



Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

VOL 3, ISSUE

Two



Introducing our Golf Development Portal

Giving you access to key insights and thought leadership from industry experts

“This portal is a key step towards building a truly global alliance dedicated to advancing golf worldwide and ensuring it is thriving in 50 years’ time”

– Phil Anderton
Chief Development Officer –
The R&A

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Contents.

04. Introducing our new Golf Development Portal

The platform will provide federations, affiliates and partners worldwide with resources, best practices and expert insights to help grow the game

10. Golf is Good in Dubai

The global participation project is helping to change perceptions around the sport through initiatives such as the Dubai Fitness Challenge

20. Canada case study: She Plays Golf

Golf Canada's She Plays Golf festivals have introduced hundreds of women and girls to the game

28. £1m boost for women's golf in Wales

The funding from the Welsh Government will support the Women's Golf Legacy Fund as the AIG Women's Open is held in the country

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

Introducing our new Global Alliance Golf Development Portal.

The launch of The R&A Global Alliance Golf Development Portal provides easy access to best-practice examples from across the globe.

Available to national federations, affiliates and partners, the platform hosts a wealth of resources showcasing golf development case studies, news and research, alongside thought leadership from experts in the sport and beyond.

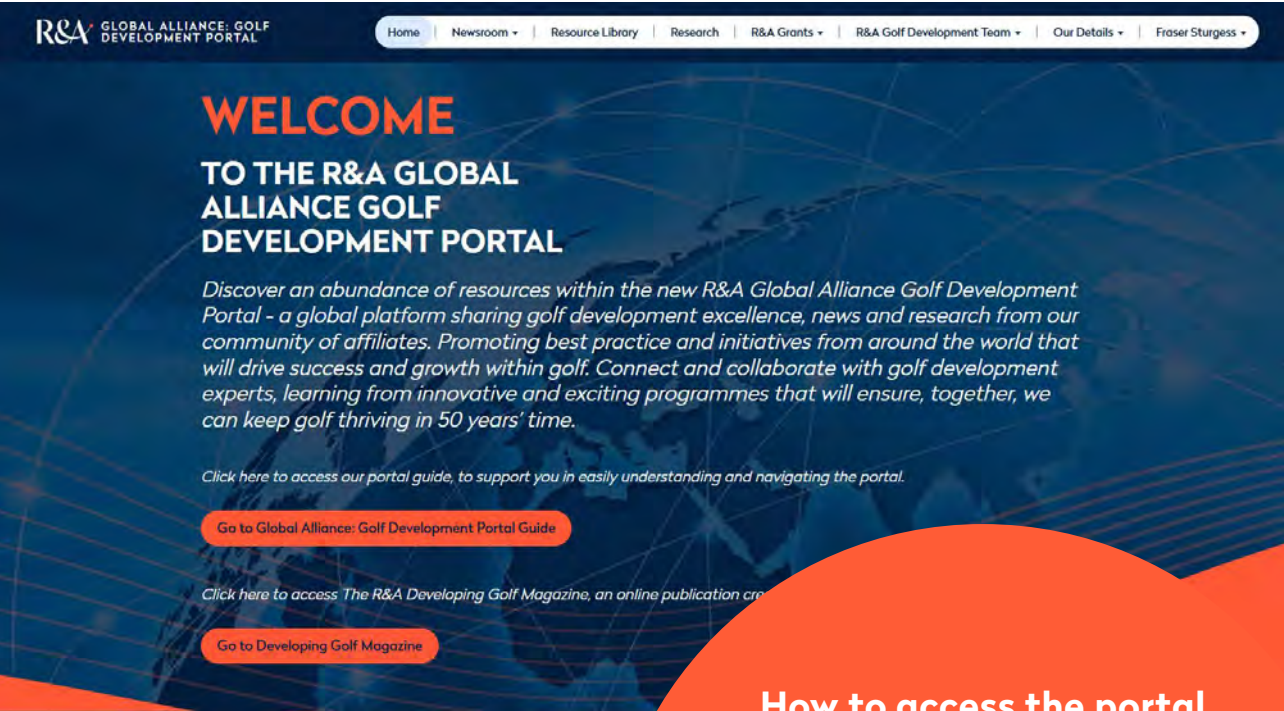
The portal will also facilitate grants and the new Balanced Scorecard, as well as featuring a directory of R&A Golf Development contacts and key personnel from other departments, including Sustainable Golf, Philanthropy and Governance.

