

## **A Case for Youth Caddies**

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for Western Golf Association

## Table of Contents

A Case for Youth Caddies: Executive Summary Report.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Current status of youth caddies in the U.S.....	6
Examples of youth caddie programs today .....	7
Western Golf Association’s Caddie Academy .....	7
Colorado Golf Association Caddie Academies.....	8
Goat Hill Park’s Caddie & Leadership Academy .....	10
Caddie & Leadership Academy in Wisconsin and Virginia.....	11
Youth on Course Caddie Program .....	12
Caddie U .....	12
CaddieNow .....	13
Benefits of youth caddies.....	13
Health benefits .....	14
Opportunities to access and learn the game of golf .....	15
Exclusion and access – leveraging caddying for opportunity.....	16
Socialization, income and learning professionalism.....	22
Leveraging caddying to achieve career success.....	31
From Caddyshack to Corner Office – Interviews .....	31
College scholarships for youth caddies.....	47
Programs that offer scholarships to youth caddies .....	48
Benefits of networking and mentoring .....	51
Reduced maintenance costs and improved pace of play.....	53
Challenges faced by youth caddies .....	54
Decline in caddies .....	54
Increased emphasis on college preparation.....	56
Summer school, summer programs and volunteering.....	57
Labor laws.....	57
Competition from older and foreign-born workers.....	60
Travel/Club summer sport participation .....	60
Opportunities going forward.....	61
Forecaddies .....	61
Implications for stakeholders.....	62
Historically underserved communities .....	62

Access to golf.....	62
Income.....	63
Mentorship opportunities .....	63
Scholarship opportunities.....	64
Youth.....	65
Developing strong work ethic.....	65
Character building.....	66
Public golf courses .....	66
Improving pace of play .....	66
Damage reduction .....	67
Added service/prestige.....	68
Private country clubs.....	69
Youth employment opportunities.....	69
Mentorship programs .....	69
Areas for future academic research.....	70
Conclusion .....	72
References.....	74

## **A Case for Youth Caddies: Executive Summary Report**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this research report is to examine the current status of youth caddies in the U.S., study the benefits derived from youth caddying, assess the challenges faced by youth caddies and provide recommendations for stakeholders in golf and future research. The full version of the report follows this summary. More than 100 sources consisting of peer-reviewed research, interviews and popular press articles have been examined for the report.

### **Current status of youth caddies in the U.S.**

Currently, caddies are offered at just over 1% of public daily fee courses, 5% of high-end public/resort courses and 17% of private courses (WGA, 2018). Youth caddies comprise ~64% of all caddies. As such, there is room to grow opportunities for youth caddies in the U.S.

### **Benefits of youth caddies**

#### Health benefits

One of the most apparent and immediate benefits of youth caddying is the exercise afforded to both the caddie and golfer. During an 18-hole round of golf, both the youth caddie and golfer walk 4-5 miles (Kobriger et al., 2006) and can burn up to 500 calories/hour (Burkett & vonHeijne-Fisher, 1998; Gabellieri, 2011). This amount of activity is more than 4 times the daily recommended amount of physical activity for youth and adults and can help reduce the risk of a variety of health issues and diseases (CDC, 2019, 2020; Murphy et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2007; Murtagh et al., 2010; Wen et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018).

## Networking, professionalism, income and scholarships

The sources examined for this report reveal many social, psychological and financial benefits associated with youth caddying. These include: enhanced social skills, adaptability, discipline, work ethic, confidence, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, golf skills/knowledge, access to golf, networking and mentorship opportunities with successful adults, potential for outstanding wages for youth and potential for college scholarships (Harrison, 2005; Sato, n.d.; WGA, 2018; Klein, 2019a; USGA, 2004; Buteau, 2019; Kilgannon, 2004; Atwood, 2020). These benefits are examined in detail in the report.

### **Challenges faced by youth caddies**

While the benefits afforded to youth through caddying are abundant, there are challenges. Adult caddies are a popular option. Youth employment, in general, has been on a steady decline and is projected to drop to 26.4% in 2024 (Morisi, 2017). Labor laws vary from state to state and can limit the opportunities youth have to caddie. Finally, the abundant use of motorized golf carts has severely impacted the use of youth caddies across the U.S. (Kilgannon, 2004; Klein, 2019).

### **Opportunities going forward**

Aside from the WGA and NGF report on the current statistics of youth caddies, no academic research has been conducted on the impact of youth caddying on long-term career, educational or social outcomes. Scholars should examine the unique opportunities youth caddying affords. More private and high-end public/resort courses should add youth caddie summer programs. Public courses could employ youth forecaddies to improve pace of play and the overall experience for their golfers. From the current evidence available, it is apparent that youth caddying affords many benefits. More work should be done to continue to highlight this

unique employment and educational opportunity and give more youth a chance to experience caddying.

## **Introduction**

It has been argued that no better job exists for youth than caddying. As demonstrated throughout this report, caddying can provide youth with networking opportunities, professional development and life-skills that are unrivaled by traditional entry-level youth jobs (e.g., retail). Caddying can also provide youth with a strong earning wage and scholarship opportunities to attend college. While there are many benefits associated with youth caddying, there are also challenges. Labor laws, competition from adult caddies and courses favoring motorized golf cart revenue over employing youth caddies are all examples. Thus, the purpose of this report is to examine the current status of youth caddies in the U.S., study the benefits derived from youth caddying, assess the challenges faced by youth caddies and provide recommendations for stakeholders in golf and future research. To accomplish this purpose, this report is organized into several main sections. First, an overview of the current status of youth caddies and examples of youth caddie programs in the U.S. is discussed. Next, the benefits of youth caddies are examined. Following this, the factors related to the decline in caddies and challenges faced by youth caddies are discussed. The report concludes by examining opportunities for youth caddying going forward, implications for stakeholders and ideas for future research on the topic.

### **Current status of youth caddies in the U.S.**

Caddies in the U.S. predominantly work in private (17% offer caddies) and/or resort and high-end (5% offer caddies) golf clubs (WGA, 2018). Youth caddies (defined as teenagers) comprise ~64% of all caddies and serve as the focus of this examination. Adult caddies are defined as full or part-time non high school/college workers. Not surprisingly, private clubs

manage (89%) and train (96%) their own caddies in house. It is encouraging that ~85% of courses that have caddies offer free playing privileges to their caddies (during restricted times) and that an estimated 62% of youth caddies do end up playing golf (WGA, 2018).

### Examples of innovative youth caddie programs

Currently, there are several thriving caddie programs in the U.S. While some differences exist among them, they all share a common goal: introducing youth to caddying and providing opportunities to learn life skills and income. While the following is not an all-encompassing examination of every caddie program in the U.S., an overview of several of these types of programs is provided.

#### **Western Golf Association's Caddie Academy**

The Western Golf Association's (WGA) Caddie Academy provides summer caddying opportunities for under-resourced high school students who hope to pursue an Evans Scholarship (provides full housing and tuition to participating universities). It began in 2012 as a pilot program with 12 participants (Butler, 2018). To be eligible, students must demonstrate excellence in academics, leadership and character (Ruiz, 2018). The students must complete three summers of caddying to be eligible to apply for the Evans Scholarship (Butler, 2018). The WGA Caddie Academy for Young Women began in 2012, and more recently, in 2017, a Caddie Academy for Young Men was started. To date, the Caddie Academy has had more than 100 graduates obtain Evans Scholarships ("WGA Caddie Academy - About Us," n.d.). This program is free to all participants. During their seven weeks of participation, youth caddies are provided housing, meals, transportation to and from the golf courses, and earn money through their caddying efforts (which they get to keep; Filing, 2018; Jones, 2018).

Examining the WGA Caddie Academy for Young Women more closely demonstrates the positive impacts that this opportunity provides. Most of the female participants are racial minorities (e.g., Latinx) and would be first-generation college students. Furthermore, the average household income of participants is \$30,000. The young women come from all over the country (13 states in 2018), and they also attend college visits, listen to guest speakers and prepare for standardized college testing (WGA, 2020c). The more recently added WGA Caddie Academy for Young Men also provides the same opportunities to mostly minority men from lower socio-economic status. It is currently growing, and in 2019 included 18 young men from three states (WGA, 2020d).

The Eastern Caddie Academy for Young Women is a regionally specific caddie program. Participants are eligible for the Platt Evans Scholarship, which provides full tuition and housing to Penn State University. The demographics of the participants are reflective of the WGA Caddie Academy for Young Women in the Chicago area. In 2019, 12 girls participated, and the program plans to expand in the future (Hunt, 20108; WGA, 2020e).

### **Colorado Golf Association Caddie Academies**

The Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy (a program of the Colorado Golf Association) features two Caddie & Leadership Academies. There are some differences between the two academies and an overview of each is provided next.

#### *Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy*

Since its inception in 2012, the Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy has produced 225 caddies. It has three chapters in Colorado, all hosted by the Colorado Golf Association. The CommonGround chapter is the oldest (founded in 2012). It is based at the CommonGround Golf Course in Aurora. The Meridian chapter was founded in 2015 and is housed at Meridian Golf



Course. Grand Junction was founded in 2017 and is located at the Lincoln Park Golf Course and the Tiara Rado Golf Course.

Youth who qualify are admitted upon the completion of their eighth-grade year. To maintain eligibility, they must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA. Their family income should be less than \$80,000. Caddies earn \$400 monthly. To earn this money, they must complete 12 loops a month and 36 loops by the end of the summer. Leadership classes, volunteer hours and a work log are also requirements. After the two-year program is complete, caddies are placed into another caddie program at a course in their area (Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2020).

#### *The Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy*

The Broadmoor is a luxury resort in Colorado. Consistently ranked among the best in the world, it features two courses that have played host to numerous national tournaments (i.e., U.S. Women's Open and 2018 U.S. Senior Open; The Broadmoor Golf Club, n.d.). Launched in 2020, the Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy builds upon the success of the Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy by providing more opportunities to youth in Colorado. The mission of the Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy is to prepare young men and women for a lifetime of success and achievement. They aim to do this through the caddie academy, leadership development, learning and pursuit of an Evans Scholarship (The Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2020). Like other programs, caddies are paid bi-weekly through a grant, and golfers can also tip their caddie after a round.

Youth who qualify are admitted on the completion of their eighth-grade year. To maintain eligibility, they must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA. Their family income should be less than \$80,000. Caddies who complete the required number of loops (six every two weeks and 40 by the end of the summer), volunteer weekly and attend weekly leadership classes will receive

their \$300, \$350 or \$400 payment each month (scaled for each consecutive year in the program). This comes to a total of \$1,200, \$1,400 and \$1,600 (not including additional tips earned) for the youth caddie. The Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy also utilizes the Cowboy Ethics and Financial Literacy programs seen in other academies (The Broadmoor Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2020).

### **Goat Hill Park's Caddie & Leadership Academy**

John Ashworth (an interviewee from the Caddyshack to Corner Office articles examined later) founded the Caddie & Leadership Academy at Goat Hill Park. This program was created to not only provide youth with opportunities, but also to save a municipal golf course that was under threat to shut down. Ashworth discovered the Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy described earlier and reached out to Solich. Now, the Goat Hill Park Caddie & Leadership Academy operates as a sister program of the Solich Caddie & Leadership Academy (Sherman, 2018).

Goat Hill is not your typical country club atmosphere. At only 4,454 yards and with no dress code, the culture is fun and welcoming. Music is blaring while rounds are being played, and Ashworth's motto is, "...world class, working class. We're trying to give a really good product that's fun to play and in good shape... People really like the vibe up here" (as cited in Strege, 2017). Ashworth recruited celebrities like actor Bill Murray and surfer Kelly Slater to join in on his campaign to save the course from being overtaken by developers.

To maintain the atmosphere that Ashworth has instilled, golfers do not have to pay for caddies. Rather, similarly to other programs, the caddies are paid through the Goat Hill Park Foundation. Golfers can tip their caddies extra. The program is available for youths aged 13-17 who primarily come from disadvantaged backgrounds. "They have to do some community

service, do some classroom stuff...” (John Ashworth, as cited in Strege, 2017). Caddies must complete six loops every two weeks and earn \$200 through the foundation. Furthermore, the participants caddie for golfers who are pre-screened as suitable mentors (Sherman, 2018).

### **Caddie & Leadership Academy in Wisconsin and Virginia**

The Caddie & Leadership Academy of Southeast Wisconsin and Central Wisconsin seek to provide young men and women with the opportunity to learn life lessons, strong work ethic, perseverance, professionalism, etiquette, communication skills and social interaction through the game of golf (Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2021a). This program aims to train 60 new participants in 2021 and continue to develop the caddies from the prior summer (Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2021b). Furthermore, caddies who are interested and eligible for an Evans Scholarship are guided and mentored through the application process. The Central Wisconsin region aims to train 25 total students and the Virginia region 11 students.

Youths aged 13-16 years old can participate in the academies. The program runs from mid-June through late-August and successful completion consists of attendance/completion of all the following: 1) two training/orientation sessions; 2) weekly leadership workshops; 3) monthly volunteer service; 4) a minimum of six loops every two weeks (24 total loops over the eight-week program). The caddies earn wages for their efforts (paid through a grant) and can also earn additional tips from their golfers. The participants receive \$200 every other week as their base earnings. Preference in admission leans towards youth with demonstrated financial need (i.e., families earning under \$75,000/year; Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2021a).

