



## **Tackling the challenge of no Pro on Orkney by starting a summer school**

### **The Challenge**

So popular has Orkney Golf Club's clubgolf programme been for the past three years that 14 PGA Level 1 coaches and a support team of 40 helpers coach around 70 children each week. With numbers and enthusiasm growing every year, the only thing missing from the programme is the presence of a PGA Pro on Orkney. In fact the nearest Pro to the Club is a two hour boat trip followed by a two hour car drive away!

### **The Solution**

But last summer the resourceful islanders found the solution by inviting up a Pro to teach their children at two Summer Schools.

To pay the costs of a Pro the Club generated sponsorship from three local businesses - George Bain, Sheila Fleet and the Glass Shop. Their combined donation of £1,500 was matched through the Sportsmatch scheme, managed by sportscotland, enabling them to invite Richard Fyvie, from West Lothian's Pumpherston Golf Club.

Familiar with the Islands after running three clubgolf coaching courses for Orkney's volunteer coaches, Richard had left a lasting impression. "I instantly recognised he was the type of coach that would be good with our children," said Janette Mackie, the Club's Junior Administrator.

Richard was also one of the first Pros in Scotland to support clubgolf at Pumpherston so was familiar with the programme.

### **Results/outcomes**

Richard focussed on Stage 3 delivery during his five days on Orkney but also coached Stage 1 & 2 juniors. As a result the 46 children he coached (aged between seven and 14) made enormous improvements in their golf.

"Their dedication and enthusiasm was fantastic and they had a huge willingness to learn," said Richard. "They came with open minds and absorbed everything and I noticed big changes in nearly all of them.

"The kids were with me all morning and afternoon in different groups, then the same kids were back with me at night for more. I was there at eight in the morning and left at 9pm having watched the first group come for coaching for the third time."

The children's improvement has been obvious to Janette, "They all made huge differences and they had such fun."

As a bonus Richard gave mentoring to the Club's nine volunteer coaches.

### **What next**

With further sponsorship the plan is to repeat the Summer School in 2009.

Ends

## **Interview with Janette Mackie, Orkney Golf Club's Junior Administrator (Feb 2009)**

### **How quickly has your junior golf programme grown in the past three years?**

It started at around 30 in the first year and at the end of last year had reached 75 on coaching or taster sessions last year.

### **Are you surprised by how quickly it has grown?**

We realised very quickly how popular the coaching would become. After we provided five week taster sessions we found the kids were desperate to join.

### **How many Level 1 coaches are now working at the Club?**

We have 10 Level 1 and four Advanced Level 1 coaches.

### **How far is the nearest Pro from Orkney?**

It's a two-hour boat trip followed by a two hour drive so it's not possible to do in one day and if we did it would be extremely expensive.

### **Has there ever been a full time Pro on Orkney?**

Unfortunately not.

### **Whose idea was it to bring in a Pro for a summer school?**

I stole the idea from the local pony club. They have been bringing advanced coaches and professional riders to Orkney for many years and have had summer camps since before I was a child.

I learnt so much in that intense week of coaching and we achieved results that would have taken much longer to achieve. By having two lessons a days it equates to 10 weeks of coaching. You also work on things straight away, meaning you never go backwards only forwards.

### **How did you get a Pro from as far away as the Central belt?**

When Richard was up for the weekend giving the PGA coaching course I asked him to coach the kids and I instantly recognised he was the type of coach that would be good with them.

You need someone with a lot of energy and enthusiasm and Richard is so adaptable. He can work with complete beginners or people with low handicaps. He's a natural coach who is very knowledgeable.

### **How did the club meet the costs?**

We were given £1,500 from three local businesses: George Bain, Sheila Fleet and the Glass Shop. Sportscotland Sportsmatch matched the full amount, which paid for coaching and Richard's travel.

### **You've never done anything like this before. How did it work?**

Richard has so much energy and was fantastic with the kids. He coached 46 children, aged between seven and 16. He coached them for 12 hours each day. He gave them lessons then took them out on the course.

### **What was the reaction from the children?**

They thought it was fantastic.

### **Did they improve as a result?**

All the children made a huge improvement. The kids that had just started golf were coming in with scores in competitions equivalent to children who had been playing for two years. It made a huge difference and they had so much fun.

### **How much can children improve in just one week of professional coaching?**

They came on far better than we had ever envisaged. Some children who had hardly played were out playing holes and entering our small hole competitions and coming in with better scores than kids who had played for two seasons. The kids that had previously been playing all improved their games to a level we thought would have taken them much longer. The kids also had great fun with Richard and if they are having fun take things in much faster.

**Richard fitted in time for coach mentoring. How did that go down with your Level 1 coaches?**

Our coaches came along to watch him coach and get tips. He also had a couple of sessions with the coaches as well to get advice. So they got a lot from it as well. All our coaches who took part improved their own golf after Richard's support and mentoring.

**Is the plan to repeat the summer school in 2009?**

Yes and we are hoping the local businesses who supported us last year will support us again this year because it was a huge success.

**Will you do anything differently this time?**

It has to be well structured to work and because we have so many kids and run lessons back to back we will possibly have to introduce another advanced coach along with Richard to meet the demand.

**Would you recommend the summer school approach to other communities who don't have a resident Pro?**

I would recommend this to any club with or without a Pro. A summer school is great fun and gets kids mixing, learning and having fun.

**With the growth of golf in Orkney could you see a time in the future when you might have a full time Pro on the Island?**

It would be fantastic for the future of golf here if we had one.

**Are there any plans for your own coaches to develop qualifications to Level 2 or 3?**

I really hope some of them will go on to do this. The children are developing so quickly and to retain their interest we must be able to provide them with coaching to stimulate their learning so they can improve and achieve their own potential.

**Interview with PGA Pro, Richard Fyvie (October 2008)**

**How did you find the attitude of the children?**

Their dedication and enthusiasm was fantastic. They had a huge willingness to learn, they came with open minds and absorbed everything. It was a great experience for me and I noticed big changes in nearly all of them.

**How much coaching did you give them?**

The kids were with me all morning and afternoon in different groups then the same kids were back with me at night for more. I was there at 8am and leaving at 9pm having coached the first group for the third time in one day. It was a case of fitting in the numbers in a 12 hour shift but we did it. It was well worth it and very rewarding.

**Have did the level 1 coaches take to the mentoring?**

The coaches came along to watch me working with the kids, then I watched them coaching. Their coaching was well set up and safe and I think they appreciated the reassurance that it was going well. They really enjoyed getting the feedback.

**Are you keen to do this again?**

I'm looking forward to going back.