The work supports The R&A's commitment to establish a Global Alliance – an international golf development community passionate about driving positive change and growth for golf around the world.

"We are proud to launch the Global Alliance Golf Development Portal, which will serve as a vital resource for our network of golf development affiliates, federations and partners across the world," said Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer at The R&A. "By providing access to key insights, best practices and expert-driven content, we aim to empower our affiliates to create positive change in the sport.

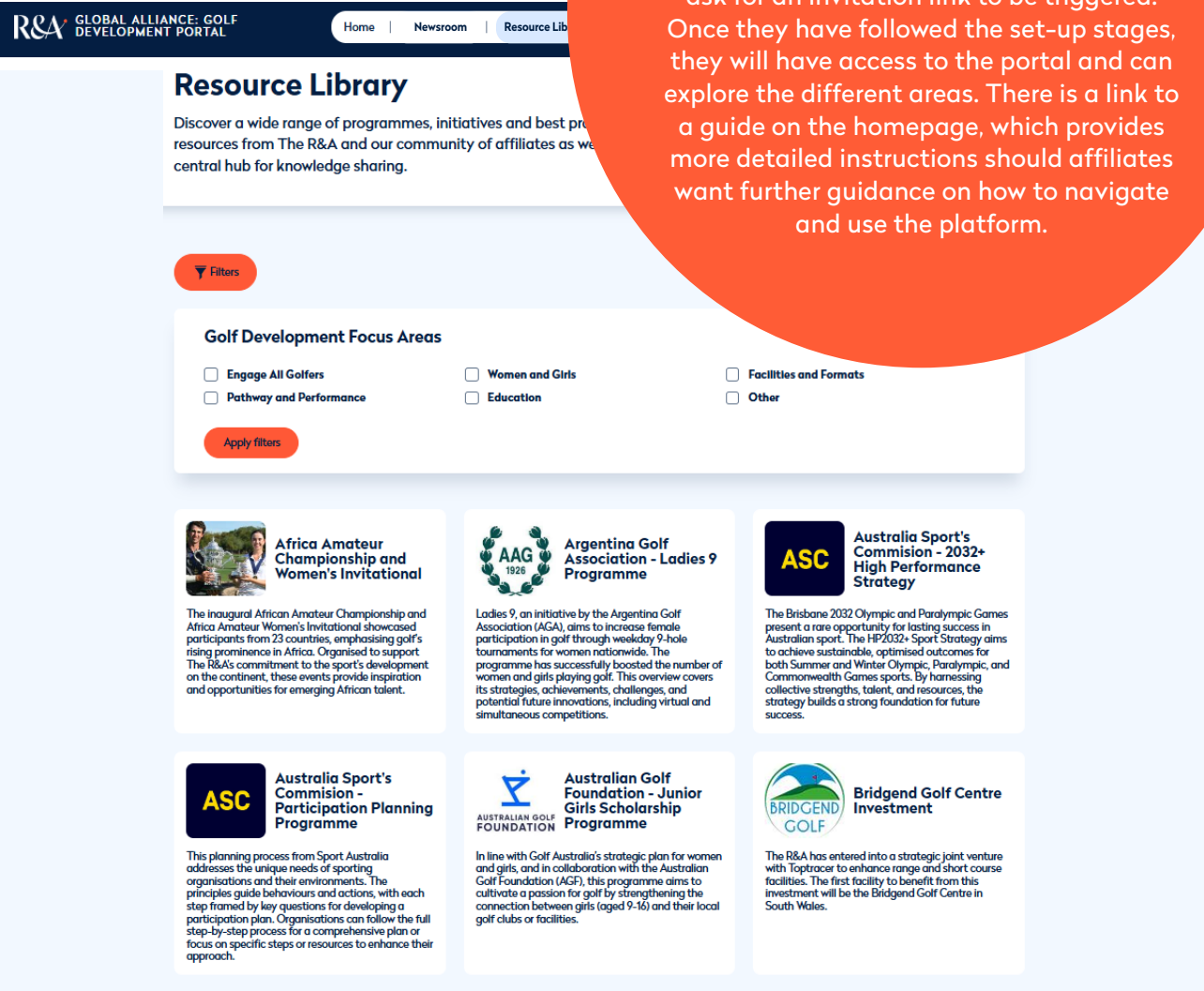
"This portal is a key step towards building a truly global alliance dedicated to advancing golf worldwide and ensuring it is thriving in 50 years' time." ●

