THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF JUNIORS IS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT AND CHALLENGING ROLE OF THE JUNIOR ORGANISER.
SECTION 3
Recruitment & Retention

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THE RECRUITMENT (INCLUDING INDUCTION) AND RETENTION OF JUNIORS IS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT AND CHALLENGING ROLE OF THE JUNIOR SECTION. JUNIORS NEED TO BE GIVEN THE BEST POSSIBLE START TO THEIR GOLFING EXPERIENCE IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH WILL ALLOW THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR SKILLS. ONCE RECRUITED JUNIORS WILL THEN NEED TO BE GIVEN A GOOD WELCOME AND INDUCTION TO SUPPORT THEIR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION BOTH IN THE GAME AND AT THE GOLF CLUB.

Golf is a popular sport and with the increased profile and positive role models, there are more youngsters who want to experience the game and therefore golf clubs must look at the different recruitment options and ideas which can be implemented. Promotion within the existing membership may no longer provide a sufficient number of juniors.

The retention of young people is also essential and golf clubs need to consider ways in which they can retain junior members into adult membership or at least ensure they keep playing the game and perhaps return to membership in the future.

WHERE TO RECRUIT FROM?

- Local driving ranges, pitch & putt courses etc
- Other sports clubs
- Primary & Secondary Schools
- Internal networking - through current membership
- Local community facilities - leisure centres, youth clubs
- Marketing – websites, newspapers, radio etc
- County Golf Partnership activities
- Club based open days & taster sessions
- County Sports Partnerships
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Recruitment pathways

- **COUNTY GOLF PARTNERSHIPS**
  County Golf Partnerships offer recruitment sessions to help get people into golf and promote opportunities within their local golf clubs. For details of how to get involved with your local partnership and to contact your County Officer see Section 9.

- **CLUB BASED ACTIVITY**
  By running open days and taster sessions golf clubs are able to open themselves up to new participants. These participants should be made to feel at ease within the golf club environment to provide them with a good experience and to support their continued participation. Follow on opportunities and structured coaching packages should always be offered to support those looking to take up the game.

- **LOCAL DRIVING RANGES & SHORT COURSES**
  For many beginners, this can be their first taste of golf and where they feel most comfortable, therefore golf clubs should not only see them as an ideal place to recruit beginners from, but they can also look to create a reciprocal link with a local facility to work in partnership with.

- **OTHER SPORTS CLUBS**
  Other sports clubs provide a good source of juniors who already enjoy sport. Golf clubs may be able to work in partnership with other sports clubs to promote each other’s opportunities or even hold a multi sports taster day.

- **PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS**
  Working with local schools can be an effective way of attracting more juniors into the golf club and engaging with the community.

Activities can be offered in schools using the adapted Tri-Golf and Golf Xtreme equipment. The Golf Foundation is able to support golf clubs in creating partnerships with local schools (see Section 9 for details).

- **INTERNAL NETWORKING**
  Promotion within the golf club is probably the easiest and most cost effective way to recruit juniors, however golf clubs should not solely rely on this method. Incentives can be offered to those members who introduce new participants to the golf club.

- **LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES**
  Local leisure centres, youth clubs and even doctors surgeries may be willing to promote opportunities on their notice boards and there may be an opportunity to develop reciprocal arrangements.

- **MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES**
  Advertising doesn’t necessarily have to be expensive, as well as more traditional methods such as placing adverts in newspapers and on local radio, adverts can be added to the club’s website and England Golf’s online club directory. County Golf Partnerships may also be able to place adverts on their websites. Social networking can also be used to help market the golf club and its opportunities.

- **COUNTY SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS**
  County Sports Partnerships can promote opportunities through their local networks and support in reaching out to different markets. For further details see Section 9. County Golf Partnerships work closely with their local County Sports Partnership to help promote golf.

