Hello Great Danes friends and welcome back to the second edition of our Golfing Great Danes Newsletter! Over the past two months there have been a lot of fantastic things happening with our team and around campus that we are looking forward to sharing with everyone! We hope you enjoy!

SPRING TOURNAMENT #1 RECAP: REYNOLDS LAKE OCONEE COLLEGIATE

Your Great Danes Golf Team recently traveled to the beautiful golf mecca of Reynolds Lake Oconee for the start of our spring season. Mercer University hosted a fantastic event with a handful of highly ranked teams such as Vanderbilt (7), Texas Tech (46), Missouri (58), Mercer (62), Kentucky (64) and we were very excited about playing with some brand new teams that we have never seen before. "We are very lucky to have had the opportunity to compete in the Reynolds Lake Oconee Invitational hosted by Mercer against some great teams. We don’t generally start our Spring season in February, so it was questionable whether we would be at our peak performance yet. Overall, I was pleased with the play of each of the players, as they all had great nine-hole scores but had trouble putting the 18-hole scores together. It was a little tough to find a rhythm with the format of 27 holes each day, and the fact it took nine hours to play those 27 holes on Day 1. As we preached all Fall, we have to eliminate the big numbers, and unfortunately we made too many of them. That was the difference in improving on our finish. However, it was a great first trip out to start the season, and we also enjoyed some Southern hospitality while staying at Coach’s brothers lake house right on Lake Oconee in the Reynolds development. From start to finish, I think we had a lot of fun and really learned a lot about where our games are and what we need to continue to work on this Spring." - Head Coach Colleen Cashman-McSween

The week started out with a fun practice round of golf with all 6 players and the 2 coaches pairing up with 3 donors including Coach Cash’s brother Chris. Following the round, the team enjoyed a couple hours of practice and then some free time back at the house which included some kayaking, fun and games and of course a home cooked dinner to rest up for Round 1 the following morning. On a very wet course which required lift, clean and place rules to be put in place, Madison Walker led the Great Danes with a solid 76 including 2 birdies. Round 2 (which was split up over day 1 and day 2) saw Junior Helga Einarsdottir shoot a 76 herself with just 1 birdie. Lastly, Annika Espino carded a team tournament best final round score of 74 which included 2 birdies and placed her a team best T-28th in the event. As a team, overall 20 birdies were made by the starting 5 players. Every week it is a goal we are looking to improve on that birdie number. Of the 17 teams playing in the 54 hole tournament, only 12 team rounds carded rounds below 300. Your Danes finished the tournament in 13th place after shooting team rounds of 314, 312, 315. “With the wet conditions and slow paced rounds, we dealt with adversity and will take a lot of the positives going into our 8 day Spring Break trip to Ft. Lauderdale for practice followed by the 3 round Babs Steffens Hatter Collegiate tournament hosted by Stetson in Daytona Beach to finish out the trip.”

SPRING 2019 SCHEDULE

2/16-17/19 Reynolds Lake Oconee Collegiate Invite, Greensboro, GA Hosted By: Mercer University (13th/17 teams)
3/24-25/19 Babs Steffens Hatter Collegiate @LPGA International, Daytona Beach, FL Hosted By: Stetson University
3/31-4/1/19 John Kirk Panther Invite @Eagle’s Landing C.C, Stockbridge, GA Hosted By: Georgia State University
4/14/19 Spring Crosstown Challenge @Wolfert’s Roost C.C, Albany, NY Hosted By: University at Albany
4/18-20/19 MAAC Championship @Disney’s Magnolia Course, Orlando, FL Hosted By: Metro-Atlantic Athletic Conference

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UALBANY GOLF
PLAYER SPOTLIGHT: (FR) MADISON WALKER

From Bermuda Dunes, California, Madison made waves in her first semester as a Great Dane. She earned the golf programs first 4.0 GPA in the classroom and she fired a 36 hole tournament score of 139 (-5), good enough for a tournament program record on the golf course in her first tournament of the season.