The platform is designed to showcase outstanding work in the field of golf development, with access to key insights and thought leadership from industry experts



How to access the portal

The portal is accessible via invitation. Any affiliate contact wishing to gain access should contact their regional team and ask for an invitation link to be triggered. Once they have followed the set-up stages, they will have access to the portal and can explore the different areas. There is a link to a guide on the homepage, which provides more detailed instructions should affiliates want further guidance on how to navigate and use the platform.



Your questions answered

Fraser Sturgess, CRM Project Assistant at The R&A, provides further insight on the Global Development Portal

How valuable do you think this resource will be?

We believe this resource will be immensely valuable. In an era of rapid digital innovation and evolving technology, we hope that by offering a digital touchpoint for all our affiliates globally, we can greatly enhance both engagement and the support we provide. Additionally, affiliates will benefit from the wealth of value in the case studies we share. We are confident that the portal's design is intuitive and user-friendly, allowing all users to easily navigate and make the most of it. We are proud of this product and excited to share it with everyone who will use it.

How will affiliates be encouraged to engage with this new tool and what level of engagement are you hoping for?

We aim for the portal to become the central hub for all golf development news, resources and research. In addition, our grants and scholarships will be processed through the portal, meaning all affiliates wishing to apply for National Body Development Grant (NBDG) funding can submit their applications via the portal. We hope this encourages engagement among our affiliates and that the resource proves valuable in helping them achieve their individual organisational goals. The R&A Global Golf Development team will be available to assist users in navigating the portal, and we will also provide training and guides to ensure users have all the key information they need to make the most of it.

How is the content curated and can affiliates make submissions of their own?

The content for the portal is curated through various methods, primarily by leveraging our global relationships with organisations to highlight key programmes and initiatives. We also focus on promoting the valuable work

our teams are doing to create assets and programmes that affiliates can use to drive golf development in their own regions. We strongly encourage affiliates to submit case studies for us to feature and celebrate. To do so, simply click on 'Propose an Article' under the 'Newsroom' section in the navigation menu. This will open a page where affiliate users can submit their article proposals for review and sharing. Affiliates should provide a title, a description or main text and any relevant supporting images.

Are there ways for affiliates to ask follow-up questions regarding any best-practice examples they wish to follow?

