

# R&A

# Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

VOL 2, ISSUE  
**Two**



The  
beginning  
of a new era

Reflections on the successful first playing  
of the Africa Amateur Championship

“The Africa Amateur Championship is a catalyst for performance growth. I am convinced it will ultimately influence participation patterns across Africa”

– Eden Thompson,  
Development Manager –  
Africa at The R&A

VOL 2, ISSUE  
**Two**

**R&A Group Services Limited**  
Company No. SC247048  
Beach House  
Golf Place  
St Andrews  
Fife KY16 9JA

[www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org)  
Email: [media@randa.org](mailto:media@randa.org)



Published by 18Players, part of Sports Publications Ltd. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but the publishers cannot accept responsibility for omissions and errors. All material in this publication is strictly copyright and all rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is prohibited. The views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of Sports Publications Ltd.





# Contents.

## **04. The Africa Amateur Championship**

The inaugural holding of a championship that aims to raise the standard and profile of golf across the continent has taken place in South Africa

## **12. The EDGA and R&A 8-Stage Pathway to inclusivity**

The programme that is raising awareness of G4D and helping federations around the world to make golf an inclusive sport

## **16. Golf and Health**

Experts spread the word about the scientifically proven physical and mental health benefits of playing golf

## **26. Case Study: Norway**

We take a look at the national federation's Girls Project that aims to help increase female participation and teach life skills through golf

---

### **About Developing Golf magazine**

**Developing Golf magazine** is a key element of the golf development alliance we are creating with affiliates globally to share best practice. This alliance also includes a new R&A Portal, increased funding support and consulting with affiliates on the ground across the year to develop the strongest activation plans, supported by R&A-created global assets.

**Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer – The R&A**







# New Africa Amateur has a vibr

---

Eden Thompson discusses the inaugural edition of a championship air





# Our Championship bright future.

Committed at raising the standard and profile of golf across the continent





**Eden Thompson**

Development Manager - Africa at The R&A

The maiden Africa Amateur Championship underlined the broad talent pool on the continent and hinted at a brighter future to come.

Hosted at South Africa's renowned Leopard Creek, the championship saw 72 men from the region competing in a 72-hole stroke play format, alongside the Africa Amateur Women's Invitational for 20 elite women.

There were home winners across both competitions, with Altin van der Merwe triumphing in the men's and Kyra van Kan topping the women's leaderboard.

We spoke to Eden Thompson, The R&A's Development Manager – Africa, about how the event was received and the impact he hopes it will have.

**The inaugural Africa Amateur Championship is in the books – how did it go?**

It went really well. It was a nervous and exciting time building up to it and getting things into place, and then all of a sudden, it's done – it just rushes past. We hope to see a little more diversity at the top end of the leaderboard in future championships, but we had a very exciting event that was well received by the players. For those federation and affiliate delegates in attendance, I think they got a real appreciation for what The R&A are aiming to achieve in Africa.

**How long in the planning was this event?**

I came to The R&A in October 2022, and it was at the forefront of the conversation by then.

Kevin Barker, Director Golf Development – GB&I and Africa at The R&A, was one of the key protagonists in creating that opportunity for Africa to have this platform to host a championship. The other regions in which The R&A are active, being Latin America and Asia-Pacific, have had their championships in place for a number of years and Kevin was a key proponent in motivating that the same opportunity be provided to players in Africa.

**Were there any snags or setbacks?**

Despite the nerves, I'd say there was a quiet confidence. First of all, The R&A Championships department has done this sort of thing hundreds of times and they run a tight ship.

My main concern was how the communication







## Van der Merwe books Open spot after play-off drama

Altin van der Merwe triumphed in a three-way play-off to become the first winner of the Africa Amateur Championship at Leopard Creek.

The South African held his nerve against his two compatriots, Christiaan Maas and Ivan Verster, to ensure his was the first name etched on to the trophy.

Van der Merwe sunk a birdie putt at the 18th to seal the victory after the top three all finished on 13-under-par, and in doing so earned an exemption into The Open at Royal Troon in 2024.

"It's awesome to be the new Africa Amateur Champion. It's an unbelievable feeling but I don't think it'll kick in until later," he said.

"I can't wait to play in The Open. Honestly, I can't wait. It's links golf as well, so I'm going to be licking my chops out there with just a little sting two iron all day and I just can't wait until the time comes."

The women's event also crowned a South African champion, with Kyra van Kan claiming the honour.





“It's already showing that the championship is that catalyst for performance growth”

channels around Africa would process the information from ourselves and the Championships department. We communicated regularly with affiliates in the lead-up to the opening of entries for the championship and in general it went really smoothly.

#### **How many countries were represented?**

We had 24 affiliates represented out of a potential 32, so that was probably the greatest success of the championship – the diversity of players in terms of the geographical spread.

