BACK TO BACK CHAMPS!! It was another MAGICAL trip to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida and your Great Danes brought home once again another MAAC Championship in a dominating fashion; a wire-to-wire 17 stroke victory with team scores of 300-316-311 (927, +63). Individually, the Great Danes placed 2 players on the ALL-MAAC TEAM and all 5 players in the Top 14. Iceland native Helga Einarsdottir ’20 shot rounds of 76-78-74 (228, +12), led the way earning second place overall by just two strokes. In addition, Helga was also named to the MAAC ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM as well. FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR award winner, Madison Walker ’22 of Bermuda Dunes, California placed sixth overall shooting scores of 74-82-76 (232, +16). Essex, England native Megan Henry ’20 placed eleventh overall shooting scores of 77-77-81 (235, +19). Annika Espino ’20 placed 13th with scores of 73-80-84 (237, +21). France native, Caroline Juillat rounds out the squad placing 14th shooting scores of 79-81-80 (240, +24). Head Coach Colleen McSween-Cashman said, “Wow. Back to back championships. It’s unbelievable. I can’t even put into words how proud I am of these players for sticking to our process, achieving the goals we set at the beginning of the season and, most important, prevailing in these very difficult and exhausting windy conditions! The scores most definitely depict exactly the weather conditions we experienced including a suspended round due to lightning and rain and winds up to 35mph for the final 2 round. But they held tough, prevailed and I couldn’t be happier for them!” Assistant Coach Matt Ragovin adds, “Our Easter week in Orlando was nothing short of amazing. Forget the win for a second, the fact we had so many parents fly in from all across the globe to watch this tournament, that really puts into perspective the type of family culture we have within our program. The way the women battled this week in some of the windiest conditions all year is a testament to their focus and mental preparation.”

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Hello UAlbany Great Danes Golf Friends and welcome back to the third edition of our Golfing Great Danes Newsletter! Our season has come to an end, all players are back at home now, but we have so many good things to share with YOU! Get comfy, enjoy and happy reading!

SPRING TOURNAMENT #5 Recap: MAAC Championship @ Disney World’s Magnolia Course

SPRING 2019 SCHEDULE

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As a result of winning the MAAC Championship once again, your Great Danes earned back to back NCAA Regional bids, this time being selected to compete at Auburn University at Saugahatchee Country Club. The field was littered with powerhouse teams including eventual NCAA Team Champion Duke University, as well as Clemson, Florida State, Alabama, Vanderbilt and Auburn just to name a few. We battled with rounds of 309-304-304 (+53), finishing in 18th place and only one shot behind Murray State (17th place) and only 13 shots behind Clemson (13th place).

Leading the way for the Great Danes was Junior, Annika Espino, who finished the tournament at +12 with rounds of 78-74-76. This is the third time this Spring that Annika has led the team on the golf course. In addition, Annika finished the season with a career low stroke average of 78.04 overall. Going down the leaderboard and only one stroke behind Annika, looms Freshman Madison Walker. Finishing with a total score of +13, with rounds of 76-74-79, Madison capped the season leading the team in stroke average (77.12) as well as leading the team in Up & Down percentage (49.8%). Junior, Helga Einarsdottir finished the tournament with a total score of +14 with rounds of 77-82-71. Helga’s final one under par round of 71 was the team’s low score and one of the lowest scores of the final round of the tournament. Helga finished her junior campaign with a career best scoring average (77.15) and led the team in birdies made (56). Junior, Megan Henry shot rounds of 78-75-81 (+18), closing out what was a career season for her. Megan had a career best stroke average (77.85), led the team this season in par three scoring (+17), and tied with Helga to lead the team in Green in Regulation percentage (55.9%). Also finishing off a career year, Junior, Caroline Juillat shot rounds of 81-81-78 (+24). Caroline posted her lowest scoring average (78.8), her lowest personal tournament round (70), led the team in Eagles made (2) and led the team in fairways hit percentage (74.4%).

Head Coach Colleen Cashman-McSween said, “I’m very proud of this team and this whole season. Even though we were hoping to play a little better and beat a few teams this week, we definitely had a lot of positives that came out of each round. Being here at NCAA’s and competing on the same course and in the same conditions with some of the top teams in the country gives us a good sense of where we are as a program and going forward, working to become one of those teams. There’s a fun culture within and it shows when we are competing as a team. Being able to enjoy trips like this one, getting to tour the Auburn athletics facility including the football stadium was really special and we hope to be doing the same thing again come next year!”

