

R&A

Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

ISSUE
four



**Golf
- Golf**
LEARN TO PLAY

Introducing Golf.Golf

Niall Horan is among the stars helping us to connect new players with our sport

“ We had to build a space where the women would feel they were welcome – that is something that was very important ”
– Magdalena Villar,
Golf Peru

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Annual Review 2022

Our annual review for affiliates is now available to read – [click here](#)

About Developing Golf magazine

Developing Golf magazine is a key element of the golf development alliance we wish to create with affiliates globally to share best practice. This alliance also includes a new R&A Portal, increased funding support and consulting with affiliates on the ground across the year to develop the strongest activation plans, supported by R&A-created global assets.

Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer – The R&A



A full-page photograph of Pádraig Harrington, an Irish professional golfer, sitting on a grassy slope. He is wearing a white cap with 'Wilson Staff' written on it, a dark blue long-sleeved shirt with a red collar and 'Kartel' and 'Bank of Ireland' logos, and dark blue trousers. He is smiling broadly, holding a large silver trophy in his right hand and giving a thumbs-up with his left hand. The background is a lush green golf course under bright sunlight.

Pádraig's new family-friendly putting green.

Ireland's three-time major champion, Pádraig Harrington, has opened a new public facility in his home city of Dublin



“My aim for this project has always been to create an affordable and accessible facility which is designed for all ages and golf abilities at no cost”

Pádraig Harrington

A new family-focused golf facility in Dublin aims to attract new audiences to golf and provide a place for everyone to meet and have fun.

The Marlay Putting Green is open to the public and free to access. It is located in Marlay Park and was designed to provide an enjoyable golfing experience for individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The putting green has been constructed in a sustainable manner to conserve resources and can be easily accessed from all parts of the Park.

Pádraig Harrington, an R&A Ambassador, worked closely with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, who provided the site and will manage and operate the green. John Clarkin's team at Turfgrass provided their expertise in construction and agronomy and worked alongside Atlantic Golf Construction in the build of the putting green. The project was funded by the Pádraig Harrington Charitable Foundation together with the assistance of a golf development grant from The R&A, and also

a grant from Golf Ireland, supported by Sport Ireland's special projects scheme.

“It has been amazing to see this project come to fruition and I am so pleased the people of Dublin will be able to experience golf in a fun and family-focused setting,” said Harrington. “My aim for this project has always been to create an affordable and accessible facility which is designed for all ages and golf abilities at no cost. I've always wanted to give back to the community and find a way to introduce the game of golf to all generations.”

Frank Curran, the Chief Executive of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, said, “We are immensely proud. This is a state-of-the-art, unique putting course covering 3,000 square metres and we look forward to bringing the game of golf to a new generation and a new audience.” ●





Introducing Golf.Golf – The R&A's new learn to play initiative.

The star-studded campaign features a digital platform designed to change the perception of golf and connect new players with venues where they can try the game

The R&A's ambitious new pilot initiative is designed to encourage people to learn to play golf at a diverse range of golf facilities across Scotland.

The launch of Golf.Golf was supported by R&A ambassador and singer songwriter Niall Horan at an event held at The R&A World Golf Museum in St Andrews.

The initiative has been developed using extensive research into how to attract new people to the sport and is targeted specifically at those who already had or have an active interest in sporting activity but not necessarily in golf.

Its aim is to change the perception of the game and drive new players to a host of venues where the sport is played, from driving ranges and simulators to municipal courses, as well as existing facilities so they can learn how to play golf.

The Golf.Golf digital platform provides an easy-to-use searchable list of all participating venues. Prospective players – from beginners to those who want to pick up the sport again – can use the platform to find their local venue and book sessions directly. Prices are set at an affordable rate so that cost barriers are reduced and venues can get involved at no cost and benefit from attracting an untapped source of first-time golfers.

Backed by a global social media strategy which includes a fun film starring Niall Horan and a host of Scottish sporting stars – including former football coach and player Gordon Strachan OBE, Olympic gold medallist and curler Vicky Wright, Scotland rugby captain Jamie Ritchie and fellow internationals and brothers Matt and Zander Fagerson of Glasgow Warriors – Golf.Golf portrays the game as fun, inexpensive, easy to understand, a place to make new friends and a great way to stay mentally and physically fit.

Golf.Golf is also being supported by The R&A's development ambassadors, who include tennis commentator and former player Daniela Hantuchová, footballer Gareth Bale, cricketer Kevin Pietersen and golfer Michelle Wie West.

The R&A's ambition is to successfully pilot the programme in Scotland during 2023 through working with Scottish Golf and for its affiliated national federations to then roll it out across global venues and so increase worldwide participation in the game.