An additional component of the Academy is leadership training. The leadership training program is called “Be Somebody” (based on the book *Cowboy Ethics and Values*) and is led by a board member. The training is delivered through a three-step process consisting of: 1) interactive

learning activities; 2) discussion of learning principles related to the activity; 3) applying principles to one's own thoughts/decisions. For 2021, the Academy is also adding "Financial Literacy" training to its program (Caddie & Leadership Academy, 2021c).

### **Youth on Course Caddie Program**

Youth on Course began in 2006 as a solution to re-engage juniors with the game of golf in Northern California (Youth on Course, 2020a). The Northern California Golf Association developed a model where local youth could play Poppy Hills Golf Course for just \$5. Since then, Oregon, Washington, Arizona and Idaho have joined in. Now, Youth on Course is in 37 states across the U.S. The Youth on Course Caddie Program facilitates caddie programs at 17 clubs in Northern California (Buteau, 2019). The payment structure and overarching setup of the Youth on Course caddie program is different from the previously discussed caddie academies. Caddies in this program earn a minimum of \$60/loop (with the potential for additional tips from the golfer). Furthermore, caddies who qualify can also be a part of the Caddies to College program. This is based on financial need and allows caddies to earn an additional \$50/round that goes into a scholarship fund (Youth on Course, 2020b). To date, over \$2 million in scholarships have been awarded (Youth on Course, 2020a).

### **Caddie U**

PGA TOUR veteran Tim Herron started the non-profit organization Caddie U to grow and train youth caddies in his home state of Minnesota. The nonprofit organization serves motivated teen caddies, students with disabilities and players from diverse backgrounds (Beasley, 2020). The organization has helped supply more than 300 caddies for the pro-am events at the PGA TOUR's 3M Open tournament. Caddie U reached an agreement with CaddieNow (discussed

next) to address practical problems that negatively affected caddie participation (Beasley, 2020). Caddie U's tagline is "Best first job ever," (Thomas, 2019).

### **CaddieNow**

Aside from the in-house private country club youth caddie program models, some companies have started their own caddie services. While some do not emphasize the youth caddie, CaddieNow is a company that does. Boasting over 5,000 caddies and more than 100 golf courses served, CaddieNow (n.d.) states that their mission is to "grow the game of golf through youth caddies and make them widely and easily accessible to golfers of all skill levels at affordable prices." CaddieNow also insures their caddies and offers cashless payment service. They have integrated virtual check-in technology and tee-sheet integration for their participating courses. CaddieNow is used by the Caddie and Leadership Academy and Caddie U to manage, communicate, schedule and pay their caddies more efficiently than in years past. The company has also worked with and helped Youth on Course, The First Tee Chapters in DC, MD, VA, FL, TX, and HI, and the WGA (CaddieNow, n.d.).

### **Benefits of youth caddies**

Having provided an overview of the current status of caddies in the U.S., an examination of the benefits of caddies (in general) and youth caddies (specifically) is examined next. The benefits of caddying are numerous. From health and social benefits to networking and career advancement, caddying has the potential to provide youth with opportunities and access they might not otherwise have. Furthermore, benefits to the golf course, such as improved pace of play, customer experience and reduced maintenance costs are also realized. The following sections detail these benefits.

## Health benefits

One of the most apparent and immediate benefits of caddying is the positive health impacts for both the caddie and golfer. The U.S. has obesity and cardiovascular health problems. Approximately 52% of adults (Hales et al., 2020) and 18.5% of youth (Hales et al., 2017) are classified as obese or severely obese, and the world's population of obese individuals tripled between 1975 and 2016 (World Health Organization, 2020). With heart disease being the leading cause of death for men and women (Heron, 2017), it is evident that humans need to be more active. This is not to say that everyone should be a fitness model or that one cannot be healthy with extra body fat, but the correlation between low physical activity and poor health outcomes is well-studied (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2019a) and many others (e.g., Fryar, Chen, & Li, 2012) list obesity, high blood pressure and physical inactivity as some of the factors that put people at a higher risk for heart disease.

As a possible remedy, brisk walking (in general; Rieck, 2020), and a round of golf (specific to this paper) have been shown to have health benefits. Numerous studies indicate that the health benefits derived from brisk walking can include reduction of risk in heart disease (CDC, 2020), obesity (CDC, 2019b; Murphy et al., 2007), type 2 diabetes (Smith et al., 2007), blood pressure (Murphy et al., 2007; Murtagh et al., 2010), all-cause mortality (Wen et al., 2011) and depression (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2018) and many others recommend 150-300 minutes a week of moderate-intensity physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) to generate “substantial health benefits for adults” (p. 28). For children and adolescents 6-17 years old, 60 minutes per day of physical activity are recommended (of which muscle-strengthening activities should be included three

days per week). These health-related benefits attributed to brisk walking and physical activity are afforded to both the player and caddie during a round of golf (Ainsworth et al., 2011; Parkkari et al., 2000; Lyerly et al., 2011; Lyerly et al., 2014; Fitzsimmons et al., 2014; Shahib, n.d.; Stauch et al., 1999). For more research on the health benefits of walking while playing golf, see Murray et al. (2016) for a review of studies on the topic.

While golf courses vary in length, the average mileage walked during a round of golf (no golf cart riding) is 4-5 miles (Kobriger et al., 2006) or an average of ~12,000 steps. During a typical walked round of golf while carrying one's own clubs, the golfer can burn anywhere between 435 calories/hour on a flat course and up to 495 calories/hour on a hilly course (Burkett & vonHeijne-Fisher, 1998). Similarly, Gabellieri (2011) found that males aged 20-58 years burned an average of ~1,200 calories and had an average heart rate of 103.5 beats per minute while carrying a golf bag for a full round of golf. Much of this is dependent on factors including: weight of the golf bag, hours or number of holes walked, body weight of the golfer, terrain, etc. (Stauch et al., 1999, Club Director, 2012; Murray et al., 2016, Luscombe et al., 2017). A youth caddie carrying a golf bag (often weighing up to 40 pounds) benefits from the added resistance and meets the daily recommendations for physical activity. Even pushing a golf bag on a pushcart is more beneficial than riding a motorized golf cart. When a golfer takes a caddie and walks the round of golf, the health benefits are realized by both individuals.

### Opportunities to access and learn the game of golf

Transitioning from the health benefits derived from youth caddying, opportunities to access the game of golf are now examined. Caddying has historically been used to access and learn the game of golf for marginalized communities. An overview of the historical experiences of these groups in caddying and current status are examined next.

## **Exclusion and access – leveraging caddying for opportunity**

To those who know and love the game, golf can provide a lifetime of fun, recreation, lasting relationships and opportunities. However, the game has not always been readily accessible to all. Golf has a long and unfortunate history of exclusion. Private country clubs across the world have historically denied membership to minorities and women (Daddario & Wigley, 2006). One of the earliest examples cited as the impetus for the recent positive change in membership policies came after Shoal Creek Country Club in Shoal Creek, Alabama, was pressured by the PGA TOUR, corporate sponsors and civil rights activists to change their ways (Chambers, 1990). Shoal Creek was set to host a PGA TOUR event at its facilities when a statement from then President Hall Thompson shocked the sports world. “We don’t discriminate in every other area except the blacks,” said Thompson (Diaz, 1990, p. 1). The concern over exclusionary practices led to investigations of similar practices at other PGA TOUR venues. Examples of other high-profile private clubs that restricted membership (either in the past or present) include: Augusta National in Augusta, Georgia (no African American members until 1990 and no women members, although no official policy existed, until 2012), Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, New Jersey (no women or minorities until 1991), Muirfield in Gullane, East Lothian, Scotland (no women until 2019, after they were pressured by the R&A lest they be denied the ability to host another Open Championship; McCann, 2019; Rapaport, 2019), Burning Tree Club in Bethesda, Maryland (which accepted the penalty of losing \$1.2 million in tax breaks as opposed to admitting women as members; Garber, 2003; Roberts, 2006), Butler National Golf Club in Oak Brook, Illinois, and Garden City Golf Club in Garden City, New York (no women as of 2019, McCann, 2019).



This troubled history, social stereotypes and more discrete forms of discrimination (e.g., new members must be personally invited by a current member to be allowed to join) have depicted golf as historically, and in some cases still is, a game for wealthy white males (Chambers, 1990; Ryan, 1997; Dawkins, 2003; Apostolis & Giles, 2011; Fjelstul, Jackson, & Tesone, 2011; Rosselli et al., 2017; Lorentz, 2020). With the current activism displayed through the Black Lives Matter and Me Too movements, golf is an institution that has not always been perceived on the side of equality and social justice. In recent years, there have been programs and initiatives developed to introduce those not historically privileged with the opportunity to play the game (i.e., The First Tee - 1997, Black Girls Golf - 2013, The Bridge Foundation - 2016, etc.), but the earliest form of beating the odds and learning the game was through caddying.

In some ways, caddying is one of the best introductions a young person can have to the game. One does not have to be rich to carry a golf bag, and most caddie programs allow the caddies to play for free on certain days of the week (Laubenstein, 2020). This is not to say that youth from a lower socio-economic status (SES) cannot learn the game at their local public municipal course. Rather, there is an opportunity through caddying to not only learn the game but earn money at the same time. Furthermore, the youth caddie has the opportunity to play for free at courses that would otherwise (unless his/her family was a member of the club) be inaccessible to him/her.

Prior to desegregation, caddying was one of the ways that many racial minorities and individuals from lower SES had access to the game of golf (Glenn, 2012; Versalles, 2020). When asked about the lack of Black golfers on the PGA TOUR, Tiger Woods said, “When I was younger, we had a few African American players out here,” referring to the likes of Calvin Peete, Jim Thorpe and Lee Elder. “That’s no longer the case. And I think it’s just that we don’t have the

same caddie programs and, hence, don't have the same access" (as cited in Crouse, 2012). Dawkins et al. (2018) discuss the role that youth caddying played in introducing the Black community to golf and how it shaped the creation of African American golf clubs. Lee Trevino and Ben Hogan, both of whom came from homes of poverty (Verdi, 1985; Brown, 2008; Barton, 2019), started as youth caddies. Charles Sifford (the first Black golfer to earn a PGA TOUR card) started as a caddie. Teddy Rhodes, personal golf instructor to legendary boxer Joe Louis and the second Black golfer to play in the U.S. Open in 1948 (after John Shippen in 1896), began his golf career at 12 years old as a caddie (he achieved great success on the United Golf Association Tour, the equivalent of the Negro baseball league for golf). Rhodes and Bill Spiller were responsible for initiating litigation against the PGA asking them to remove their "Caucasian only clause" (Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, 2020). Lee Elder, the first Black man to receive an invitation to play in the Masters Tournament, caddied in his youth and even caddied for Teddy Rhodes. In 2020, he was named as the honorary starter to replace Arnold Palmer at the Masters. Pete McDaniel, author of the most comprehensive text on the history of African American golfers, says, "Caddying taught me a really strong work ethic and gave me a sense of independence. And it also began my life's long love affair with golf" (as cited in Benet, 2002, p. 128). Had it not been for these legends' introduction and access to golf through caddying, the history of golf might look vastly different.

It should be noted that there are not any current published statistics or database maintained on the demographics (e.g., race, gender, age, SES, etc.) of caddies in the U.S. (either at the youth or adult level). Much of what is written on the changing demographics of caddies is taken from observations of the changing demographics of caddies on professional tours, caddie manager perspectives and historical analysis (e.g., books and articles in popular press and

academic literature). Given the insight provided by these sources, it can be said that, especially in southern states and at the professional level, the demographics of the caddie yard have shifted. Where caddies of color were once a mainstay at country clubs and as caddies on the PGA TOUR, caddie managers like Kim Albert, who started caddying at the age of nine and has been in the business ever since, state they can count the number of Black caddies on one hand (Brown, 2008). Several explanations for this shift are proposed. First, many country clubs now utilize caddie companies to hire caddies and, according to managers like Albert, these companies do not have a diverse pool of caddies (Brown, 2008). Second, the large prize purses on professional golf tours contributed to the shift in caddie demographics (Crouse, 2012). As prize money increased, so did white caddie interests in the pro-circuits. Given that most professional golfers were/are white, they hired their family, friends and people they knew and/or were recommended by others.

The changing economy was also a contributing factor. Prior to the 1950s (when a caddie could receive \$2 for a single loop), caddies earned similarly to the standard minimum wage (e.g., ~\$1/day in the 1920s and 1930s). As such, caddying was an attractive alternative to picking tobacco in the fields and other forms of physical labor. The creation of the motorized golf cart and the opening of higher-paying factory jobs during the Civil Rights Movement also contributed to Black caddies seeking work outside of the golf course (Benet, 2002; Crouse, 2012). Since then, it is also plausible that young Black youth shun the role of caddie, as it can be viewed as a continuation of service. As such, as other sporting opportunities have grown in popularity and, as young Black youth see great success by the likes of Michael Jordan, Mike Tyson, Cam Newton and LeBron James, their interests take different paths (Harrison, Lee, & Belcher, 1999; Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002; Ogden & Hilt, 2003; Van Sterkenburg &

Knoppers, 2004). In this view, it is more attractive to be the star of the sport as opposed to the helper.