With another successful season from the University at Albany Women’s Golf team, next year we look to top all of the career bests and team records. Coach Cash went on to say, “The best news though is that we have the entire team coming back plus a few more players coming in for hopefully an even more exciting season! It’s been an honor to coach these players. They really have made a mark on this golf program’s legacy and they make it a pleasure to coach them.”
From Spring Break in Fort Lauderdale, to a Mets vs Marlins Spring Training game, and then up to Daytona Beach for a great tournament, your Great Danes made the best out of the sunshine state! Assistant Coach Ragovin said, “staying at a great rental house with a pool table, ping pong table, a pool, and a giant video game entertainment center, the team was in full spring break mode as soon as we arrived.” Dodging lots of rain drops over the first few days, we were able to play a few rounds of golf in the Fort Lauderdale area and use the time wisely to get solid and efficient practice in before we headed north to Daytona Beach for Stetson event. “It was great to be in my hometown of Fort Lauderdale for a few days with Coach Cash. We got to reminisce and point out all the local sites to the team from both our childhoods in south Florida. We also had a great time experiencing a MLB Spring Training game, where a few of the players experienced professional baseball for the first time.” said Assistant Coach Matt Ragovin.

Arriving in Daytona Beach and our next amazing rental house complete with a hot tub, fire pit and an outside shower, only steps away from the ocean, the team enjoyed their first day off at the beach complete with boogie boards and sand castles and rounded out with a great dinner right on the water. (Click here to watch a video spotlighting our team and the houses we choose to stay in while on the road at tournaments)

Finishing off the Spring Break trip, the team competed in the 3 day Babs Steffens Hatter Collegiate at LPGA International and placed 6th of 12 teams with scores of 305–312–319. Annika Espino lead the team with a great showing for your Danes placing 12th overall shooting rounds of 74-75-79 (+12). Overall, the team made a solid 31 birdies for the event and saw Freshman Pasqualina Tartaglione, playing as an individual, shoot her career low score of 73 in the final round.

Spring Tournament #3 Recap: John Kirk Panther Invite

HOSTED BY: GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Flying into Atlanta once again to compete at Eagle’s Landing Country Club for the John Kirk Panther Invite, hosted by Georgia State University, the Great Danes placed 4th, one shot from 2nd place, out of 16 teams with scores of 303-303-307 (+49). Beating many southern schools such as Oral Roberts, Jacksonville State, Jacksonville University, Samford and host Georgia State, we put up a great fight down south. “I’m really proud of this team and their performance throughout this event,” said Head Coach Colleen Cashman-McSween. “We really got off to a solid start after Rounds 1 and 2, shooting our best Spring scores to date. Even though we missed out on second place by just one stroke, it is nothing to be upset about.” Individually, Caroline Juillat led the team with scores of 70-77-78 (+9) and only seven shots away from first place. The two-under par round of 70 in the first round was Juillat’s lowest career round, which led to her best career tournament finish as well. Four shots behind Caroline was Junior, Annika Espino with scores of 79-75-75 (+13). Annika had a solid showing including an amazing hole out for Eagle on her 17th hole of the second round. Freshman Madison Walker finished the tournament by shooting 79-73-79 (+15). Junior Helga Einarsdottir battled to shoot rounds of 75-78-82 (+19), who tied with Caroline with a team leading (7) birdies during the event. Rounding out the squad was Junior Megan Henry, who posted rounds of 82-79-75 (+20).

“Overall, competing against so many of these Southern schools this week and beating them is a great feeling moving into the tall end of our season,” Cashman-McSween said. “It definitely gives us a lot of confidence moving forward for our final two events knowing that we are ready to compete against all the schools that have had the opportunity to practice outside year round!”
As everyone knows, weather in the month of April is hit and miss. But luckily for us, for the first time ever in the Spring, your Great Danes had the opportunity to host its nearby MAAC Conference foes, the Siena Saints at Wolferts Roost Country Club on a chilly Masters Sunday afternoon. The 1st Annual Spring Crosstown Challenge contrary to its Fall format of stroke play was played in match play style. If you’re not familiar with this format, each player plays a head to head match against the opposing teams player on each hole, instead of everyone counting up their strokes at the end of 18 holes and deciding the winner based on the fewest strokes hit.

Head Coach Colleen Cashman-McSween “The team really looks forward to the Crosstown Challenge in the Fall. So playing another match in the Spring in our own backyard was a no-brainer! During my years here at UAlbany, I have enjoyed fostering our relationship with the Siena players and the coaches, and I’m very proud to say that both programs enjoy each other’s company and competition.”