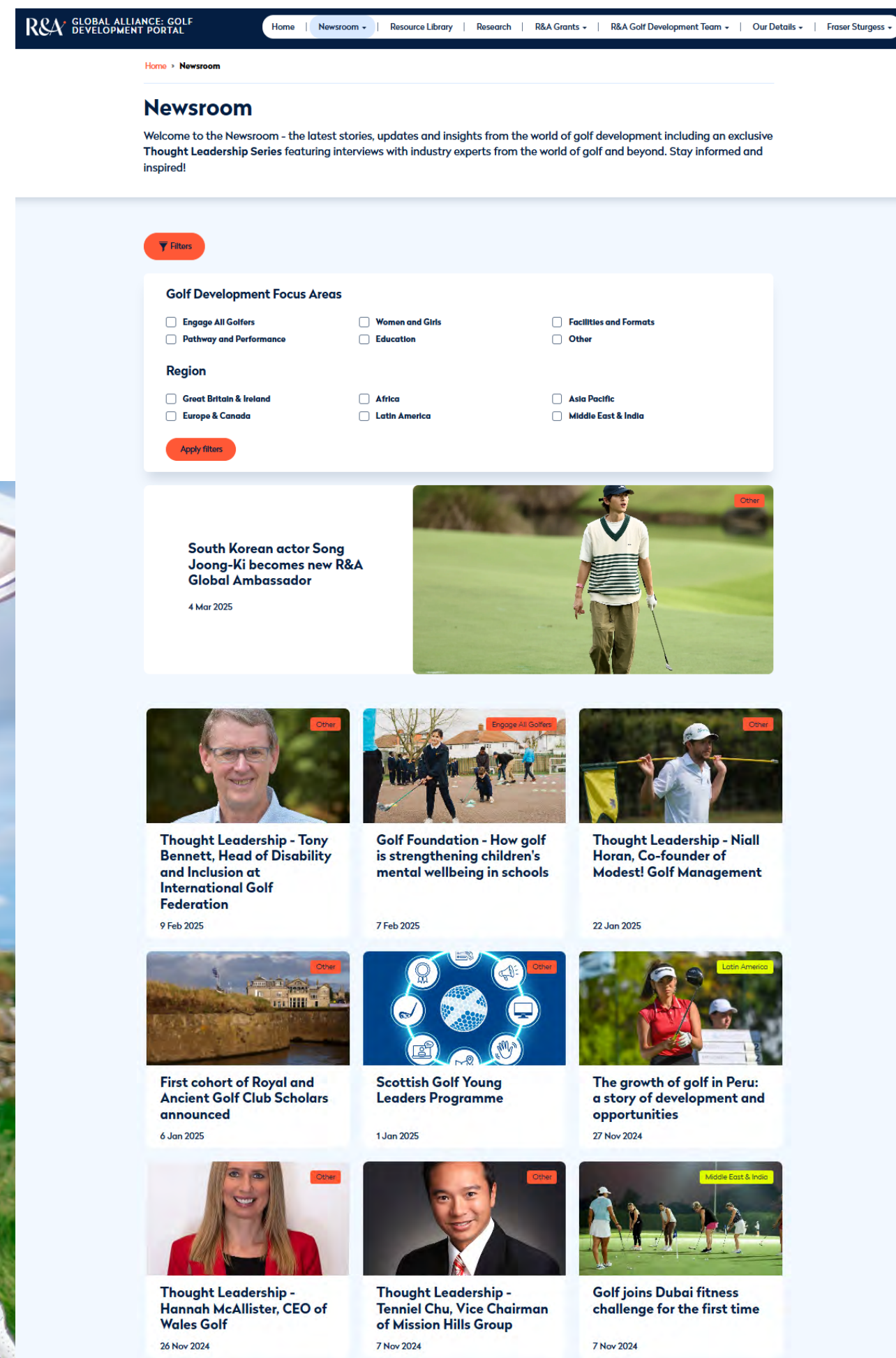
Yes, most resources, research and news stories provide contact details for affiliates to follow up and learn more. Alternatively, affiliates can reach out to their R&A regional director or manager, whose details can be found in the 'R&A Golf Development Team' directory in the portal's navigation bar. The portal also allows users to leave comments and engage in discussions, fostering meaningful conversations. Ultimately, we strive to make the portal a truly collaborative space where affiliates can ask questions, connect, share knowledge and leverage R&A regional teams to drive growth.

What plans are in place to further develop the portal?

We have ambitious plans to continuously innovate and enhance the portal, ensuring it remains a dynamic and evolving resource rather than a static one. Our goal is to provide long-term value to affiliate users by keeping the platform relevant and engaging. This includes staying up to date with the latest news, projects and developments in golf and sharing them with our users. Additionally, we plan to release regular newsletters to keep users informed about upcoming portal updates and the latest resources.

**- David Gallichio, General Manager –
Golf Participation, Golf Australia**

**- Tracy Bunyan, Chief Operations Officer,
Golf Ireland**



The Golf is Good campaign has been changing perceptions around the sport in Dubai through a host of initiatives focussing on the themes of education, awareness and participation.

Despite providing the stage for a number of high-profile events and being home to world-class facilities, some in the UAE still don't regard golf as a sport, or at least not one they envisage participating in.

As such, golf had long been overlooked in major activation and awareness programmes such as the Dubai Fitness Challenge. Furthermore, there had been a lack of understanding of the health benefits of golf in a region where physical inactivity has led to high rates of type 2 diabetes.

With no prior collaborative campaigns or initiatives having been undertaken, Neal Graham – The R&A's Development Manager for the Middle East, Central Asia and India – saw an opportunity for Golf is Good to make its mark.

With a view to elevating golf as a participation sport, the campaign set out to establish awareness and create initiatives for new and existing golfers by partnering with key stakeholders, as well as educating policy makers on the benefits.

