



## **Case study – Active Schools helps create a sustainable clubgolf development pathway in Invergordon**

### **Challenge**

Every Primary 5 child in the Invergordon cluster's four schools receives an introduction to golf through firstclubgolf. Nearby Invergordon Golf Club provides the exit route where children develop their skills on the next stage of the player pathway.

The club has strong juniors (one who now plays off +1 and two off scratch) but greater numbers of children are needed for its membership to thrive.

In 2009 the club had two qualified volunteer coaches to deal with an increasing number of children whose interest in golf had been sparked by firstclubgolf at school. The club's junior convenor realised that more coaches were needed to give juniors the best quality coaching.

### **Solutions**

"The link between the schools and the club has always been there but our move now is to strengthen that link and provide a structured pathway," said Gavin MacKenzie, Invergordon cluster's Active Schools Co-ordinator, who plays an integral role in the link.

"The plan is to deliver firstclubgolf, either myself, or through teachers and support staff within each school. Indeed in some schools, where staff are particularly passionate about golf, they will continue to provide first club golf through the summer term."

This term all of the cluster's P5 children will play five sessions of firstclubgolf, using modified equipment.

"Because I run the Community Sports Leaders programme at Invergordon Academy, which is for senior students to support community sports activities, I'm training some of them to help the delivery of the clubgolf programme in primary schools," said Gavin.

"In addition, two HNC Sports Coaching students from Inverness College will also support the delivery, giving them an opportunity to develop their coaching skills.

"The fifth session of each school's programme will take place at the golf club so that each child will get a real feel for playing on a golf course."

The fifth lesson will be delivered by the club's qualified coaches, using real golf equipment. As part of its commitment to the programme the club had, during the winter, identified a group of members keen to coach Stage 1 of the clubgolf programme and in February were looking at a vastly fortified band of nine coaches.

"This year for the first time the club's junior convenor Kenny Hearton is supporting the delivery of firstclubgolf in the schools," said Gavin.

"This will help create a natural progression to the club because the coaches the children meet at the schools are the ones they will see when they get to the club. Kenny is incredibly passionate

about golf and this is reflected in his willingness to give so much time to help build the links between the schools and the club.

“The club is also supporting two of my Sports Leaders through their Level 1 training course. They are both keen golfers and, by their club putting them through the course, they are expecting a good deal of commitment back from them.”

## Results

The clubgolf programme is already popular at Invergordon GC, which had 24 children on its coaching in 2009, and the new moves this year will build on those strong foundations.

“For a lot of children firstclubgolf is their first taste of picking up a club and getting some real coaching,” said Gavin.

“The way the firstclubgolf programme is designed the children are physically active, involved with teamwork and learn rules. We have fun games that are golf related but are more vigorous than you would normally associate with golf. So the children get plenty of wider health benefits.

“Active Schools is about getting children out and active more often, to encourage children into all these activities and for them to find their niche.

“At Invergordon, the children coming through the programme have an established pathway into the golf club where they can learn the basic skills and develop their potential.”

In July 2009, John Lindberg, Marketing Manager for Swedish Golf Union, visited Invergordon to observe Newmore Primary School’s transition visit to the golf club.

Of Highland’s 29 secondary schools, 27 have a direct pathway into a local golf club with established clubgolf coaching programmes with all Active School Co-ordinators advertising coaching sessions and promoting junior membership.

## Ends

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