With 6 total matches to be played and 6 total points possible to be earned, the Spring Crosstown Challenge came down to the final putts for the final points on the 18th hole with everyone gathered around watching. What an exciting finish! Both Match one featuring UA’s Megan Henry ’20 and Siena’s Sara Riso ’19 and Match two featuring UA’s Helga Einarsdottir ’20 and Siena’s Grace Cuttone ‘21 came down to the last hole after back and forth matches all afternoon between four of the top ranked players in the conference. Helga secured the 3rd point for UA with a routine par to prevail 1UP, while Siena’s Sara Riso drained a clutch 15 footer to secure her par and the 3rd point for Siena squad concluding the match in a 3-3 TIE! In the other matches, UA’s Madison Walker ‘22 vs Abigail Chai-Onn ’21 was a classic match play battle with Madison making plenty of long putts throughout the day to keep the pressure on, but coming down the stretch to the 18th hole, Madison’s tee shot ended up just slightly out of bounds and she was defeated by Chai-Onn who went on to make a par. In the next group, there was an unexpected injury to Lena Kaufman ’22 of Siena, so Abigail Chai-Onn played a second match against UA’s Pasqualina Tartaglione ’22. Pasqualina fought hard before Siena’s Chai-Onn sealed the match with a par on the 15th hole and secured a point for the Siena squad. Match five was a huge for UAlbany and it featured UA’s Annika Espino ’20 laying down the law on Siena’s Mariisa Fiorina ’20. Annika played extremely solid and steady golf to win 9 of the first 10 holes, giving her a 9&8 victory and giving your Great Danes the first point on the board. To round out the event, UA’s Caroline Juillat ’20 took care of business by defeating Siena’s Ashley Nguyen ’19 after the 16th hole, 3&2.

Looking forward, Coach Cashman-McSween said, “Match play is very exciting and has proven that anything can happen. The format keeps everyone in the game, because it is a 1-on-1 battle to win each hole and finish the match as quick as possible. In the future, it is my hope to make this event a true Capital Region golf affair, where I would love to host all four area NCAA Golf programs, including Saint Rose and Union as well. I think that would be really cool for our area.”

As golfers, it’s obviously important to practice as much as possible, keeping your fundamentals as sharp as possible year round. But the most overlooked part of the game and arguably the most important facet is keeping the mental game even sharper! So on Fridays during the months of November-April, team practices consist of NO golf clubs, but rather work on mental toughness and preparation. Sometimes watching Sport Psychology videos on our projection screen, performing a trust walk around the room avoiding obstacles and even inviting guest speakers, we take full advantage of the day in many different ways. In Early April, we invited UA Head Football Coach Greg Gattuso to speak to our team about his career, life lessons, and how to be the best Student-athletes you can possibly be, no matter the sport you play. Coach Gattuso said, “I had a great afternoon meeting with our Women’s Golf Team. What an impressive group of young women, they kick butt on the golf course and they are always one of the top GPA squads at UAlbany. Go Danes!”

The team had the opportunity to ask a multitude of questions to Coach Gattuso and he did a great job at tying the game of football to sport of golf. The team also learned what it was like for himself to play and win a National Championship at Penn State for Coach Joe Paterno. Coach Gattuso attributed a lot his successes having played on that Championship team as well as his past jobs including 6 years in law enforcement, as a high school football coach and at the many D1 colleges during his coaching career.
PLAYER SPOTLIGHT: [JR] MEGAN HENRY

From Epping, Essex, England, Megan is the epitome of personality and teamwork! Always with a smile on her face and a bright light in tough times, Megan also plays an integral part on the course. This season Megan averaged her career best of 77.83, while leading the team in Greens in Regulation (56.5%), and in rounds under par (3). Megan also set and reached her goals in the classroom this year by achieving her career best GPA, a 4.0 in the Spring Semester!

Megan said, “This year has been one to remember, starting off the season with a personal best 68, (-4) and team scoring record (289) will be a round I will never forget. Regarding my academics, I truly put my focus on time management and preparation just like I would for golf, and things really came together nicely. Plus, all the team’s hard work has paid off and it’s great to know that we are getting better and better as team.” Megan likes to attribute the teams success to the chemistry, hard work, and focus at tournaments by saying, “This team is as close as it’s ever been. Staying in houses when we travel has made the team chemistry better than I ever could have imagined and finishing the season with another conference championship win was the best feeling ever!”

With one year to go, Megan is definitely looking forward to a great senior campaign. “Next year I am looking forward to having new teammates and making this team even stronger. Knowing it is our last year, I think I can say for everyone that we are going to give it our all to get even more wins next year and grow the program to new heights!”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: CORRIN CONROY ’11

The 2011 graduate majored in Sociology with a minor in Criminal Justice and Psychology. Very fitting now that she is currently a 31B (Military Police) for the United States Army. Corrin is stationed at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs, residing with her spouse, and two dogs Max and Huey. When asked about her choice in joining the military, Corrin said, “Growing up I had no idea I wanted to join the military. Later in life, talking with my spouse and wanting to live a bigger purpose drew me to join. I am able to use the education I gained from the University at Albany. I also like the structure of the military and the fact it helps me live a healthier/fit lifestyle.”