"The Golf is Good campaign has enjoyed huge success in a number of countries," said Graham. "Working with the Emirates Golf Foundation, we saw an opportunity to bring the campaign to the UAE. We wanted to base it on three themes: education, awareness and participation.

"We need to break down the perception held by some that golf is not a sport, and with the established data we have on the health benefits, we can educate people and raise that level of awareness.

Golf is Good – Dubai.



Neal Graham, R&A Development Manager for the Middle East, Central Asia and India, discusses the impact the global participation project is having in Dubai



**“ The Golf is
Good campaign
has enjoyed huge
success ”**



Hero Dubai Desert Classic – Step Fore It Challenge

This year's Hero Dubai Desert Classic celebrated the wide-reaching health and wellness benefits of golf for both spectators and players with the launch of Step Fore It.

The initiative challenged tournament visitors to rack up as many steps as possible throughout the event – with prizes for those topping the leaderboard.

Research shows that golf spectators average over 11,500 steps per day at events, offering a unique combination of physical activity, outdoor enjoyment and social interaction.

Each year, over 10 million people attend golf tournaments, collectively walking millions of steps. At The 152nd Open, over 168 million steps were taken by spectators across Royal Troon, while at events like the Schengen Open, spectators walked the equivalent of the Great Wall of China, and Ryder Cup fans covered four times the globe's circumference.

Step Fore It was conceptualised by the Hero Dubai Desert Classic as part of the Golf Is Good campaign, supported by the Emirates Golf Federation.

"It's also about educating policy makers and bringing them on board to help spread the message and encourage people to be more active, with golf providing a great way to engage in physical activity."

Graham recognised that to deliver the message in the most compelling fashion, it would be necessary for people to experience the sport for themselves.

Through direct participation, they could truly understand the benefits that playing golf brings, which is where the Dubai Fitness Challenge came to the fore.

The annual, month-long event challenges participants to complete 30 minutes of exercise daily for 30 days. Since its inception in 2017, it has motivated millions to embrace healthier lifestyles, providing an array of city-wide events, free workouts, exciting tournaments and wellness opportunities.

Golf had not been part of the event's extensive list of activities in the first seven editions, but Graham set out to change that. Following discussions with the Department of Economy and Tourism, which runs the event, golf was included for the first time in 2024.

"This was the first time golf came together to be recognised alongside sports with much higher levels of participation, like cycling, swimming, running, yoga and Pilates," he said.

"I reached out to all the clubs and we had nine off-course and on-course venues involved. There were 135 free activations. People could register via the official website for the challenge or go directly to the venues who were supporting it and take part in sessions.

"These included lessons, strength and conditioning sessions, simulator time, community walks and range access."

Other initiatives, such as a Golf Sixes Mini League tournament during the DP World Tour Championship – which coincided with the Dubai Fitness Challenge – and the Unleash Your Drive in Schools Programme, helped to drive even greater engagement and provided a catalyst for boosting participation among young people.

"As a result of the Dubai Fitness Challenge and the other elements encompassed within the Golf is Good campaign, we gained TV and radio exposure and reached a huge number of people," added Graham. "Over 1,000 people took part in the free activations for the month across the nine venues, and we're working with the government to continue this positive momentum and find more ways to promote the health benefits of golf participation." ●

Post-campaign findings:

89%
agreed it was successful in getting the health message across

73%
of current on-course golfers likely to play more golf because of the campaign

66%
of non-golfers likely to consider playing golf because of the health benefits

50%
of lapsed golfers likely to consider returning to the sport because of the health benefits

“Over 1,000 people took part in the free activations”



About Golf is Good

Piloted in Wales in 2022 with the involvement of R&A Global Golf Development Ambassador Gareth Bale, Golf is Good is a participation project using cutting-edge animation to illustrate the health and wellbeing benefits of the sport. Through the medium of creative storytelling, the campaign emphasises golf's proven ability to improve physical fitness, stimulate mental wellbeing and encourage social interaction.





The incredible growth of Australian golf.

Case Study

The data shows record-breaking numbers of participants and the continued growth of club membership

Golf in Australia continues to flourish after the latest figures showed a fifth consecutive year of club membership growth, a record number of adult players and a substantial jump in junior participation.

Golf Australia's annual participation report for 2023-24 highlighted a 9% rise in adults playing golf, taking the total to 3.8 million.