Sessions are aimed at a wide range of potential players, from children to women-only groups and one-to-one coaching delivered by professionals and volunteers that will support them in learning to play golf in a fun and welcoming environment. Administration of the platform is done centrally leaving venues to focus on delivering fun and inexpensive golf experiences in welcoming environments.

Golf.Golf soundbites

"Next to making music, golf is a huge passion of mine, which is why I want to inspire people from all walks of life to give it a try. By supporting Golf.Golf and The R&A's work to inspire more people to get involved in the game, I want to show people that learning to play golf is great fun, good for your health and can be enjoyed by anyone whether alone or with friends and family. This way we can begin to change the perception of golf and attract new players into the game, especially young people – which is why I am so proud to be working alongside my management company Modest! Golf on this."

● Niall Horan

"This campaign is perfectly placed to encourage people who are already warmed up to the idea of sport, into our great game of golf. The Golf.Golf digital platform is beautifully simple to use and directs people to whatever form of learning golf is right for them, whether that's at a driving range or a club. It opens new participants up to the idea that golf isn't, and doesn't have to be, just one thing. It's a very exciting initiative."

● Fraser Thornton, Interim Chief Executive of Scottish Golf

"What has been proposed with the Golf.Golf programme is what I believe a total game changer for the game of golf. I've been involved in this industry for 30 years and this is by far the best initiative that I have seen."

● Sandy Smith, Head PGA Golf Professional at Ladybank

“This is dedicated to making it easy and attractive for people to take up golf”

Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer at The R&A, underlines the ambition behind Golf.Golf that he believes will become a global portal to the game

How will this campaign counter the perception that golf is hard to get into?

We'd heard anecdotal comments about it being difficult to get into golf. I did my own research and realised that there were lots of difficulties. I had to go on to a club website and then when I eventually found the PGA pro section, it was email me and it was £60 an hour. For a lot of people that can be quite intimidating.

We did a lot of research with people who didn't reject golf, but just didn't yet play it. We asked them a series of questions. The first one was 'do you see promotions about learning how to play golf' and 75% said they hadn't seen any. When we said to them, 'if there was a structured programme, would you be interested in giving golf a go', we had 40% saying 'we'd love to'. So we knew we had a big opportunity. Just taking the friction out of the process is important.

We found that you can get very logical answers when you ask people why they don't play golf. It will be it costs too much, I've got to be a member of a golf club. All of these factors come into it.

But when you scratch underneath the surface, often it will just be because people are busy and it hasn't been presented to them as: there it is, it's simple, it's easy to do, it's easy to book, it's fun, and it doesn't need a whole bunch of commitments.

Then there is the intimidation factor. A lot of people think if you want to learn how to play golf you have to be a member of a golf club – but you don't. And 'I don't want to make a fool of myself by turning up and teeing off in front of other people'. Well, you don't have to do that.

There were all these myths. And that was the genesis of the idea of coming up with this kind of national programme dedicated to making it simple and easy and attractive for people to take up golf.

To what extent does Golf.Golf involve itself in the delivery or is it just about connection?

It does get involved in the delivery. Because through proper quantitative research, we asked these audiences what they would want from their

Golf.Golf soundbites

Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer at The R&A, said, "We have seen golf's popularity boom in recent years with more people playing golf more regularly. We must capitalise on this growth by promoting the many positive social and health benefits of golf and offer opportunities to learn to play that are fun, accessible and inclusive.

"This is why we have created a promotional campaign featuring global stars, national sporting heroes and everyday people to build awareness of how fun and easy it is to learn to play golf and which offers a simple to use digital platform so they can freely book lessons at facilities near to them.

"We look forward to seeing the results of the pilot in Scotland and learning from the experiences of those people who take part in the activities."



Visit the Golf.Golf platform
Click here

introduction to golf. There were a few things we got back that made it easy for us to create a series of programmes that we knew the audience would be interested in. Sometimes it was just the language that we use – like 'get confident in the basics, where you can learn with like-minded people outdoors' and 'have a taster session'.

There are some people who want to have one to ones. There are some who are very happy having just someone who is a volunteer but specialises in juniors, or beginners. We said we will create these programmes. How exactly you run them at your facility, we're not going to dictate every single specific element of it. But if you want to be part of Golf.Golf, we want you to offer at least one of these types of programmes. So we have had a hand in what is delivered as well as the very important part of making people aware that they can do it in a very simple and fun way. The way that we've done that is by campaigns involving the Niall Horans of this world, and national ambassadors, which gives you that fantastic reach, and then real people saying 'I did it, it's great fun and you should give it a go too'.

Why did you want Niall Horan to be the face of this campaign?