We had sufficient entries, but that geographical diversity wasn't quite there with around ten days to go. However, in those last few days there was a lot of rallying around by ourselves and the Africa Golf Confederation to make sure we had the geographical diversity.

#### **What do you hope the lasting impact will be?**

I think the championship epitomised where golf in Africa is right now – although a broad overview will show a dominant display by South Africa, a closer look at the individual rounds and even hole-by-hole scoring will show there was a lot of really good golf played and a wealth of talent and ability out there, but a lack of opportunity has not allowed it to fully develop.

When we started engaging with affiliates in 2023 about the prospect of this championship, there was a significant increase in the number of WAGR® events on the continent as the federations rallied around the idea of creating opportunities for their players.

That was a direct result of us engaging with the federations and leading them to understand exactly what the benefits would be in creating the opportunity for their players to play in the continental championship.

Africa is a vast continent and, as a result, not many players have the opportunity to play outside of their country too often. For a championship like this to provide not only the opportunity, but also to ensure that opportunity was not directly attributed to personal affordability, made it all that much more special.

We already have players talking about setting goals to ensure they're a participant in 2025, and the federations are already looking to how they can continue to develop or progress their competitive pathways to open more opportunities for their players.

It shows that the championship is that catalyst for performance growth, and I am convinced that this will ultimately influence participation patterns across Africa. ●



## Martin Slumbers, CEO of The R&A, on the impact of the Africa Amateur Championship

"This is the start of a long journey. There are a number of players here who are extremely good and a number here who are going to develop in the next decade. It's about creating opportunities for people and creating pathways for people. It is our job to create the environment that they can do what they believe they want to do and, if they're good enough, have that pathway to move to the next level. This is why we do it and that is what is most exciting."







## The Africa High Performance Programme

The R&A, in partnership with the International Golf Federation (IGF), PGA of South Africa and Olympic Solidarity, supports the most promising talent from countries on the African continent through the Africa High Performance Programme, providing intensive training camps and ongoing expert support to advance golfers and coaches of exceptional promise.

Co-funded by the Olympic Solidarity Fund, the programme aims to raise the standard of players and coaches, while bolstering the profile of golf in Africa.

Launched in 2022 with a process of talent

identification, there followed a squad training camp at Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club in December of that year, with nine players and three national federation coaches from four African countries.

"It has grown from there as we realised in order for us to create a stronger feeder network into this programme in future, we needed to broaden the exposure of players to a high level of coaching," Eden Thompson explained.

"In 2023, we included what we call in-country visits, whereby five countries were identified that have players either within the programme





**“I think the championship epitomised where golf in Africa is right now”**



or who just missed out on original selection, and we sent two PGA coaches into those countries to run elite three-day training camps.

"The host federation gets an opportunity to identify the leading 12 golfers and if they have golfers within the Africa High Performance Programme, they are required to attend that camp.

"We also asked the host federation to put forward three coaches to attend, and there's a skills transfer between coaches so that when we leave, there is a broader understanding of the requirements for delivery of high-performance

coaching."

Thompson is optimistic that the foundations being laid now will yield results, but he asked for patience as such things inevitably take time.

"A lot of work is going into engagement with affiliates in respect of preparing their processes and the internal programmes to create better prepared, more skilled, competitive players," he said.

"I just hope that everyone can be patient enough for Africa to get some of these processes in place and that we can see the real results of what investment into Africa means."



# The EDGA and R&A 8-Stage Pathway.

---

EDGA President Tony Bennett discusses a programme that is spearheading the drive towards making golf a truly inclusive sport





The EDGA and R&A 8-Stage Pathway puts golf for the disabled, now commonly referred to as G4D, front and centre.

It was developed to support national federations, and other interested parties, in promoting full and quality participation in golf for individuals with disabilities.

Governing bodies across the sport want to be more inclusive and the pathway offers a clear route to help any organisation achieve its objectives in G4D.

The programme had a soft launch in September 2023, and since then national federations on four continents have started their journey along the pathway.

The process begins with virtual meetings followed by a 60-question online and confidential questionnaire covering governance, sector knowledge, operational capacity and participation, all of which are relevant to G4D.

The objective is to have G4D embedded within the organisation rather than being the responsibility of one individual or department.



“Often, those responsible for G4D must gain sponsorship, run participation events and tournaments, market and create media, which is frankly impossible, as the skills required are too broad,” explained **EDGA President Tony Bennett**.

“Tournament teams know how to run tournaments, so they only need more information and training to organise G4D events.

“The same can be said for all other departments. For example, course raters, rules officials and tournament directors can all be trained to conduct an accessibility audit at the

**“The golf industry has a massive opportunity to expand the sport among the 1.2 billion people with recognised disabilities”**



Juan Postigo Arce



EDGA



courses they visit in the normal scope of their respective roles.

“The beauty of 8-Stage is that it is self-paced, so some federations are further along the pathway than others.”