The final blow to the presence of Black caddies could have been when the Masters stopped requiring golfers to use the club's caddies in competition. Prior to 1983, every professional golfer had to take an Augusta National caddie (who was always a Black caddie). The Masters is one of the most watched golf tournaments each year, and the sudden shift to a majority white caddie workforce marked the end of seeing Black caddies on television. According to McDaniel, "It was the only time Black caddies were treated well and recognized for their role in the sport" (as cited in Benet, 2002, p. 128).

The shift of focus in the Black community to other sports (i.e., basketball, football, etc.) has come from a variety of reasons. Cultural stereotypes imposed upon the Black community (e.g., 'natural athletic ability'), limited access via segregation and discrimination to other upper-class sports (i.e., golf), and social expectations of success in athletics have, in many ways, lead to unrealistic expectations of becoming a collegiate and/or professional athlete in basketball and football (Coakley, 2021; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Harrison et al., 2011; May, 2008, 2009; Singer, 2008; Singer & May, 2011; Rosselli & Singer, 2014). Even for Black youth who choose to play golf and eventually play at an elite level (i.e., college or professionally; Rosselli & Singer, 2017a), they often fight the cultural stereotypes of golf being a "white" sport from their peers while simultaneously trying to not be "too Black" for golf (Rosselli & Singer, 2017b; Coakley, 2021).

In their most recent 2015 study, the NCAA (2020a) reported that 64% of men's basketball and football Division I student athletes agreed/strongly agreed that their families expected them to be a college athlete when they were young. Men's baseball reported 66% and men's golf

reported 54%. These reports were high among Division II student athletes as well. The NCAA estimates that only 1% of high school athletes go on to play basketball for a college/university and only 2.9% go on to play football at the DI level in college. These numbers are similar for women's athletics (NCAA, 2020b). Of these collegiate athletes, only 1.2% of women's basketball, 1.2% of men's basketball and 1.6% of football student athletes are drafted to play professionally in the NBA, NFL and WNBA (NCAA, 2020c).

Given the overwhelming odds against earning college scholarships to play DI basketball and football, more time and energy could be devoted to other avenues to earn college scholarships. This is not to disparage athletic dreams and goals, but rather to encourage education about other options and diversifying experiences before attending college. For a junior in high school who is under six feet tall and is playing on the junior varsity team, summers spent caddying might be a viable option to both earn money and build a caddie resume that can earn them a scholarship to college that is equal to or surpasses in value that of a college athletic scholarship. As will be discussed later, there are college caddie scholarship programs available that are not dependent on athletic potential and provide deserving students monies to pay for college every year.

Girls and women have also begun to leverage caddying to obtain opportunities. Examples from the WGA's Evans Scholars demonstrate this potential. According to Schreiber, in 2018 girls and women comprised only 2% of all caddies in the U.S. Furthermore, the caddying population is now overwhelmingly white. In comparison, that same year the Evans Scholars were comprised of 25% female caddies. There is potential for these numbers to continue to grow, as the WGA's Caddie Academy, which launched for girls in 2012 and boys in 2017, is comprised of minority individuals (90%) and more girls/women apply each year (Schreiber, 2018). The WGA started

the initiative to address the lack of diversity in caddies, and it is having a tangible impact.

Women and people of color comprised more than 30% of the Evans Scholarship recipients in 2018 (Pope, 2018). To date, girls have leveraged this opportunity to earn more than 55 Evans Scholarships (WGA, n.d.). This number will only continue to rise. For the 2020-21 academic year, Evans Scholarship recipients were comprised of 37% women and 33% people of color.

### Socialization, income and learning professionalism

While there are no peer-reviewed studies that address the benefits of youth caddying from a sociological perspective (most golf research is conducted on either the kinematics and exercise science components of the swing/skills, pace of play and some on the caddie/professional golfer relationship), there are ample personal experiences documented in popular press, magazine and news articles, personal commentaries and books to draw from. One recent example of a caddie program that has had a positive impact on youth is the Seminole Golf Club's (located in Juno Beach, Florida) high school caddie program. Seminole was designed in 1929 by famed architect Donald Ross and is a place where "career caddies" (adults) comprised the rounds caddied. The youth caddie program was founded by member John Hand, and currently consists of 10 youth caddies who work on weekends and over holiday breaks. He discusses the transformation that he sees from the youth when they become caddies. "When you have an opportunity to bring young people into the fold of adults, they conduct themselves properly. They look you in the eye, they pay attention, they're enthusiastic. If you're willing to conduct yourself properly, that's how you can create a connection." The caddies turn in their academic transcripts to Hand for his review (to make sure they are keeping up with their studies), and they get the opportunity to learn from and network with the club's membership.

Hand recalls that his life and career benefitted from several people during his time as a junior golfer and caddie. As such, he wanted to create a way for Seminole's membership to become more involved with their own community. The impact has been immediate and worthwhile. Several quotes from the youth caddies are relevant. "The conversations that you have out there between holes and between shots is pretty awesome." "They open up to you and talk to you about their life and their struggles that they maybe went through maybe running a business." "You don't get many high school jobs like this." "There is this one member who told me, 'Really excel in school.' Ever since then, I've worked extremely hard in school, and it's done well for me." "The people here have really taught me some great life lessons about work and getting through obstacles." "Work hard in school and just love golf and this job will literally change your life for the better." These examples demonstrate the immediate impact that youth caddying can have. Not only are the youth learning valuable life lessons from the membership, they are also being held accountable to excel academically.

Brad Klein (2019a), who was a 2006 inductee into the Caddie Hall of Fame, discussed the role caddying has played in his life. He has caddied at every level of the game and even had the honor of caddying for Jack Nicklaus. "I've always thought caddying was more than about earning spending money as a kid. It was about learning how to be an adult and how to handle myself with strangers, occasionally in awkward circumstances... A round as a caddie meant four hours in a laboratory of life skills, honed in a safe environment, to be tested later in life" (Klein, 2019a, para 5 and 7).

The USGA also acknowledges the impact caddying can have on young lives. Concerning the benefits associated with caddies, the USGA states that caddies can learn good work habits,

social skills and have access to playing the game that might not be afforded otherwise, thus helping to grow junior golf (USGA, 2004).

The caddie yard is also a place where diverse individuals can learn and gain wisdom from one another. As Klein (2019a) writes:

Suburban kids who find themselves in a caddie yard with men and women from more blue-collar urban neighborhoods can learn how diverse their own community is more quickly than their peers otherwise might. That removal from a bubble of privilege can make impressionable youngsters into empathetic adults in a hurry. There is a forced intimacy that cannot be replicated in any other youthful employment. (para 29)

In his examination of 600 Evans Scholarship applicants' essays, Harrison (2005) found many themes that relate to skills learned through caddying. These include (but are not limited to): enhanced people, social and communication skills, ability to work with a variety of people, discipline, work ethic, hard work, confidence, responsibility, leadership, teamwork and golf skills/knowledge. Buteau (2019) reports that caddies who participated in the Youth on Course program in Northern California also report improved communication skills (92%), responsibility (90%) and confidence (85%). In addition to these tangible skills gained, networking and mentorship were also found (also supported by Kilgannon, 2004; Klein, 2019a; USGA, 2004; Atwood, 2020).

The reading of current Evans Scholarship essays continues to build upon these themes. Below are examples of quotes from several essays that reflect the valuable lessons and skills learned while caddying. These quotes are presented in their original form. A '...' indicates an area where one quote ends and another begins. Any typos and/or grammatical errors are retained



to maintain the integrity of the quote. To protect the identity of the applicants, initials were used in place of real names.

I always like to tell my friends that there is not a single better job for a teenager to have than to be a caddie. It has not only kept my wallet full, but it has taught me things about the game of golf that I love. It has taught me how to keep my composure while playing golf, and how to always maintain good etiquette on the course. It has given me an opportunity to create connections and relationships that have helped me work often and to the best of my ability. I am very grateful to have been able to caddie throughout high school and I hope I will be able to use the job in the future as an opportunity to create more connections, learn more about the game of golf, and help more people play the game. (J.L.A.)

I would look forward to talking to the members about topics they were passionate about in their lives such as real estate, banking, paintings, sports, and medicine. Through these conversations, the members taught me many lessons in their stories of how they gained success in their own lives. One of the most important conversations I had was with one member, Dr. S.C, while I was carrying his bag during a three-day tournament. After I had told him about my unfortunate situation regarding not making the soccer team, Dr. C bluntly explained to me that “failing is a part of success.” ... I cannot stress enough how much of my success I owe to the wise men and women I met through my years of caddying. These mentors have instilled in me the qualities of responsibility, respectfulness, and, most of all, commitment (J.S.)

From the eyes of my own mother, she has noticed that this program taught me a lot of valuable life lessons such as becoming a more mature, independent, self-driven young African American woman. The program also taught me to keep my eyes open for new and unexpected opportunities. ... As an individual who doesn't live an advantaged lifestyle, I was still able to walk alongside individuals who have great differences from me, learn how to be responsible and independent, and grateful. Caddying overall has played a huge role in my entire lifetime. Caddying has helped me become more confident as an individual. One major takeaway that I received from caddying is women empowerment; after caddying in the Women's Invitational for three years, I was able to be surrounded by other participants also trying to achieve similar goals as me, which was very uplifting. ... After caddying for three years, my goal is to set an example for female caddies and encourage women of color to experience a rewarding life of being a caddie that comes with a lot of networking and inspirational opportunities which I am extremely appreciative. (E.C.A.)

In two seasons, I have caddied 76 loops, and have had the pleasure of meeting some hard-working, interesting, and thoughtful golfers along the way. I now see that I can have the same opportunities that they have had. (J.T.)

After completing my first few loops, I knew that caddying was for me because getting to spend a few hours on a course performing a rewarding service for members and guests, while interacting with them and building meaningful connections, is something that does not really feel like work. Instead, it feels more like a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the

game of golf while also bettering my work ethic and overall character, which is something I will be forever grateful for. (M.D.)

I was able to log just under 100 loops, but the lessons I learned as a caddie are just as valuable to help me in the future. I was able to take on a leadership role as an honor caddie and developed many values that would represent the Evans Scholars in the best way possible. Being a caddie taught me how to be dependable, efficient, and hard working. Although the weekend morning wake up calls were brutal at times, they helped remind me of a bigger goal I was chasing and that there were lots of people depending on me. Caddying has opened up more possibilities than I ever imagined. While continuing to caddie, I was offered a job as an outside staff member which helps reinforce the values caddying taught me. Through both jobs, I have created amazing relationships that are very important to me. (A.C.)

Caddying pushed me beyond many of my comfort zones. I started to feel more confident meeting new golfers, making new friends, talking with teachers, and basically finding my voice in this world. As my caddying career progressed, not only did I learn to love the sport of golf, but I also met so many interesting people and I learned from them. (B.H.)

Caddying has shaped me into the person I am today, and I am incredibly grateful for it. ... Caddying showed me how I am beyond capable of anything I set my mind to. As each year went by, I became increasingly comfortable talking to adults, and learned a lot.

Now I'm not nearly as shy, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to talk to different members about careers and their life experiences. (N.S.)

Caddying was a great experience and exposed me to the finer things in life. It was serene and peaceful almost as if the world stood still while I was caddying. In contrast to the city of Chicago where you always have to look over your shoulder for potential danger. Living and caddying away from home during the summer inspired me on how I wanted to live one day: to eventually become a member, bring my family out of the treacherous environment, and to live somewhere safer. That is what enabled me to get out of bed at 5AM every morning, my family. (E.W.)

When I'm caddying, I learn patience, respect, responsibility, professionalism, and communication. ... Caddying has been a very important part of my life—it has helped me grow as a person and has helped support my family since my mom is now unemployed. (A.H.)

Through caddying, I learned how to get out of my comfort zone, meet new people, while also learning the game of golf. Patience is another thing I have gained through this program because getting out is very unpredictable. In addition, I love communicating with the golfers while caddying; hearing their stories motivates me to achieve more for my future. (A.R.)

During my time caddying, I learned how to organize my time during the day. ... I also learned about each golfer's daily life and the profession each one pertained to. I understood each golfer's personality and learned valuable social skills because of golf. (J.R.)

I have developed many lifelong relationships, not just with my peers but with golfers as well. I love finding out the various careers that are possible for me to pursue, and it's interesting to hear how the golfers got to where they are today. When I was interested in the field of law, I was given a business card by a guest at my course. He has humble beginnings as well and is now a successful lawyer. Hearing the golfer's origin stories gives me motivation that one day I can achieve my goals just as they have. (C.E.)

Being a caddie has been and continues to be an extraordinary experience that has helped me build upon my strengths of dedication, social skills, teamwork, and hard work. Ridgemoor has given me the opportunity to accept and conquer new challenges, build relationships with a diverse group of people, and realize the benefits of hard work. I have been extremely fortunate to be able to caddie for numerous golfers that support my efforts to grow and develop my skills. They have given me advice about school, work, and everything in between. Caddying has become a significant part of my life. (M.P.)

