



Golf and Health
Case Study

Maximising the Health Message at Golf Events.

Golf can provide health enhancing physical activity for players and can have physical and well-being benefits for spectators at major amateur and professional events.

Overview.

The Golf & Health Project aims to study the many and varied health and wellbeing benefits of golf, consider any risks and to publish regularly in international, peer-reviewed journals.

It has the full support of the World Golf Foundation, which comprises the major golfing bodies worldwide, including The R&A, the European Tour, USGA, the Masters Tournament and their constituent members worldwide.

The aim of the project is to scientifically evaluate the health benefits of golf, both physical and mental, and present the results in a relevant format to players, potential players, decision makers and the wider golf industry.

Recently, there has been a real drive by golf bodies to raise awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of playing golf with spectators, media and policy makers attending professional golf events.

For more information on the Golf & Health Project visit www.golfandhealth.org



Golf & Health



Why promote golf and health at your event?

As well as the health benefits of golf for players, notably through walking, the sport is potentially unique from a fan point of view. In most sports, spectators are seated during competitive action but those who follow their favourite players around the course during a golf event walk in excess of five to six miles.

Key areas of focus on health for your event:

- Player welfare
- Spectator understanding
- Potential commercial opportunities with health partners
- Influence opinion with local and national Government

Golf fans who follow one round are likely to, on average . . .



Published Research.

Medical researchers working on the Golf & Health Project have had research papers published in leading scientific and academic journals, with the health benefits to spectators attending golf events of notable interest to organisers.

Golf spectators take 11,500 steps on average at a golf event, walking between 5-6 miles on average, burn more than 1,000 calories and rate health benefits as a reason for attending.

The research also shows that spectators not only value watching world-class golf at close quarters but also enjoy the benefits of fresh air, time with friends and family and physical activity which is further enhanced by green space and connection with nature.

[View research paper](#)

Remarkably, 40% have been found to remain more active three months after attending a golf event if the messaging is right.

[View research paper](#)

Promoting health benefits at a golf event.

The 147th Open at Carnoustie and The 148th Open at Royal Portrush

The Open is one of the world's great sporting events and has provided a real opportunity to promote health messages to hundreds of thousands of fans attending the Championship each year.

Information Towers

Four information towers on site - two in the Spectator Village and two on the course - were used to display positive health messaging to fans attending. LED screens situated throughout the venue were also used to display golf and health messages.



Spectator Guide

A 'Red Route' is detailed in a pocket guide for spectators to allow them to navigate around the golf course. The entire route is approximately 6km in length, which is over 10,000 steps for a fan.

Player Gym

An exclusive, dedicated player gym was first introduced for The Open at Royal Birkdale in 2017 and the purpose-built facility is complemented by the physio unit provided by the European Tour Performance Institute. Players and their team are able to use the space and facilities provided to focus on preparation, recovery and physical conditioning. Physios, osteopaths, sports therapists and strength and conditioning staff provided valuable input to a large number of players.

The physio unit was situated immediately adjacent to the gym and player facility. In 2019, the gym was regarded by staff and players as the best yet.

Player Clubhouse

A bespoke clubhouse was introduced at Royal Portrush in 2019 that brought together under one roof all player services – services that enable the players to perform to their maximum potential over the week (e.g. a players' lounge, locker rooms, creche, gym, performance unit and more).

Catering for players was also of a very high standard. The nutritional offering in 2019 was carefully considered for all players with a wide range of drinks and food on offer to enable their bodies to fuel and repair and to protect against illness.

Media

The health benefits of golf were also promoted using media opportunities during The Open.

- Sky Sports News interview with Dr Andrew Murray, Chief Medical Officer on the European Tour and PhD researcher for the Golf & Health Project, in front of one of the Spectator Village information towers at Carnoustie in 2018
- Strong social media promotion on The Open and The R&A digital platforms including promotion of the player gym
- Sky Sports, Golf Channel, Golf Monthly, National Club Golfer, Global Golf Post and newspaper coverage of the Golf and Health messaging e.g. including the Golf Memories work at Carnoustie
- The Carnoustie Golf Memories Group is one of a number to form at golf facilities in Scotland. They are part of the overall Golf Memories Project, which in turn are part of the wider Sports Heritage Scotland network helping those living with dementia and memory loss
[View The R&A feature](#)
[View Golf Channel feature](#)

The above are simply media examples and illustrate the opportunity at an event to gain media coverage through the golf and health messaging.

