

# **Girls in Golf Pilot**

A Report on the Girls in Golf Pilot in Grampian

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# Girls in Golf

## Introduction

In Scotland today the amount of children playing golf is approximately ten boys to one girl. This is quite a dramatic and significant differential in playing terms and as such will need constructive and long-term development to improve the overall response from junior girls trying golf and ultimately retaining membership of a golf club.

It is therefore no mean feat that although the female membership is dramatically low Scotland does develop a good proportion of these players into golfers of a high standard.

With only 2,700 girls currently members of golf clubs, compared to 25,000 boys in Scotland, there is a definite need to increase the amount of girls participating in the sport. Actual club membership varies considerably with the maximum membership of any one club being 20 girls and a number of clubs having a membership of zero. If the number of girls being introduced to the sport is increased through firstclubgolf in schools and by making them aware that girls as well as boys play the sport, we can tackle the problem of retention once they get started.

With the problem being recognised and acknowledged, a pilot scheme was planned and implemented with the aim of:

- Identify why so few girls play the game
- To help provide a formula to help attract and retain girls in the future.

The pilot scheme took place in the Grampian region and involved Alford, Fraserburgh and Oldmeldrum golf clubs from the Aberdeenshire area.

# Girls in Golf

## Programme

The three clubs that took part were asked if they would run clubgolf stage 1 girls only coaching sessions to which they all agreed. They collectively felt that the number of girls involved and playing was a weak area within their junior membership.

Alford golf club were keen to see if these girl only sessions would allow the developmental process to happen in a more constructive manner with no undue competition/influence from junior boys. This appears to be a key element of why girls don't want to participate in golf. This tactic would hopefully show a marked improvement in the girls. The sessions would also deliver feedback when comparing to the mixed gender sessions held the previous year. Fraserburgh did not have any girl members; Oldmeldrum had one girl member, who through necessity went for coaching with the boys.

Oldmeldrum Golf Club PGA Level 1 coaches undertook visits to two local primary schools to deliver firstclubgolf. This was extremely successful with Oldmeldrum Golf Club signing up 29 girls to their stage 1 coaching sessions.

Alford had 20 girls take part whilst Fraserburgh had 8 girls attend their coaching sessions after generating some local interest. The girls were all aged between 9 and 12.

After initial meetings with representatives from each club it was decided that three events, over and above their stage 1 coaching, would be held to introduce and give the girls a taste of golf in a non-competitive setting. One event would take place at each club and the Texas scramble format was agreed on, as this would encourage playing as a group and not as individuals.

# Girls in Golf

## Events

### **Alford - 5<sup>th</sup> August 2005**

- 44 girls attended
- 9 hole Texas Scramble
- Mixed club teams of 3 or 4 girls
- Buffet tea
- Goodie bag to take away

### **Oldmeldrum – September 05**

- 49 girls attended
- Texas Scramble format
- 15 mixed club teams
- T-shirts – supplied by Paul Lawrie Junior Golf
- clubgolf caps in team colours
- Various activities to participate in before tee time (Appendix 1)
- Buffet tea
- Medals

### **Fraserburgh – 15<sup>th</sup> October 05**

- 9 hole shotgun start Texas Scramble
- 9 teams of 4
- Sweets at each teams first hole
- Quiz question tied to the flag at each hole for the girls to answer
- Buffet tea

## Summary of Golf Events

Each event was very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by all the girls. There were a few lessons learned at each venue, all of which were positive

- Texas Scramble – great format for keeping the play going and not letting anyone get disheartened through high scores.
- Mixed club teams – opportunity for the girls to make new friends.
- Shotgun start – each team was finished at roughly the same time.
- Coloured caps – easily recognisable on the course

## Social Event

### Bowling Day Out

It has been identified that girls enjoy the social aspect of golf rather than the competitive aspect when they start playing the game. *'A competitive environment is considered to be a major factor in dropout amongst girls who do not consider themselves to be good at sport* <sup>(1)</sup>. With this in mind a bowling day was organised with 38 girls in attendance.

At the end of the pilot each girls was presented with a certificate and golf goodies as a thank you for taking part.

The Swedish Golf Federation also state the importance of taking part in activities other than golf, such as going to the cinema or having a BBQ. This may be the reason that ladies golf in Sweden is so successful.

<sup>(1)</sup>*Increasing demand for sport and physical activity in adolescent girls in Scotland – Exploring Issues, suggesting solutions* (sportscotland Booklet)

## Questionnaire Feedback

Questionnaires were handed out to get some feedback from the girls; with a return rate is 60%. (Appendix 2)

The feedback is very encouraging as it is extremely positive.