The best part of caddying is making connections with the golfers I serve. They all come from different environments and families, there was no familiar story. This was my favorite part, learning how the golfers came to be who they are today. One golfer said he

was a caddie himself when he was a kid and was paid only five dollars a loop. He told me that caddying isn't about how much money one makes, but how much effort is put in. Some caddies work for the money, but I serve to build relationships, attain wise words about the real world from golfers, and build the foundation towards my success. Working for the WGA Caddie Academy has been a grand part of my life ... I use my earnings to help my mom with costs and pay for my current tuition. (M.T.)

Caddying also provides a viable source of income for youth. In 2004, Kilgannon found that youth caddies in the New York/Long Island area were bringing in upwards of \$120 for four hours of caddying. Furthermore, teenagers interviewed for Kilgannon's article agreed, "It's the best-paying job a kid our age can get" (para 13). One interviewee stated that some teenagers were making \$1,200/week (para 29). At \$30/hour, there are not many other part-time jobs youth can obtain that pay that much. In conjunction with the National Golf Foundation (NGF), the WGA (2018) found that (including tips), youth caddies average \$63 for a single bag loop, \$126 for a double-bag loop and \$81 for a round as a forecaddie. Overall, this averages to \$90/round between the three types of caddying options or \$22.50/hour for a four-hour round of golf. The federal minimum wage for nonexempt employees is currently \$7.25/hour (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021a). The state with the highest minimum wage is Washington at \$13.50/hour (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021b). Considering the added ability to network and socialize with professionals from a variety of professions (e.g., doctors, lawyers, CEOs, realtors, etc.) and learn professionalism on the job, caddying presents an attractive employment option for the youth of today.

## Leveraging caddying to achieve career success

Having discussed the benefits of youth caddying (e.g., health, socialization, mentorship, work ethic, etc.), it should come as no surprise that some of the most successful entrepreneurs and businesspeople have a background in the caddie yard. An entire website is dedicated to telling the stories of those who started caddying at an early age and went on to be highly successful in business. An examination of these stories and interviews is presented here.

### **From Caddyshack to Corner Office – Interviews**

Kai Sato is the founder of the website Caddyshack to Corner Office. Sato grew up in a home that faced many challenges (i.e., divorce, bankruptcy, and substance abuse). He was fortunate to earn a scholarship to a boarding school and started caddying in college. Sato says that “caddying was just as transformative as attending a highly ranked boarding school” (Meet Kai Sato of Caddyshack to Corner Office in West LA, 2020). Through reflection, he came to realize how influential the various businesspeople he caddied for were and how they inspired him. He started this website as a way of sharing inspirational stories of some of the most successful people in business and golf, and the role caddying played in their lives. To date, Sato has interviewed 25 people for his site. They range from for-profit company presidents and CEOs to PGA TOUR caddies, and all have been successful in their field. The average age they started caddying was 12.5 years old (with some starting as early as age 9).

An analysis of these 25 interviews reveals several common themes that are learned and developed through caddying: 1) life skills/lessons; 2) building social capital; 3) best paying job for a youth; 4) introduction to playing golf and/or access; 5) personal growth. These themes and their sub-themes are discussed in detail alongside representative quotes from the interviewees. In many ways, the findings below echo those from the Evans Scholarship applicants’ essays and

demonstrate the capacity of youth caddying to develop the skills necessary to succeed in life and the workplace.

### *Life skills/lessons*

#### Value of hard work and discipline

The value of hard work was mentioned repeatedly by the interviewees. While most of the interviewees came from working-class backgrounds, some did come from privilege. Regardless, working hard and understanding that effort and doing things the right way pays off was consistent throughout the interviews. ESPN senior golf writer Bob Harig said:

When I started out (caddying), I was at the bottom of the totem pole. There was definitely a hierarchy. ... So, it was stressed and impressed upon you that you really had to pay your dues. ... The caddie master assigned the loops, and there was no logic to it aside from merit. It came down to who you were and how well you caddied. So, you needed to get good, beyond just showing up each day. (Sato, n.d.)

David Podas, director of golf at Bel-Air Country Club in Los Angeles, California, echoed this when he said, “There is a pecking order, and you have to bide your time. You take whatever you’re given” (Sato, n.d.). Mary Petrovich, former CEO of a Carlyle Group company, reflected on how caddying toughened her up and prepared her for a male-dominated business career. Concerning the lessons learned as a caddy, she said, “The biggest lesson was how to succeed in the face of adversity. Hard work is free and so is having a great attitude. You just keep setting the bar higher. That has been a recurring theme throughout my life” (Sato, n.d.). Famed golf course designer Mike Keiser also stated, “You learned about golf, but you also learned a lot about life, what it meant to work hard, and what it took to be successful” (Sato, n.d.).



John Hallberg, former CEO of the Children's Cancer Research fund (currently a volunteer director for the WGA) discussed his experiences with hard work. Specifically, the task of carrying two bags at the same time teaches hustle. "Not only do you have to show up every day but when you're carrying doubles, in the rain, holding an umbrella, it's real work. Then, one guy hits it into the left bunker, the other guy hits it into the right bunker, and you have to rake both bunkers and tend the pin, while also reading the putts" (Sato, n.d.).

Discipline was also mentioned by several of the interviewees. "You learn the importance of being reliable, showing up every day, no matter how badly you feel," said past chairman and CEO of Booz Allen Hamilton, Bill Stasior (Sato, n.d.). For the new youth caddie who must earn his/her stripes, learning the consistency and discipline needed to show up for work every day is an important life lesson to learn at such a young age. John O'Donnell, founder of the lifestyle brand johnnie-O, reflected, "... we all gained a lot of discipline from working" (Sato, n.d.).

While other interviewees also mentioned the value of hard work and discipline learned through caddying, perhaps Fritz Corrigan, president and CEO of The Mosaic Company, summed it up best when he said, "There are many lessons. Hard work is one. The value of hard work and really committing to something. You don't have to be the brightest bulb, but if you outwork everyone else and do your very best, you'll get more opportunities" (Sato, n.d.). The ability to caddie as a youth (as early as 9 years old for some of these interviewees), perform manual labor, and have adults rely upon you can serve as a highly influential experience. As the quotes above demonstrate, some of the most successful businesspeople who were once caddies reflect strongly upon how caddying shaped and molded their work ethic.

## People skills

As mentioned previously, the caddie serves in many capacities during a round of golf. From advisor to psychiatrist, a caddie must know when to be quiet and when to offer sage wisdom. For the youth just starting as a caddie, the people skills gained every day on the job can prove to be advantageous later in life. Many of these interviewees would go on to become CEOs, presidents and owners of their own companies. According to the interviewees, few jobs afford youth the opportunity to learn how to engage with, encourage, handle disputes and provide timely advice to older adults than caddying. "I learned about life – how to get along with all types of people... how to deal with intimidation by the older boys... how to gain 'mentors' and 'sponsors'... how to settle grievances" – Bill Stasior (Sato, n.d.). Jeff DiModica said, "Caddying taught you respect, punctuality, speaking when spoken to" (Sato, n.d.). Stephen Malbon, founder of Malbon Golf, discussed his experience caddying for millionaires and the pressure that created:

More than anything, it was how to handle yourself in high profile situations. You've got two millionaires almost fighting on a hole, trying to decide if the one guy made a 7 or a 6 because there are thousands of dollars at stake. I learned about staying calm in high pressure situations. (Sato, n.d.)

Time management and strategic planning are also important to the caddie. Being able to rake a bunker while ensuring the golfer is enjoying their time, has the club they need for the next shot and making sure to keep up with the group are examples of things a caddie must do all at the same time. Matt Desch, CEO of Iridium, the largest satellite system company in the world, discussed how important time management and people skills are to running such a large company. Concerning lessons learned during his time as a caddie, he said:

While caddying is a physical endeavor, the greatest skills you learn are the psychological ones – what subtle things to say to encourage your player, how to think ahead to support two golfers you’re caddying for as well as two other golfers in a cart (all at the same time) ... So many lessons come from caddying but one of the most important is listening and observing. Being a leader requires vision, the ability to communicate and inspire, but if you aren't perceptive to the environment around you, you'll miss critical information needed for success. Sometimes the most important thing is to watch and listen, and only speak when the time is right and you have something to say. That's what a good caddie does; he or she watches and observes carefully before starting to provide advice... It toughened me up and helped me relate to anyone at any level around the world. (Sato, n.d.)

As much as caddying is a solo job, there are aspects that relate to teamwork. Whether it is the caddie providing advice to the golfer or caddies helping each other out on the course, the youth caddie has ample opportunities to learn how to support others. "Another one is teamwork. ... It wasn't about being a star, it was about getting the job done. When I was getting more leadership positions at the company, we honored everyone on the team. You start learning that as a caddie" - Fritz Corrigan (Sato, n.d.).

In a powerful reflection, John Hallberg discussed how caddying taught him the skills needed to be a strong fundraiser in his career:

The other big lesson is how to get along with people and the value of strong relationships. If there’s one thing I've done in my career, it’s that. Look at something like raising money for the CCRF the past 13.5 years, donors give to people not just to organizations. ... I

was a really shy 12-year-old kid, so caddying developed my ability to converse with 40, 50, and 60-year-olds in a meaningful way (Sato, n.d.).

Finally, Fred Gaudelli, who has had a successful 15-year career as the executive producer of NBC's Sunday Night Football program, reflected on the art of disagreeing with someone in a respectful manner:

If you're going to be successful in any venture, you're going to have to tell your boss something she doesn't want to hear. You're going to have to say that you disagree, and here's why you disagree. There's a little bit of an art to that where you're not insulting them. Caddying taught me that because they're paying you to carry the bags, but they're also paying for my advice. I'd try to get them to listen to me. You're not saying that to them directly, but that's really the gist of what you're doing there, so that really helped me in life. I'd been doing that from the time that I was 14 years old, once I'd gotten comfortable on the golf course. Like the round with Art Wall, he was relying on a 14-year-old kid for his expertise! (Sato, n.d.)

### Customer service

The ability to provide high-quality customer service is vital to many industries. From the for-profit mega corporations to the small non-profit seeking donations, happy customers and patrons are the lifeblood of revenue. Caddying is a service. Youth who get involved and stay involved can develop this valuable skill early in life. Neil Jacobson, the former president of Geffen Records, discussed the role caddying played in his development of customer service skills:

And the foundation of service was taught to me through caddying. In a beautiful way, caddying is a service. It's about being able to adapt to each player in any situation, being

malleable. It's being able to take the blame even when it's not your fault because it ultimately helps the client succeed. Once I learned quality service as a caddie, I was able to apply that level of intensity to everything else in my career. (Sato, n.d.)

Putting others' happiness and experiences above one's own is also a key aspect of customer service. No matter what the worker has going on in their personal lives, the customer is always prioritized. Bill Stasior summarized this, "The main thing was: a caddie could never have a bad day – it's our job to try, no matter how play is going, to make it a good day for the member" (Sato, n.d.).

### *Building social capital*

#### Networking

When leveraged properly, the youth caddie has the possibility to create great networks through direct access to powerful and successful individuals across a variety of industries. Some caddies specifically seek to earn loops with those they hope to align with. Neil Jacobson knew that he wanted to work in the music industry and that Tom Ennis (vice president for Arista Records at the time) golfed at the club Jacobson caddied for. "I got that loop when I was 17 or 18 years old. I knew I wanted to work for Tom and went after it with brute hustle" (Sato, n.d.). Bob Harig said, "I had friends who went to work for people they caddied for" (Sato, n.d.). This was the case for Bill Doyle. He credited his "first real job" to caddying for a gentleman named Fred Blesi:

When I got older, he had me come work for International Minerals and Chemicals (IMC) as a sales trainee. I didn't end up working for him until the end of my time at the company but later brought him on to my board of directors at Potash. It's a big circle of life. He's been a mentor to me and a wonderful friend. (Sato, n.d.)

Alan Fadel, senior partner of the Aurora Group at Morgan Stanley, discussed the role the country club he caddied at played in supporting others. “But because it was a familial club, everybody tried to support one another. They tried to help one another and advance one another in golf and in life” (Sato, n.d.). John Hallberg discussed how one of his loops came from a family of bankers. When it came time for Hallberg to obtain an internship for his senior year of college, he called upon his loop:

So, I called Mr. Bilski and asked if there was anything that he could do. The next thing you know, I had an internship at the bank working with the head of marketing. I was on the ground every day, and the experience opened me up to marketing, banking, and corporate America in general. Even though he didn’t know me very well, he had enough confidence in me to give me a shot. I’ll always be grateful for that opportunity. (Sato, n.d.)