That means nearly one in five of the country's adult population engaged with golf in one format or another, from traditional courses to driving ranges, simulators and minigolf.

There was similarly impressive data relating to club membership, which jumped by 5.6% to hit 459,143, marking a 19% growth over the past five years.

James Sutherland, CEO of Golf Australia, cited the evolving nature of the sport as one of the primary drivers behind its increasing popularity.

"Golf is one of Australia's biggest participation sports," he said. "With unprecedented participation growth over the last five years, our sport continues to evolve with new formats and entertainment options that provide new

opportunities to welcome people to the game. Golf has never been more fun and accessible and truly is a sport for all.

"We've seen a 19% growth in golf members across Australia the past five years, but the figures tell us that members are only a fraction of those who are picking up a golf club.

"While traditional on-course play remains



“ Golf has never been more fun and accessible ”

strong, the numbers also reveal growth in off-course offerings like driving ranges, indoor golf and mini-golf. This reflects golf's increasingly broad appeal and the impact the Australian Golf Strategy is having in inspiring more Australians to play more golf."

Junior membership enjoyed a massive 33.4% boost, underpinned by a 37.3% increase among boys and a 13.8% increase among girls.

Membership among women and girls rose by 3.2%, supported by initiatives like The R&A Women in Golf Charter and the Australian Golf Foundation's Junior Girls Scholarship programme, the latter seeing a 22.7% growth.

Participation in Golf Australia's MyGolf, the national junior introductory programme, grew by 10.7% to reach 33,643 participants, while the

Get Into Golf entry level programme for adult beginners saw a 21.2% increase, with 86.8% being female.

Sutherland lauded the efforts of all those working and volunteering in the industry for supporting the continued growth of the sport.

"It would not be possible without the dedication and support of club and facility management and staff, PGA professionals, greenkeepers, volunteers, retail employees and others across the Australian golf industry," he said.

"It is important not to overlook the thousands of volunteers that work across clubs, facilities, events and other golf activities. We acknowledge their contribution to this impressive growth and thank them for their passion and ongoing commitment to our sport." ●

Golf in Australia in 2023-24

19%

of adult Australians played golf in some format

33.4%

increase in junior membership

5.6%

increase in golf club membership

3.2%

increase in women and girls membership

22.7%

increase in Junior Girls Scholarship programme participants

10.7%

increase in MyGolf participants

21.2%

increase in Get Into Golf participants

She Plays Golf.

Case Study

The initiative from Golf Canada is bolstering participation pathways for women and girls from the entry level to the elite game

Golf Canada's She Plays Golf initiative has introduced hundreds of women and girls to the sport in a safe and inclusive environment, while also strengthening the development pathways for the country's high-performing players.

First piloted in Calgary in 2023, the programme consists of two primary components – a Championship Series focussing on those women who aspire to compete at the highest level and She Plays Golf festivals, which address the entry level of the participation pathway.

Having expanded in scale and reach during 2024, with additional festivals and championships across the Greater Vancouver

and Greater Toronto Area, the initiative has now engaged over 800 women from coast to coast.



Laura Wilson, Director of Inclusion Programmes and Safe Sport at Golf Canada, leads on the festival activations, while she credits High Performance Director Emily Phoenix and Director of Amateur Championships Mary Beth McKenna for spearheading efforts on the Championship Series.

"The festivals are a week of activations that really focus on that first involvement," said Wilson. "It's about establishing a development





“Once we get women to the course, how do we keep them there?”

Women in Golf Leadership luncheon

Another event to emerge as part of the vibrant She Plays Golf ecosystem is the Women in Golf Leadership luncheon.

Featuring a wide cross-section of women in a variety of roles across the industry, the primary purpose is to create an opportunity for networking and the sharing of ideas, drawing on their considerable collective expertise.

The first edition set the standard, operating like a "working lunch" as attendees, ranging from PGA pros and club managers to provincial association board members and women who run their own leagues, fielded questions and offered their insights.

"It provided a platform to encourage conversations and foster creative solutions for women working in the golf industry," said Wilson. "A measure of the success of that event is that we had three women step up who wanted to keep that group going in Alberta. We communicate with them regularly and they send out information to that network of women."

