

For Immediate Release

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Bridgestone, PGA TOUR Advance Diversity in Golf with Inaugural Bridgestone HBCU Invitational

- **The first-of-its-kind tournament at TPC Sugarloaf featured 15 teams from Historically Black Colleges and Universities.**
- **The invitational is one element of the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program, which aims to create greater diversity in golf.**
- **Before the competition, teams participated in a custom ball fitting, a career development panel and a community immersion event.**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (November 3, 2023) – This week Bridgestone Americas (Bridgestone) and the PGA TOUR hosted the inaugural Bridgestone HBCU invitational, a first-of-its-kind tournament featuring competition from 15 HBCU teams at TPC Sugarloaf in Duluth, Ga. The contest is an element of the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program, part of the PGA TOUR's Pathway to Progression program, which aims to achieve greater diversity in golf by developing talent from diverse and historically underrepresented groups.

The Bridgestone HBCU Invitational hosted ten men's teams and five women's teams from HBCUs across the country for two days of competition on November 1 and 2. Both men's and women's competitions were hotly contested with only one stroke difference between 1st and 2nd place. The Arkansas Pine-Bluff men's team secured their victory with a total score of 593 while the Alabama State women's team took home the trophy with a total score of 654. Both teams earned a two-day development camp at the prestigious TPC Sawgrass golf course in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, home of THE PLAYERS Championship. Arkansas Pine-Bluff also earned an invitation to the Bridgestone Collegiate Invitational, set for March 24-26, 2024, at Silverado Country Club in Napa, Calif.

"Bridgestone is committed to utilizing our platform and resources to make the game of golf more accessible for student-athletes of diverse backgrounds," said Caitlyn Ranson, head of partnership marketing, Bridgestone Americas. "The Bridgestone HBCU Invitational was a pivotal first step in developing a stronger and more inclusive golf community. We are excited about the future of our new program with the PGA TOUR and what we can achieve together to support the whole athlete on and off the course."

Leading up to the tournament, Bridgestone and the PGA TOUR coordinated enrichment opportunities designed to provide equitable access for players interested in pursuing the sport as a career, while also creating a pipeline of young golfers that better represent communities nationwide. On October 30, student athletes from Drew Charter School in Atlanta, Ga., joined Morehouse College golfers and coaches who participated in the Invitational for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Bridgestone Golf facility in Covington, Ga., where they received a custom ball fitting and shared perspectives on their golf journeys.

Following the experience, Bridgestone hosted a welcome dinner at TPC Sugarloaf for all teams competing in the invitational, where Eastside Golf founders Earl Cooper & Olajuwon Ajanaku spoke to attendees about their mission to raise awareness of golf and inspire the culture. The groundbreaking lifestyle brand will join forces with Bridgestone in the coming year to reach underserved communities and diversify the game through the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program.

Finally, on October 31, competitors were invited to a Pathway to My Career panel discussion led by ESPN's Michael Collins, featuring Bridgestone's Caitlyn Ranson, Black Sports Business Academy's Vincent Pierson, Creative Artists Agency's Annette Parker, Stewart Cornelius from Multiplier, Devon Fox from the PGA TOUR, Ardelia Austin from Mercedes-Benz Stadium and Michael McClendon of the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. Industry leaders offered personal perspectives on gaining professional experience, translating golf skills to life and work, and building a network.

"The PGA TOUR appreciates the support of Bridgestone in helping put together this incredible week of competition, and we congratulate the Arkansas Pine-Bluff men's team, Alabama State women's team, and Gonzalo Moreno of Alabama State and Trinity Ahing of North Carolina Central on their individual victories," said Kenyatta Ramsey, PGA TOUR Vice President, Player Development. "The Bridgestone HBCU Invitational was a great starting point as we look to inspire the next generation of golfers from diverse backgrounds, and we are excited to see how the event grows and develops in the years ahead."

In September 2023, Bridgestone and PGA TOUR announced the launch of the Bridgestone Collegiate Development Program, which is focused on developing talent from diverse and historically underrepresented groups and creating equitable access for current and future generations. The next event within the program will be the HBCU Coaches Summit, which will connect golf coaches from HBCU schools with other leaders in the collegiate and professional space to develop their game knowledge and offer insights into how to prepare their teams for future success.

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, Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bridgestone Sports Co. Ltd., headquartered in Tokyo. More information: bridgestonegolf.com.

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](#), X (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), WhatsApp (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), [WeChat](#), [Weibo](#), [Toutiao](#), [Douyin](#) and [LINE](#).

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