

(Sent to West Lothian Courier, West Lothian Herald & Post)

Fifteen new juniors graduate at Uphall Golf Club

Fifteen children from Cawburn, Kirkhill and Meldrum Primary Schools became clubgolf's latest graduates this week when Uphall Golf Club, at the forefront of the nationwide drive to introduce children to the game, completed the national junior golf strategy's Stage 1 course.

During the spring term P5 children from the three schools were given the opportunity to take part in the strategy's introductory game, firstclubgolf as part of the curriculum.

So much did they enjoy the experience that 15 of them signed up for the second stage of the strategy's player development pathway at Uphall. The ten-week Stage 1 course, which uses real equipment and covered the fundamentals of chipping, pitching, putting, and full swing, as well rules and etiquette, concluded this week when the Club's Professional, Gordon Law, presented the children with their certificates.

"We have a strong junior section at the club and we recognise the need to encourage more youngsters into the game," said volunteer coach, Karen Jakobsen.

"We first started the clubgolf Stage 1 course last year and it was a huge success - as a result our junior membership has grown, particularly in the girls' section. We are delighted with the progress this new group of children has made over the last ten weeks and half of these children have already told us that they would like to join the club on their next birthdays."

Mrs Jakobsen, along with Jack Hutchings, Susan Rennie and Anne Moir, were Uphall's first members to become qualified to teach children after attending the PGA clubgolf Level 1 Training for Volunteers Course in 2005. This year a further three members, Sylvia Crichton, Alison Wilson and Kathleen Rae, also became qualified to coach. All three now plan to become Level 2 qualified coaches, enabling them to help their juniors fully develop their skills.

A further incentive, to keep the children in the game, was announced at today's awards ceremony. The clubgolf graduates have all been offered free tuition over the summer holidays.

NOTES FOR EDITORS:

- clubgolf is a partnership between the Scottish Golf Union, the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association, the Professional Golfers' Association, the Golf Foundation and **sportscotland**. The strategy has been developed as a direct result of the Scottish Executive's commitment to introduce every nine-year-old child in Scotland to the game by 2009.

- clubgolf is funded by the Scottish Executive which has committed £500,000 per year to the scheme through **sportscotland** until 2009.

- As Scotland's national junior golf strategy, clubgolf is backed by Scotland's most famous golfers, Paul Lawrie, Sandy Lyle, Catriona Matthew, Colin Montgomerie, and Scotland's First Minister, Jack McConnell, MSP and Sports Minister, Patricia Ferguson, MSP. It aims to provide new opportunities in the game for every child in the country and to increase participation in the sport by adopting a totally new approach to the development of junior golf.

- clubgolf has been introduced at a point where, of the 260,000 members in the 580 clubs north of the border, the average age is between 42 and 44 years old. This figure is likely to rise in line with the demographic trend of an ageing Scottish population. Although memberships have grown at a rate of just under five percent during the past decade, there has been an increase of almost 20 percent in the number of courses built over the same period.

- clubgolf aims to build on existing traditions and club infrastructures to develop a new and innovative approach that will introduce new participants to the game and secure the sport's future.

- Clubs across Scotland are playing a vital role in the clubgolf strategy. Following clubgolf's six-week firstclubgolf course, children have the opportunity to progress to the second phase of clubgolf's Player Pathway, Stage 1. Hosted by their local clubs, Stage 1 is a 23-hour course, covering the fundamentals of putting, chipping, full swing, rules and etiquette, taught by the club's fully trained volunteer coaches. After Stage 1 there are a further four stages on the Player Pathway.

clubgolf's targets for 2009 are:

- 50,000 9 year olds introduced to clubgolf every year through firstclubgolf
- 50,000 9-14 year olds retained in the clubgolf programme at any one time
- 20,000 9-14 year olds experiencing golf in a community golf programme setting
- 200 clubgolf centres (golf clubs and community linked centres delivering some of the above)
- 20 junior clubgolf facilities (new clubgolf facilities)
- 40 affiliated junior golf facilities (driving ranges/practice facilities utilising the clubgolf brand)

- Ends -

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19 June 2006