"Our goal is to create a network like that in all of our provinces and eventually have a national group of women working in the golf industry who we can turn to for feedback, support and to tap into their expertise."

pathway for women and introducing them to golf in a fun and welcoming way."

Players can experience the Try Golf activation, rotating through a series of stations covering areas such as putting and chipping. Wilson noted the importance of having women lead these activations in service of creating the safe environment the festivals promise.

"We have women leaders leading the programme," she said. "We found that golf facilities who don't have a woman coach on staff, or PGA pro on staff, are quite willing to step aside and let us bring in women professionals to lead the session."

"We feel it's very important to have women leaders, and we have incredible volunteers in those sessions. We reached out to existing women's leagues looking for volunteers and we found that, because they are golfers, they want women to fall in love with the sport too, and they ended up being our greatest ambassadors for the programme."

"We have volunteers stationed out in the parking lot to create that safe, welcoming space right from the minute women pulled in."

The whole environment proved to be so inspiring to the women taking part that many were keen to pursue golf further.

Wilson explained, "We found that women were very excited about the experience and they were connecting with each other, saying, 'Do you want to come back here next week?', and the volunteers were stepping in, saying, 'You know, I'm happy to join you every Tuesday, we can meet back here at the range'."

"Women were creating these groups and communities organically, which was so inspiring for us to see that take place without it being prescriptive."

The format for the juniors is the same, but Golf Canada has integrated community partners into the event who align with the organisation's mission to prioritise sport and physical activity for young girls.

"We've had community groups like Girls in Sport Alberta or Fast and Female joining, and we set them up as a station," said Wilson. "At that station it is more of a conversation, talking about the importance of staying in sport and being physically active."

"The focus is on trying to keep girls in sport as they get older."

For 2025, Golf Canada is looking to expand the Try Golf component, with clubs and facilities from across the country invited to apply to host an event. However, Wilson pointed out that it is key for facilities to demonstrate a commitment to creating an inclusive, ongoing pathway for women to continue participating in golf beyond the initial event.

"We have a toolkit that we will give them complete with video links," she said. "It really standardises what the Try Golf experience should look like, because everyone's definition of a welcoming environment can vary."

"For any facilities that apply to host a Try Golf clinic, there are questions for them to address – do you have women professionals on staff to lead? Would you be willing to allow a woman to come in to lead the programme? And, crucially,

In numbers

The 2024 She Plays Golf festival and Championship Series took place in Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario with three week-long festivals anchored by a professional championship in each region.

23

events at 18 golf facilities

800+

women and girls engaged

585

festival participants – women and girls new to golf

89

women coaches and volunteers

170

competitors in the Championship Series

6

exemptions into the CPKC Women's Open



The Championship Series

The She Plays Golf Championship series consists of three enhanced \$60,000 54-hole events – the Peloton Glencoe Invitational, GOLFBC Group BC Women's Open and Ororo PGA Women's Championship of Canada. The top two finishers in each event qualify for the CPKC Women's Open at Earl Grey Golf Club in Calgary.

Wilson on her role

"My role involves working with marginalised communities, traditionally underrepresented groups in our sport, and trying to increase representation of equity-deserving groups in golf. Safe sport is also in my portfolio and it's certainly a priority here in Canada. I don't think people realise how closely aligned safe sport is with inclusion, because if you don't create those inclusive, welcoming, fun environments, then it's difficult for people to feel safe in the sport."

“ Women were creating these groups and communities organically ”

what programming do you have available for participants to engage in next?

"We really are trying to be aware of the importance of having that next piece; once we get women to the course, how do we keep them there?"

That key question provided the impetus for Golf Canada's on-course transition events, aimed at helping women feel comfortable on the golf course by introducing them to different formats, etiquette and rules in a supportive environment.

"We found that some women had been to a driving range or maybe played miniature golf at a putting course but had never really played golf on course," said Wilson. "We had one event called

Learn to Scramble, where we introduced the women to the scramble format.

"We had volunteers stationed at every tee box and every volunteer was given one rule which they would introduce to the women, or one piece of etiquette, and they would also help with club selection and navigating around the course.

"The other on-course event that we ran was called Golf 101, and that was for women who may have played golf one or two times but really didn't find that it was a sport for them.