Madison works extremely hard on every aspect of her life and it definitely shows! Madison says, “To me, academics has always come first and with the excitement of being at college, I did not want to let myself or anyone down with my academic performance. I believe that that also ties into my golf performance in my first fall season here at UAlbany. I knew that I came to this school for a reason and I wanted to prove to my coaches and team and to reassure myself that I came here for a reason.”

Madison started her collegiate golf career with a bang, placing second individually shooting rounds of 69 and 70, while guiding the team to a record breaking victory at the 2018 Dartmouth Invitational (289, 291= 580 +4). Going into the spring semester, Madison knew she would have to make some adjustments as the team moved indoors which she is not used to being from the desert of California. She reflected on the first spring event by saying, “I knew that my best game wasn’t going to be played but that also did not mean that I was not going to bring the best that I could to the course. I found the first event to be a learning experience from playing 27 holes two days in a row to playing a different style of course. That’s what all of this has been so far here in college: a huge learning experience. I’m excited to learn more days in this coming spring semester; with the solid team we have, I cannot wait to see what’s in store for us.”

In her free time, standup comedy and Jennifer Lawrence movies are always always playing, but Madison is very much a family oriented person who really enjoys spending time with her little sister, parents, friends and her five pets while home for Winter break and Summers. Displaying commitment and already proven talent, Madison always brings a smile with her and has been a great addition to the UAlbany Golf program.

The UA Golf Simulator Makes It's Debut

Starting the spring semester off on a new note, your Great Danes have been hard at work with our brand new state of the art GC Quad golf simulator. Head Coach Colleen McSween-Cashman said, “I can’t thank enough all the Friends and Families of the Women’s Golf Program who have donated money in support of our mission – especially, Judy Mysliborski who made this project happen with her persistence and dedication to our team and her vision for our future! To be able to call this GC Quad Simulator our own is definitely a dream come true for myself and for this golf program. Not to mention- A GAME CHANGER!!”

When it comes down to daily practices, the players and coaches now have the ability to see ball flight, ball data as well as club path and club data for each swing in each session. Understanding ball and club data is a crucial part to understanding their swings and improving their games in competition. The old saying is “numbers don’t lie” and the GC Quad is extremely accurate pinpointing carry yardages for each club in the bag as well as simulating the balls reaction when landing on or off greens as a result of the solidness of the shot. Learning your swing path (in to out or out to in) and seeing it on the full swing data gives the immediate feedback as to why the golf ball is doing what is it doing in the air. Learning how a ball that has a downward or upward impact explains why a ball may or may not fly to its maximum distance. This simulator feeds out so much quality information on every shot that it is very hard to not see immediate improvements in so many areas while all the players learn their golf swings even better than before.

In addition, each practice session allows the coaches to set up personal challenges from varying yardages and with specific parameters, giving each athlete the ability to hone their skills on that required challenge until the goal that is set is fulfilled. Furthermore, in order to simulate the nerves as they compete in tournaments, coaches create a “one ball challenge” every day at practice. Contrary to your average Sunday golfer, our players do not get mulligans! Thus, each player gets one swing to go through a set amount of holes/targets, with the targets being small in diameter around the flag or even setting up a Par 3 contest for closest to the pins. Each player at the conclusion of the day’s practice gets points for where they finish in the daily challenge and all the day challenges are added up for a weekly winner! In only a few months of practice with the simulator, our players saw an immediate improvement in their wedge game (inside 100 yards) during the first event in Georgia. When a player would walk off a green and say to the coaches “that was a 5 pointer,” everyone smiled and the morale and confidence was high. There is no better feeling then setting a goal in practice and seeing the result come to fruition in competition when it really counts!

