

Golf News

US Kids Golf Venice Open Retains GEO Certified® Tournament Status For Third Year

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Putting Green during the Practice Round of the U.S. Kids Venice Open, Golf della Montecchia, Padova, Italy.
(Credit: Filippo Vianelli)

The 2020 **U.S. Kids Golf** Venice Open has been awarded **GEO** Certified Tournament status for the third year in a row to become the first amateur event to reach this milestone recognizing sustainability in golf.

The tournament, organized by U.S. Kids Golf, the largest children's golf foundation in the world, in collaboration with **PlayGolf54** – the only golf establishment in the Veneto region featuring 72 holes altogether, is held annually at Golf della Montecchia, Golf Frassanelle and Terme di Galzignano Golf. The internationally recognized GEO Certified Tournament award, administered by the non-profit GEO Foundation (GEO), reflects the continued commitment towards environmental and social issues.

Last year's event demonstrated leadership across a range of sustainability indicators to meet international criteria and continually improve and innovate across planning and engagement activities, staging operations, venue actions, accommodation, legacy and community outreach

projects. Despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic during the 2020 event, the organizers adapted and continued to keep sustainability at the forefront of the event.

Dan Van Horn, Founder and Chief Executive of the U.S. Kids Golf Foundation said: “For the third consecutive year we are delighted to achieve this important recognition. Year after year the U.S. Kids Venice Open exceeds expectations of environmental sustainability. We believe our commitment to this endeavor is a very important message throughout golf for all of the families. For that reason, we will continue to follow this path in the future.”

Paolo Casati, President of Golf della Montecchia and of PlayGolf54 Group said: “We are very proud to support the U.S. Kids Golf Venice Open, now in its seventh year. The event is growing annually and raising sustainability awareness in the younger generation. Many thanks to GEO Foundation for its fundamental mission and for supporting all the golf clubs that are committed to protecting the environment.”

Among the highlights from the 2020 event were:

- Golf della Montecchia is connected to solar power built on the roof of the maintenance shed and players were informed in real-time of the system’s performance, with 1928,65 kWh of clean energy produced and a saving of 0,964 Tons of CO₂e during the week. The new energy supplier for PlayGolf54 also provides 100% of energy from renewable sources with no generators at the event.
- Engagement was stepped up with a ‘Green Questionnaire’ for staff introduced this year following previous initiatives for players and families. The results showed an impressive 100% awareness of sustainability among staff and helps to inform further focus areas.
- A dedicated social media specialist significantly increased sustainability communications on Instagram and Twitter while a post-tournament sustainability review was published in the magazine ‘Professione Golf Club’, a dedicated quarterly publication for club & course managers.
- The water initiative continues to make an impact with increasing water refill stations for players and staff raising total consumption from 972 litres to 2,050 litres, saving 4,100 plastic bottles compared to 1,944 the previous year.
- A partnership with OCEANTEE ensured 10,000 bamboo tees replaced plastic tees in 2020.
- A new bug hotel, the second on-site, helped foster nature along with communications around honey production on the course and a floating island for nesting birds.

Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of the **GEO Foundation for Sustainable Golf**, said: “Many congratulations to all the team at the Venice Open for their continued commitment to sustainability and engaging the next generation on this journey. To be awarded GEO Tournament Certification for three years in a row is a significant achievement and recognition of the ambition to continually improve and innovate. This event is a wonderful showcase of what can be achieved and the role a tournament of any size can play.”

Neil Beecroft, the independent, expert verifier, said: “The actions and detail across all aspects of the tournament, including nature, resources and community, are highly commendable. The commitment of the team is evident and plans already underway to further enhance the sustainability programme at the tournament in future years demonstrate a continued commitment, which is particularly positive during the challenging times 2020 have brought. It is a strong sign that the excellent efforts made regarding sustainability were not reduced, but rather pursued and further enhanced.”



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