Caddying can provide access and extended periods of time for youth to be around successful people in a way that few other (if any) jobs afford. Bagging groceries, taking orders at a fast-food restaurant, and mowing lawns, while fine jobs for youth, do not provide this level of access. Jim Ellis, former president and CEO of American Porsche Design and current tenured professor at USC, summed this up when he says, “The biggest thing was how I was exposed to businesspeople. They were all successful, and I wanted to be like them” (Sato, n.d.). Eddie Melendez, president of local media for Entravision, said, “... but the experience of caddying is way more than the money. It was about meeting the people” (Sato, n.d.). He went on to discuss how his father was a caddie and how a member at the club his father caddied at helped him obtain a full-time job so he could provide health insurance for his family.

### Insider knowledge of success

It is said that business deals are conducted on the golf course. For a youth caddie who pays attention, there is much wisdom and insight to be gleaned from their golfers' conversations during the round. Several of the interviewees stated that their golfers would often speak candidly about the mistakes they made in business or the sacrifices it took to get to where they were. Bob Harig reflected, "You started to see what it's like to take things seriously because these people certainly did to get where they were in life" (Sato, n.d.).

While working, caddies can also learn about careers that they might not have known much about otherwise. John Hallberg discussed this and how it opened his eyes to opportunities:

Jack was one of the first entrepreneurs that I met, and it really opened my eyes to what was possible. He owned a company called General Office Products, which was a local distributor of office furniture and things like that. He was a prime example of how caddying exposed me to people and careers that I didn't know a thing about. Whether it was doctors, lawyers, or bankers, if you listened a little, you could learn a ton. (Sato, n.d.)

The way these influential and successful individuals carry themselves can also make an impact on the youth caddie. "I loved being around the type of people that I caddied for. They were so successful, classy, and elegant. They constantly pushed themselves ... I was highly impressionable at that state in life, so these people were very inspiring to me" - Neil Jacobson (Sato, n.d.). These lessons were not limited to careers. Bill Stasior said, "Listening and learning from people who were successful, it was stepping into a different world but still being your own person. ... I loved to listen when they'd talk about their lives or business" (Sato, n.d.).

## Mentorship and advice

Aside from networking opportunities, the interviewees discussed the role that the golfers they caddied for played as mentors in their lives. Neil Jacobson discussed the impact that the previously mentioned Tom Ennis had on him. “I actually started to change the way I spoke after being around him ... Tom and my dad both gave me the same advice in two different ways, and it was exactly what I needed to hear at that point in my life” (Sato, n.d.). Mary Petrovich discussed the invaluable relationship she developed with one of her loops. “There was one member with whom I shared a particularly close relationship. There’s actually a book written about her ... and I’m actually a chapter in the book because we were so close” (Sato, n.d.). David Podas credited the head pro at the course he caddied at as having a “huge impact” on his career.

Matt Desch’s story is particularly intriguing. One of the golfers he caddied for changed his mind of what to major to pursue in college. This change ultimately led to his career path as the CEO of the largest satellite system company in the world:

Another critical loop for me came following my senior year of high school, after winning an Evans Scholarship to Ohio State and was about a month away from attending college. I had drawn a good loop, someone I respected. He asked me on the 13th hole where I was going to college and what I planned to study. At the time, my aspiration, not knowing any better, was to say "patent attorney." I didn't know what a patent attorney did, but it sounded like a great combination of science and law, and something that would pay well. I remember my golfer replying something to the effect of "then you're an idiot," though probably a bit more direct than that. I was shocked! I thought this adult I respected would be terribly impressed with me, but he had the opposite reaction. I stammered a reply, “Then, what do you think I should study?” He replied without hesitation, "Computers!" ...



Several weeks later, I signed up for Computer Science as a major, and that took me into the technology career I have today. I will forever appreciate that golfer and the advice that set me down my path. I don't think that I would have been a great patent attorney. (Sato, n.d.)

Jim Nugent, founder and publisher of Global Golf Post, had a similar experience with career path advice. While he originally thought he wanted to become a journalist, he found he was not as skilled a writer as his classmates. "Talking it over with one of my regular loops during the summer, he told me, 'You're a sales guy. Go get a sales job.' So, I went to work in media but on the business side" (Sato, n.d.). Nugent credited this advice and the path it led him down as the reason he was able to start Global Golf Post. "None of that would have happened without the advice that I received caddying. His counsel changed the direction for my life" (Sato, n.d.).

One of the most powerful examples of how caddies can be mentored by the golfers they interact with is the story shared by Eddie Melendez. When asked about the people he caddied for and if any of them contributed to his career in a meaningful way, he detailed how a group of club members acted as second fathers and mentors to him:

There are many, but things really changed for me when I met a guy named Win Eubel, "The Commander." We got to know each other through my caddying for him. He was a loud, flamboyant dresser, often winning the best dressed award at the club. His regular group was full of media guys, like John Sutton who ran KCBS. That became my regular loop every weekend, from eighth or ninth grade all the way through high school. On Friday and Saturday nights, The Commander would call my house and tell my mom what time they were playing the next day. She'd post the time on the fridge, and I'd get up there each morning about 30 minutes beforehand. I took care of the entire foursome in

one cart, two bags in back and two in the front. Over time, these guys became second fathers to me. They even gave me money for my grades. It was \$5 for A, \$3 for a B, and I had to give them \$5 back for a C. My parents never asked me about my grades, but these guys were all over it. I couldn't fathom giving them a bad report card and did well in school. They took an interest in me, very intent on what I was studying and into. But they were so respectful about it with my parents, even asking my dad if it was OK to mentor me. My dad was so moved and fully onboard. (Sato, n.d.)

Not only do the golfers the caddies loop for serve as mentors, but the older, more experienced caddies also serve as mentors. "Over time, you'd get out on loops with the older kids. They teach you, mentor you, point out your mistakes, and tell you how to improve. I really looked up to the college kids" - Jim Nugent (Sato, n.d.). Finally, the membership of a club can serve to provide advice and support to a young caddie. Mary Petrovich recalled how her original plans did not include attending a four-year university, "And then caddying became a big part of my life and laid the foundation for everything from there. It was the supportive members, like Suzy, who not only put the idea of attending the University of Michigan in my head but also helped me get an Evans Scholarship" (Sato, n.d.). It is clear from these interviews that the atmosphere of caddying allowed for fertile ground to develop networks, mentor relationships and life-changing advice. For individuals who do not come from privilege and do not inherit powerful networks, caddying can be leveraged to obtain opportunities previously unavailable. In sum, John Turner, chairman of Hillcrest Capital Partners, said, "My father was a radiologist, and I was very lucky that my family had resources. But from a very young age, I was able to see how impactful caddying could be, especially to those less fortunate" (Sato, n.d.).

### *Best paying job for a youth*

While evidence has already been provided to demonstrate that caddying is one of the highest paying jobs youths can have, it is insightful to see how these highly successful businesspeople affirm this concept from their own experience as youth caddies. Several of the interviewees discussed how they came from hardship and had to work, or how their parents made them work to pay for college and hobbies. After experiencing and surveying the options, caddying was the clear winner for money earning potential. "The money was just way better than any minimum wage job. ... When I'd come home from college during the summers, I'd caddie since it was the best way to make money" - Bob Harig (Sato, n.d.). Eddie Melendez provided further support when he said, "As a young kid, a teenager growing up in LA, I'd come back with 50 or 60 bucks in my pocket. That was great money back then" (Sato, n.d.). Neil Jacobson stated:

And, of course, I loved the cash. It was real money for me at the time, when you're getting \$80 for four putters or \$160 for packing two bags, working four days a week. Remember this was 1995, 1996, and 1997, I was making \$500 to \$700 per week as a teenager. (Sato, n.d.)

Mary Petrovich had the tragic experience of losing her father early in life. When that happened, all the siblings had to pitch in and get jobs. Her older brother started caddying and when she saw the money he was making, she had to get in on it. "I started caddying at Franklin Hills Country Club when I was 12 years old. It became my full-time job for nearly eight years" - Mary Petrovich (Sato, n.d.). Matt Desch also had to work early in life. He reflected on the financial opportunities provided to his family through caddying:

I was the second of six children in a blue-collar family without tremendous resources. Our parents encouraged us to work from an early age, and my older brother had

discovered caddying several years before. Given his success, we were all encouraged to follow. Once he earned a full Evans Scholarship from the effort, it wasn't really a choice, as it would have been impossible for our parents to have paid for all of our college educations. I won an Evans Scholarship to Ohio State after four years of caddying, and two additional brothers followed along later also winning Evans Scholarships. Caddying was very good to the Desch family. ... It was also the best way to make money for other things, like learning to fly, which I also did during high school (Sato, n.d.).

One of the most powerful examples of the earning potential for youth caddies comes from John Hallberg. He was able to help his father buy a car by giving him a loan. "And at one point in 1970 or 1971 when interest rates were really high, I actually lent my father \$4,500 to buy a new car. It was a Chrysler New Yorker, and it felt good to be able to contribute in that way" (Sato, n.d.).

Given child labor law age restrictions, caddying is also one of the jobs youths can do early in life. Some of the interviewees started caddying as early as 9 years old (though most were 12-14 years old). For youth, the financial potential, both historically and currently, makes caddying a worthwhile investment of time.

#### *Introduction to playing golf and/or access*

The game of golf has historically been intentionally and unintentionally exclusive and available only to those who have the time, resources, and access to play the game. Without caddying, the game of golf might not ever have known great golfers like Ben Hogan, Lee Trevino and Lee Elder. Most golf courses allow the caddies to play and practice on the course at least one day a week at no cost. Given the often-exorbitant membership fees to top-tier country clubs, many youths would not have access to otherwise learn the game. Programs like The First

Tee and other affordable golf programs have helped to close this gap and address the issue but caddying still serves as a very important introduction to the game.

Many of the interviewees discussed how caddying provided them access to learn the game. Alan Fadel said:

I was there pretty much every day in the summers. And then in sixth and seventh grade, I would go over there on Mondays to practice. Since we weren't members or anything, that was my time to practice. ... I was addicted from the first day. It was my environment. I felt right there. (Sato, n.d.)

Bob Harig, who would go on to write golf content for 25 years with ESPN, said that caddying was what introduced him to playing golf. "That's where I played my first rounds of golf. Every Monday, we played from 7 a.m. until 3 p.m., as much as we wanted" (Sato, n.d.).

Head golf professional Jack Druga said, "I played until dark, sometimes 40 or 50 holes in a day. I basically played until I got picked up" (Sato, n.d.). He even achieved a college golf scholarship due to his ability to practice, improve and grow to love the game.

John Ashworth, founder of clothing lines Linksoul and Ashworth, believes in caddying so much that he started a caddie academy where youth are paired with a mentor golfer who guides them and gives them a tip at the end of the round. He said, "The kids are 13-17 years old, and it's just incredible to see how it has changed their lives. Even kids who had never played are now into golf" (Sato, n.d.). Given that the golf industry is concerned with the longevity and growth of the game, caddying could serve a vital role in introducing and capturing the interests of youth and create life-long golfers.

### *Personal growth*

The final theme from the Caddyshack to Corner office interviews concerns personal growth. As the interviewees reflected on their time caddying, it was apparent that they learned about much more than just the game of golf. They also learned about themselves and what they wanted/did not want to become. John Ashworth said:

At that age, you don't realize the layers that you're developing, but it's definitely an important part of my life looking back on it. Golf really is my religion. It's what I've studied and been around my whole life. It's a very spiritual game as you know. It's close to nature and also close to people. You can really observe and get deep on yourself. It's just never ending, like peeling back layers of an onion. You just keep going and going and going. (Sato, n.d.)

The membership at a golf course can have a strong impact on how youth caddies view the world. For Jeff DiModica, these individuals were invaluable to his perspective:

Our members were hard working middle class and I learned more from them than I could ever pay back. I learned life isn't easy, heard real life problems, and met honest people who uphold the sacred rules of golf more than most of the CEOs with whom I have played with and been around since. You can't control what happens to you in golf, and these people understood that. People who are used to controlling the things around them and getting their way are a lot more likely to bend the rules or use a foot wedge than those who have dealt with a lot of bad bounces. (Sato, n.d.)

Each interviewee had something to say about the role caddying played in their life. Jim Nugent said, "Caddying was transformative in my life, both literally and figuratively" (Sato, n.d.). Mike Keiser went so far as to claim the four years he spent caddying as "the best four years

of my life” (Sato, n.d.). John Ashworth said that the life skills developed through caddying are even more beneficial to learn than playing golf. “It develops character and shows you how to navigate life. It’s a total game changer” (Sato, n.d.). Mary Petrovich claimed that caddying taught her focus, commitment and perseverance, and Jeff King said that caddying taught him about respect and manners. David Podas echoed this and said, “For young people, in general, golf builds character. It promotes honesty and integrity. It breeds good people; the game requires goodness, sportsmanship, and etiquette” (Sato, n.d.). Eddie Melendez said:

Caddying opened the world to me. It showed me what was in reach, that I could go to college. It showed me that I could graduate and get a job. I never would have thought that without the members telling me it was possible. And then, they kept pushing me further, saying, “You already did that. Now you can do this.” It taught me to dream bigger and be curious. (Sato, n.d.)

In sum, even individuals who have achieved extraordinary success in business and life recognize and appreciate the value of youth caddying. Fritz Corrigan provided a perfect summation quote when he said, “I’m sure every person you interview for this has said that caddying is the best summer job there is, and it’s true” (Sato, n.d.).

