

## **Case study – Dumbartonshire club benefits from structured clubgolf programme**

### **The challenge**

As part of its encouraging attitude to juniors, well meaning members of Kirkintilloch Golf Club had previously been giving coaching to children, albeit on an ad hoc basis.

When Peter Halkett took over as the club's Junior Convenor in January 2008 one of his first tasks was to set up a structured junior coaching programme. "At the time we had 80 boys and 10 girls in the junior section and we wanted a coaching programme whereby all our kids, no matter what their level, will have structured coaching," he said.

### **The solution**

By March 2008 five club members, including Mr Halkett, became qualified clubgolf coaches after attending the two day coaching course. In April the club opened its doors to the first group of 26 clubgolf recruits.

"Anybody, irrespective of their age, gender or personal ability as a golfer can be a good coach," said Mr Halkett. "You just have to be willing to give up some time to help give something back to the kids.

"Once you've been through the two day coaching programme, delivered by the PGA, it makes it very easy to teach kids in the format clubgolf want you to teach them (clubgolf provided the newly trained coaches with coaching manuals and resources to deliver the structured coaching programme)."

Putting their five members through a volunteer coach training programme cost the Club £700. More was invested in providing junior equipment. Yet, by charging children £20 a year for coaching the Club will break even within just two years and produce revenue for junior golf at the club thereafter.

### **The results**

The club's move to start a clubgolf programme coincided with a surge of interest in golf in local primary schools - in 2008 over 1200 children across Dunbartonshire had an introduction to golf in primary schools through clubgolf's introductory game, firstclubgolf.

Twenty six of them, boys and girls, enrolled for our first clubgolf coaching course in 2008 (some them pictured below with clubgolf volunteer coaches).

"The kids loved it, they're as keen as mustard and had an absolute ball," said Mr Halkett. "Through clubgolf we took a group of kids to Gleneagles and we took a couple to The Carrick for a coaching clinic with Colin Montgomerie. So the kids are getting a lot of benefits from clubgolf."



## **Plans for 2009**

The 2009 plan is to expand its clubgolf coaching to include up to 40 children. In addition the Club's volunteer coaches will be targeting older children at the local high school.

"We'll be using the coaching skills we've learnt last year to give a six week coaching course and out of that I'm hopeful some of these kids will be keen to continue and come to our clubgolf sessions from April to August," said Mr Halkett.

"The school has a host of kids at different levels. Some are accomplished golfers with handicaps so we are organising a competition for them as well."

As a direct result of starting a clubgolf coaching programme, Kirkintilloch has eight new junior members and expects to have as many as 40 children on this year's coaching course starting in April. Four more club members have shown an interest in becoming qualified coaches.

The Club also plans to involve a PGA Professional in their clubgolf programme – initially giving clubgolf Stage 2 then eventually Stage 3 coaching - to enable them to offer a full pathway for juniors.

"We all enjoyed coaching in 2008 and are looking forward to getting up and running this year," added Mr Halkett, with a ringing endorsement: "Any club that wants to enhance their junior section will do themselves a lot of good in taking on clubgolf as part of their coaching routine. It enhances the club's reputation and the kids' performances, it's highly recommended by us."

## **Full interview with Peter Halkett, Junior Convenor at Kirkintilloch Golf Club (January 2009)**

### **Why did you look at clubgolf initially?**

Some of our members did ad hoc coaching for the juniors and I was keen to take that forward and start an organised and structured coaching programme. The ball was already rolling prior to me becoming Junior Convenor last January - our captain last year was in discussion with clubgolf and the Club and committee is fully supportive of our junior section.

### **What made you decide to start a clubgolf programme?**

We wanted a structured coaching programme whereby all our kids, no matter what their level, will have structured coaching programme. We started Stage 1 coaching in 2008. We're looking to expand that over the next few years into Stages 2 and 3.