When we met Niall a couple of years ago, we were throwing ideas around about what can we do to help work together to grow the sport. This was one of the areas that we touched on – the perception of how difficult it is to get into the sport. So we came up with that idea together and having him as the front person was the obvious answer.

We also have a whole bunch of other people who will be involved in creating content, social platforms, putting it out about how they love playing golf, how fun and easy it is to play.

There'll be all of our social platforms. And then we've got the paid campaign, which has got Niall in it, plus, in Scotland, it's got rugby captains, curlers, footballers and real people. The combination of all of that gives us the reach to change the perception of it being a bit stuffy and just for men. And also makes it genuinely appealing and attractive.

What are the key points that you hope to learn from the Scottish pilot that will inform the campaign when it is rolled out more widely?

Which of the programmes work, in terms of the appeal both to customers and the facilities themselves. And not just golf clubs, although they're very important, but driving ranges as well.

The pricing strategy – have we pitched it at the right level? On some of the programmes, we've got a standardised price – our 'get confident on the basics' is £60 for four sessions. Is that approach the best way or do we just allow different pricing at every different facility?

On communications and the whole marketing mix, what messages work best? Is it programme specific? Is it more general about the enjoyment of golf? Of all the different ambassador communications that go out, which ones seem to work best? Is it more focused towards real people? What's the role of the ambassadors?

We'll also be speaking to all the facilities to



identify how many people they got at each of these events and how many of them were there simply because of this campaign.

What is the message you want to get across to affiliates around the world about Golf.Golf?

Affiliates have a major role to play in helping facilities, whether they're affiliated to them or not, to help push and promote golf and get the message across that it's open and accessible and affordable. The second message would be to keep your eyes open for our next communications because the idea is that we want to roll this out around the world so Golf.Golf is the global, aggregated centre, wherever you are in the world, if you want to learn how to play golf. It will take potential customers in their country directly to their facilities, where they can book and learn how to play.

In the case of the Scottish pilot, when and where will the consumer be aware of the campaign?

We have already started with paid advertising directly targeted to the kinds of people that we think are most likely to take up the sport. We've already had 1,800 sessions booked in the space of three and a half months. Next we have Niall Horan and Gareth Bale and all of the national ambassadors in Scotland talking about it on their social platforms. The other part of it is the individual clubs and facilities themselves on their own platforms will be talking about the sessions that are available. So I think a lot of people will see a lot about Golf.Golf in the coming months. ●

Golf.Golf in numbers

1,800

Sessions already booked in Scotland

£60

Cost in Scotland for a four-lesson introduction to the game

75%

Non-golfers who said they hadn't seen any kind of promotion for golf...

40%

...and the percentage of them who said they would be interested if a structured programme was offered

Increasing participat

Female tournament entries in Peru doubled last year thanks to a new

Case
Study



tion in women's golf.

programme that concentrated on making women feel truly wanted





Magdalena Villar is a board member of the Peruvian Golf Federation and the president of the Women's Golf Commission, which is helping to transform women and girls' golf.

During lockdown, Golf Peru turned its attention to women's golf and how it could develop the game.

The Federation adopted The R&A's Women in Golf Charter and created a Women's Golf Commission, which has worked hard with the 12 clubs across the country to make them a welcoming space for women.

We spoke to Magdalena about the Commission and how it has changed the face of women's golf in Peru.

When did the Federation start the drive to get more women playing golf?

I have been a board member at the Federation since 2017 and we had been talking about the Women in Golf Charter that The R&A had started. So, when 2020 came and we couldn't play golf, we started talking about things that could be done. We started the Women's Golf Commission, we joined the Women in Golf Charter and we had a policy regarding what we wanted to do with women.

I lead this by getting five other women from different clubs, doing different things in life and different things in the sport, to see how we could improve or develop women's golf in Peru, as golf is a very much a man's world in South America.

One of the things the Commission decided was that if we wanted to achieve things, we needed some extra help as the Peruvian Golf Federation has a very limited budget. So, we did a survey, got the numbers of how many ladies were playing, what we wanted to achieve and what the women wanted. We completed a report and I submitted it to The R&A to apply for a grant.

What are the barriers to women playing golf in Peru?

Women's golf is very small. When you want to start, it's really expensive if you have to add up the equipment and taking classes. In Peru, you used to go out and have to get a caddy when you were a new player. So it added many things that made it not very friendly. Also, we don't have public courses yet. If you want to start to play golf you have to play in a private club. And all the other sports are free, or you have to invest very little money. So golf is the last thing they are going to try. Also, in many clubs in 2020, women wouldn't play on Saturdays or during the



Women's golf in Peru

14%

Golfers who are women

12

Number of courses

18

Ambassadors for women's golf

“We have given women the possibility to try the sport. Before, they would have never tried because they didn't know how”

weekend because it was a men's day. So women played during the week.