“Our push toward a top-100 ranked program remains to be a major program goal and because of our community, friends, and family we are well on our way to achieving that goal with the addition of this simulator. So thank you to all who have been a part of this journey towards the top.” - Assistant Coach Ragovin
COACHES SPOTLIGHT: ASST. COACH MATT RAGOVIN

Born and raised in South Florida, Assistant Coach Matt Ragovin (Coach Rags) is currently in his second season with the Great Danes Golf program. UAlbany marks the third collegiate program he has coached with and he has been fortunate enough to find success thus far in his career. In two years at Washington and Lee University, Coach Rags saw success with both the Men’s and Women’s programs. In his first year, the W&L Women’s team finished the season ranked seventh in the nation, earning an at-large bid to the National Championship in Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida. The following year, the W&L Men’s team won the conference championship, earning their way and ultimately finishing third at the NCAA Championship in Rochester, New York. That summer, Coach Rags departed the mountains of Lexington, Virginia for the border town of Canton, New York. A Graduate Assistant Coaching Position at St. Lawrence University was on the horizon, which also came with a degree in shoveling snow!

In his first season with the Great Danes, Coach Rags helped guide the team to program records, a wire to wire conference championship win, and a berth to the NCAA Regional tournament hosted by Florida State University. He said, “Being a part of such a great group of ladies who are from all across the globe is such a rewarding and fun experience. It definitely shows on and off the golf course. Winning the MAAC in my first year with the team was incredible and we are hungry to feel that again this April.”

Coach Rags played his collegiate golf at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. Captain for two years, he took a great amount of pride in leading his team on and off the course. But it was his three years of working at the New England Golf and Tennis Academy in Belgrade, Maine that nurtured his love for teaching and coaching the game of golf. Coach Rags said, “Working with youngsters that are new to the game taught me patience and focus I wouldn’t have learned anywhere else. I love to play golf and always will, but passing on my knowledge and experience to the future athletes of the game is very rewarding.”

Coach Rags comes from a large family consisting of four siblings: Gina, Jennifer, TJ, and Mikayla. His father, Michael nurtured his love for sports while his mother, Laura taught him how to not burn scrambled eggs. His hobbies consist of playing hockey, learning new songs on guitar, and taking his dog Jeter on adventures. “This is a great time to be a Great Dane and we are very excited for what is to come for our program! Stay tuned for some exciting golf ahead.” - Coach Matt Ragovin

OUR GREAT DANE FAMILY

(Jr.) Helga Einarsdottir  Home: Seltjarnarnes, Iceland
(Jr.) Megan Henry  Home: Epping, Essex, England
(Jr.) Caroline Juillat  Home: Biarritz, France
(Jr.) Annika Espino  Home: Honolulu, Hawaii
(Fr.) Pasqualina Tartaglione  Home: Pine Bush, New York
(Fr.) Madison Walker  Home: Bermuda Dunes, California
(Head Coach) Colleen McSween  Home: Plantation, Florida
(Asst. Coach) Matthew Ragovin  Home: Coral Springs, Florida

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ANNEMARIE KISSANE ’12

Our inaugural alumni spotlight is Albany, NY native, Annemarie Kissane. Annemarie graduated Cum Laude with a BA in European History in 2012. Immediately after graduation, Annemarie moved to Florida to work at Disney, but returned to the Capital Region and has spent the last four years working in the golf industry as an assistant golf professional. While working as a PGA apprentice, she accepted the role of Men’s and Women’s Assistant Golf Coach with The College of St. Rose. Annemarie said, “It has been incredibly fulfilling to work with both the local junior golfers and the collegiate golfers here in the Capital Region. I have had the chance to share my experiences with young athletes and their families who have the same questions and concerns I had during my recruiting process. And working with the youngsters gives me a lot of hope for where the game of golf is heading.”

Her time on the golf team came with a lot of good laughs and memories. “My favorite tournaments were always Dartmouth and the Conference Championships. Winning the America East before moving to the MAAC was special. Any time there was a chance to explore the city we were visiting was fun because we’d always find mini golf and ice cream to help us unwind. Best of all, finding great restaurants off the beaten path was something we really enjoyed. Our team was always very tight knit; it was something that the upperclassmen instilled in me as a Freshman, and something that I really encouraged while I was Captain. We spent time at each other’s houses, brought our dogs to the park together, and always had movie and pizza nights before home tournaments.”

