perfect fit for this role.

When asked what the PGA HOPE Program in Wyoming did for him, Zec stated “HOPE got me back into a community of like-minded people that I have been lacking since I left the Army. Being the 2024 PGA HOPE Ambassador means the world to me. This opportunity to help other veterans silence their demons, through the game of golf is an honor that I won’t take lightly. Life can get pretty lonely for my brothers and sisters who served, but the Buffalo GC PGA HOPE Program has brought back that needed sense of community for us.”

Zec found his true calling and served as an Army Specialist from 2013-2016. After leaving the Army, Owens sought a fulfilling pursuit and found it at the Veterans Home of Wyoming in Buffalo. There he became deeply involved in activities supporting veterans, focusing on suicide prevention and aiding those with mental health and memory challenges.



PGA HOPE Colorado programming has made a significant impact since its inception, providing veterans with opportunities to learn and enjoy the game of golf at no cost, which serves as both a

therapeutic outlet and a means of building lasting friendships. Through its programs, PGA HOPE Colorado has successfully reached over 700 veterans in calendar year 2024, helping them transition to civilian life, develop new skills, and create supportive networks within their communities. This is a growth of over 71% in veterans served compared to 2022 when the Foundation made it a strategic priority to reach more veterans.

"We are thrilled to welcome Zec as our fourth PGA HOPE Colorado Section Ambassador," said Steven Bartkowski, CEO and Executive Director of PGA REACH Colorado Foundation. "His commitment to serving his fellow veterans aligns perfectly with our mission to empower those who have served our country. We look forward to seeing the positive impact he will have on our programs in Wyoming."

PGA HOPE is not just about golf; it's about healing, connecting, and providing a pathway to community reintegration for veterans. The Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the lives of veterans by offering a supportive environment where they can engage in the game, learn new skills, and find purpose through sport.

For more information about PGA REACH Colorado foundation and how to support the programming, visit <https://reach.coloradopga.com/>.

For a list and map of all PGA HOPE Ambassadors, visit <https://sites.google.com/pgahq.com/pgahope-ambassador-hub/ambassadors>.

About PGA REACH Colorado Foundation

The PGA REACH Colorado Foundation is a 501c3 public charity in Colorado that works daily to support our over 900 Colorado PGA of America Golf Professionals to make a difference in our local communities. Programming ensures that regardless of your age or background, cost will try not to inhibit one's involvement and enjoyment of the game of golf. The mission of the PGA REACH Colorado Foundation is to positively impact the lives of youth, military, and diverse populations by enabling access to PGA of America Golf Professionals, PGA Sections, and the game of golf.

Media Contact

Steven Bartkowski
CEO/Executive Director
sbartkowski@pgahq.com



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