So far, 14 federations have had initial meetings, with six completing the questionnaire and further analysis meetings. Each is either implementing white-labelled resources, training their staff, or updating their existing practices.

“The R&A has been incredibly supportive of EDGA over the years,” said Bennett. “The inaugural G4D Open, held at Woburn in May 2023, sent a clear message to all golf associations, facilities, players and the media that everyone is welcome to enjoy what I believe can be the most inclusive sport.”

Adopting 8-Stage is a crucial component of the inclusive landscape that The R&A is actively pursuing, which has significantly raised awareness of G4D worldwide. With more than 160 affiliates and the credibility of being recommended by golf’s pre-eminent body, EDGA has had meaningful conversations with national federations that might have been difficult to reach otherwise.

Bennett added, “Golf is a sport that involves taking a club to hit a ball towards a target. This task can be practised alone, shared with others and be social or competitive. Therefore, golf is fundamentally inclusive; the stick doesn’t know who is swinging it, but the golf industry clearly does.

“The R&A has taken the lead in promoting greater inclusion of under-represented groups, and EDGA represents one of the most diverse player groups. The golf industry has a massive opportunity to expand the sport among the 1.2 billion people with recognised disabilities and even more among the 60 per cent of adults living with limitations.

“An industry that delivers services that meet the needs and wants of a broader demographic provides a barrier-free environment and has an inclusive attitude that will change how golf is perceived.” ●

Daphne Van Houten



Visit  
[edgagolf.com](https://edgagolf.com)  
for more  
information



# Golf and Health.

---

The evidence is clear – golf is good for your physical and mental health. It's time everyone knew







**Kevin Barker**  
 Director – Golf Development GB&I  
 and Africa at The R&A



**Dr Andrew Murray**  
 DP World Tour's Chief Medical and  
 Scientific Officer and R&A Advisor

Playing golf yields an abundance of physical and mental health benefits, with players even shown to live five years longer.

Such claims have long been made among golfers, but now they have the weight of science to back up those views.

Research into the intersection between golf and health has shown an array of benefits, from lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke to

# ense your day job, od for you.



**“This message  
 around golf  
 and health is  
 rightly front and  
 centre”**

Ambassador - Golf and Health





combatting anxiety.

Here, Kevin Barker, Director – Golf Development GB&I and Africa, and Dr Andrew Murray, the DP World Tour's Chief Medical and Scientific Officer, discuss the findings and how they are informing actions on the ground.

### **How important is it for The R&A and its affiliates to promote golf's health benefits?**

**KB:** We've been engaging with affiliates for a number of years now in trying to get this message out. We sponsored the First International Congress on Golf and Health in London in 2018, and the second was held in 2022, hosted by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

These have provided opportunities to bring together national federations and medical and scientific experts in the field of health.

We're very vocal about this topic and it's a consistent theme when our various Golf Development team members are engaging with affiliates.

We want to help them understand how they can promote the health benefits of golf, not only to existing golfers but also in a way that will attract new golfers and change the perception of golf to the wider population.

### **How is that message being communicated?**

**AM:** This message around golf and health is rightly front and centre and it was a key session at the International Golf Conference last year.

Guidance has been produced to share with affiliates and the general public, including the Golf and Health report, The R&A website and the Golf and Health website, which contains plenty of useful information on the physical, mental and social benefits of golf.

There's also the Golf is Good campaign, which is about trying to work out what's going to resonate with members of the public because they might not want to know all the technical details – they may want more specific information about how it's good for your heart, or for wellbeing, or for mental health.

Key messages have been developed around those areas and turned into assets, such as infographics, videos and other bits of content that can be shared with golfers, potential golfers and policymakers.

I also work as the Chief Medical Officer for the DP World Tour and we've been showcasing these at our events in Dubai and other events that are upcoming, and they really do strike home.

## **In focus: Golf is Good**

Golf is Good is a global participation project piloted in Wales in 2022 featuring R&A global ambassador Gareth Bale.

Using cutting-edge animation to showcase the various health benefits of golf through creative storytelling, it was found that 73 per cent of current on-course golfers were likely to play more golf because of the campaign.

"I'm proud to be involved in this health campaign with The R&A and it's great that Wales is the pilot market," said Bale.

"Through the animated video, I'm keen to show how golf helps me in my life. It allows me to get away from football, socialise with others in green space and enjoy a form of exercise.

"I hope the campaign shows people that golf has many health benefits and can keep you fit, happy and be enjoyed by everyone."

England Golf have begun 2024 with active use of the Golf is Good assets across their digital channels, with a focus on 'new beginnings' and linking to their 'find and play' facility. Denmark, Finland, South Africa, Colombia, Argentina, Serbia, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia will be activating the suite of Golf is Good assets through the year.

Stakeholders have also been requesting infographics, with plans to convert a selection from Dr Murray into R&A-branded assets to be used across various events and shared with affiliates.

