Welcome from the Great Dane Women’s Golf Team

Hello everyone and welcome to the first issue of the UAlbany Women’s Golf Team Newsletter ~ golfing Great Danes! In this newsletter we will highlight many happenings with our program. From spotlighting current and former players to sharing our community service projects, recapping/previewing the season to highlighting the upcoming changes to the USGA Rules of Golf. We’ll cover it all, right here! So strap in, because this golf program in little Albany, NY is soaring up the National Rankings and we want you to be a part of it!

Meet our Family

Without further ado, here are your 2018-2019 Great Dane Golfers & Coaches:

(Jr.) Helga Einarsdottir  
Hometown: Seltjarnarnes, Iceland

(Jr.) Megan Henry  
Hometown: Epping, Essex, England

(Jr.) Caroline Juillat  
Hometown: Biarritz, France

(Jr.) Annika Espino  
Hometown: Honolulu, Hawaii

(Fr.) Pasqualina Tartaglione  
Hometown: Pine Bush, New York

(Fr) Madison Walker  
Hometown: Bermuda Dunes, California

(Head Coach) Colleen McSween  
Hometown: Plantation, Florida

(Assistant Coach) Matthew Ragovin  
Hometown: Coral Springs, Florida

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Coaches Spotlight

Colleen Cashman-McSween is currently in her sixth season as Head Coach of the Great Danes Golf program. Hailing from South Florida, Coach Cash was a multi-sport athlete growing up, playing boys baseball, basketball, volleyball, softball and golf. But she always had a football in her hand. Why you ask? Well, because both of Coach Cash’s brothers played college football and her Dad coached it for years. To Coach Cash, competitive sports come naturally and it shows in her playing & coaching record. Coach Cash played collegiate golf at Purdue University before she found a home on the LPGA and Futures tour, where she competed in over 100 events (winning once), as well as competing in two U.S. Opens. Before coming to UAlbany, she spent 12 years coaching at her high school alma mater, St. Thomas Aquinas, where she reached the state championship all 12 seasons, collecting one championship and two runner-up finishes. Wanting to further her coaching career, Coach Cash spent two seasons as the Assistant Coach at the University of Michigan before making her way to Albany. In just a short time on the job, Coach Cash brought home the 2015 MAAC Championship, followed by another conference win and NCAA Regional bid in 2018. “From a very early age, growing up in a family with 2 older brothers and our father as our coach in pretty much every sport, I had the opportunity to watch how the numerous kids and parents admired my dad for the tireless hours he devoted to making each and every player better whether it was on the diamond, the football field or the court. It was then, way back around the age of 7, that I can remember wanting to be a coach just like my dad. Of course, that was if my baseball career with the Chicago Cubs didn’t work out as I had always dreamt. Now, with over 20 years in coaching total, I can say that I am the lucky one because of what I have learned from all my players and the experiences that we have shared. The successes and failures, the highs and lows, the joys of winning and the agony of defeat…these are what have made ME the lucky one because each and every single player has made me a better person and make it easy to love my job every single day!” — Coach Colleen McSween
Meet our Family

Your Golfing Great Danes opened up the 2018 Fall semester with a BANG! #PurpleFam

Winning the prestigious Dartmouth invitational by six shots over Harvard University (Ranked #105), 26 shots over MAAC foe Quinnipiac (Ranked #167), and 34 shots over Boston University (Ranked #125). "I can't even put into words how proud I am of this team," said head coach Colleen Cashman-McSween. "It truly was a team effort! They practiced hard prior and they went out on a mission to break last years team scoring record. And not only did they break it, they shattered it not one, but both days! To finish the tournament at 4 over par total for 2 rounds is amazing. We have come so far in my time here at UAlbany, it is almost unthinkable. Not only to have 4 scores under par this weekend, but to have Madison come in and shoot 2 rounds under par herself and a program record of 5 under in her first college tournament is incredible. We are very excited about the potential of this team! This season is going to be a lot of fun with a great group of ladies!" Following a great start to the season, your Danes competed at very strong events including the Boston College Intercollegiate (6th/17), the Yale Intercollegiate (12th/17), and the Brown Bear Fall Invite (T5th/12). Assistant Coach Matt Ragovin says, "The team battled extremely hard through tough conditions all semester, gaining valuable experience going into a great spring schedule. We finished the semester with a program record ranking of 153 and we are excited for what the future holds for this team!"

As a program, we consistently preach fun and family! In late September, a fun team tradition of playing an intrasquad Ryder Cup/Presidents cup match was not lacking fireworks and fun! The team is split up based on hometown or nationality and play the same formats as the real Ryder Cup/Presidents cup. Junior golfer Megan Henry says, "The Ryder Cup is always fun, everyone gets involved and it shows how close and competitive the team really is. It’s fun to get the coaches involved and play some serious golf while having a laugh."

