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**1. Why do we think a merger with the Women's Golf Association of Massachusetts (WGAM) and Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) is a good idea?**

The WGAM and the MGA have historically done and continue to do a good job of running Championships, Events and Tournaments but both organizations recognize an important opportunity to combine efforts to better serve the greater golf community and provide enhanced services to a wider audience of clubs and golfers. Currently the WGAM taps into less than 14% of all women golfers in the state. As a combined entity, we feel that we can better maximize and streamline efforts to grow the game of golf in Massachusetts for competitive, recreational and new golfers.

The concept of a merger has been discussed many times over the past few years. Both organizations have established 501(3)c statuses, are financially stable and have seen an increase in membership over the past year. It is therefore an optimal time to execute a merger of the two organizations.

In addition to enhancing its member services platform, the WGAM has experienced increased difficulty in acquiring volunteers to serve on its Board of Directors and to assist with managing tournaments. This merger will allow for an expanded volunteer base at the governing, committee and on-course levels.

The WGAM office is asked to do so much. In addition to organizing and running Tournaments, the staff is expected to keep the website updated, publicize results, track invoices and run the business office. In addition to their golf and Tournament knowledge, the WGAM staff is asked to have an expertise in IT, website management, social media and communications. The MGA is staffed with

experienced staff in the areas of accounting, marketing and communications that can be utilized to better promote all activities and services.

## **2. When will the merger become effective?**

The expected effective date for the merger is January 1, 2018. WGAM members will experience little – if any – change during the 2017 golf season.

## **3. What is the USGA's opinion of the potential merger?**

The USGA requests that State and Regional Golf Associations serve all golfers – regardless of age, skill level, gender, etc. – in their constituency in the most efficient and economical manner. The USGA recently unveiled a partnership model initiative, which will be implemented in the year 2018. The proposed “Massachusetts Golf Association” that will result from this merger meets the new standard set by the USGA as it will serve ALL golfers in the state and will have the backing of the USGA. The timing of the merger is a perfect time for the two organizations to collaborate.

## **4. What will be the name of the merged organization?**

The MGA will technically be absorbing the WGAM with the intent of combining efforts to serve all golfers in Massachusetts. The designation of state name, followed by “Golf Association”, is consistent with other state golf organizations across the country. Both organizations believe it makes sense to represent all golfers of the state with this type of denotation. The services and opportunities currently provided to golfers through the WGAM will be an integral part of the new Massachusetts Golf Association.

## **5. What will happen to our WGAM logo/brand?**

We anticipate that the MGA logo will be modified to reflect the new, combined organization effective in 2018. The loss of the WGAM logo/emblem was one of the perceived downsides compromised in merger discussions. However, we feel that this merger presents an important opportunity to create a new brand that represents the rich history of both organizations.

## **6. How will our WGAM history be preserved so that our legacy will not be forgotten?**

The WGAM currently displays many of its trophies and several treasured photos inside the Massachusetts Golf House & Museum in Norton, which is also the location of our home offices. We plan to continue to work closely with the MGA to preserve even more documents, additional photos and mementos from our rich history, including the WGAM logo.

The MGA is committed to preserving and displaying these trophies in the Massachusetts Golf House & Museum post-merger. We will also explore ways to create a history/legacy link and platform from the merged website.

**7. Will we have our own website?**

Beginning in 2018 there will be one, merged, MGA website that will include links and coverage of all Championships, Tournaments, Events and Member Services that are currently offered by the two organizations. We also anticipate having a “history” link included within the new site that will allow direct access to the WGAM archives.

**8. Will our WGAM Executive Director, Cathleen Beach, continue to be part of the merged organization?**

Cathleen Beach will continue to serve a key director role and maintain a high-level position within the new organization as the Director of Women’s Golf and Player Development. Cathleen Beach has been an integral part of the discussions and will help to oversee the execution of the merger.

**9. How will the WGAM be represented in the merged organization to protect the legacy and interest of the WGAM and women’s golf moving forward?**

There will be appropriate and guaranteed representation on the merged MGA Board and Governance Committee as well as on all departmental committees established by the MGA (Championships, Member Services, etc.).

**10. Will there still be volunteer opportunities outside of the MGA Board/Governance?**

There will be expanded volunteer opportunities through this combined organization, including in some areas that the WGAM did not previously serve (e.g., The First Tee of Massachusetts initiatives). Both men and women will be able to serve as officials at men’s and women’s events, and we will continue to utilize volunteers to successfully and efficiently conduct Championships, Events and Tournaments. We will also have an opportunity to take part in officials training and educational seminars and sessions that are currently run by the MGA staff.

**11. Will we have the same tournament schedule going forward and the same quality of golf courses?**

Yes. We plan to offer the same schedule of tournaments for 2017, 2018 and 2019, including the popular Spring Team and Fall Cup events. We are constantly examining our tournament schedule and formats in order to adjust and fine-tune the tournaments to changing interests and needs. We believe that we will be better positioned to obtain quality golf courses as one organization that represents all Member Clubs within the state.

**12. Will tournaments for women be offered to players with a handicap up to 36.0?**

Yes.

**13. What changes will there be to the Junior Programming, if any?**

The MGA made a substantial investment in acquiring MGA Links, an 18-hole, par 3 golf course located in Norton several years ago and has been expanding The First Tee initiatives in Norton, and in various locations throughout the state. Additionally, programs for all juniors will be streamlined

with less duplication of effort to provide both boys and girls with the best opportunities for development and playing opportunities.

**14. Will there be an increase in tournament fees/costs?**

WGAM members will no longer have to pay the annual \$65 membership fee to join the WGAM. The fee that each member pays for an annual USGA/GHIN Handicap Index will serve as your “membership fee” effective as of January 1, 2018. We will work hard to keep the fee structure for tournaments as low as possible, yet still provide a quality and enhanced experience as we have done in the past.

**15. Will the merger require a membership vote?**

We have retained professional legal counsel to represent the best interests of the WGAM on all fronts. They are currently researching what we need to do to move forward with the merger in terms of a required vote. We will inform/update you as soon as we have the proper legal advice.

**16. Will our events become coed?**

Our tournaments will remain as is, only eligible to women players, except, the Sheeran and Stone Cup competitions.

The MGA Championships are open to any male or female who meets the stated handicap requirement. In an MGA championship, all players play from the same set of tees. Additionally, there have been a few junior girls who have competed in the Massachusetts Junior Amateur Championship and the Massachusetts Young Golfers’ Amateur Championship.

The MGA Member Days are open to both men and women and there are separate tees available for men and women. This will continue post-merger.