### **How healthy was your junior membership at the time?**

Before clubgolf there were around 80 boys and 10 girls in the junior section. As a result of the first year's clubgolf coaching eight of the children have joined as junior members.

### **How easy was it to find volunteers to coach?**

People don't always understand what they're getting involved in but once you sit them down and give them all the information they're keen to get involved and help the juniors.

We got five coaches trained, one of them myself, by March last year and started clubgolf April. We're looking at getting another four trained on the Level 1 course next year so we can expand the coaching

**What type of person makes a good volunteer coach?**

Anybody, irrespective of their age, gender or personal ability as a golfer can be a good coach. You just have to be willing to give up some time to help give something back to the kids. Once you've been through the two day coaching programme it makes it very easy to teach kids in the format clubgolf want you to teach them. We all enjoyed coaching in 2008 and are looking forward to getting up and running this year.

**Who organises your clubgolf programme and how is the workload spread?**

It's all down to me as Junior Convenor. But as long as you know what your intentions and goals are you sit down at the start of the season with your coaches, get all your letters out telling parents when it starts and what's available. After that we assign each coach a group of children and it's relatively easy - it looks after itself. Colin Bell (clubgolf's Argyll & Dumbartonshire Regional Manager) has been a great help.

**How many kids did you have on year 1 programme?**

We had 26 kids, boys and girls, enrolled for our first clubgolf coaching course in 2008. We're looking to expand that this year; the course starts in April.

**Did the kids enjoy clubgolf?**

The kids loved it, they're as keen as mustard and had an absolute ball. Through clubgolf we took a group of kids to Gleneagles and we took a couple to The Carrick for a Colin Montgomerie clinic. So the kids are getting a lot of benefits from clubgolf. The kids on our clubgolf course all started with a firstclubgolf introduction at school and wanted to move on and learn more. So they are all keen to play.

**Was it a financial burden?**

The Golf Club paid coaching fees for five of us. It cost £700 to get five coaches through and we spent a couple of hundred on all the equipment. But you don't need a lot of children to recoup these costs. We charge the kids £20 for the 20 hour course so if our numbers remain in the high 20s we will break even at the end of this year. We're hopeful to get numbers on the course to the high 30s maybe 40 this year. Then we will be generating some revenue for the club.

**Does Kirkintilloch have a Pro?**

No, but we have plans in place where we can get access to a Pro. We are looking to get clubgolf Stage 2 coaching started this year with our existing juniors who are well beyond Stage 1. If we can generate enough interest it will fund the cost of a Pro to deliver the coaching.

**Are your own coaches planning to progress their coaching qualifications?**

We are hoping to get one or two of us through the CPD course next year; the additional coaching session that enhances your Level 1 status so you can teach further stages.

**Any other developments planned for 2009?**

We'll be using the coaching skills we've learnt last year to teach an older age group at the local high school. We'll be giving a six week coaching course and out of that I'm hopeful some of these kids will be keen to continue and come to our clubgolf sessions from April to August.

**Who approached who?**

We approached the school through the local Active Schools Co-ordinator. They were delighted and quite happy to let the school come in and do six sessions between February and March. We'll be doing it indoors off golf mats with plastic balls initially and then dividing children into coaching groups depending on their ability. The school has a host of kids at different levels. Some are accomplished golfers with handicaps so we are organising a competition for them as well.

**Would you have considered giving this type of coaching a year ago?**

If the schools had approached us this time last year and asked us to give their kids a six week coaching course we wouldn't be comfortable doing that. It's purely because we did the two day clubgolf training course, and coached the children at the club last season, that we've developed the ability and confidence to go on and teach kids in the high school.

**Your first year's clubgolf programme has been a great success. What's your message to other clubs out there that haven't got involved yet?**

Any club that wants to enhance their junior section will do themselves a lot of good in taking on clubgolf as part of their coaching routine. It enhances the club's reputation and the kids' performances, it's highly recommended by us.