

GOLF'S CONTRIBUTION TO MICHIGAN

GAM Shares Study of Golf Industry's Impact on Economy, Quality of Life

The Michigan golf industry's total economic impact is \$6.1 billion.

Our state is home to 859 courses, including the most public golf courses in the nation.

We are the top winter-interrupted golf tourism destination in the country.

The golf industry here provides 61,000 jobs.

Those are some of the highlight numbers from a recently completed study by the National Golf Foundation (NGF), which was commissioned by the Michigan Golf Alliance, a collection of the leading golf organizations in the state, including the Golf Association of Michigan (GAM).

GAM Executive Director Chris Whitten said his first reaction to the study's results was one of confirmation.

"Those of us traveling the state and in the industry have felt the positive growth of Michigan golf the last several years, and this confirmed what we saw and are continuing to see," he said. "It also reinforced how fortunate Michigan golfers are with the number of facilities available to them."

Whitten said if a person looks at the state demographically, the golf footprint in Michigan does not make sense.

"Until you know Michigan golfers and understand their enthusiasm for the game, then it starts to make sense," he said. "It's one thing to have all these great golf courses but another thing to support all of them the way Michigan golfers support them in a state where golf isn't available all year."

Whitten said the numbers put Michigan near the top, rivaling any state in terms of overall participation and economic impact.

"It starts with rounds played and the activity of the golfers who are avid and enthusiastic and that trickles down through the facilities and then into the communities that are home to those facilities," he said. "On top of that the tourism numbers stood out, especially the number of folks coming to enjoy our golf courses. We are in the elite group of golf destinations in the world."

Whitten said the reaction of the GAM officers and governors was like his reaction.

“Number one, the study is a great sign for our business and two, it highlights more opportunity for the GAM to spread our message for the benefit of the game which is consistent with our mission and what we try to do.”

The GAM has included the NGF's impact study [HERE](#) for its member courses and golfers.

Notable things you will find and can find more information on in the study include:

- The Michigan golf industry contributed almost \$6.1 billion to the state's economy in 2023 and supports 61,000 jobs with \$1.795 billion of wage and benefits income and more than \$821 million in state and local taxes.
- Michigan has 859 golf courses that are part of 709 facilities, almost all of which are classified as small businesses. Of those 709 facilities, 604 are public and 105 are private.
- The NGF said outside of the coastal, warm weather states of Florida and California, it can be argued that no U.S. state has a more substantial footprint in the world of recreational golf. Michigan is 10th in the U.S. in size and 11th in population but ranks third in the total number of golf courses.
- More than 1.85 million golfers travel to Michigan for golf and spend more than \$1 billion annually with non-residents playing about three of every 10 rounds in the state each year. Only a handful of states have a larger proportion of annual rounds played by visitors like the Sunbelt states of Arizona, Florida, and South Carolina and the world-wide tourist destination Hawaii.
- Only Florida, California and Texas with golf facilities open the year around have a higher volume of annual rounds played than Michigan, which had approximately 16.42 million rounds played in 2023.
- Approximately 896,700 residents play traditional, green-grass golf. Only seven U.S. states have more golfers.
- Michigan golf provides 92,200 professionally managed acres of green space in Michigan serving as wildlife sanctuaries and the facilities practice environmental impact programs like expanding natural areas, reduction of water usage, using natural algae controls and providing garden beds and bee and bird houses.
- Golf facilities in Michigan had a charitable impact of \$104.3 million in 2023 by hosting an estimated 4,880 dedicated charity events with 467,400 participants.