Sports Ministers

With health and well-being a vital area for governments, golf and health messaging at major golf events also offers a significant opportunity to engage with ministers and other leading policy makers on site to promote key points and help drive change in this area.

Example tweet from Golf & Health account, Carnoustie 2018, with Joe Fitzpatrick MSP:



'The Scottish Minister for #PublicHealth, Sport & Wellbeing, @JoeFitzSNP, explains why golf is good for you and how watching golf at #TheOpen can be great for spectators too!'

The 2018 Ricoh Women’s British Open at Royal Lytham & St Annes and the 2019 AIG Women’s British Open at Woburn

The AIG Women’s British Open, a major championship in women’s professional golf, offers great opportunities to promote health messaging to a wide audience.

Information Boards

Prominent spectator board with relevant logo branding to highlight the benefits to spectators of attending the Women’s British Open.

LED screens

Scrolling 30-second video loop on the LED screens throughout the venue (on and off course), highlighting golf and health benefits using six images, as well as women and girls and nine hole golf. The screens were in use across all four championship days.

Video

A video with Golf & Health Project ambassador Brooke Henderson was promoted on The R&A social media channels.



The 2019 Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open at The Renaissance Club

The 2019 ASI Scottish Open, a European Tour event, was regarded as one of the most inclusive health focused and health promoting golf events staged in Scotland. It was unique in that for the first time it had an event for people with disabilities running alongside it.

There was also an area in the Championship Village where able-bodied people could experience what it is like to play the sport with a disability. It is hoped this will raise awareness of the challenges faced by players competing on the emerging tour for people with disabilities.

The benefits of regular exercise at golf events was highlighted to spectators via different, engaging forms. For example:

- Giant seats situated at some of the furthest points of the course with ‘selfies’ then encouraged to highlight how far fans had walked and the fun element of spectating
- Spectator map in Championship Village to show how many steps spectators could walk at various parts of the course
- Leading players featured on information boards with short, sharp quotes to highlight the importance of golf and health



500,000 miles At Gleneagles, spectators collectively walked the equivalent of 20 times around the 25,000-mile circumference of the Earth



The 2018 Ryder Cup at Le Golf National, France

The world's biggest golf team event highlighted the many health benefits of golf to the 250,000 fans who attended during the week near Paris.

Ryder Cup Europe included on-course signage in the spectator zones as well as a page in the event's Official Programme, to explain how spectators can benefit, focusing on the number of steps fans could walk across the site as well as repeating various health messages seen at other professional events.

Spectator health benefits form part of the overall Golf & Health Project's goal of researching and providing information about the wide variety of ways that golf can benefit your physical and mental health.

On the eve of The Ryder Cup in France, a Medical Forum was held at the Louis Vuitton Foundation which brought together 250 experts to discuss the physical and mental health benefits of golf, including spectating.

The 2019 Solheim Cup at Gleneagles

Like The Ryder Cup, health benefits were also promoted at the biggest team event in women's golf. Golf fans walked the equivalent of 20 times around the world as organisers outlined the health and wellbeing benefits of attending Scotland's showpiece sporting event in 2019.

With a crowd of over 90,000 people on site in Perthshire for the biennial Europe versus USA contest, and based on scientific knowledge of the average steps taken by spectators in Scotland, spectators collectively walked the equivalent of 20 times around the 25,000-mile circumference of the Earth.

Most spectators at the Solheim Cup also walked farther than the recommended 7,500 to 10,000 steps and indeed further studies have shown that when spectators hear about the health benefits of walking from their favourite golfers, it can inspire them to be more active after the event, potentially providing a health legacy. Indeed 40% of spectators reported being more active three months after receiving health promoting messages at a European Tour event.

What National Federations can learn.

National Federations and professional tours are encouraged to use the above messaging as opportunities to promote golf and health activity at their events, amateur or professional, or pass on information to their respective affiliated clubs.

Currently, the German Golf Association is focusing on collecting further medical studies and plans to provide clubs with a toolbox of 'best practice' health-oriented player programmes until 2020.

A research report from Germany ('A stakeholder marketing perspective: golf's potential to (re-) position as a health

sport' from Tim Breitbarth and Christopher Huth) also highlights opportunities. In order to accelerate the diffusion and transformation of golf as a health activity, it states that federations could also work with health insurers and a range of health providers to implement programmes.

Clubs could also reconsider their employment strategy to include staff with training and knowledge of health; or work more closely with influential markets such as investors and media to spread the golf and health messaging.