Results: Europe Wins 3 1/2 to 2 1/2

Great Danes Volunteer

Great Leaders, Great Champions, Great Danes! This is the motto our athletic department lives by and we take it very seriously. It all starts with giving back to the community and truly portraying what a great leader is. This Fall our team has had the pleasure of volunteering around the Capital Region multiple times. In September, the team joined the Walk to End Alzheimer’s at Siena College. Thousands of people flooded the campus to raise awareness and funds for a great cause. In early November, for the second year in a row, the team volunteered at the Washington Park Lake House, Holiday Lights in the Park. It’s always tons of fun filling up the tree with ornaments and singing Christmas tunes. A few days later, three of our players who belong to SAAC, volunteered to cook meals at the Interfaith Partnership. Women of many talents! And it doesn't stop there. For a second year in a row, two of our players made their way over to Becker Elementary to read to 3rd grade students! The smiles totally last a lifetime! Last but not least, the entire team spent the day with the Make a Wish foundation of North East New York making popsicle stick snowflakes and candy cane reindeer with the kids It truly is a great feeling to give back and we look forward to the opportunities to come!
A great student, team leader (on and off the course), and ultimate competitor, Helga Einarsdottir (Junior golfer hailing from Seltjarnarnes, Iceland) is our inaugural Player Spotlight. An Accounting major, Helga has earned multiple academic awards including the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference All-Academic team as well as the Women’s Golf Coaches Association’s All-American Scholar Team. She was also named to the UAlbany Dean’s List of Distinguished Students in Spring of 2017, the Fall of 2017, and the Spring of 2018! We are positive that it won’t be her last Dean’s list award! “It is always a big honor to be awarded for things you put a lot of effort into. Receiving the MAAC, WGCA, and Dean’s list awards show that effort and it keeps pushing me to do better. For me it is as important to be as good of a student as well as an athlete” says Helga.

On the course, Helga has been turning heads since she stepped foot in her first collegiate event! She has collected multiple individual program records as well as contributing to many team records. Individually, Helga has the two lowest semester scoring averages of 76.00 from Fall of 2018 and best of all, 75.64 in the Fall of 2017. Helga’s individual score of 69 at the 2017 Rutgers Invite is her career best and places her 1 stroke behind current teammate Megan Henry’s 68 for the program’s best. She also is one of two in program history to record a hole-in-one, which came last year at the Yale Invite Practice Round. Look out for Helga to continue her success this Spring!

Not only does Helga compete in college, she is also a member of Team Iceland! She has competed in many countries with Team Iceland and most recently they competed in the World Amateur Team Championships in Ireland and the European Ladies Team Championship in Austria. Helga said, “Both of these events were a great experience. I have put in a lot of work on my golf game and getting chosen for these events is a great reward for my hard work. Having two close friends on the national team made it enjoyable and supported each other the whole way!”

Fun Facts With Helga

Where's the worst smelling place you have been? “Everywhere in Iceland where there are hot geysers.”

If you could be any animal what would you be and why? “A Lion. I feel like they are really powerful”

Dumbest way you've been injured? “Walked into a street light and broke my front tooth.”

Favorite place to travel? “Everywhere in Iceland. We have beautiful scenery, landscapes, and nature. The summers are the best because it is daylight almost all of the day. Nothing beats midnight golf with your friends.”

Rules of Golf 101

The rules of golf are like laws in the United States, they don’t change often, but when they do, expect controversy and potential chaos. Forward to January 1st, 2019. Golf will be adopting many new rules and changes to current rules/procedures. Over the course of these newsletters, we will pick one rule or change of rule to highlight, hopefully helping to keep our golf community updated!

The first rule that will be highlighted is Rule 14.3, which covers how a golf ball must be dropped in a relief area. Formerly, a golfer must drop the ball from shoulder height, with their arm extended outward, facing your target. The change to the rule is simple, you must now drop the ball from knee height, giving the ball a chance to land a bit softer, which will limit the bouncing and rolling of the ball outside of your designated relief area. If the ball is not dropped in the “right way”, you must keep dropping the ball until it is dropped in the “right way. If the ball is played after dropping the “wrong way”, a two stroke penalty will be assessed to the players score.

Meet the Future Great Danes

Mckayla Tallman

Hometown: Westfield, Indiana

What’s the most useless talent you have? “Flipping. I did gymnastics for 10 years and I’ve learned a lot of flips and tricks.”

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat?? Facebook

Why did you choose UAlbany? I chose to go to UAlbany because of the warm and welcoming environment. I immediately saw how loving everyone was towards each other and could tell that this team was truly a family. I love being around positive people who love to work hard and have fun and I knew I would experience that at UAlbany. I am most looking forward to meeting new people and learning more about my team members. I am also looking forward to playing a new set of courses and competing against some great teams from all over. I am so excited to begin this new and exciting journey at UAlbany next year!

Meet Future Great Dane, Olivia Hunt from Ashtead, Surrey, England

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