### College scholarships for youth caddies

For a period, it was almost a given that going to college was a pathway to a successful career. As tuition has continued to rise and the percentage of the workforce holding a bachelor’s degree has increased, some are considering whether college is still advantageous enough to pursue. While individuals who grow up in poverty (and earn a bachelor’s degree or above) do not earn as much as their counterparts who grow up in high-income families, they do earn more than their peers who do not earn a college degree, and, in most scenarios, college is a good investment

of time and resources (Bartik & Hershbein, 2016; Webber, 2016; Witteveen & Attewell, 2017; Lobo & Burke-Smalley, 2018). Regardless, a reality of today's college student is the financial burden associated with student loan debt. These loans can reduce the long-term financial benefits associated with earning a college degree (compared to those who graduate debt-free).

Caddie scholarships can help to offset and, in some scenarios, fully eliminate this burden for deserving youth. While not everyone is blessed with the athletic capabilities of a D I student athlete or the financial backing to develop elite musical talent, hard work in the classroom and as a caddie on the course can afford the same scholarship opportunities (and in some cases better) for youth caddies. Considering that many college attendees cannot afford the cost of college without student loans, and that, for some, not taking loans means not attending at all (Velez et al., 2019), any scholarship is extremely helpful. For those who must work while in college, their time to graduate is often extended. This can further add to their debt post-graduation. For full-ride scholarship students who receive full tuition (and sometimes room and board), they have one less thing to worry about and can focus on graduating in a timely manner.

### **Programs that offer scholarships to youth caddies**

Sullivan (2019) provides insight into the types and amounts of scholarships available through caddie programs. He writes, "National caddie scholarship funds, combined with thousands of individual club programs, now award tens of millions of dollars each year to boys and girls who work at golf courses" (p. 28). In 2018, the Evans Scholars Program provided \$24 million in full scholarships and housing to 985 caddies. The Westchester Golf Association's caddie scholarship program awarded \$1.1 million in 2018, and the Francis Ouimet Caddie Scholarship now awards annual scholarships up to \$40,000 with an average of \$7,000 (Sullivan, 2019). A review of several of the top caddie scholarship programs is provided next.



### *Evans Scholars Foundation*

The largest caddie scholarship program is the Evans Scholars Foundation. Eligibility for this prestigious award consists of a strong caddie record, excellent academic record, demonstration of financial need and outstanding character (WGA, 2020a). For the award recipients, full tuition and housing is provided at 21 leading universities. Evans Scholars maintain a cumulative 3.4 GPA and a 95% graduation rate (WGA, 2020b). There were 1,010 Evans Scholars enrolled at for the 2020-21 academic year and there are more than 11,550 alumni since 1930. The Evans Scholarship program also partners with many local and regional golf associations and scholarship to provide co-branded scholarships (“Our History,” 2020).

### *Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund*

The Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund has nearly 500 scholars each year and has awarded over \$38 million in need-based college tuition assistance since 1949. The awards range from \$1,500 to \$15,000 per year (with a top-end award of up to \$40,000 in 4 years). To date, over 6,000 students have earned scholarships. Alumni graduate at a 92% rate with an average 3.5 GPA. Caddies and those employed in other service to golf positions are eligible to apply (FOSF, 2020).

### *J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust*

The J. Wood Platt Caddie Scholarship Trust was created in 1958. In the past 60 years, over \$22 million has been awarded to over 3,500 caddies. For the 2019-20 academic year, 130 caddies received more than \$1.1 million. Graduate students are also eligible for scholarships. The award amounts range from \$1,000-12,000 per academic year (GAP, 2020).

### *New Jersey State Golf Association*

The New Jersey State Golf Association (NJSGA) also provides scholarships to deserving caddies. Since 1947, it has awarded more than \$15 million in scholarships to nearly 3,000 caddies. The 154 recipients were awarded over \$650,000 for the 2019-20 academic year and attended 88 different colleges (NJSGA, 2020).

### *Long Island Caddie Scholarship Fund*

The Long Island Caddie Scholarship Fund (LICSF) has a rich 59-year history. To date, 800 scholars have come through the program and \$4.3 million has been awarded. The scholarship covers up to four years of undergraduate study or an accredited trade school. Applicants must demonstrate financial need, have been accepted or currently attend an accredited school and have at least two years of experience as a caddie or other golf service role (e.g., work on driving range, bag room, etc.). The LICSF has recently partnered with the Evans Scholars Foundation to provide full housing and tuition to deserving caddies. For the 2020-21 academic year, there are eight Long Island Evans Scholars in school (LICSF, 2020).

### *Westchester Golf Association Caddie Scholarship Fund*

The Westchester Golf Association Caddie Scholarship Fund (WGACSF) was founded in 1956 by Willie Turnesa and Udo Reinach. Currently, the Fund awards an average of 280 scholars per year, with one-year tuition commitments totaling \$1,000,000. For the general WGACSF, candidates must complete a minimum of two seasons of service to golf (e.g., caddying, golf course maintenance, etc.), demonstrate financial need and demonstrate academic ability. To be eligible for one of the 14 endowed and five named scholarships, candidates must meet the standard WGACSF requirements and then align with the requirements specified by each scholarship's donor. To be eligible for the Westchester Evans Scholarship (full tuition and

housing), applicants should have a strong caddie record, excellent grades, outstanding character and demonstrated financial need. In the 2020-21 academic year, there were nine Westchester Evans Scholars (WGACSF, n.d.).

In sum, there is no shortage of scholarship opportunities for caddies. Hard-working youth across the country have the potential for large portions of their college education to be paid for by simply getting involved with caddying, focusing on their studies, and living in a dignified and upstanding manner. This potential combined with the already high pay for youth caddies demonstrates the financial opportunities that young people can leverage through caddying.

#### Benefits of networking and mentoring

The adage “It’s not what you know, but who you know,” or the more modern version “It’s not what you know, but who knows you,” both convey the importance of networking in finding and obtaining employment. The concept of social capital has been described by Baker (2000) as the resources available to an individual as a result of their own personal relationships (i.e., network). Whether it is obtaining a job (Granovetter, 1973; Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997), raise and/or promotion (Michael & Yukl, 1993; Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Wolff & Moser, 2010), or simply receiving information about a job opening, one’s access to social capital is helpful to achieving whatever one defines as success. Research on the role of networking has found positive relationships with career success (Forret & Dougherty, 2004; Wolff & Moser, 2009; Blickle et al., 2009a; Blickle et al., 2009b). Seibert et al. (2001) found that the quantity and quality of social relationships predict career success.

While few challenge the benefits of networking on achieving career success, there is more to the process than simply knowing many people. The intensity and confidence with which one pursues networking and mentors has an impact (Wanberg et al., 2000). Blickle et al. (2009)

found that proactive, self-initiated mentoring as a form of networking enhances the career success of early career employees (hierarchical position and income). Related to this self-initiation, Forret and Dougherty (2001) found that self-esteem and extroversion are positively correlated with networking behaviors (see also Wanberg et al., 2000). Recall from the prior Evans Scholarship applicants' essays that many reported how caddying improved their socialization skills and confidence. Concerning learning the art of networking, de Janasz and Forret (2008) state, "Skill-building opportunities in how to approach other people and introduce themselves, as well as opportunities to learn how to engage in 'small talk' to help find areas of common interest can enhance individuals' networking abilities" (p. 634). These skills and opportunities are built into the natural day-to-day activities of a caddie.

Continuing this line of logic, Lin et al. (1981) found that the status of the contact had a strong effect on the prestige of the job attained by new job seekers. As many of the professionals that can afford to play golf at private or premier golf courses and afford a caddie are often doctors, lawyers, CEOs, bankers, etc., access to these individuals is a prime area of opportunity for a youth caddies' future.

Research has shown that younger generations benefit from mentoring but also that the benefits are mutual (e.g., older adults benefit as well; Larkin et al., 2005). One of the benefits that aligns with the Evans Scholarship applicants' responses is for mentors to re-live successful roles and offer hard-earned expertise. For some youth caddies who grow up without successful role models, this is valuable knowledge to gain. Furthermore, Timpe and Lunkenheimer (2015) found that youth without a father but who had a male mentor earned "significantly more, on average, than those without a male mentor" (p. 12). McDonald and Lambert (2014) report that natural mentors (non-parental older adults) improve intrinsic-employment outcomes in early

adulthood. These intrinsic outcomes relate to long-term perspectives on careers and goals. As golfers can select their own caddies, and some choose the same caddie often, there is fertile ground for these types of mentoring relationships to develop. Whereas some mentoring settings are delimited to one hour on a weekend or an after-school program, golfers can spend upwards of 4-5 hours each outing with their caddies. Furthermore, these relationships can exist for several years as a youth caddie goes through high school and even college (provided they remain employed at the same course and the golfer continues to play there). It is important to note that not all mentors and/or mentoring programs are equally effective (Sipe, 2002). As with other positions of influence, title alone does not make one a good person/mentor. However, when looking at the big picture, mentoring is positively associated with a wide range of benefits to the protégé (DuBois et al., 2002; Sambunjak et al., 2006; Eby et al., 2008).

#### Reduced maintenance costs and improved pace of play

The USGA (2004) postulates that if renting motorized golf carts were reflective of the true cost of maintenance of the carts, golfers would be more inclined to take caddies (as the cost difference would be either minimal or negated altogether). To date, the most comprehensive study of the cost of maintaining a fleet of motorized golf carts (i.e., gas, maintenance, cart paths, damage to the turf, etc.) is Moeller's (2014) analysis. After taking into consideration a variety of factors (cart path maintenance, cart fleet maintenance, and hidden maintenance), it is estimated that golf carts cost anywhere between \$85,352-\$170,153/year to a golf course. While these estimates also demonstrate that they do bring in net profits ranging from \$88,597-\$173,398, the continuous maintenance, noise pollution, space needed to house a fleet of 60 carts, and a further distancing from the tradition of golf as a walking sport exist. More rounds walked with youth caddies could reduce the costs of fertilization and irrigation needs, minimize compaction of soil

and the damaged caused by improper use of golf carts (Vavrek, 2000, 2002; Wienecke, 2004; Moore, 2011), reduce the pavement and/or concrete on courses, contribute to a more even pace of play, and help to improve course appearance by raking bunkers, replacing divots, and fixing pitch marks on the greens (Moeller, 2014; Shahib, n.d.; MGA, n.d.).

Youth caddies can also help improve the pace of play. Klein (2019b) goes so far as to attribute slow play to the decline of the caddie ranks and postulates that slow players were not caddies as kids. Youth caddies and forecaddies can assist by helping to track tee shots and find balls that land in the trees or hazards. Even with the new rule limiting the time spent looking for a lost ball to three minutes, the more eyes watching tee shots the better. Youth caddies also assist with raking bunkers, reading putts on greens and tending flagsticks. Each of these actions over the course of an 18-hole round can help improve pace of play.

To conclude this section, the benefits of youth caddies are numerous. The health benefits to both the golfer and caddie, financial earning potential for the caddie, networking and mentorship possibilities, educational outcomes, scholarship opportunities and reduced maintenance costs to golf courses are substantial. Interviews from Evans Scholars applicants, highly successful businesspeople who were youth caddies early in life, and research on the benefits of mentorship all paint the same picture. Much good can be leveraged through youth caddying. We next turn to the challenges faced by today's youth caddies.

### **Challenges faced by youth caddies**

#### Decline in caddies

While some private country clubs and higher-end golf courses overseas (e.g., Scotland, Southeast Asia, etc.; Danneberger, 2014) still use and employ caddies and minimize motorized golf cart use for the recreational golfer whenever possible (USGA, 2004), the U.S. has seen a

decline in caddies (in general) and youth caddies (specific to this paper) at public courses. In 2017, Deegan provided a list of all 150 public/resort and private (with some public access) courses that he could find that offered caddies. Of these, 15 were walking-only resort courses, 24 required mandatory caddies, 15 required caddies only during peak season, six offered youth caddies, and the rest fell into categories that were some combination of requirements/offerings not already listed.

In conjunction with the WGA, the NGF conducted a study on the status of caddies offered at public and private courses in the U.S. Of the 6,000 courses deemed most likely to have caddie programs, ~3,087 were contacted. Of those that were standard facilities (e.g., public daily fee courses \$40-\$74 green fees), just over 1% offered caddies. The results were slightly more encouraging for private (17%) and premium (5%) courses (WGA, 2018).

Given that golf is a game with a rich history of caddying and that caddies played an integral part of the early game (pre-motorized cart era) and still do on professional tours, the current status of caddies (in general) and youth caddies (specifically) in the U.S. is a serious cause of concern for all stakeholders. There are many explanations that can be provided for the decline in caddies. For one, the average cost of \$63 (youth caddie) and \$88 (adult caddie) for a single loop is more than double the cost of many public and municipal daily-rate course green fees. For golfers on a tight budget, it is plausible that some would rather play three or four rounds of golf without a caddie than one round with a caddie. It is a simple matter of economics. Another possible explanation is the introduction of the motorized golf cart (Kilgannon, 2004; Klein, 2019a). Since the 1970s, the golf cart has become the ‘go to’ for many clubs. The golfer can rent a golf cart for less than the fee of paying a caddie (USGA, 2004), and golf course managers see carts as an added revenue stream. Youth labor laws, minimum wage requirements

and modern golf course design (often with several long distances between golf holes that can add 30-40 extra minutes to an 18-hole round; Vavrek, 2000; Riccio, 2012) have all lead to the reduction in caddies (Crouse, 2012; Moeller, 2014; Klein, 2019a).

