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Pathway to Progression announces 2026-27 Underclass Elite Ranking and APGA Collegiate Ranking

Top-ranked HBCU player to earn exemptions into elite amateur events, including The Monroe Invitational and Porter Cup

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida – The PGA Tour’s Pathway to Progression program today announced the initial Underclass Elite Ranking and APGA Collegiate Ranking of the 2026-27 season, underscoring the Tour’s continued commitment to recognizing top performing collegiate golfers from historically underrepresented communities.

Rudy Sautron from the University of Tennessee leads the Underclass Elite Ranking, while Nicholas Canales from the University of Central Oklahoma holds the top spot in the APGA Collegiate Ranking.

Now in its second season, the Underclass Elite Ranking recognizes the top freshmen, sophomores and juniors, as well as fourth year players eligible for a fifth year of competition. Following Sautron in the initial ranking is Argyle Downes from Rutgers in second place and Gabriel Dulong Villoslada from University Texas Rio Grand in third. Monte Chumchavate from Nevada and Kostka Horno from New Mexico State round out the top five.

“The Underclass Elite Ranking is a critical lever in strengthening the Pathway to Progression program,” said Kenyatta Ramsey, PGA Tour Vice President, Player Development. “Rudy Sautron’s win at The Monroe this summer is exactly what these rankings are intended to do, which is to put talented players on bigger stages and give them the chance to show they belong.”

Top players in the final standings will be invited to the Underclass Elite Showcase at TPC Scottsdale, where the top five finishers will earn a spot in the Underclass Elite Performance Experience at TPC Sawgrass.

The player who finishes No. 1 in the final ranking will again receive an exemption into The Monroe Invitational. Last season’s invitee, Sautron, won the 85th Monroe in July with a tournament-record 19-under par. The victory earned him a spot in the PGA Tour’s Butterfield Bermuda Championship, held last week, where he made the cut and finished T17.

“The Monroe Invitational is proud to continue its partnership with the PGA Tour’s Pathway to Progression Underclass Elite Ranking for a second year,” said Mason Grower, Tournament Chairman of The Monroe Invitational. “Our 2026 champion, Rudy Sautron, earned his spot in the Monroe field

by finishing No. 1 in the inaugural 2026 ranking. We're excited to see the program continue to grow and thrive, and we look forward to welcoming the series champion back to Monroe in 2027."

New this season, the top ranked player in the overall ranking and the top ranked HBCU player will receive exemptions into the Porter Cup, a prestigious amateur event held annually at the Niagara Falls Country Club in Lewiston, New York.

"This new partnership will not only add an elite HBCU player to our field, but it also gives them an opportunity to compete against topflight amateur talent," said Marty Shimmel, Porter Cup Tournament Director.

Now in its seventh year, the APGA Collegiate Ranking identifies top graduating collegiate golfers from underrepresented communities preparing to turn professional. Following Canales in the initial ranking is Francisco Perez from Howard in second place and Lance Christensen Jr. from Colorado Christian in third. MJ Darmawan from Florida A&M and Rodrigo Barahona from George Washington round out the top five.

The top five eligible players in the final standings will join PROBOUND, the PGA Tour's professional development program. These players will earn membership in the APGA Tour, and have access to various player development resources, Delta flight credits to aid with tournament travel, and mentoring programs to support their transition to professional golf.

The top ranked player in the final APGA Collegiate Ranking will also receive scholarship entry into the pre-qualifying round of the 2027 PGA Tour Q-School presented by Korn Ferry.

Both rankings are powered by CLIPPD and use Average Strokes Gained to evaluate performance across NCAA Division I, II and III, NAIA and NJCAA competition.

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About PGA Tour

The PGA Tour's mission is to deliver the world's most compelling professional golf competition, featuring the sport's greatest players, for fans, partners and communities. The PGA Tour, headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, operates the PGA Tour, PGA Tour Champions, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA Tour Americas and PGA Tour University. To date, events across all Tours have generated more than \$4.4 billion in charitable giving

About the Pathway to Progression

The PGA Tour's Pathway to Progression player development program is an initiative designed to identify and support underrepresented golf talent across the junior, collegiate and professional levels. The program provides access, resources, and competitive opportunities to help players advance through the amateur ranks. Through strategic alignments and partnerships, Pathway to Progression aims to build a stronger, more diverse pipeline of future Tour professionals.