**“The credibility that comes with the scientific evidence underpins everything we do now”**



# Golf can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes.



TYPE 2 DIABETES IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE COMMON WORLDWIDE.

Studies specific to golf show beneficial effects on blood sugar

Playing golf regularly can help prevent and treat type 2 Diabetes, in conjunction with healthy eating

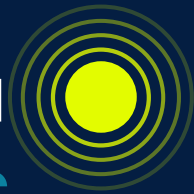
Regular exercise can help obesity and reduce the number of people with a high risk of developing diabetes

By being physically active, people with diabetes and on modern drugs can benefit and reduce the risk of complications by **40%**



Research produced by Murray, A., Daines, L., Archibald, D. et al. and supported by the University of Edinburgh.

# Skin Cancer: what you need to know.



Golf is scientifically proved to be good for your physical and mental health, but golfers and caddies have been shown to have a **x2.4 increased risk** of developing skin cancer due to prolonged exposure to the sun.



**IF IN DOUBT, GET IT CHECKED OUT!**

Most skin cancers can be cured if detected early. Examine your skin regularly and see a doctor/expert if concerned.

## THE FACTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Non-melanoma</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most common form of skin cancer</li> <li>Typically occur on areas regularly exposed to sun</li> <li>Grow slowly over months</li> <li>Rarely spread and easily treated</li> <li>Especially if detected early</li> <li>Do not improve without treatment</li> </ul> | <p><b>Melanoma</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3rd most common and the most dangerous form of skin cancer</li> <li>Can be seen in young people</li> <li>If treated early outlook is very good</li> <li>Can develop from existing moles or appear as new 'mole like' marks</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## LOOK FOR...

- A scab that won't heal
  - A lump that has scabbed
  - Associated bleeding
  - Red/inflamed, scaly or crusty patch of skin
  - Skin growth that rapidly changes
- Take the **ABCDE** approach to inspecting your moles. Look for **ASYMMETRY, BORDERS, COLOURS, DARK, EVOLVING.**
- Not all melanomas have a mole like appearance – pay attention to any spots or lumps that do not go away. For visual examples go to [golfandhealth.org](http://golfandhealth.org)



Research produced by Glover, D., Hull, M., Matthews, A., Murray, A. and supported by the University of Edinburgh.

# The physical health benefits of golf.

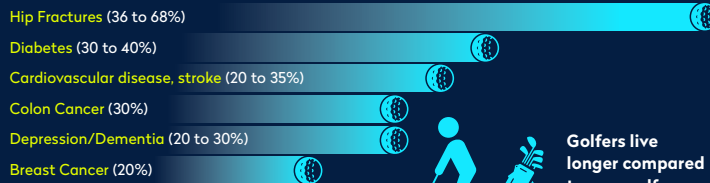


Golf can provide moderate intensity physical activity...

<p><b>Using a golf cart</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.5 METs</li> <li>6000 steps</li> <li>4 miles</li> <li>600 kcal/18holes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Walking the course</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.8 METs</li> <li>11-17000 steps</li> <li>4-8 miles</li> <li>1200 kcal/18holes</li> </ul>
---	---

**MORE health benefits by walking**

Physical activity is associated with reduced risks of chronic conditions...



- Cancer:** Playing golf can decrease the risk of colon / breast cancer. Remember to wear sunscreen, protective clothing and seek shade to reduce risk of skin cancer.
- Respiratory:** Playing golf can improve and maintains lung function in older adults
- Cardiovascular:** Golf can improve known risk factors for Cardiovascular disease. Consult a doctor before playing golf if unstable cardiac symptoms present.
- Musculoskeletal:** Golf can improve balance and strength in older adults. Incidence of injury moderate, injury rate per hour low (back, elbow, and wrist most common).



Research produced by Murray, A., Daines, L., Archibald, D., Shiphart, Hawkes, R., Kelly, P., Grant, L., Muttie, N. and supported by the University of Edinburgh.

# Golf spectator health benefits.



Physical inactivity is responsible for more than **3 million deaths worldwide** and may kill more than smoking

Walking provides **physical, mental & social health benefits**

**10,000,000+**

people spectate at golf events each year – not being restricted to seats, they can walk the venue

**x7** Shenzhen Open spectators collectively walked the length of **the Great Wall of China 7 times**

**x4** Golf spectators at the 2014 Ryder Cup collectively walked **4 times around the world**

In 2023, at The Open...

**6,300** unique users registered their steps across the tournament week

**391,000,000** total steps recorded

**11,500+** Research has shown that spectators average more than 11,500 steps per day at a golf event



Research produced by Murray, A., Archibald, D., Scott, H. et al. and supported by the University of Edinburgh.