Question: **WHAT RECRUITMENT PATHWAYS EXIST AT YOUR GOLF CLUB AND WHEN WAS THIS LAST REVIEWED?**
Welcoming Juniors into the Golf Club

1. **Provide an introduction to the golf club environment** – ensure the facility is junior friendly and welcoming. Encourage parents to attend with their children.

   The GolfMark scheme can support golf clubs in this area (see Section 9).

2. **Offer a comprehensive and structured learning programme** which motivates through achievement with a focus on fun and learning.

   The Junior Golf Passport can be used (see Section 9).

3. **Make the transition into membership easy.** Provide a range of opportunities and limit any barriers which may be in place (e.g. interview process).

   To encourage high playing standards, incorporate further coaching as part of the membership package.

4. **Hold an informal welcome evening** for new members whereby they are introduced to the club officials and adult members. Make the evening a social event to support new members in developing friendships and also encourage family members to the club.

5. **Provide new members with an introduction booklet** which acts as a reference guide.

   England Golf’s generic Welcome Booklet can be used (see Section 9).
Induction Booklet/Handbook

It is good practice to provide all junior members with an induction booklet or handbook, which will act as a reference guide and will support them to feel at ease within the golf club environment. This booklet should include the following:

- Contact numbers for club officials.
- Dress code guidelines.
- Competition dates and times.
- Competition regulations.
- Details of the coaching programme.
- How to obtain a handicap.
- Rules of golf and etiquette guidelines.
- How to fill in a scorecard correctly.
- Junior committee structure (if appropriate).
- Rules of the golf club.
- What a junior should commit to (expected coaching/competition attendance).
- Junior code of conduct.

As part of England Golf’s Recruitment & Retention Toolkit, a generic ‘Welcome Booklet’ is also available to download or purchase (see Section 9 for details).

Why do Junior Golfers Leave the Game?

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Supporting the Retention of Young People

It is not just the retention of junior members that golf clubs need to address, looking after golfers once they reach 18 years of age is also vital to ensure they maintain their relationship with the golf club and continue to play.

Below are some questions for golf clubs to consider:

- Is there appropriate coaching provision?
- Are there a range of competitive opportunities for all abilities?
- Is there a smooth transition from junior to adult membership categories - intermediate packages, staggered fees?
- How attractive are the membership packages - do they include ample use of the facilities, different payment methods and social activities? Are they competitive?
- Does the golf club offer a range of membership categories to suit different lifestyles?
- Is a joining fee necessary? What does it include?
- Is a transitional fee necessary?
- When were the club rules and regulations last reviewed? Do they need updating? Are they equitable?
- Does the golf club have a development plan incorporating junior golf, which gives the golf club direction and continuity?
- Does the golf club consult with junior members and their parents to gather their thoughts on what will encourage them to remain within membership?
- Is there sufficient funding for the junior section to support a range of activities?
- Are all sections of the golf club working together to support junior members and players?

Fact:
94% of golf clubs have membership vacancies

Golf Club Membership Questionnaire – England Golf
SUCCESSFUL APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

TO RECRUIT JUNIORS, WE HAVE COMMUNICATED WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOLS EXPLAINING OUR PHILOSOPHY BEHIND JUNIOR GOLF. WE HAVE FORMED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE HEAD TEACHERS AND THEY ARE HAPPY TO PROMOTE OUR INITIATIVES THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL E-MAIL SYSTEMS AND IN ASSEMBLIES AND PARENTS EVENINGS. DEVELOPING THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEAD TEACHERS HAS BEEN CRUCIAL IN GETTING THE WORD OUT TO THE SCHOOLS.

Back at the golf club, we hold a junior/academy open day where parents and juniors can come along to try golf and it gives us an opportunity to showcase what Tenterden is all about. The club is involved in lots of other initiatives such as ‘Tentertainment’ which is a big festival in the town park (great for families) and we also have a stall at late night shopping in the town. All of these types of events help to keep us in contact with our local community.