- All girls enjoyed the Texas scramble format
- Enjoyed meeting and making friends with the girls from other clubs
- Preferred to be part of a girls only coaching session, compared with mixed sessions
- If not already would like to become a member of their club
- Enjoyed the social event
- Baseball caps
- Would like to take part in similar events this year
- Parents added very positive comments (Appendix 3)

## Girls in Golf

### Partnerships

Key partners within clubgolf in the Aberdeenshire area:

- Aberdeenshire Council
- Paul Lawrie Junior Golf
- SLGA
- SGU
- PGA
- sportscotland

As the events were held in Aberdeenshire the council contributed £100 towards each clubs catering costs, which would have still have left each club with some costs to meet.

Paul Lawrie Golf donated the t-shirts, which were also given to the girls in Kilwinning as part of the Girls in Golf incentive.

## **Infrastructure**

Regional Manager

Volunteers

Schools

Golf Clubs

County

Academy

## **Girls in Golf**

Summary/conclusion

Offering girls only coaching sessions seems extremely worthwhile. Girls are more likely to take up a coaching place if they know that they are not going to be making a fool of themselves in front of boys. One way to do this is to run two coaching sessions back to back with boys in one session and girls in the next, and making the p5 girls aware of this once the firstclubgolf is completed in schools – it is also making good use of the coaches at the club.

When doing road shows, visiting clubs etc we need to highlight the point of getting more girls into the clubs for coaching as part of our presentation stating that there are guidelines available to help them get started. It also needs to be pointed out that it may not only benefit the girls getting coaching on their own, but that it has a positive effect on the boys as well due to them not being under pressure to perform well in front of the girls.

It would also be beneficial to go back to existing clubs and deliver cluster meetings, asking them if they would be willing to try golf for one season to see how it works for them. Two of the PGA Level 1 coaches from the Grampian pilot have said that they would be willing to speak with clubs to tell them their experiences if need be

Clubs can then be added to the clubgolf website under Girls in Golf Coaching where they can see the other clubs who are doing the same. This would then give them the opportunity to get in touch with each other to organise similar events that took place in the pilot.

Information could also be distributed to the clubs through the club development pack with ideas on how to increase your Junior Girl Membership, in a leaflet form with details on the pilot and links to the website, either clubgolf or the SLGA.

When starting out in golf girls prefer to compete as friends rather than against each other, group activities are also highlighted as being more fun to participate in. In a scramble event girls are competing as friends rather than against each other showing that golf is fun and enjoyment is paramount.

By targeting girls at a young age and making sure that they have a positive experience of golf, by making it fun and sociable may help retain them in the sport, as they get older. By introducing girls to social competition, means that they learn about competition, but also develop friendships. Many will be happy to remain playing at this level while others will progress to compete at a tougher level. The important point is the girls have that choice.

# Girls in Golf

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Website – identification on the clubgolf and SLGA web site of those clubs delivering girl only coaching sessions.
- Through the club development or an individual booklet outline the benefits of this approach and what to undertake to achieve more girls getting into golf
- Cluster meetings to Golf Clubs
- County meetings to SLGA Junior Secretaries

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## Appendix 1

### OLDMELDRUM G.C. – GIG

#### Timetable

2.15 – 3.00	Registration, distribution of polo shirts and baseball caps, photographs.	
3.00 – 3.22	Groups 1 2 3 Groups 4 5 6 Groups 7 8 9 Groups 10 11 12 Groups 13 14 15	Tee-off, group 1 - 3.00, group 2 - 3.07, group 3 - 3.15 Putting green Driving range firstclubgolf equipment Pitching & chipping (nets & umbrellas)
3.22 – 3.45	Groups 1 2 3 Groups 4 5 6 Groups 7 8 9 Groups 10 11 12 Groups 13 14 15	On course Tee-off, group 4 – 3.22, group 5 – 3.30, group 6 – 3.37 Putting green Driving range firstclubgolf equipment
3.45 – 4.07	Groups 1 2 3 Groups 4 5 6 Groups 7 8 9 Groups 10 11 12 Groups 13 14 15	On course On course Tee-off, group 7 – 3.45, group 8 – 3.52, group 9 – 4.00 Putting green Driving range
4.07 – 4.30	Groups 1 2 3 Groups 4 5 6 Groups 7 8 9 Groups 10 11 12 Groups 13 14 15	On course On course On course Tee-off, group 10 – 4.07, group 11 – 4.15, group 12 – 4.22 Putting green
4.30 – 4.45	Groups 1 2 3 Groups 4 5 6 Groups 7 8 9 Groups 10 11 12 Groups 13 14 15	On course – buffet in clubhouse when finished round On course On course On course Tee-off, group 13 – 4.30, group 14 – 4.37, group 15 – 4.45
4.45 – 7.00	Groups complete round, have buffet in clubhouse, and then go to golf activities that they may have missed, i.e. pitching & chipping, firstclubgolf equipment, driving range, putting green.	
7.00 – 7.30	All groups meet in clubhouse.	