"We had an experienced golfer walking with them offering tips, answering questions, clearing up any rules issues. It was about giving them the knowledge and tools to understand the game and feel more comfortable on the course."

She Plays Golf is set to continue its growth this year with a festival in Atlantic Canada. The goal is to make the festival model portable and adaptable, such that it could be attached to any event celebrating women and girls. Wilson hopes the success of the initiative will inspire others to follow suit.

"There are a lot of golf federations that are looking to address the barriers that women face in golf, and I think they are common barriers," she said.

"I hope that we've come up with something that can be utilised by other federations to help them in their pursuit of overcoming those barriers as well." ●



£1m boost for women's golf in Wales ahead of the AIG Women's Open.

Royal Porthcawl will host the first AIG Women's Open to be played in Wales

Case Study

“A really exciting time for our golf clubs”

Golf in Wales is to receive a £1 million boost from the Welsh Government to help cement a lasting legacy from the largest female sporting event ever to be held in the country.

The investment will support the Women's Golf Legacy Fund, which aims to create long-lasting change by addressing barriers faced by women and girls in golf.

The initiative will provide grants to golf clubs for projects across Wales, focusing on developing inclusive, family-friendly and gender-equal facilities.

Going the extra mile

The AIG Women's Open will be held at Royal Porthcawl from 30 July – 3 August and will be the first time the Championship has been played in Wales.

The funding reflects the Welsh Government's commitment to using major events to inspire change.

Wales Golf CEO Hannah McAllister said, "Having the AIG Women's Open played in Wales is a really exciting time for our golf clubs.

"Thanks to the support of the Welsh Government, we can help boost the provision for women and girls in golf through improved facilities which can stand the test of time."

McAllister continued, "While we continue to deliver a wide range of services and initiatives in support of our strategy, 'Everyone's Game: for fun, for sport, for life', we feel this investment will allow us to go the extra mile in terms of increasing the participation of women and girls in golf, whether as players or as part of the workforce.

"Our joint hope is that the AIG Women's Open, the largest female sporting event ever held in Wales, can have a similar long-term impact to the Ryder Cup in 2010."

Breaking down barriers

The AIG Women's Open is the showpiece for The R&A's commitment to growing women and girls' golf via its Women in Golf Charter.

Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer at The R&A, said, "We believe that providing opportunities for women and girls to play golf in a welcoming and inclusive environment, where they feel comfortable and have facilities designed for their needs, will help to break down barriers to participation and enhance their enjoyment of the sport.

"We would like to applaud the Welsh

Government and Wales Golf for developing this initiative which reflects the values of The R&A Women in Golf Charter, and we look forward to seeing the positive benefits generated by this substantial investment."

Inspiring participation

Speaking as the Government announced the funding, Jack Sargeant, Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, said, "2025 promises to be a huge year for women's sport in Wales, and I'm really keen to ensure that Welsh Government and partners use the spotlight on elite athletes as a springboard to make a real and lasting difference to the opportunities and experiences available to women and girls at every level across Wales.

"The support we are announcing will help ensure Wales derives maximum benefit from hosting the AIG Women's Open at Royal Porthcawl Golf Club later this year – not only in welcoming thousands of golf fans from across the world to Wales but importantly in harnessing the ever-increasing profile of women's golf into something that can inspire and drive others to participate."

Everyone's game

By improving facilities and creating a welcoming environment, the Women's Golf Legacy Fund also supports Wales Golf's vision of making golf 'Everyone's Game'.

In order to access the funding, clubs will need to be signed up to The R&A's Women in Golf Charter, be affiliated to Wales Golf and

“This investment will allow us to go the extra mile”

participate in the New2Golf Beginner Golf Initiative, or similar introductory golf sessions aimed at targeting underrepresented groups, in 2025.

Eligible projects include on-course toilet facilities, highlighted as a key barrier for women golfers in surveys, as well as upgrades to women's changing rooms, family-friendly spaces, unisex changing facilities and improved disabled access.

Other projects that could be considered are family seating areas near to coaching facilities, promotion of the Welsh language, improved greenkeeper facilities to attract more females into greenkeeping, or any other innovative projects aimed at recruiting and retaining women and girls, as well as increasing participation in golf among as diverse an audience as possible while also helping meet the needs of existing players. ●



R&A



Contents 

