

## Case study - Coaching in a remote area with video analysis support

### The Challenge

Caithness golf clubs, Reay and Thurso, were amongst the first in Scotland to offer clubgolf coaching soon after the strategy was launched in 2003.

When Lybster and Wick Golf Clubs also began offering clubgolf coaching the four clubs joined forces to form the Caithness & North Sutherland Junior Golf Partnership. This would ensure the maximum number of children experiencing firstclubgolf in school would have the opportunity to develop their skills at a club.

As a direct result the number of children playing golf in the far north of Scotland has grown dramatically. For instance Reay Golf Club has 84 junior members, around half of them from non golfing families. Forty five of these children are being coached between Stages 1 and 3 on the clubgolf programme. Thurso GC's junior section rose to over 70 this year.

Many of these children have reached a standard where they would benefit from specialist coaching from a PGA Pro. Until this spring that meant, for some Caithness children, a 140 mile round trip to their nearest Professional, Brian Anderson, in Brora. Brian had made the reverse journey on several occasions to coach groups of children.

### The Solution

The Partnership is open to innovation and keen to find a way to harness Brian's experience and enthusiasm whilst reducing travelling time of coach and students. This April the Partnership invested in a video camera and software to enable them to send footage of their juniors' technique to Brian for analysis.

Evan Sutherland, a volunteer coach from Reay who this January became the first amateur coach in Scotland to complete Stage 3 Orientation with the PGA (part funded by the Partnership), and Brian are testing the new system on two Caithness teenagers; a boy and a girl, both of whom have senior handicaps and are part of Evan's Stage 3 coaching course.



"I video three or four swings, from both face on and down the line," said Evan, pictured above videoing a clubgolfer at Reay GC. "Being young, their technique varies slightly from swing to swing, and I like to give Brian with his more experienced, trained eye more choice to make his assessment from."

On receipt of the video tapes Brian (pictured below analysing swings from Evan's video tapes, courtesy of Robin Williams) runs them through his PC, identifies areas that can be improved and emails back his recommendations to Evan.

"You can see a fair bit on the video," said Brian. "There are 10 measuring positions in the golf swing, from the address right through to the finish. You can check out all these positions so the feedback I can give is pretty comprehensive."



### **The Outcomes**

Whilst the Partnership's use of video analysis is in its very early stages, Evan reports that he is already putting into practice Brian's feedback.

"You'll always learn from a Pro with as much experience as Brian," said Evan. "Brian may spot things I don't and give me ideas to work on. Sometimes it's very simple things, small changes, and you work on that for a while until you're happy with it.

"It saves a lot of travelling, which they spend use practising instead, and having the tapes is a nice record of for the kids to look back on and see how much they have improved."

### **Success Criteria**

Using video analysis could prove to be the way forwards for clubs in remote areas that do not have easy access to a Pro, especially on the Islands where there are no Professionals.

To use it effectively both parties need to have access to a video recorder and video analysis system. The essential elements are good communication and empathy between the Pro and a clubgolf coach.

"You've got to have the two coaches working together and in tune with one another," said Brian. "In our case Evan knows what I'm looking for so I can relate back to him what I think are the priorities.

"I find it quite fascinating to be able to do this and it's good for the kids to have someone else on board who is interested. It's a great idea and there is potential for it to spread to other parts of the country and hopefully we'll see Pros servicing more rural areas."

### **What next?**

The video analysis for remote areas link is in its trial stages. If it works, and there is every sign it will do, the service could be made available to larger numbers of children.

At present Evan posts video tapes to Brian which he then runs on his own video recorder.

If the demand grows and a larger group of children become involved the plan is to speed up the process by investing in superior technology that will allow Brian and Evan to send video clips via the internet.

Meanwhile, the North District SGU has invested in video cameras and a video analysis package with the intention that SGU Regional Coach, David Torrance, will run a remote video coaching pilot for talented young golfers on Orkney and Shetland.