Each player will receive a token for 40 balls for the driving range.

Area used for firstclubgolf, pitching and chipping is behind car park – access through last bay in driving range.

Please feel free to allow girls to use the clubhouse, between activities, for refreshments, etc.

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## Appendix 2

### Girls in Golf

Questionnaire Results – 36 returned

**Q3. Have you completed club golf stage 1 coaching sessions?**

Yes	No	Not sure
28	1	7

**Q4. Have you completed club golf stage 2 coaching sessions?**

Yes	No	Not sure
7	19	10

**Q5. Which Texas Scramble did you attend?**

Alford	Oldmeldrum	Fraserburgh
16	32	20

**Q6. What did you enjoy most about the Girls in Golf events?**

Meeting other girls	The Coach	Playing at different courses
30	17	26
Buffet tea	Caps & T-shirts	Playing in a Texas Scramble
7	18	26

Comments  
"I loved it all"  
"It was great to get a certificate at the end"  
"Had a great time!"

**Q7. What did you enjoy least about the Girls in Golf events?**

Weather	Repetitive	Coach
19	2	2
Time on course too short/too long		Facilities
11		1

Comments  
"Too cold sometimes"  
"We had a long time to wait to play at Alford"  
"Didn't dislike anything"

**Q8. Are you a member at you local golf club?**

Yes	No	Not sure
15	21	0

If YES when did you join?  
 2005    2004    2003    before 2003  
 7        4        1        3

If NO would you like to become a member of your club?    Yes 16        No 3

**Q9 Have you played on your own course this year?**

Yes 15        No 21

If yes how many times?  
 Only once    2-5 times        6-10 times        more than 10  
 2                10                3                14

**Q10 Do you have a club or a CONGU handicap?        Yes 5        No 31**

Details  
 32 handicap  
 clubgolf 12 handicap x 2  
 clubgolf 17 handicap  
 34 handicap

**Q11 Do any of your family play golf?**

Mum	Dad	Brother	Sister	Grandparents	Other
11	27	14	10	13	11

**Q12 Have you enjoyed being in a girl's on coaching group?**

Yes 35        Maybe 0        No 1

Comments  
 "Anna used to think golf was only for boys so it was really good for her to be with the other girls. It has been a wonderful experience and it has encouraged more girls to play golf."  
 "Would prefer mixed"