Having established that the number of caddies (in general) is diminishing in the U.S. (WGA, 2018), youth looking to work as caddies face numerous challenges. First, older caddies (e.g., college-aged and adults) have more flexibility to work during the school week and during the morning when many rounds with a caddie are played. As youth are enrolled in school for most of the year, their availability to caddie is limited to weekends, holidays, and summer breaks. When priority goes to more tenured caddies, and caddying opportunities are already limited, youth miss out on gaining traction in the caddie yard (Kilgannon, 2004).

Second, youth employment (overall) is declining in the U.S. (Morisi, 2017). Since the peak rate in 1979 (57.9%), the teen labor force has been on a downward trend with a projected all-time low of 26.4% by 2024. Explanations include increased emphasis on college preparation among teens, higher summer school attendance, labor laws, competition from older (adult and college-aged) and foreign-born workers, and travel/club sports. More specific insights into this issue are provided next.

### **Increased emphasis on college preparation**

Even as college tuition and student loan debt has increased, youth in the U.S. are pursuing college degrees with fervor. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, college tuition and fees are 1,416.46% higher in 2021 compared to 1977. Tuition and fees are 63% higher in 2021 than in 2006. Furthermore, college acceptance rates at top ranked schools have decreased (e.g., 45% in 2008 down to 30% in 2018 at top 10 ranked public colleges; Friedman, 2018). As such, today's youth are seeking academic and athletic scholarships to help pay for



college. As academic studies and athletic skill take considerable time and effort to excel in, free time is spent studying or practicing rather than working (Morisi, 2017). Youth caddying scholarships are one viable means to help alleviate the cost of college while still earning money at the same time. As such, more emphasis and publicity should be given to organizations, such as the Evans Scholars Foundation, that provide these types of opportunities.

### **Summer school, summer programs and volunteering**

Where summers were traditionally the prime time for youth employment, more youth are participating in college summer programs, camps, or summer school. Ninety-seven percent of top universities offer summer programs for high school and middle school students. These serve as educational opportunities, but also as potential recruiting events. Summer school enrollment has steadily increased. Consider that in 1985, 10.4% of youth aged 16-19 were enrolled in summer school and in 2016 that number increased to 42.1% (Morisi, 2017). Summer school enrollment reached 45% in 2021. Some high schools are also requiring their students to volunteer in order to graduate. While there is nothing wrong with volunteering, and it is commendable, every hour spent takes away from available time to work and earn money.

### **Labor laws**

For youth younger than 16, labor laws can limit employment opportunities. For example, Alabama restricts youth under the age of 16 to working three hours daily (18 hours weekly) when school is in session. For youth who get out of school between 3:30-4 p.m., they would have to get to a golf course immediately to have a chance at getting a full 18-hole loop in before night. With the federal regulations stating that work is prohibited between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. for youth under 16, this further limits the caddying opportunities during school. Even if there is daylight after 7 p.m., they must not work. Most states follow the 7 p.m. curfew for those under

16 before a school day (U.S. Department of Labor, 2021c). Some states (Texas, Wyoming, Utah, New Hampshire, etc.) do have later hours (e.g., 9-10 p.m. before a school day; however, these hours are not suitable for caddying due to lack of daylight). Some states do allow youth to work before the age of 16. The states most friendly to and accommodating of youth caddies are Illinois (13 years old), Wisconsin (12 years old), Michigan (11 years old), and Colorado (9 years old; Rose, n.d.).

### *Changes to independent contractor status for caddies*

Caddies have historically been classified as independent contractors (ICs). For both the caddie and the golf course/club, this was a mutually beneficial relationship. The golf course was not required to provide benefits, payroll, retirement plans, etc. Caddies enjoyed flexible hours, scenic views, access to play amazing courses for free, and cash. If golf courses are forced to reclassify their caddies as employees, unintended negative consequences abound. Take for example California's Assembly Bill 5 (effective January 1, 2020). This legislation was intended for gig-economy giants like Lyft, DoorDash and Uber (Sens, 2020). Many caddies in California are wary of any changes to their IC status. They enjoy the flexibility of their work, the pay, and well above-average pay per hour. The caddies fear that becoming employees will reduce their hourly rate substantially and diminish their flexible hours. Many golf courses/clubs enjoy the "hands-off" nature of caddies being classified as ICs. They owe them no benefits, no hours, and no retirement (Sens, 2020). The famous Pebble Beach courses in California have over 250 caddies. They are managed and run by Caddy Services International, which is part of **CADDIEMASTER®**. This is an IC model company and the caddies, company, and Pebble Beach have joined to exempt caddies from the law.

Also at stake are youth caddies' opportunities. The switch to employee status could deter many youths from ever donning a caddie bib. As previously demonstrated, caddying is one of the highest paying jobs a youth can have (Brennan, 2018). A move to employee status could result in a massive pay cut for youth, and they may choose other employment options. An added negative side effect of this would be that youth miss out on mentorship, life skills and scholarship opportunities (Sens, 2020).

The California Supreme Court developed a three-part test to determine if a worker is an IC. First, the worker must be free from the control and direction of the club in the performance of the work. Second, the worker must perform work outside of the usual course of the club's business. Finally, the worker must be engaged in an independently established trade, occupation or business (National Club Association, 2018). To avoid this altogether, clubs could hire caddies through third party services (e.g., CaddieNow, **CADDIEMASTER**<sup>®</sup>, etc.) or have members hire their own IC caddies, thus removing the club's role altogether. Electronic direct payments make this a viable option. The Metropolitan Golf Association recommends using ClubUp as a scheduling system for today's caddies. Electronic payment apps like Venmo and PayPal can remove the role of the club/course altogether.

While there are ways around the employee/IC legislation, some of these options are less than ideal for the youth caddie who works weekends and summers. The role of the traditional caddie manager in scheduling and assigning loops is what allows many youth caddies their first opportunity to get involved. If golfers go the route of directly hiring only those they already know, new youth caddies miss out on the traditional blind pairings that are based on seniority and showing up on time. Furthermore, dedicated youth caddie programs (such as the previously mentioned Seminole caddie program) are built with youth in mind to provide them these

opportunities. Moving to a traditional employee classification would further hurt these types of programs and could all but eliminate opportunities for youth caddies. Some, like the caddie academies in Colorado and Wisconsin, have gone to an educational grant model. This allows the caddies to be independent contractors and relieves the golfer from paying a minimum wage fee. Instead, they can give a tip if they want to, but the grant pays the caddies (Buteau, 2019).

### **Competition from older and foreign-born workers**

Not only are youth competing with each other for summer employment opportunities, but there has also been an increase in labor force participation by people aged 55 and older. By 2015, 39.9% of workers were in the older age group and 34.3% were youth. Adults are staying in the workforce longer than ever before (Morisi, 2017). Even though older individuals may retire from their regular jobs, they often take bridge jobs to hold until official retirement. Foreign-born workers have also increased in recent years. For manual-labor jobs, employers can hire hard-working foreign-born individuals who often take a lower wage than their U.S.-born counterparts (e.g., median weekly earnings of \$885 for foreign-born full-time wage and salary workers compared to \$1,000 for their native-born counterparts; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020).

### **Travel/Club summer sport participation**

As college athletic scholarships have become more competitive, there is increased pressure on specializing in sport early in childhood and adolescence. While the overall number of youth sport participants aged six to 12 has decreased from 2011 to 2016 (Langhorst, 2016), travel/club sport participation is as frenetic as ever. Parents are vying for college scouts' eyes and are spending as much as 10% of their annual income on their child's athletic development (Marin, 2017). With this increased desire for college athletic scholarships comes the necessity to play sport year-round. This leaves little time for youth caddying and other summer employment.

The opportunities to earn college scholarships through caddying are not dependent on athletic potential, and more families could use their summers earning money and building their caddying scholarship resumes. The result could be less debt and there is still the potential to have college paid for (partially or fully) by a caddie scholarship.

### **Opportunities going forward**

Not all golf courses have the capacity to implement thriving youth caddie programs. First, the clientele base at a course needs to be receptive and open to caddies (in general). Some municipal and/or public courses with low green fee rates may not have customers who can afford or desire to play with a youth caddie on the bag. However, at higher rate public courses without youth caddie programs, there are creative ways to introduce the concept that could lead to the creation of official youth caddie programs.

#### Forecaddies

One way that golf courses can introduce the benefits of youth caddies is through forecaddies. Forecaddies, as opposed to the traditional walking caddy discussed throughout this paper, differ in that they are typically hired for a group of three to four golfers as opposed to being assigned to a single golfer. The group of golfers may walk but often ride in golf carts while the forecaddie attends to assisting them during the round by helping spot tee shots, rake bunkers, and attend flags on the green (Smelser, 2021). By paying youth forecaddies through a small increase in daily green fee rates (and additional tips by the group of golfers), golf courses can improve pace of play and the overall experience of the customer. Prestigious courses like Pebble Beach and TPC Sawgrass utilize traditional caddies and forecaddies. If courses decide to charge the golfers directly for the forecaddie service, it can be more cost-effective to the golfers than each of them having to pay for a traditional walking caddie. For certain courses, this may be the

best option for the clientele. A youth forecaddie program that is established and successful could lead to traditional (one caddie per golfer) youth caddie opportunities.

In addition to offering youth forecaddie services, courses could require youth forecaddies during peak business hours and seasons to maintain pace of play and maintenance of the golf course. For example, if a golf course knows that the peak hours are Friday to Sunday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., and the pace of play to complete an 18-hole round increases by 1.5 hours during that time, requiring a forecaddie for each group could help. By having more eyes on the golf ball, a trained staff to fix divots, ball marks, rake bunkers and provide guidance to golfers, all parties benefit. The golfer gets a top-rate experience with an acceptable pace of play and the golf course does not suffer unnecessary wear, tear and abuse.

### **Implications for Stakeholders**

#### Historically underserved communities

The prior review demonstrates legitimate benefits of youth caddying for historically underserved communities. Access to golf, income that rivals most other earning opportunities for youth, mentorship opportunities and college scholarships are all available through youth caddying. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

#### **Access to golf**

The cost of participation in golf has historically been a barrier to underserved communities. With limited discretionary income to spend on hobbies and leisure activities, golf can be seen as a low-priority option. Given that other sports have little to no participation costs (e.g., soccer, basketball, football only need a ball and a public court/field) and that golf requires greens fees, the underserved youth can leverage caddying as a means of free access to golf at top-tier golf courses and country clubs (where most caddie programs exist). Whereas a basketball

goal is always 10 feet tall, and the field of play dimensions never change for soccer and football, golf can be more difficult depending upon the characteristics of each course one plays. As such, having free access to practice and play at top-tier courses can help to develop a youth golfer into a talented life-long golfer.

### **Income**

As previously demonstrated, the income potential for the modern youth caddie exceeds what one could earn in a traditional youth job (e.g., cashier, grocery bagger, fast food employee, etc.). During peak season, youth caddies can earn upwards of \$22-\$30/hour. There are examples of some youth earning more than \$1,200/week. These are wages that rival full-time salaries (e.g., teachers in some school districts in Texas make \$48,000-\$52,000). Combine this income potential with the life skills and networks that can be developed, and caddying becomes a highly desirable job for an underserved youth.

### **Mentorship opportunities**

The Caddyshack to Corner Office interviews demonstrate the amazing potential for developing mentorships while caddying. Potentially, golfers who can afford memberships to top-tier private country clubs and golf courses have often achieved success in their careers. These individuals can and do bond with youth caddies and mentor them during their time as caddies and even into adulthood. Examples abound of mentors who gave an internship or a first job opportunity to a former caddie. For historically underserved youth, access to these potential mentors is valuable. In perhaps no other setting do we see adults engaging with youth from potentially opposite backgrounds and life experiences for four or more hours at a time. The opportunity to have a behind the scenes look into the conversations of successful adults is just as valuable as a mentorship relationship. The Caddyshack to Corner Office interviews and Evans

Scholarship applicant essays also demonstrate this principle. To the caddie who is observant and pays attention, much wisdom and knowledge can be gleaned.

### **Scholarship opportunities**

The financial cost of a college education continues to increase. Unfortunately, for those who do not come from families with money, the reality of student loan debt can delay the purchase of a home, investing in retirement and starting a family (Hanson, 2020). The previous review of college scholarships specifically dedicated to caddies shows that ample funds are available to caddies who demonstrate excellence in academics, character and caddying. Furthermore, some (like the Evans Scholarship) state financial need as a requirement on their website's description of the scholarship opportunity (WGA, 2020f).