### Are people beginning to make the link between golf and health?

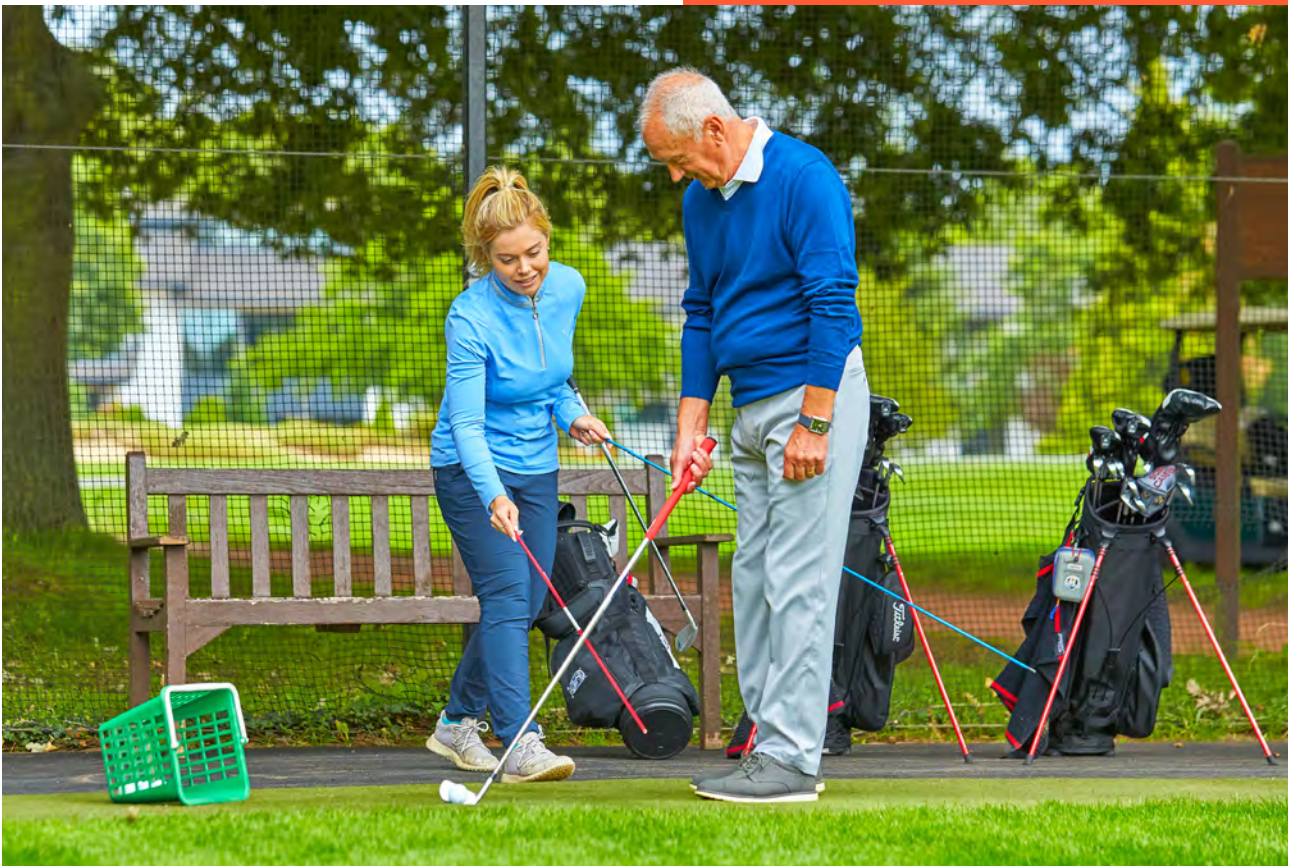
**KB:** I have to pay tribute to Andrew and his colleagues for the work they've done to change the perception of golf. It was Andrew and the former Chief Medical Officer at the European Tour, Dr Roger Hawkes, who came to us saying that golf wasn't viewed as being as good for your health as other forms of exercise.

The work that Andrew and others have done has really lent credibility to the idea that actually it is good for your health, and that has been essential in changing the way people perceive golf and how seriously it's taken by policymakers and decision makers.

The credibility that comes with the scientific evidence underpins everything we do now.

**AM:** I've advised various governments regarding how to get more people active and thus how to increase health. People didn't used to think that walking had health benefits or taking the stairs rather than taking the lift had health benefits. Golf can often give you four hours of walking, you're swinging a club, there's a connection to nature and to others. Golf brings all these benefits and I think now the likes of the World Health Organization, along with national governments, are recognising that. ●

- On average, golfers live five years longer than non-golfers
- Golf can help prevent and treat 40 major chronic diseases
- Golf can help strength and balance, improve quality of life and provide aerobic exercise
- On a regular 18-hole course, most players will walk between four and five miles, burning up to 2,000 calories
- If you play golf for at least 150 minutes per week you are meeting WHO global exercise guidelines
- Spectators walk between five and six miles on average and burn more than 1,000 calories per day





Dr Andrew Murray is a sports and exercise medicine consultant at the University of Edinburgh, a public health policy advisor, a general practitioner and a well-travelled public speaker.