**Q13 Have you made any new friends from the coaching sessions?**

Yes 34        Maybe 1        No 1

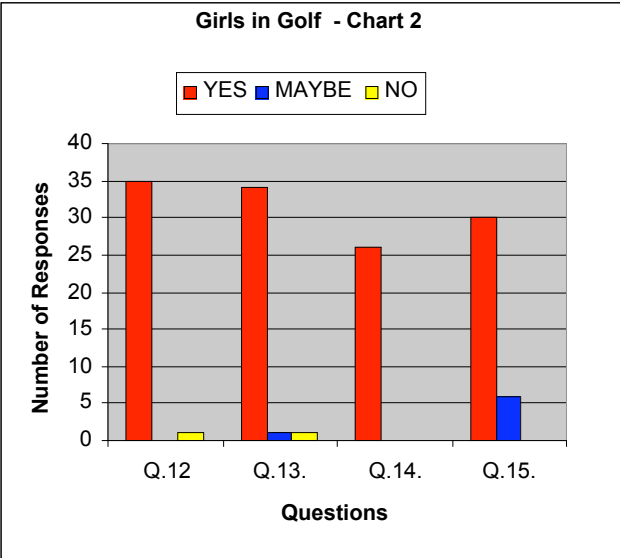
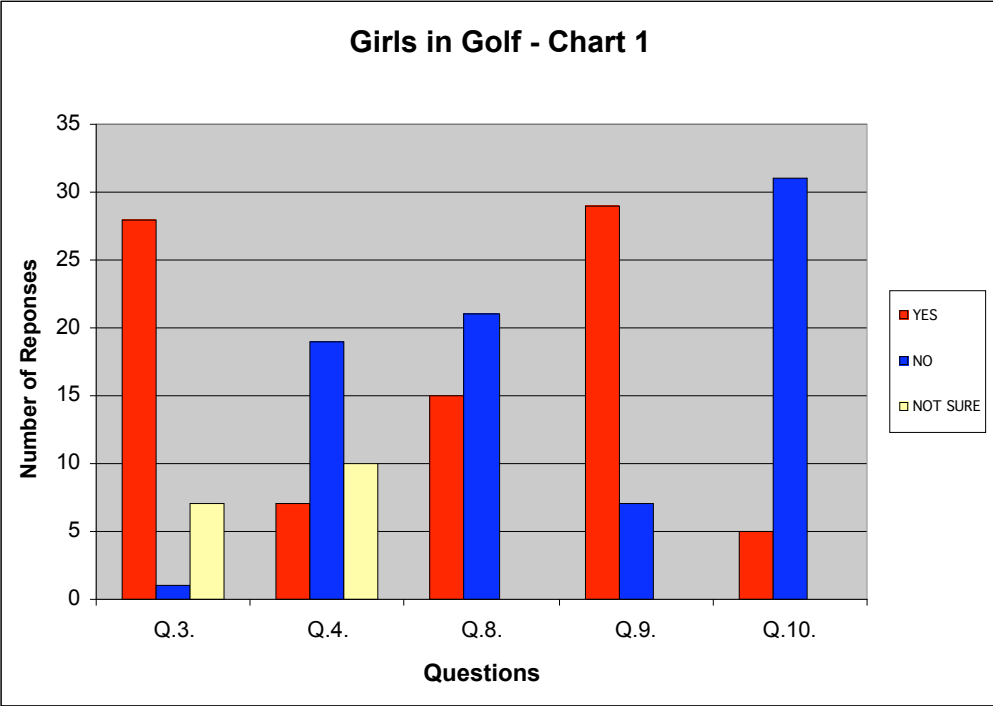
Comments  
 "There is always good company on the golf course so it will be a hobby her parents will be encouraging."  
 "I enjoyed meeting people from different places."  
 "They were co-operative."

**Q14 Did you enjoy the bowling outing?        Yes 26        No 0**

**Q15 If there were an opportunity to take part in similar events next year would you be interested?**

Yes 30    No 6

Comments  
 "Please, please let there be more events next year!"  
 "It was fun."



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## Appendix 3

### **PARENTS ADDITIONAL COMMENTS / LETTERS / EMAILS**

“Jasmine has enjoyed her golfing sessions very much. She would not have the opportunity to play golf otherwise as her Grandad lives 600 miles away and no-one else plays. The ladies who run the golf are lovely and I thank them for taking the time to run the lessons.”

“I just want to thank you all because the 2 girls had a great time. They were both eager at the sessions and for us to go up at other times for extra practice. I think it's a great idea and hope it continues.”

“I thought that the events were well organised and the lady coaches were very good – a great way to learn golf alongside other girls and I hope that they are able to keep it up! More please!”

“I would like to thank all the staff and club golf for all the enjoyment that Jade has got out of golf and it is very good for them to get a sport they like. It is so good I have taken it up myself. I thought it looked very boring but it is not. Jade has enjoyed it and the teachers have been really good and put a lot of work in. There should be more like yourselves in this world. You do a lot in your time for the young girls of today.”

“I would just like to add my comments to those of my daughter Fiona. The whole golf experience has been wonderful and I cannot thank or commend the ladies at Oldmeldrum too highly they were marvellous. Fiona has had a fantastic introduction to golf which she really enjoyed and I really hope she will be able to continue within such a friendly and encouraging framework.”

“It is not easy for girls to break into the hallowed halls as complete beginners – her dad does play and I am purely a few rounds a year golfer – more due to time than anything else. Given this it was not easy to get her started. Her Grandfather plays but is more willing to take the boy cousins out for a game. So anyway thank you and thanks to the ladies section at Oldmeldrum for all their efforts. I am sure Fiona is not among their better golfers, but I am pretty positive she is amongst the most enthusiastic.”

“Zoe enjoyed the coaching at Oldmeldrum GC very much from what I could tell. The times that I was able to pick Zoe up and also help on the Texas Scramble day I could tell that the girls were all enjoying themselves. It was so impressive how well organised the girls were and all the activities were fun and a true introduction in to what being a golfer and a member of a golf club is all about. Having previously taught and therefore knowing Brenda, Dave and Neil I cannot emphasise how lucky the kids are to have such enthusiastic people looking after them. The time that they must put into this is quite staggering and they should be applauded for this. What has been started is super and I hope will continue. Neil Marr – Professional, Meldrum House.”