

# Annual Review.

## 2019/20



R&A



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## Foreword

This foreword comes with the overriding hope that those connected with our sport in whatever capacity remain safe and well, despite the pandemic which has caused such great human tragedy and economic disaster for so many.



Golf courses in many countries have been closed during the last year and the lockdowns that have been put in place affect the people of all those nations, whose safety is now dependent on the successful roll-out of life saving vaccinations, however long that may take. Without question, this has been a time of great challenge for the whole world.

Our own sport was significantly impacted in 2020 by the cancellation of The 149th Open, due to be played at Royal St George's last July. Hugely disappointing as it was, this was the correct decision for the Championship itself, our sport and the UK. We look forward to July of this year, when Champion Golfer Shane Lowry will defend the Claret Jug he so memorably won at Royal Portrush in 2019.

The impact of the pandemic on golf in many countries represented by The R&A's Affiliates has been profound and we established a fund of £7m to help offset its damaging effects. These funds have been very greatly welcomed by recipients.

Our own 2020 highlight was undoubtedly The AIG Women's Open - the most important championship held (for men or women) last year outside the United States of America. Royal Troon

hosted this and produced a 'fairy-tale' winner in Germany's Sophia Popov, who belied her world ranking of 307 to win impressively with a score of 277. In the process, she made many friends, who learned of her successful struggle to overcoming adversity - the hallmark of a true champion.

The pandemic resulted in either cancellation or postponement of all major amateur golf (including international matches) apart from The Women's Amateur Championship and The Amateur Championship. Both events were played - like The AIG Women's Open - with no spectators present. Aline Krauter, also from Germany and England's Joe Long emerged as champions respectively at West Lancashire and Royal Birkdale and will this year enjoy the exemptions which come with their impressive victories

Although we ran a limited amount of elite competitive golf last year, The R&A's governance responsibilities continued as usual. We welcomed the gradual but consistent roll out of the World Handicap System, which has been well received internationally. Although our work on the vitally important Distance Insights Project was put on hold following the first onset of the pandemic, this has now resumed.

It remains to be seen how the infrastructure of our sport will recover from the impact of economic damage wrought by the pandemic as hopefully the virus eventually recedes, both in the UK and beyond. However, as we look forward, one challenge for us all is to capitalise on the surge in interest in golf during 2020. This resulted in great increases in the number of rounds played, golf being recognised as a sport that could be played safely under slightly modified rules throughout most of the pandemic.

One of our own initiatives is the launch of #FOREeveryone, a toolkit and resource available to Golf Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland to both attract and retain more women and girls in the sport. This project is supported by the Home Unions as well as The PGA and other bodies.

We at The R&A are certainly looking forward greatly to this year and will continue to do all we can, working with our various global partners, to develop and improve our sport at this important time.

**Ian Pattinson**  
Chairman, The R&A

# Chief Executive's Review

Sadly, the last year has in many ways been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sport rightly took a back seat to looking after the health and wellbeing of our families and loved ones. That has been the absolute priority for all of us but in a business sense we were obliged to take some extremely difficult decisions on the staging of our professional and amateur championships last year.

Since last March, our focus has been on ensuring that we do all that we can to help support everyone involved in golf, from those working in the sport to the millions of people who play around the world.

We have undertaken important work with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Golf and other golf bodies in the UK to co-ordinate the safe playing of golf with the government and devolved administrations and to provide golf clubs and facilities with important guidance on operations and resuming play safely. This has also included temporary measures for applying the Rules of Golf recreationally and in competition.

As a result, we were able to lay important foundations for golf's response to the pandemic when measures were lifted in Spring last year and this has since enabled many people to enjoy the sport's physical and mental health benefits during a time when a real premium has been placed on individual wellbeing.

We also worked in close collaboration with our health advisers, partners and government officials to be able to stage the AIG Women's Open and our men's and women's amateur championships safely. The AIG Women's Open was a real boost for women's professional golf when playing opportunities had been significantly curtailed and was the first major women's championship to be played anywhere in the world last year.