While the scholarship amounts vary, with some providing full room and board as well as tuition to others that pay tuition only, any amount of money helps the college student seeking to earn their degree. Historically underserved-communities graduate college with more debt than those from more advantaged communities. For example, Black college graduates owe an average of \$25,000 more in student loan debt than white graduates (Hanson, 2020). These caddie scholarships can help to level the playing field. Given that the average DI college athletic scholarship amounts to \$14,270 a year for men and \$15,162 for women, and that DII scholarships average less than that (\$5,548 for men and \$6,814 for women; Fay, 2020), the aforementioned caddie scholarships are worthwhile to pursue. The inclusion of room and board for some caddie scholarships can quickly surpass the amount of money obtained through the average athletic scholarship. Rather than investing thousands of dollars each year on travel sports and specialized coaching in the hopes of obtaining a college athletic scholarship, youth could spend their summers working as caddies and simultaneously earn money and build their chances



to obtain a caddie scholarship. The money that would have been spent on sport training could be invested into a 529 savings plan or a Roth IRA. This covers multiple scenarios if a scholarship is not awarded.

## Youth

While the preceding benefits of youth caddying were directed toward historically underserved communities (that is not to say that they do not also apply to all), the current benefits apply to all youth caddies. Developing strong work ethic, building character and integrity, and physical health benefits are all built into caddying. Each of these are reviewed here.

### **Developing strong work ethic**

Caddies are often required to arrive at the golf course prior to the first tee time. This demands discipline and dedication. For the youth who spends their summers sleeping in late and lounging, caddying can change everything. The quote ‘the early bird gets the worm’ rings true for caddies. If a caddie shows up late, he/she may miss out on the opportunity to work two loops in the day. Show up late often and the youth caddie may no longer have a job. Early rise and early bed-time habits are strong building blocks for youth to develop and can prepare them for a lifetime of successful habits.

The physical component of caddying is also an opportunity to develop strong work ethic. As previously discussed, carrying a bag weighing up to 40 pounds for a stretch of 4-5 miles is a physically demanding job. Add to this the heat that some summers can bring, and caddying becomes a true test of will and determination. While muscles and endurance develop and grow over time, the mental stamina required to remain focused and attentive for 4-5 hours is another added benefit. The caddie must remain at the ready to switch between raking a bunker to

cleaning a club to reading a putt, all while keeping a good attitude and navigating the social dynamics of adult interaction.

### **Character building**

Caddying also has the potential to develop character in youth. As demonstrated throughout this paper, many successful businesspeople started caddying in their youth. The game of golf is built around integrity and honesty. The golfer and their caddie are beholden to call their own penalties, honestly report their score on each hole, and treat the golf course and their playing partners with respect. Every service aspect of the caddie (e.g., raking bunkers, replacing divots, fixing pitch marks on greens, cleaning clubs, etc.) builds respect, dignity, and service to others. Furthermore, the way a youth caddie is trained and expected to interact with the golfer develops manners, respect, and professionalism. Caddying can play a powerful role in the overall character development of a youth.

### **Public golf courses**

While caddies at public courses are often found at resort-style or high-end public facilities, the mid-level and even municipal public golf courses should consider implementing caddie programs (Versalles, 2020). Improvements in pace of play, reduced damage to the course, and added components of service/prestige are all added benefits of youth caddies that could serve well for public facilities.

### **Improving pace of play**

As Lorentz (2020) and others have noted, golf has a perception of being a ‘slow’ sport. While some may find a 4-5 hour walk through nature a relaxing escape from reality, others prefer a faster-paced style of golf. Modern life may contribute to this (less free-time for leisure pursuits, faster expectations in general, etc.). As much as some may enjoy the slower pace of golf, few

enjoy waiting 10 minutes between each shot for the group in front to play. This is where the caddie can help.

Instead of spending 3-5 minutes searching for golf balls in the trees or rough, a forecaddie can be sent ahead to watch tee shots. They can carry flags like those used by spotters at professional golf tournaments to vastly reduce time spent looking for errant tee shots. Furthermore, experienced caddies can help reduce time spent reading greens and raking bunkers. While each of these tasks does not seem to be time intensive on their own, when added to an 18-hole round of golf, every bit of assistance helps.

The added experience of course knowledge can also help pace of play. Golfers who have never played a course before are often not aware of the line off the tee or where to avoid placing their shots. The experienced youth caddie can provide crucial guidance and strategy that can help reduce time spent deliberating or searching for tee balls that are out of play.

### **Damage reduction**

There may be few things more frustrating to a golfer than hitting a perfect approach shot into a green, only to find pitch marks between their ball and the hole. Aside from being frustrating, pitch marks can cause severe damage to greens. A properly repaired pitch mark will recover in 24 hours. An unrepaired pitch mark not properly fixed within two hours can take two months or longer to repair. One that is incorrectly repaired can take up to four weeks to recover ('Repairing Pitch Marks,' n.d.). Furthermore, a green riddled with unrepaired pitch marks can wreak havoc on the golfer's experience while putting. Rather than having a true test of skill, the putt becomes a game of chance as the ball hops and bounces in unexpected directions on its way to the hole. The youth caddie can help with repairing pitch marks in several ways. First, they can teach golfers how to properly repair them, thus preventing future damage due to incorrect repair

technique or ignoring them altogether. Second, while the golfer is putting, the youth caddie can repair pitch marks out of the sightline of the golfer. Repairing even just three neglected pitch marks per hole can drastically improve the golfing experience and takes little to no time.

Divots in the fairway are another area of neglect on many public courses. As with pitch marks, unrepaired divots can take months to heal (Waters, 2019). As with pitch marks, the youth caddie can replace or repair divots while the golfer is walking ahead or while other golfers are playing. This task takes little time, repairs the fairway and improves the playing experience for other golfers.

While eliminating motorized golf carts may not save the course a substantial amount of money in maintenance costs, it can help to reduce the damage to the course from golfers who are less than apt to follow cart path only or proximity to green rules. In areas where water drainage is poor, a single golf cart can leave deep ruts in the turf that may require repair. On days after a heavy-rain, youth caddies can provide the necessary support to allow golfers to still play without the hesitation of carrying their own bag.

### **Added service/prestige**

Finally, the public course can benefit from youth caddies through added components of service and prestige. Many golfers, especially in the southern United States, have never experienced golf with a caddie. Given the history of the caddie in golf and the added level of course knowledge and service they provide, it is something every golfer should experience at least once. In addition to the maintenance of the golf course, the addition of caddies can improve the prestige and image of a public course to a higher tier than it may currently be. Each component of service the caddie provides elevates the golfer's experience and overall image of the club.

## Private country clubs

As previously discussed, private country clubs contribute the most youth caddying opportunities. Many of these private country clubs have initiation fees and monthly dues that are affordable by only those with high income levels. As such, private country clubs are positioned to give back to their communities in a variety of ways.

### **Youth employment opportunities**

By employing local youth as caddies, the private country club can transfer monies from its well-off members to those potentially less fortunate. Steady income for a youth not only helps them on an individual level, but also helps their families meet their daily financial needs. It is not uncommon for youth in single-parent or low-income households to have to work to contribute to their family budget. Throughout this examination of youth caddying, it has been made clear that caddying is a well-paying job. In some cases, this money can help meet a monthly family budget. For others, it can be used to start a college fund. In either case, the money earned through youth caddying at a private country club is a strong reinvestment into the local community. Youth caddying can be seen as a way of paying it forward. To surmise this strategy, Versalles (2020) provides the following perspective, “But if these same clubs were to build grassroots caddy programs focusing on nearby low-income nearby neighborhoods? Now you’re talking. That’s impactful. That’s helping a family budget. That’s nurturing mentorships and relationships. That’s bonding” (para 18).

### **Mentorship programs**

As demonstrated by the Caddyshack to Corner Office interviews, there is evidence that highly successfully people have been mentored during their time as youth caddies. Caddying provides youth the opportunity to have insider access to individuals with resources (e.g.,

financial, networking, and experience). Private country clubs can leverage these opportunities by creating official mentorship programs. The member board could identify members of good character who have the availability to serve as mentors to the local youth caddies employed at the club. While there are numerous ways to structure a mentorship program, the basic premise would be that a member takes a regular caddie and spends the round providing guidance, answering questions and teaching valuable life lessons from their experience. Once the caddie has graduated college and is entering the workforce, the member can provide the caddie access to their network for career advice and opportunities. The country club can place requirements on the mentorship program for both the mentor and caddie as deemed appropriate. By providing this type of opportunity, many youth caddies can be given access to networks and opportunities that may otherwise be unavailable to them. This has the potential to help not only the youth caddie in the present, but also the local community in the future (Meltzer & Saunders, 2020).

### **Areas for future academic research**

While a case for youth caddying has been made in this paper, there is currently a lack of academic research on the experiences of youth caddies. Aside from the WGA and NGF report on the current statistics of youth caddies, no research has been done on the impact of youth caddies on long-term career, educational, or social outcomes. Case studies of large-scale youth caddie programs should be conducted to examine best practices and social and educational outcomes. Surveys of adults who were youth caddies could assess career outcomes associated with prior experience as a youth caddie. These surveys would complement and expand upon the current interviews conducted by Sato on the Caddyshack to Corner Office website. Interviews and surveys with current youth caddies could provide insight into benefits gained by working in this field.

Furthermore, research into the current perceptions of Black youth and parents on caddying would provide valuable insight into the decline in youth caddies from this population. Strategies to better market and promote youth caddying to this group could come from this research. Research should also examine the competitors to youth caddying in the summer months. What other forms of employment or recreation are taking youth away from the caddie yard and why? Are golf courses more inclined to hire adult caddies over youth caddies? If so, why?

Research could also be conducted to examine the impact of youth caddying on a variety of outcomes. Some examples include GPA, behavior at school and home, intention to pursue college and ethical decision making. Parental perception of their child's discipline and work ethic before youth caddying and after one summer caddying could also be examined.

Official research into the price golfers are willing to pay for a caddie at a public or semi-private course is also warranted. This would help golf courses interested in starting their own youth caddie programs structure their fees accordingly. It would also help golf courses to determine the feasibility of starting youth caddying programs based upon their daily green fees and clientele base. Research could also examine and quantify how much time youth caddies save a golf course in its average pace of play. This data could be used to better market and introduce the benefits of youth caddy programs to a club.

With scientific data on the impacts and outcomes of youth caddying, perhaps large governing bodies (e.g., USGA, PGA, LPGA, etc.) would be further inclined to provide support for and awareness of the opportunities for youth caddies in the U.S. Given that 62% of youth caddies end up trying golf (WGA, 2018), the golf industry has a vested interest in growing youth caddying opportunities. The longevity of the game would benefit from it. From the current

evidence available, it is apparent that youth caddying affords young people with vibrant and fertile ground to grow in confidence, decision-making, professionalism, and work-ethic, and can serve to expand their social network with successful individuals they might not have access to outside of the golf course. More work should be done to continue to highlight this unique work and educational opportunity and bring caddying back to its roots.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the evidence examined demonstrates a wide-ranging case for the benefits of youth caddies. These include personal benefits to the caddie, such as the physical (e.g., positive health outcome potential), social (e.g., networking opportunities), and financial (e.g., good earning wages and scholarship opportunities). They also include societal benefits, such as mentorship (e.g., older successful individuals giving back to their community by mentoring youth caddies) and sharing social capital (e.g., successful community members providing jobs and network to youth caddies from less fortunate backgrounds). Furthermore, youth caddies benefit the golf industry. They can improve pace of play, reduce cart traffic/damage to courses, and help maintain ideal playing conditions through raking bunkers, repairing divots and fixing pitch marks on the greens. No matter what approach is taken to examine the impact of youth caddies, positive outcomes abound.

While the benefits are numerous, the modern youth caddie faces challenges. Various extracurricular opportunities, such as club sports and travel teams, are vying for free time during the summer that could be spent caddying. Adults are caddying as part-time or full-time employment. Caddying is, at some courses, moving from in-house management to caddie company services. While caddie companies can still employ youth caddies, the in-house caddie programs offer a more traditional caddying experience. Earning one's dues and learning how to



navigate social settings in the caddie yard offers intangible experiences that receiving a text message that a loop is available does not. As such, educational, marketing and outreach efforts, like those conducted by the WGA, from the large golf governing bodies could re-engage and revitalize youth caddie opportunities outside of those that already exist. There are a growing number of courses that have identified this need and are adding youth caddie programs of their own (CC of North Carolina, Tucson CC, Oklahoma G&CC, Oak Point CC) or are adding youth caddies to existing programs (Frederica GC, Winged Foot GC, Belle Meade CC, Valhalla GC, Garden City GC, and Maidstone GC; WGA, 2021). This demonstrates that youth caddying opportunities can be added across the U.S. and benefit all parties involved.

Academic research on the current status, challenges and benefits of youth caddies should be funded and conducted to provide empirical data on youth caddying. Caddying can be leveraged to open educational, social, and financial opportunities to those from less fortunate backgrounds, and change the trajectory of lives across the world. The youth caddie can play a vital role in the continued growth of golf, and, in return, golf can give back through the numerous life lessons and opportunities caddying provides that few other activities can rival. Youth caddies deserve a chance.

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