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## **Bridgestone Named Presenting Sponsor of Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program, part of PGA TOUR's Pathway to Progression**

*Global mobility solutions and golf equipment provider to support efforts toward greater diversity in golf*

**PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida (September 5, 2023)** – The PGA TOUR today announced that Bridgestone Americas (Bridgestone) will become the presenting sponsor of the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program, a part of the PGA TOUR's Pathway to Progression. The program is designed to achieve greater diversity in the sport through increased focus on developing talent from diverse and historically underrepresented groups.

"We are thrilled to welcome Bridgestone as the presenting sponsor of our efforts to provide more opportunities for collegiate golfers from communities underrepresented in our sport," said Neera Shetty, PGA TOUR Executive Vice President, Social Responsibility and Inclusion. "Bridgestone is in lockstep with the PGA TOUR in our vision to motivate and inspire the next generation of golfers from diverse backgrounds, and we look forward to their partnership as we continue to make the game of golf more open and accessible to all."

The Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program will have a dedicated focus on elevating the competitive and mentorship opportunities for Historically Black College and Universities (HBCU) golfers, while also providing tangible career development opportunities for both players and coaches. Among its initiatives are the Bridgestone APGA Collegiate Ranking, the HBCU Coaches Summit presented by Bridgestone, the Bridgestone Player Development Camp and two new collegiate golf tournaments – the Bridgestone HBCU Invitational and the Bridgestone Collegiate Invitational. Players participating in these events will also receive custom ball fittings and other essential equipment for competition from Bridgestone Golf.

"At Bridgestone, we believe it is important that our partnerships reflect the rich diversity of our teammates, partners, customers and the communities we serve," said Sara Correa, chief marketing officer, Bridgestone Americas. "The Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program will accelerate our recent efforts with the PGA TOUR to create equitable access and unlock new opportunities for golfers of diverse backgrounds. What really matters is making sure that future generations of players and fans see themselves reflected in the sport, and we are committed to building exciting, new alliances within this program to do just that."

The Bridgestone APGA Collegiate Ranking, now in its third year, creates competitively focused opportunities to support and enhance the development of highly talented collegiate golfers

from underrepresented communities. Each year, the top five Black collegiate players in the ranking earn opportunities through the program, including a full year of membership on the APGA Tour and automatic entry into PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry.

The Bridgestone HBCU Invitational will be contested November 1 and 2 at TPC Sugarloaf in Duluth, Georgia. The 54-hole team and individual stroke play event will include 10 HBCU men's golf teams and five HBCU women's golf teams, with the winning teams earning a two-day development camp at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, home of THE PLAYERS Championship. Furthering its support of the collegiate space, Bridgestone will participate in the HBCU Coaches Summit presented by Bridgestone, helping to mentor and provide coaches with insights to better prepare their teams for future success. The summit is in collaboration with the Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA) and the Black College Golf Coaches Association (BCGCA).

Rounding out the list of initiatives under the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program is the Bridgestone Collegiate Invitational, a 54-hole tournament featuring top-level NCAA Division 1 men's golf programs and HBCU schools along with high-ranking individual golfers from underrepresented communities in golf. Korn Ferry will award its winner with an exemption into a 2024 Korn Ferry Tour event to be announced at a later date.

First unveiled in March 2023, the PGA TOUR's Pathway to Progression aims to support the identification and development of junior and collegiate golfers from historically underrepresented communities. Now in its third year, The Collegiate Ranking, in partnership with the APGA Tour, provides transitional support for the top five Black senior collegiate golfers as they begin their professional golf careers.

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### **About PGA TOUR**

By showcasing golf's greatest players, the PGA TOUR engages, inspires and positively impacts our fans, partners and communities worldwide.

The PGA TOUR, headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, co-sanctions tournaments on the PGA TOUR, PGA TOUR Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA TOUR Latinoamérica, PGA TOUR Canada and administers PGA TOUR Q-School presented by Korn Ferry and PGA TOUR University. TOUR members represent the world's best players, hailing from 24 countries and territories. Showcasing the biggest moments in the sport with history and legacy on the line, the PGA TOUR has long-term domestic distribution partnerships for broadcast coverage on CBS, NBC and Golf Channel and video streaming service on ESPN+. Internationally, PGA TOUR coverage is available across 200+ countries and territories in 26 languages via 44 broadcast and digital partners. Virtually all tournaments are organized as non-profit organizations to maximize charitable giving, and to date, tournaments across all Tours have generated more than \$3.64 billion.

Fans can follow the PGA TOUR on the new PGA TOUR app and PGATOUR.COM, and on social media

channels, including [Facebook](#), Instagram (in [Spanish](#), [Korean](#) and [Japanese](#)), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), Twitter (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), [WeChat](#), [Weibo](#), [Toutiao](#), [Douyin](#) and [LINE](#).

**About Bridgestone Americas, Inc.:**

Bridgestone Americas, Inc. is the U.S.-based subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, a global leader in tires and rubber, building on its expertise to provide solutions for safe and sustainable mobility. Headquartered in Nashville, Tenn., Bridgestone Americas employs more than 45,000 people across its worldwide operations. Bridgestone offers a diverse product portfolio of premium tires and advanced solutions backed by innovative technologies, improving the way people around the world move, live, work and play.

**About Bridgestone Golf**

Based in Covington, GA, Bridgestone Golf, Inc. manufactures premium golf balls under the Bridgestone and Precept brands. Beginning in 2006, Bridgestone revolutionized golf ball selection with its custom ball-fitting program, identifying a golfer's ideal golf ball based on personal swing characteristics. Today, as the #1 Ball-Fitter in Golf, Bridgestone has conducted over four million fittings via a combination of live-fitting, online selection, OTTO Autonomous Ball Fitting, and its V-FIT video ball fitting. The consumer data gathered from ball-fitting continues to inspire Bridgestone's innovative new golf ball designs, yielding industry-leading performance products for the entire range of players, from recreational golfers to the best in the world. Bridgestone Golf is proudly represented on professional tours by Tiger Woods, Fred Couples, Matt Kuchar, Jason Day, Chris Gotterup, and Lexi Thompson. Bridgestone Golf USA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bridgestone Sports Co. Ltd., headquartered in Tokyo. More information: [bridgestonegolf.com](http://bridgestonegolf.com).