His PhD assessing the health benefits linked to playing golf formed the scientific basis for The R&A's policies and various initiatives around golf and health.

### **How did you come to be interested in the relationship between golf and health?**

My background is as a general practitioner and sport and exercise medicine doctor, and I used to work for the Scottish government as their physical activity champion, looking at what works to promote health.

It came to my attention that golf could be something that's really powerful for people and I decided to do a PhD to see if it did have health benefits or not.

### **What did your research show?**

The evidence from the PhD summarising what was known globally showed there are health benefits. Golfers live longer than those who don't play golf and are less likely to suffer from heart attacks, stroke, type 2 diabetes and a range of other things.

There are also mental health benefits, with fewer instances of depression, anxiety and dementia in relation to the rest of the general population.

It's not just playing golf either – more than 10 million people come to golf events globally to spectate, and they take an average of 11,000 steps.

### **Did the findings surprise you at all?**

I personally wasn't surprised at all because I suspected that golf would be good for health. But I was pleased because so many patients and so many family members and others thought that you had to play squash or football to get these health benefits, but the evidence

now is clear that golf has physical health benefits, mental health benefits, social benefits, as well as longer length of life.

I think the thing that really impressed me about golf is that it's not just for people that are 20 or 30 – it can be played from the age of three to 103. My kids are five, seven and nine and they can play, my parents are 70 and 72 and I can play golf with them. That's the beauty of it.

### **How did you seek to apply those findings in a practical sense?**

The findings were exciting news, so then it was a case of asking how we can get that message out there to encourage more people to play golf and existing golfers to play more often.

I just don't think enough people know about it and that's why we can get the megaphone out as doctors and share this information, and that's something affiliates and federations are helping to do as well.

We also want to help health professionals and scientists recognise the health benefits of golf and get the industry to do the things that will get more people playing golf by making it as accessible and inclusive as possible.

### **Are the health benefits of golf helping to attract new players?**

Yes, they are, and the more you travel to different parts of the world, the more you realise this to be the case. I spent some time in the Emirates recently, and many people told me they hadn't really thought about getting into golf, but they did so because they noticed playing had made their partner happier or their kids happier. Colleagues in China have told me it's a big driver for getting people out into green space where they can enjoy those health benefits.





# Meet The R&A Team: Eden Thompson.

---

The R&A's Development Manager – Africa on his hopes for the growth of the sport on the continent





The chance to play professional golf may have eluded him, but **Eden Thompson** is still living the dream working in a sport he loves.

Golf administration presented itself as the obvious path for Thompson after he opted not to pursue his original dreams of playing professional golf.

Having found his way to The R&A, he does not harbour any regrets.

### **Describe your career path before you joined The R&A:**

Like most of us in golf administration, my journey started as a player.

I played competitively in Swaziland (now Eswatini), Zimbabwe and South Africa over a period of 12 years.

However, I came to realise the only way I was likely to make a living from golf was administratively.

I have to thank my late parents for insisting I get some form of education behind me before trying my hand at professional golf, as I never did turn pro.

I completed my honours degree in sport and recreation management and always hoped to get into golf administration.

My first job was working for the municipal council managing sporting facilities, and in 2004 I became assistant executive director at the South African Golf Association, where I stayed for just over three years.

We had started a family by that point and, due to circumstances, I moved out of the national body and into the role of director of golf for Central Gauteng Golf Union.

We then took the opportunity to relocate to a more rural setting as I moved to the Boland Golf Union, where I worked for four-and-a-half years before returning to the national federation (GolfRSA) where I fulfilled various roles.

The position at The R&A came up in 2022. My wife encouraged me to apply, and I got the job.

### **What does The R&A mean to you?**

From an administrative perspective, I don't think there is any position in golf that is greater than working for The R&A.

I know it may sound like a cliché, but to me it was always the ultimate dream to work for The R&A – it is the pinnacle, with all the history and romance surrounding St Andrews and the Old Course.

Having grown up in Swaziland, I grew up only knowing about The R&A in respect to governance of the Rules of Golf, which is what





first really ignited my interest.

When I learned The R&A governed the sport in all areas of the world outside of the USA and Mexico, and that the support offered extended beyond the rules, it set something alight in me in respect of how important the organisation was in the development of a game that had provided me with most of my happy moments as a sports person.

Never did I imagine a position would become available with The R&A in Africa, but after 18 years of being part of the development of the game in South Africa, it did.

To be able to help develop the game I love in a part of the world that is so important to me is a wonderful opportunity.

#### **What does your role at The R&A involve?**

As part of The R&A's goal to ensure that the game is thriving 50 years from now, the Golf Development team in Africa have an opportunity to facilitate this with particular focus on participation and inclusivity programmes across all formats of the game.