To retain the juniors we have a tiered academy system (pars-birdies-eagles-junior team), which is based on age and experience and gives the juniors a structure and goals to work towards.

Our recruitment programme for adults encompasses many initiatives, which are supported by the Kent County Golf Partnership including the ‘get into golf’ campaign with successful beginners groups on a Saturday and ladies groups on a Monday. Tenterden have also recently held a very successful club open day where we were able to sign up 7 new members and add lots of names to our database, as well as enrolling new players onto our free ‘get into golf’ taster sessions and follow up groups.

Our ‘Stepping Stones to Membership’ programme is a pathway for beginners or inexperienced players, which incorporates the necessary technical, rules and etiquette information required to get out on to the golf course and become a member of the club. Players have the opportunity to use the par 3 course and then the academy course, which has tees positioned to make play easier and less intimidating for beginners. Without doubt, we feel this is essential for new players and makes it manageable for their standard of play.

Tenterden have a number of local partners who help to support and promote the club, particularly at a nearby business centre and the local Chamber of Commerce. We also affiliate to other websites and promote through our own site, which includes a film about what the club has to offer.

Richard Silman
Head PGA Coach

"The work and progress that we have accomplished in bringing new players in to the game is there for all to see. Our academy provides the ideal welcome and learning ground for new players, whether junior or adult and now that we are GolfMark accredited we have been able to form really strong links with the local schools and community. Tenterden is a club that is continually trying to improve and move forward and we welcome all categories of golfer to our club”

Mike Barkway
Club Management Officer
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS, COOKRIDGE HALL PROVIDES OVER 1,000 PUPILS PER YEAR, IN LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS (AGED 8 TO 9 YEARS) WITH FREE GOLF LESSONS. THOSE SHOWING PROMISE OR INTEREST TO IMPROVE ARE THEN INVITED TO A TWO HOUR SESSION AT OUR CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS, WHICH INCLUDES FUN ACTIVITIES WITH ONGOING REGULAR SESSIONS.

Sessions have also been introduced for parents at the same time as their children and this has been very successful. With 20 parents having had their first taste of golf we are now looking at undertaking more family coaching and golf sessions. Encouragingly some of the parents have now become full members at the golf club.

Following the initial sessions, the youngsters are invited to attend six one hour coaching sessions at a subsidised cost. Over 70 pupils have taken up the offer including 30 girls. Of these, over 40 have continued to have group lessons in the Academy and have been given the opportunity to join our Tigers section (pre-membership group) and become club members.

We work in partnership with a local 9-hole par 3 course and hold regular events there for the Tiger section. The juniors have an opportunity to improve their game and learn the rules and etiquette whilst developing their skills. Based on ability, players in the Tigers can then progress into the junior section and become members.

Some of our current junior members have also been trained as volunteers to help with the schools sessions and the Tigers section, with a reward scheme in place.

Due to the success of the Tigers Section, we have also now applied the same system to women. Following lessons in the academy our new female beginners can join a group who play on the local 9-hole course until they are able to play the full course at Cookridge.

Ray Agar
Junior Organiser
Summary

There are a number of different recruitment avenues that golf clubs can experiment with, including reaching out into the local community, linking with their County Golf Partnership, creating links with schools and developing relationships with local clubs and facilities.

What works for one golf club may not be as effective for another and therefore it is important to try different methods.

Once juniors have experienced golf, they should be given an opportunity to continue their participation.

Through structured coaching programmes at welcoming environments, non members will hopefully develop their skills and take up membership opportunities, which complemented by a thorough induction and welcome will retain them within the golf club.

All sports experience a drop off in players once they reach 18 years of age and golf is not immune, however by carefully considering the needs and requirements of these golfers there may be an opportunity to limit this and ensure they return to the sport and hopefully the golf club at a later age.

Further support and guidance can be found in England Golf’s Recruitment & Retention Toolkit (see Section 9 for details).