Some of Corrin’s hobbies include going to sporting events (the Denver Broncos and the Denver Nuggets are amongst her favorites) and playing golf is still a big part of her life. After reflecting on her golfing career here at UAlbany, Corrin mentioned, “my favorite tournaments were always the Dartmouth and Rutgers invitational. Also, Having the conference championship at Disney my Junior, Senior seasons was a nice way to finish the season and helped me relax a little bit before finals.” Corrin also had some advice for the current golfers on the team when asked about her time with the program by saying, “One thing I will say to the players that are still on the team, is cherish each tournament and round, no matter the outcome at the end of 18 holes/tournament. Graduating and actually having to pay for equipment and playing you realize the great opportunities you had playing collegiate golf.”

Her time on the golf course was very solid when competing for the Great Danes. Firing low career scores of 73 at the ’09 America East tournament and the ’09 Crosstown Challenge, a semester low scoring average of 80.1 during the Fall 2008, as well as draining 14 birdies in the same year. One of Corrin’s favorite memories is, “traveling to the Princeton Invitational for sure, the architecture on their campus is amazing. Also, I found the course to be one of the most difficult. If I remember correctly, we stayed at a Residence Inn that happened to have a basketball hoop and growing up one of my passions was basketball. This also brings me to one of the reasons I chose UAlbany. Because Coach “Doc” Sauers coached the basketball team for years and we clicked instantly.”

All the best to Corrin and her family out in Colorado and the Great Dane family wants to THANK YOU for your service in the United States Army!
COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT #1 - THE BETTER TOGETHER GAMES

As an Athletics Department, we have a sincere role in destigmatizing mental health issues and providing an inclusive and supportive environment for our student athletes. In early April the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) put together a Better To9ether games involving multiple coaches and teams across the department. Student-athletes were randomly teamed up and competed in events/games such as dodgeball, tug-of-war, basketball, and outside of the box games such as the oreo challenge. Head Men’s Lacrosse Coach Scott Marr was also on hand to speak with the Student-Athletes about being healthy, mentally/physically, and how coming together in the name of awareness will make a real impact in our community. Junior Great Danes golfer Caroline Juillat says of The Better To9ether Games, “It was a great experience to meet new athletes and compete in fun different games as well as learning about all of the resources available to us in time of need is great. SAAC always does a great job putting these important and fun events together and we always look forward to coming out and spreading awareness.”

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT #2 - WE CARE

Your Great Danes had a few members of our team join the We Care Project on April 11th along with other members of the UAlbany and Albany Med communities, packing and delivering “survival kits” for victims who have undergone forensic testing at Albany Med in the aftermath of sexual assault. The “We Care” kits contain items of comfort and necessity, along with an encouraging note from the volunteers. At the end of the event the kits will be transported to Albany Medical Center so that they can be shared as needed. Junior Annika Espino said of the event, “This was the first year we volunteered at the We Care Event and it’s quickly turned into not only my favorite volunteer event thus far, but maybe the most meaningful we volunteer at. At first, I didn’t realize the importance of small things like teddy bears or a toothbrush, but seeing how putting all of these things together positively impacted so many people really opened my eyes. The small notes and inspirational messages were a great touch and means so much to those in need. Putting these bags together is the least we can do for the community and I’m glad we could be a part of it. It’s a great feeling giving back to the community and helping those around us that truly need it. The team works tirelessly in the classroom and on the golf course, so any chance we get to be out in the community and getting our minds off of the daily stresses makes all the difference.”

RULES OF GOLF 101: REMOVING LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS AND GROUNDING YOUR CLUB IN A BUNKER

They’re here to stay! The new rules have officially been implemented around the world and in this issue, we will cover removing loose impediments and grounding the club in a bunker. So lets dive in.

Rule 12.2a and 12.2b outlines how you are now able to remove any loose impediment as well as “generally” touch the sand before taking your swing in a bunker. To further clarify, “Deliberately touching the sand in the bunker with a hand, club, rake, or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information for the stroke, or Touching the sand in a bunker with a club in making a practice swing, in grounding the club right in front or behind the ball, or in making the backswing for a stroke is still considered a penalty.”

(Click for USGA video)

OUR GREAT DANES FAMILY

(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
(Asst. Coach) Matthew Ragovin Hometown: Coral Springs, Florida