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Cincy Magazine April/May 2020

6/17/20 – Cincy Sports: Golf Championships Persist Despite Changes

New guidelines promise safety that other sports don't have

Noah Tong



In these strange times where team sports are postponed—and the notion of fans in stadiums is fondly remembered as a hazy memory—golf in Cincinnati is filling the void for sports enthusiasts.

The Greater Cincinnati Golf Association (GCGA) has hosted amateur and junior championships since June 2, albeit under strict COVID-19 policies and restrictions. These stipulations require competitors and volunteers alike to always practice social distancing, as well as maintain a limit of one spectator per participant. Other rules outlaw lingering and encourage quick warmups; as a result, the speed of play increased.

“So far so good,” says Todd Johnson, executive director for the GCGA. “We’ve had no issues with anyone getting sick, and these rules speed up the game since there’s nothing to fiddle with.” Johnson estimated rounds of golf are now taking a full hour less than usual.

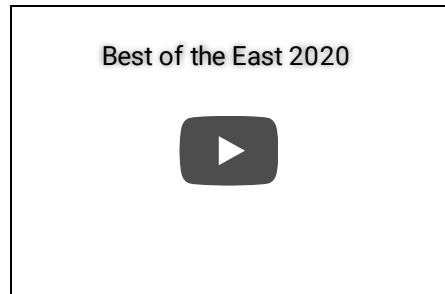
More tournaments open to the public are scheduled in the following months, something that cannot be guaranteed for other sports. To date, it is not certain FC Cincinnati will return to Nippert Stadium to resume the regular season, and there is great skepticism there will even be an Opening Day at Great American Ball Park. Fall sports may not look ordinary either.

In contrast, Johnson believes golf could captivate the public’s attention.

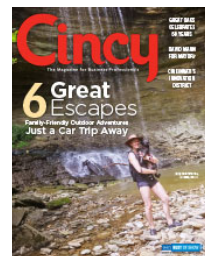
“This is one of the few sports where people can feel safe,” he says. “It allows us to get back to some sort of normalcy. Golf may hit a spike in interest if other sports aren’t played normally.

“Whether this becomes the new norm, only time will tell.”

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