



ENTERTAINING THE JUNIORS

Keith Lloyd, Chief Executive of the GCMA, writes about junior members at the golf course.

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No sooner have your junior members returned to school or college, than the half-term break arrives to give them a final opportunity to hone their golfing skills before the adverse weather conditions set in.

No doubt there will be some organised competitions for them by way of the Junior organiser/convenor's dedicated preparations, but what happens if poor conditions set in and play has to be abandoned? The prospect of groups of bored teenagers hanging around the clubhouse is unlikely to enthuse a busy club secretary and the following suggestions may be a source of relief in such circumstances:

Quiz

Organise a quiz, focusing on the more common "What if" aspect of the Rules of Golf. The best format is prepared Questions with multiple-choice type Answers. The answers should be linked to a reference of the exact Rule, and ideally further reference to the "Decisions on the Rules of Golf" publication would create more interest and education for all concerned.

Examples of such could include:

- ✎ Playing a wrong ball – penalty, corrective action
- ✎ Play from the wrong Teeing area – penalty, corrective action
- ✎ Declaration of "provisional" ball being played, when original ball may be lost
- ✎ Playing the ball as it lies – ie not able to improve a lie by moving a branch etc
- ✎ Identification of water hazards (ie Yellow /Red Stakes) and clarification of reference to "lateral"
- ✎ Correct procedures for play once a ball has entered a hazard (including penalty for grounding club)
- ✎ Ball lying in water in a bunker – correct procedure for relief, and appropriate action if bunker fully submerged in water
- ✎ Procedure for taking relief from GUR and/or waterlogged areas
- ✎ Loose impediments – removal of natural substances, definition of, etc
- ✎ Preferred lies – winter conditions of pick, wipe and place within six inches, etc
- ✎ Course boundaries – out of bounds, clubhouse, flowerbeds etc, and any variances particular to local rules of Club

It may also be an opportunity to cover other basic principles and responsibilities of the player in completing a scorecard correctly. Date, handicap and correct signature by the individual can be focused upon, with the tragic case of Messers Roe & Parnevik earlier this year, and de Vincenzo and Harrington in previous years just a few examples for discussion.

No doubt this may promote other questions from the attendees and you may wish to add some examples from your own club where members have been disqualified or penalised for breaches of the Rules.

Course Maintenance

In my experience, juniors are often regarded as the lowest form of life in a golf club, and consequently blamed for all indiscretions such as pitch marks, divots and unkempt bunker surfaces. It is also my experience that the vast majority of juniors are indeed NOT to blame for such acts. However, it is good practice to educate them by way of posters, notices and newsletters on a regular basis.

Another good way of displaying the education process to members generally and at the same time occupying their interests is by organising a grouped session involving the greenstaff, whereby a practical demonstration out on the course can be most rewarding.

Pitch Marks

It should be demonstrated that pitch marks are caused each time a ball strikes a putting surface, and not just from the “full” shot from a distance.

The importance of correct and prompt repair should be emphasised, with the greenstaff on hand to clearly demonstrate why a tee peg or bunch of keys should never be used. Each individual should be given the chance to “have a go” and appropriate pitch marks repairers should be provided for all in attendance.

It is also worthwhile frequently repeating the “look for two” slogan to them at this impressionable age, as it is something that will perhaps stick with them for the future, and hopefully be passed on to others.

Bunkers

Again practical interactive demonstrations involving the greenstaff are most effective here. The importance of a bunker “being left as you would wish for it to be found” is perhaps stating the obvious. However, it is worth instilling this in the youngsters’ minds as well as the importance of raking the sand from the centre to the edges and not the opposite.

A further consideration is to make sure they understand the importance of raking the surface firmly and evenly after play, and the need for holding the rake appropriately with both hands is not overlooked.

Another good practice is to educate them to enter and leave the bunker in such a way as to minimise the disruption to the surface and the subsequent need for making good.

It may well be of benefit to combine this session with a lesson from the club Pro, and ask him to give a brief lesson on the simple basics of playing from a bunker – (wet sand, dry sand, steep face variances etc).

Miscellaneous

It may also be useful to run through the procedures the Club has in place regarding detection of fire. It is most likely that a young person could panic in such circumstances and become frightened and confused very quickly. It would be reassuring for them to know help would be at hand, and most certainly be of benefit to the Club if they carried out swift and appropriate action as specified in the policy procedures.

After such education, it may be worthwhile to have a trial run of the fire alarm being sounded and the evacuation procedure being effected. It may be a good exercise to show the other members of the Club that the junior section is aware of and competent in such practices.

Etiquette*

Naturally the subject of etiquette should not be overlooked, and a general reference to the club's dress rules and expectations regarding behaviour and courtesy to others is always useful. However, I would suggest this is delivered in a refresher type address on a low-key basis, and not particularly with everyone standing to attention in front of a bellowing Club Captain!

* "Don't be a Golf Menace" publication available free of charge from The R&A – <http://shop.randa.org/index.cfm?action=productdetail&productID=13&cfid=20696457&cftoken=67182134&deptid=2&catid=&free=1>

Children in Golf (updated April 2008)

This has been produced under the umbrella of the NSPCC.

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- ✂ Downloaded free of charge in PDF format.
- ✂ Purchased in a hard copy format for £5.00
see <http://www.childreningolf.org/downloads.asp>

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