



JUNIOR SECTION GUIDELINES

(reviewed August 2011)

The attitude of private members clubs to juniors has changed much over the past years and many clubs encourage and help their junior members. The rules of junior sections vary drastically from one club to another. A well run junior section with a smattering of good golfers is a bonus to any club and at the end of the day remember they are the senior members of tomorrow.

The Golf Foundation through schools provides great opportunity to young golfers and a vast number have their first chance of playing golf by this method. Members' sons and daughters obviously get more chance to start than those whose parents are not golfers but whatever the method it is important for each club to have a clear cut policy for their juniors. The following points are suggestions to make your junior section successful.

- ✦ The club should appoint a Junior Organiser with full authority to run this section. It should be a senior member male or female with possibly sons or daughters in the club. This person should always be invited to attend management or other committee meetings when matters relating to juniors are to be discussed.
- ✦ Look carefully at the age juniors can be permitted to join. It is probably best to have a starting age limit of say 10 years. Golf can develop bad traits in people like - only considering yourself and it is important that youngsters play team games as well as golf. They normally cease to be juniors at 18 but many clubs have a form of Intermediate Membership to take them into full membership over a period of years.
- ✦ Allow for those going on to further education and have some form of Student membership within the club.
- ✦ Have a clear set of rules for junior members which states what times they can play and use the clubhouse facilities.
- ✦ It is best to have a Junior Committee which they run themselves; this gets them into the way clubs are run. It should consist of a Captain and Vice Captain and perhaps three others who along with the Junior Organiser will run the section.
- ✦ Arrange for them to have an Annual General Meeting in which they elect their Officers and Committee. Usually the Club Captain is invited to attend and possibly take the chair.
- ✦ Try to have an area in the clubhouse solely for them. This is not always easy if space is limited.
- ✦ If they use the clubhouse then they must be made aware of any regulations such as dress rules, no jeans or trainers etc. In my experience they often conform to these regulations better than senior members especially if they are told firmly right from the start.

- ✦ All potential junior members should have a series of lessons from the professional and also be taught the etiquette and rules before being allowed out on the course. Many clubs make the professional sign a certificate of competence before they can become members.
- ✦ The junior organiser should arrange parings in competitions carefully so that newcomers play with more experienced players so that they get off to a good start.
- ✦ Junior competitions should be organised at times when the course is not busy and if necessary senior members should act as markers for matches.
- ✦ Never allow parents to caddy for their offspring as this often leads to all sorts of bother. If mum or dad is keen get them to help out marking cards, or even ball spotting on the course.
- ✦ Most clubs have a special handicap system for beginners possibly starting as high as 48 for both sexes. When they reach 28 or 36 for females then they can be assessed for official handicaps.
- ✦ They are not normally allowed to enter main club competitions until they have a handicap often as low as 24 for men and 30 for females. Some clubs make it even lower such as 18 and 24. In busy clubs with full starting sheets for competitions, senior members will object to being unable to play because the list is full up with juniors. Club policy on this will depend on the attitude of each club, but it is usually better to have separate competitions for them in the school holidays.
- ✦ There are usually restrictions in playing on the course at busy times such as weekends. These restrictions are usually lifted when they obtain a certain handicap for example single figures for major club competitions and 18 or under for medals and stablefords. These rules should be clearly set out and a copy sent to all new members. Many clubs do not allow juniors to play with each other in senior competitions and again this should be clearly defined.
- ✦ Subscriptions to the club will vary between clubs but if possible it should be kept relatively low to encourage a strong section.
- ✦ Many clubs have no entrance fees for juniors and have a fee for when they join the senior club often based on their years of membership. In these circumstances a member with the maximum of 8/10 years will pay a nominal fee. In many cases the fees are payable over a period of several years to help defray the cost.

Children in Golf (CiG) - This has been produced under the umbrella of the NSPCC.

The Safeguarding Children in Golf Guidelines (produced by the CiG) gives straightforward advice regarding best practices that should be applied to void or limit the possibility of abuse. The Guidelines also make recommendations on how to recognise abuse, deal with suspicions or allegations, as well as identifying the responsibilities of staff or volunteers.

Copies of the Guidelines are available from the CiG website, or telephone: 0121 452 5975

- ✦ Download the guidelines free of charge in a PDF file from the CiG website - <http://www.childreningolf.org/downloads.asp>
- ✦ Or purchase in a hard copy format for £5.00 from the CiG

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