

# 2021 U.S. Kids Venice Open

Golf della Montecchia, Golf Frassanelle and Terme di Galzignano Golf



GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Tournament  
Report

August 2022



**GEO Certified<sup>®</sup>**  
TOURNAMENT



# CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Verification and certification process
- 3. Practices, Highlights and key performance indicators
- 4. Continual Improvement Points
- 5. About GEO, and sustainability in and through golf





## INTRODUCTION

GEO Foundation is delighted to recognise the 2021 U.S. Kids Venice Open as a GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Tournament, achieving this award on a fourth successive occasion. Hosted annually at PlayGolf54 encompassing Golf della Montecchia, Golf Frassanelle and Terme di Galzignano Golf, the tournament is organised by U.S. Kids Golf and Play 54, taking place from August 19-21, 2021.

As a result of a concerted team effort and with concrete commitments to the future, the U.S. Kids Venice Open has:

- Undergone an official verification process, undertaken by independent verifier Libi Newell
- Successfully passed the GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> evaluation
- Met the required criteria of golf's voluntary standard for sustainable golf tournaments
- Shown significant progress on Continual Improvement Points set during 2020 Verification.

GEO concurs with the verification assessment that, having achieved 46 out of the 54 credits available, and with Continual Improvement Points set for the future, the U.S. Kids Venice Open should be re-certified with the GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Tournament status for the 2021 event.

This certification recognises the organisers' credible and important leadership in advancing sustainability - in and through golf – helping foster nature, conserve resources, take climate action and strengthen communities.

The tournament has also helped to raise awareness and influence a new generation of emerging golfers.

This official GEO Certified<sup>®</sup> Tournament Report summarises the commitments made, actions undertaken, results generated, and continual improvement points accepted for future editions of the tournament.

Jonathan Smith  
Executive Director  
GEO Foundation



“The U.S. Kids Venice Open stands as an inspirational example of a sustainable golf event and the positive impact this can have on a new generation of golfers, partners, and all who attend. To be successfully awarded GEO Certified Tournament status for a fourth time is a true credit to all involved and demonstrates tournaments of all sizes can play a key role in accelerating sustainability.”

*Jonathan Smith,  
Executive Director,  
GEO Foundation*



## VERIFICATION PROCESS

The official tournament audit was carried out by an independent verifier, Libi Newell.

Verification involved the following activities, using the International Sustainable Tournament Standard as the guide to ensure comprehensive and consistent evaluation of performance.

- Assessment of submitted tournament documents and review of plans in place with organisers
- Remote verification of policies in practice and results and undertook key interviews
- Review of progress on Continual Improvement Points set during 2020 verification
- Post-event evaluation of 2021 tournament data and results
- Provision of feedback considerations for continued future improvement.

The verifier then submitted a full verification report for evaluation by GEO Foundation.

### About Libi Newell

Experienced at both an operational and strategic level as a Tournament Specialist, Libi supports golf tournaments around the world to design and implement meaningful, innovative sustainability programmes. Additionally, she was part of the team that helped the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games become the first ever event certified to ISO 2012-1.



“The U.S. Kids Golf Venice Open is strongly committed to advancing sustainability across all aspects of the event and the collaboration across the board is an example for all events regardless of their size. To have sustainability running through the heart of the event is a credit to the team and this fuels an ambition to continually improve and explore more actions which is to be applauded.”

*Libi Newell, Independent Verifier*

### GEO certification review

GEO undertook a full review of all tournament and verification materials and evidence, ensuring:

- **Comprehensiveness** – those activities undertaken touched on all elements of the Tournaments Standard
- **Consistency** – that the verification approach was balanced, wellweighted and with consistent depth of evaluation across criteria
- **Accuracy** - matching the verification report with evidence submitted by the tournament to ensure statements and claims were accurate.



# BEST PRACTICES AND HIGHLIGHTS

Sustainability was implemented in a planned and coordinated way across all key elements of event staging, and in line with the GEO tournament certification criteria.

A wide range of actions spanned the following sustainability action areas:

1. Planning & Communications
2. Site protection
3. Procurement
4. Resource management
5. Access and equity
6. Legacy

## Planning & Communications

High level commitments, supported by the tournament staging and organising teams are key to foster engagement through effective planning and communication and sharing the initiatives to all stakeholders notably participants, families and staff.