The R&A have a number of programmes and initiatives with resources to support affiliates in their development journey.

With each of our engagements, we are careful to assist affiliates with the programmes that will work for them and to show how they can adapt them for delivery given their particular circumstances.

I also believe that an important part of my





## Eden's perfect weekend

The perfect weekend for me would start with a round of golf on a Saturday morning with a bunch of mates. Unfortunately, the result of that would really determine whether the weekend is perfect or otherwise! In the afternoon it would have to be a traditional "braai" – a barbecue – with my family. My daughter's away at university and my son is in his middle teens, so being able to get the four of us together and have a meal outside, that to me is perfect. Then on Sunday, it would be a quiet day in the bush at Kruger National Park.

“ I know it may sound like a cliché, but to me it was always a dream to work for The R&A ”

role is to be a conduit back to The R&A for our affiliates, so they have a voice.

### What is the best part of your job?

What is so important to me is being able to make a contribution to a sport that I love, and to make that contribution in a part of the world that, given the opportunities, really does need that catalyst for growth.

I started playing the game in Swaziland, and I grew up on an asbestos mine, where there weren't a lot of kids my age.

Golf provided me with an opportunity to pursue an activity or competitive sport where I could rely on myself.

Most days I would be the only one on the golf

course, which is the beauty of the sport – it can be enjoyed as a part of a group or community but just as equally enjoyed alone.

Having that experience and understanding of the challenges for golf development in places like that, it underlined the support that African federations and affiliates need in terms of being able to make the benefits of the game known as widespread as possible.

Golf has helped to shape my character, helped me deal with challenges and brought me happiness.

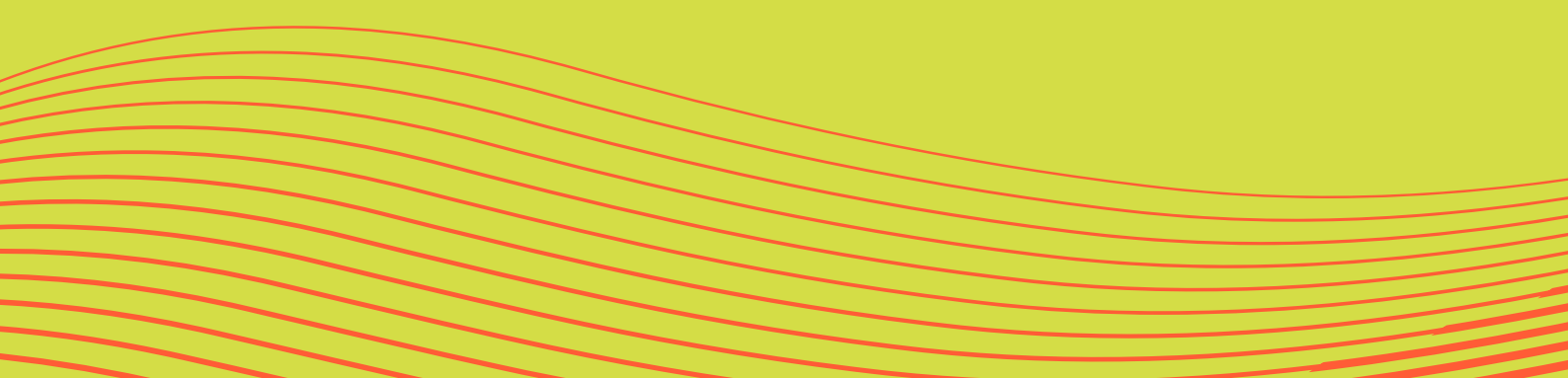
One of the most rewarding parts of my job now at The R&A is to facilitate the opportunities for others to experience the benefits and joy the game brings. ●





# Making an impact – Norway is delivering on its promise of its Girls P

Increasing female participation numbers is a key part of the Norwegian desire to grow the sport as a whole – and that starts with juniors







### The Norwegian Golf Federation

(NGF) has taken a proactive approach to driving female participation, and it's only just getting started.



Fuelled by a desire to promote golf as a sport for all, the NGF is operating across a broad range of

areas to bring its vision to life.

With initiatives designed to increase engagement at all levels, from first-time players to coaches and leaders, the NGF is paving the way to a brighter, more inclusive future for golf.

Here, **Head of Golf Development Fredrik Due**, and **Project Manager – Women's Golf Benedikte Grøtvedt** discuss how they're making that happen.

#### How does the Girls Project fit into the NGF's vision for golf in Norway?

**FD:** It's important to say that we have a focus on junior golf and the assignment is to grow the game for all youngsters, no matter what sex. But within that we did recognise the need to make girls' golf our number one priority, because the participation numbers were lower there. Although it's called the Girls Project, this isn't something we think has an end – we want to keep working on this and on junior golf in general.

