



Case study – creating a new lady membership at Tain as a result of the clubgolf programme

1. The Challenge

Tain GC committed itself to the clubgolf coaching programme at an early stage with clubgolf coaching being delivered at the start of the 2004 junior season. Led by the now Level 2 qualified volunteer coach, Mike Sangster, as many as 80 children regularly attend weekly coaching sessions on three weekday evenings and Saturdays. Club Pro, Stuart Morrison, coaches Stage 3 of the programme so a complete pathway is in place for local juniors.

In 2006 the club had 32 full Lady members and like many clubs it was in need of more.

2. The solution

The coaches saw that each week, children were being dropped off for coaching, and then collected an hour later by mothers, aunts and grandmothers. They seized the opportunity by organising ladies-only coaching to run concurrently with the clubgolf sessions. These were delivered by volunteer Level 1 qualified coaches who followed the Stage 1 coaching manual provided by clubgolf.

3. The Outcomes

The ladies-only coaching was an immediate success. Within a month the coaching had attracted 30 ladies, aged between 20 and 70 years old. Almost all of them were beginner golfers.

The coaches and club committee discussed ways to include and involve these ladies once they had completed their coaching course.

The club decided to introduce a special new 'Intermediate' category of membership for these ladies to provide a stepping stone to eventual full membership. Intermediate membership was set at £100 per annum, and there was no joining fee. This entitled them to full use of the practice facilities and the 9-hole course, which was part of the clubgolf junior facility development.

The Intermediate category was available for a maximum of two years after which ladies were encouraged to become full members. Five Intermediate members have since become full lady members and gained handicaps.

Most of the other Intermediate ladies continue to come to the club for coaching. For them the social aspect of golf is more important than gaining handicaps and as a result activity in the club's bar and restaurant has increased.

Keeping these ladies involved is a valuable source of revenue for the club which this year adapted its membership by allowing former Intermediate members to become Social members with concessionary rights to play the 9-hole course.

This category allows the ladies access to coaching and the clubhouse facilities. A Social member, who has previously been an Intermediate member, can play a round of the 9-hole course for just £5. Meanwhile, the Intermediate membership is still in operation.

As is the case with many golf clubs, Tain's membership has declined over the past 18 months. Yet its ladies Full membership has increased from 32 to 43 over the past two seasons. Its total lady membership, including Seniors, Social and Juniors, stands at 80. Tain's innovative approach to attracting lady members has played an important part in this.

4. Success Criteria

- A proactive volunteer workforce of coaches
- An ability to react to demand of ladies only coaching
- Creative thinking
- A flexible approach in adapting membership categories
- The Intermediate category of membership has created a successful format for beginner lady golfers that have limited time to play and also do not at this stage see themselves aspiring to playing in ladies medals.

5. What Next

This case study illustrates how relatively straightforward it can be to attract new lady members to the golf club. The initiative has been a great success and the club's flexible approach meant that although many of the Intermediate ladies did not aspire to gaining handicaps they could still contribute to the social side of the club and bring in vital revenue. Tain is now applying the principle to attracting more male members.

Ends