Annemarie and her fiancé, Mike, have a dog named Weasley and are currently in the process of purchasing their first home in Albany. They will be tying the knot this Fall where two of Annemarie’s UAlbany teammates will be bridesmaids!

- Congrats and best of luck in your coaching and teaching career, Annemarie!

MEET A FUTURE GREAT DANE: OLIVIA HUNT

Hometown: Ashlede, Surrey, England

What’s your biggest mess up in the kitchen? My friend and I burned fudge so badly that we had to beat it out of the tin with rolling pins as it was rock hard.

If you could travel anywhere, where would it be and why? The moon, because I’d love to jump around with no gravity and eat floating food inside the space ship.

Favorite course you’ve played? Alcaidesa Links Golf Course (Spain)

Craziest family holiday story? When my family and I went to Ireland and swam in the freezing sea Christmas Day—we even made it into the local newspaper.

Why did you choose UAlbany? Because it’s a good university with outstanding golf and an ambitious, cohesive and friendly team and coach.
On February 9th, your Great Danes golfers spent some quality time with the many young girls and boys who came out for the annual National Girls & Women in Sports Day. The day started out with a complete domination by our Women’s Basketball team over the University of Vermont, 65-40. At the game’s conclusion, our team transitioned onto the court where two chipping stations and a putting station were set up and many whiffle balls went flying. The kids were rotated in 10 minute cycles and visited each of the four UAlbany sports that volunteered including Volleyball, Women’s Soccer, Field Hockey and lastly, Women’s Basketball. It was a special day for all that participated, players and kids alike. As an athletics department, each team actively pursues volunteering opportunities throughout their seasons as it is always a great way to give back to a community that cares.

2017-2018 MAAC Championship Rings Have Arrived

On Friday, February 1, 2019, the much anticipated unveiling of our teams 2017-2018 MAAC Championship rings finally happened! Joined in our UA Golf Simulator Room by Athletics Department Administrators as well as former Great Dane player, Annie Songeun Lee, Coach Cash proudly distributed the well deserved, team designed championship rings to Assistant Coach Matt Ragovin and now Juniors, Helga Einarsdottir, Megan Henry, Caroline Juillat and Annika Espino. The storybook season that it was saw the program finish with not only it’s second MAAC Championship in 4 years, but also a season ending ranking of #175 and an automatic bid to the NCAA Regional Championship hosted by Florida State in Tallahassee, FL.

Golf Bag Fundraiser

Back by popular demand, our “team only issued” PING stand golf bags are once again available for YOU to order. Be one of the very few in the Capital region or in your area to sport the brand new, very recognizable, conversation starter, high quality, UALBANY logoed, personalized stand golf bag. Feel proud as you represent your Great Danes at your charity golf tournaments or simply just your daily round of golf!

The cost is $225 and that will include shipping to UAlbany. Order NOW before the end of March by emailing Coach Cash at cmcsween@albany.edu and include the exact name you would like personalized on the ball pocket. Hurry, this opportunity doesn’t come around often. Order now for yourself, your friends or your family. They make great presents for all occasions and are only available right here, right now! ORDER TODAY!

Rules of Golf 101: Putting with the Flagstick In

They’re here to stay! The new rules have officially been implemented around the world and in this issue, we will cover putting with the flagstick in the hole. It’s one of the most talked about rules changes and for good reason. So lets dive in.

Rule 13.2 details putting with the flagstick in the hole by stating: This Rule covers the player’s choices for dealing with the flagstick. The player may leave the flagstick in the hole or have it removed (which includes tending the flagstick and removing it after the ball is played), but must decide before making the stroke. Unlike in the past, there is no penalty if a ball in motion now hits the flagstick on the putting green. (click for USGA video)