Golf offers some lessons that are just too valuable not to highlight to the next generation. The things you can learn are really life skills, and we thought if we were going to do something with junior golf and girls' golf, it needed to be in that direction, and that's where the idea of Impact came along.

#### Can you explain what Impact is?

**FD:** Impact is our vision for creating a robust next generation through golf. It's a common expression in the sport – you make an impact when you strike the ball – but in this case it's about having an impact on society.

We can do that by using golf to help teach skills that are useful for so much more than just being good at this sport; things like honesty, focus and resilience.

#### Why was there a specific need to create the Girls Project?

**BG:** I had been thinking about a project like this for a long time. I had a lot of experience in this area – being a girl and being a player working in the sport – and I lived in the United States for 12

## Case Study

# How on the Project.

in Golf Federation's



years and saw what they were doing over there.

But all along I was thinking a project aimed at girls' golf would not change much by itself – there needed to be a broader cultural change, and that's where Impact was the last piece of the puzzle for me.

It will take time, but we're moving the right way, and the project has recruited a lot of new female coaches, as well as male ones. We're working with 100 coaches at 74 clubs out of 170, so it's grown a lot in a short time.

We're now implementing things from Impact into the Girls Project, and we'll see the results over time. In Norway, the group with the lowest participation is girls under 12. They're attracted to the Girls Project but they're not continuing into the clubs because the environment doesn't match what they experience at the events.

But the 100 coaches we're working with at these events are taking what they're learning back to their clubs and it's starting to change, and we want to help continue that process and deliver on the concept of Impact.

#### **How does Impact work in practice?**

**FD:** We're developing sessions where we make those Impact skills the main focus. We still want to help children play golf to the best of their ability, so the technical skills matter, but the idea is that you would have something like a putting session where resilience is the main skill you're trying to develop – the idea of not giving up.

Resilience is an important thing in golf, but it's also a life skill, so we can develop the person as well as the golfer.

As part of Impact, we will also provide education for coaches to come and learn how to deliver these sessions. That's important because it's about capitalising on those golden moments where you have an opportunity to deliver valuable lessons by asking the right questions and offering good coaching.

This is still in development, but when coaches around Norway can deliver those sessions, they will be able to deliver hundreds of impacts at each club – meaning there are hundreds of situations where a kid is practising and developing these skills.

#### **In what ways is golf presented differently to appeal to girls?**

**BG:** Because the balance of boys and girls in the sport is so crooked, some girls might feel like it isn't a space for them. Also, although it's not intentional, coaches might be making it more of a boys' arena than one for girls; we need to

“Golf offers some lessons that are just too valuable not to highlight to the next generation”







## Impact skills

- Honesty
- Focus
- Resilience
- Cooperation
- Self-esteem
- Self-regulation
- Goal setting
- Critical thinking

create an arena that is for all kids.

Coaches are already doing a great job but the more knowledge they have and understanding of what they can give the kids and what they need, the better they can do.

For example, research shows that girls like the mental side of the game and the challenges that presents, whereas boys are more interested in the physical part. The key is to have sessions that do both so they appeal to mixed groups – that's how you can have the maximum impact.

### **Are there barriers preventing more clubs embracing the Girls Project and Impact?**

**BG:** I think they understand what the aims are, but it's hard for them to only focus on something that has long-term outcomes because they need to show results to their boards.

We know it's difficult for them, but they appreciate the benefits and the fact this is an investment in the future. As we develop Impact, we'll be talking to clubs a lot more about that and bringing them along on this project.

The clubs need to be ready to welcome the girls and be more open to them to come and try golf. We're seeing there are more families wanting to play, but there needs to be a lower barrier for them to join.

That process has started with some clubs asking for a really low fee for kids to come, and we saw an increase in the number of girls joining.

### **What do you hope the Girls Project will achieve for golf in Norway?**

**BG:** Within five years, we will see that, by changing the environment and the culture on the grass for the kids, we're going to bring many









## Committed to a stronger future for golf

As part of its commitment to growing the sport, the NGF is refunding the participation fee for females taking part in the coaching development programmes so long as the attendee completes 35 hours of active coaching/volunteering at their club the following year.

**“ There needed to be a broader cultural change, and that's where Impact was the last piece of the puzzle for me ”**

more girls and boys to golf.

What we're also seeing is that this arena attracts a different type of person, perhaps someone who wasn't interested in golf before but feels comfortable. That will bring in more families and help to grow the game of golf in Norway.

If we are recruiting young people to the game and looking after them, providing opportunities to learn and develop as people and as golfers, we will see someone come through and go all the way. We have tournaments from the lowest level to the highest, so we have everything in place for that to happen.

What's exciting is that we will see someone go through this programme and end up being a greenkeeper, or a leader, or a coach – maybe something not even directly related to golf, but where they are applying what they have learned from the programme. That gives me goosebumps because it's so valuable to have these role models for girls and all kids. ●



# R&A



Contents 