What are you doing to overcome those issues?

We realised if we wanted more women or families involved, we really had to work on making the women feel wanted, like they are being cared for and that they have a space to play. We had to build a space where the ladies would feel that they were welcome and that is something that was very important.

We started talking to captains in the different clubs and explaining to them how important it was to support ladies when they want to start golf, convincing them how important it is to give free classes to ladies for them to choose to go and play golf over tennis or the gym or swimming. And we talked to the captains about how important it was for ladies to have their space and to be able to play Saturdays because many were working. We now have ladies playing Saturdays nearly in every club.

Every club now has two or three sets of ladies' golf clubs that ladies can use to practice or even borrow to play, so they don't have to buy a set to start. And when a lady has a set of clubs to be sold, we put out the information through our ambassadors so new ladies can buy a used set, which is not so expensive.

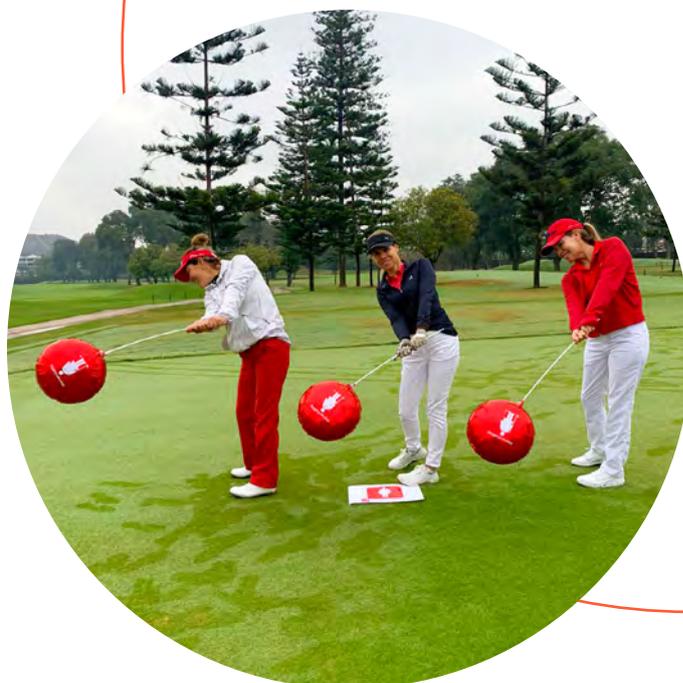
How have you created welcoming spaces for women at golf clubs?

We have, from every club in Peru, a group of captains and ambassadors as a direct way of engaging with ladies in the clubs and who will look out for the new ladies and help them come into the group, help them feel at home and make sure they wouldn't be left to start on their own. That's the way we worked in every club to have somebody who was in contact with us directly overseeing the new women playing.

What activities have you arranged for your female golfers?

We did scrambles, mixing women from all the clubs and the good players with the not-so-good players.

Then after every scramble, we had drinks at the



New handicaps gained

2019: 30

2022: 84

Cards submitted

2019: 4,800

2022: 7,300

Active players

2019: 264

2022: 325



end or lunch so everybody could mix and enjoy. Then we also had a putting tournament in every club, where the new women didn't have to have much experience to be able to play. And last year some clubs started organising an invitation tournament, where they invited other players from other clubs to come and play without having to pay an entrance fee, then a lunch with raffles at the end.

One club organised a senior tournament one day and an invitation the day before. So even if you weren't senior, you could go and play and enjoy lunch, which was a big success because over 50 ladies flew from Lima to Trujillo to be part of the tournament.

What support have you received from The R&A?

The R&A has supported us financially with grants, which has helped us support the different activities we have carried out, like the tournaments, and it has helped us to help the clubs in the south with support with lessons and all the education that we've done.

I was also part of the Women in Golf Leadership Programme with The R&A. So, for me, it has helped me a lot to see how you can organise

and engage a team in a project and carry it out in different ways. It's given me a lot of tools on how to motivate my team - my small team of the Women's Commission and the big team of the ambassadors' group - and it has even given me the tools of how to express myself in a better way and how to engage with a man's world.

What has the Women's Golf Commission achieved?

We have given women the possibility to try the sport. Before they will have never tried because they didn't know how. So many had only seen the golf course from the bar or from the tennis court, they had never even walked to the practice range to see how it looked.

What has been your biggest success?

Every club realising that ladies need a space to develop the sport. When we finished 2022 we had more than 70 new ladies with a handicap when we usually had 15 a year. That is a big success.

I think that was because ladies are having a space where they can go and feel they are not rejected from the golf course ●

“ We realised that if we wanted more women or families involved, we really had to work on making the women feel wanted ”



R&A



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