### Highlights:

- For the 2021 edition a formal document with Sustainable Development Goals was underlined by the two organising companies (PlayGolf54 and U.S.Kids Foundation) and all the involved partners.
- Use of press release, video and social media to highlight initiatives.
- Introduction of the 'Pioneer of Sustainability' certificate to celebrate actions from suppliers and partners, presented to 11 of the event suppliers.
- Strong initiatives in place at Della Montecchia and Frassanelle also on course for GEO Certification.



“We are exceptionally proud to achieve this award and recognition for our commitment to sustainability. The young golfers and families who attend this event are always fully engaged with the initiatives and we will continue to strive to inspire all who attend this wonderful event.”

Dan Van Horn, Founder and Chief Executive of the U.S. Kids Golf Foundation



## Site protection

The tournament venues are actively engaged with the GEO OnCourse programme helping facilities to measure and track their sustainability progress, calculate and offset carbon, and get world-leading recognition. Golf della Montecchia is a GEO Certified venue and Golf Frassanelle is working towards this goal. The courses are managed by Play 54 Golf, which has policies, practices and initiatives in place across its operations to reduce environmental impact and promote local suppliers.

### Highlights:

- The protection of highly sensitive areas is part of the day-to-day management of all the three venues, thanks also to engagement through GEO and OnCourse. Moreover, the size of the tournament limits potential negative impact.
- During the event, golf carts could be used only for staff and referees, whilst spectators and parents could only follow the players on foot (with the only exception for potential disabled spectators).
- A bird island built to provide additional privacy for nesting birds.
- Beehives, with the added benefit of selling honey, and wildlife signage put in place by Frassanelle support and promote biodiversity.

## Procurement

An effective procurement policy focuses on sourcing local food and beverage through to the reuse of materials.

### Highlights:

- Providing traditional recipes made with local, organic foods has ever been an important aspect of the PlayGolf54 F&B departments as well as for the Blu Radisson hotel group.
- Wine, meat, milk and dairy products, and most vegetables are produced in local farmlands.
- During the tournament, players and spectators were able to choose vegetarian and gluten-free options, and the catering service has provided menus taking account of allergens and intolerances.
- A 'Create your own healthy meal' was launched providing the nutritional analysis for every dish.
- Every participant received a Montecchia Honey produced on-site thanks to the pollinator initiative and the increased number of beehives in Montecchia and introduction at Frassanelle.
- Vegetables at Montecchia's Restaurant have been harvested from the new on-site organic garden.
- Use of the water re-filling station has increased from 2050 litres to 2768 litres, saving the equivalent of 5536 500ml plastic bottles.



## Resource Management

Effective water, waste, energy and transport plans help to minimise the impact of an event. It is important to measure and continually monitor and track progress of the tournament.

### Highlights

- Two members of staff monitor the waste diversion to ensure enters the correct waste stream
- Use of the water re-filling station has increased from 2050 litres to 2768 litres, saving the equivalent of 5536 500ml plastic bottles.
- Plastic bottle caps are collected and donated to charity
- The solar power built on the roof of the maintenance shed at Golf della Montecchia a strong focal point for players as they are informed in real time of the systems usage
- Both venues use a 100% renewable energy supplier
- A carbon mitigation plan includes a fee at registration for all participants which raised 540 euro to enable 55 trees to be planted.
- Hybrid vehicles are provided by sponsors and promoted at tournament.
- Shuttle buses provided and promoted to participants; bikes provided by hotel to participants.
- Both venues have EV charging points.

## Access and equity

Access and equity is at the heart of the event whose purpose is to grow the game for the next generation. Free access and encouraging young golfer to play and enjoy golf in a family friendly environment underpins the whole event.

### Highlights

- Entry to the event is free. Both clubs work closely with local schools throughout the year, (including annual biodiversity and golf visits) and promote a welcome to the event.
- All car parking (venues and official hotels) is provided with parking lots for disabled
- The parking lots of venues and hotels have reserved places for disabled people, and all the buildings are equipped for the disabled (as special WC and ramps) .
- US Kids Venice Open provided the opportunity to accompany disabled spectators with shuttle-buses along the golf course.



## Legacy

A focus on staying local to support the local community can leave a lasting legacy for those who take part and reinforce the importance of the event regionally.

