

(sent to all national TV, radio, written press and selected regionals)

### **Colin Montgomerie delighted with clubgolf progress**

**clubgolf**, the national junior golf strategy launched by Colin Montgomerie and the First Minister, Jack McConnell MSP at Gleneagles Hotel in 2003, is well on target to introduce 23,600 nine year olds in Scotland to golf this year.

That was the message from Colin Montgomerie today at Gleneagles, who met a group of the children who are taking part in the programme, which is being rolled out across the length and breadth of Scotland this year.

**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. A lasting legacy of Scotland's successful Ryder Cup 2009 bid, the Scottish Executive is providing funding of £500,000 per year for clubgolf through sportscotland until 2009.

Last year, clubgolf exceeded its target of introducing 10,000 children to the game by more than 2,000. Early signs show that this year's targets will also be surpassed.

Speaking at the **clubgolf** stand where he gave advice to some of the 200 children who have been invited by **clubgolf** to Gleneagles this week, Colin Montgomerie said, "I am delighted that the **clubgolf** initiative we launched here in 2003 is proving to be such a huge success.

"Being part of a golfing family meant I was fortunate to be introduced to the game early in life but there are thousands of youngsters out there with the same ability, if not better, who will not find out about their fantastic talent if they're not given the chance to play.

"Investing in junior golf at grass roots level through clubgolf is vital if we are to achieve our overall aim in Scotland of making the game more attractive and available to all, whilst increasing the base of players at club level.

"The key is giving children the right introduction, then providing a support structure that will allow each player to progress to the level to which they aspire. It is wonderful to see that through clubgolf this is being achieved on such a grand scale and I am sure the programme will continue to flourish."

Said Alan McMillan, **clubgolf's** Junior Golf Manager, "Young people are the life blood of our sport and we are well on the way to ensuring that every nine year old child in Scotland will have the opportunity to learn the basics of golf by 2009.

"Our targets are ambitious but, with the co-operation of golf clubs and schools and the commitment of local authorities we have shown they are achievable."

**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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Or visit clubgolf's official website: [www.clubgolfscotland.com](http://www.clubgolfscotland.com)