### Highlights

- 18 students from a Polish school have been involved as volunteers in the Venice Open organization.
- Sessions to raise the awareness about the importance of the local Civil Protection
- Play Golf 54 has an established business community of local businesses. Local food is part of PlayGolf54 F&B department policy and ten partners out of 19 were local, as well as 14 volunteers for the event.
- 2 local charities supported during the event – the Hospital Volunteers Association, and the local Civil Protection collecting funds through 3 initiatives: -putting green contest; -'Guess the number of bees' contest; -bottle caps collection, raising 750 euro







## CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT POINTS

The concept of continual improvement, ongoing innovation and setting new and higher targets is an important aspect of GEO Certified® Tournaments.

The following Continual Improvement Points were identified during certification of the 2021 tournament. The tournament partners will review these as priority areas for 2022 as part of a commitment to continue to extend year-by-year.

Continual Improvement Points from 2021 for 2022 are:

### Section 1: Planning & Communications

- *Credit 1.1 — Sustainability Plan*  
Good work on the SDG document; verifier is suggesting you could plan out mid and longer term goals across the action areas. (Not required for credits)
- *Credit 1.3 – Venue*  
Continue to encourage and support Frassanelle toward becoming GEO Certified and promote certification and highlights when in place.
- *Credit 1.4 - Stakeholder consultation*  
Consider publishing or making available summary results within post event communications and report. Consider open questions to provide an opportunity for comment and suggestions.
- *Credit 1.6 - Post-tournament promotion*  
A short 1/2 page post event sustainability report which links to sustainability plan and the actions and results against each goal.

### Section 2: Site Protection

- *Credit 2.2 — Safeguard habitats and ecologically sensitive areas*  
[Browse Sustainable Golf Highlights for further ideas.](#)  
  
Less cars means less temporary infrastructure - investigate reducing or closing parking spots.
- *2.7 Innovation*  
[To push more on the honey, look into Sustainable Golf Highlights examples.](#)



### **Section 3: Procurement**

- *Credit 3.1 - Procurement Policy*

Request partners including US Kids Golf follow the organisers example in considering the lifecycle of items procured for the event specifically merchandise, give-aways, and awards.

- *Credit 3.2 – Track and monitor suppliers*

Consider widening scope of questionnaire and tracker across social factors as well as environmental (e.g. fair and equal pay, equality policies).

- *Credit 3.4 – Avoid waste*

Carried over from 2020, consider using QR code instead of paper to do a digital survey.

### **Section 4: Resource Management**

- *Credit 4.4 – Strive toward “zero waste”*

Request detailed waste data from waste contractors and require oversight of end destination. Audit waste to review what items go to general waste and if they can be reduced or replaced. Discuss zero waste to landfill target with waste contractors and set timeline.

### **Section 5: Access & Equity**

- *Credit 5.1 — Access and equity Plan*

Include the access and equity initiatives within actions promoted on website and in plans to show the holistic natures of tournaments sustainability.

### **Section 6: Legacy**

- *Credit 6.1 — Measure economic impact*

Carried over from 2020 - consider a post event survey to increase accuracy of spending assumptions.

- *Credit 6.5 — Community legacy*

Carried over from 2020 – Consider engaging with children on other sustainable practices while on-site



## ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY, IN AND THROUGH GOLF

GEO Foundation is an international not-for-profit organisation entirely dedicated to advancing sustainability in and through golf, collaborating with the golf industry worldwide to:

- ✓ Strengthen the social and environmental contribution of golf
- ✓ Help the sport credibly communicate its commitment and value
- ✓ Champion sustainability in front of a large audience.

GEO manages and assures the OnCourse® program for facility and course management, new golf development and tournaments – currently used in 76 countries worldwide.

In addition to the delivery of programs and solutions, GEO's wider activities include research and innovation, communications and reporting, and support for strategy and policy.

GEO also administers GEO Certified®, the international mark of credible and comprehensive sustainability in golf, and part of an elite group of well-known ecolabels which include Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, and Forest Stewardship Council. After completing OnCourse®, a golf facility, development or tournament can apply for this international distinction.

Join OnCourse® - for sustainability, climate action and golf's future!



Congratulations to the organisers for making sustainable development such a central part of what they do, and for highlighting action and continual improvement through the U.S. Kids Venice Open