While all of us involved in administering golf fully recognise the extent of the challenge we have been presented with, it is also important not to lose sight of the progress made throughout the last 18 months and to look at the positive outcomes that were achieved.

The publication of the Distance Insights Report is highly significant for golf and provides comprehensive research and analysis on the contributors to, and long-term impacts of, hitting distance. The report demonstrates that increases in hitting distance have affected some of the essential elements of playing golf, including changing the strategic challenge of the sport, altering the balance of skills needed to be successful and risking courses becoming less challenging or potentially obsolete.

We have committed to working in collaboration with the key stakeholders in golf to address this issue and assess potential solutions that can help end the cycle of increased distance in a way that brings the entire sport together. We are working closely with the USGA throughout this process to help ensure that golf remains sustainable and enjoyable for generations to come.

The introduction of the new World Handicap System last year was another important step towards modernising the sport and meeting the needs of today's golfer. Our hope is that its launch will be a catalyst for change and will embrace all golfers whatever their level of ability, while broadening the sport's appeal to new audiences. As with the new Rules of Golf, we will see a period of adjustment but once the new system beds-in we will see golfers and golf clubs benefit in many ways.

We knew that The Open's return to Northern Ireland for the first time since 1951 was going to be a truly special occasion but I do not think anyone could have been prepared for the energy, noise, laughter, celebration, emotion and passion for golf that came from the record 237,750 fans who watched home favourite Shane Lowry lift the Claret Jug at Royal Portrush. It was equal to any sporting event I have seen.

The government and local agencies in Northern Ireland contributed significantly to its success and I thank those organisations for their support and involvement in staging the biggest sporting event the country has ever seen.

The Open continues to have a substantial impact on the economy of the host region in which it is played each year and, in 2019, over £100 million in economic benefit was provided to Northern Ireland as a result of staging the Championship. We also recognise the importance of the relationships we have with the local communities and businesses near to the venues and we invested £100,000 in legacy projects which will positively enhance the local communities in Portrush.

Our partnership with AIG is continuing to provide benefits for women's golf. In 2019, we made a significant increase in the prize money available for the competing golfers in the AIG Women's British Open in recognition of the Championship's importance to women's golf, while last year a new brand was launched to signify our intention to elevate the Championship around the world and it will now be known as the AIG Women's Open. Five world-class venues have also been announced as hosts of the AIG Women's Open to 2025, demonstrating our commitment to raising the profile of the Championship.

We have enjoyed a remarkable two years in which Hinako Shibuno and Sophia Popov became first-time Major champions in extraordinary circumstances – Shibuno in her first appearance outside of Japan and Popov in having overcome adversity to lift the title.

At the heart of The R&A's Women in Golf Charter is a desire to inspire more women and girls to follow their dreams and aspirations to reach the highest levels of golf. Our agreement with the European Tour to jointly support a new LPGA-LET partnership is fully consistent with these aims and we look forward to working with them on this important venture to build a strong and sustainable Ladies European Tour that includes more opportunities for women and girls to pursue their ambitions here in Europe.

We continue to pursue ways in which we can grow the sport for women and girls, as it is fundamental to its success now and in the future. Last year, we launched #FOREeveryone as part of a cohesive



drive to create a more inclusive culture, nurturing greater female participation and encouraging more women into roles within the golf industry. In providing more support to clubs and facilities to attract and retain more females into the sport, we hope that #FOREeveryone can inspire tangible change and provide a supporting mechanism for clubs well into the future.

We also look forward to staging a new elite amateur championship for women in Latin America in partnership with the ANNIKA Foundation. The Women's Amateur Latin America championship will provide a vital pathway for the region's aspiring female golfers to reach their full potential and compete in a world-class environment.

Our Women in Golf Leadership Development Programme encourages

more women to seek careers within the golf industry. It will continue to support the development and progression of women who have the potential to become future leaders within the golf industry, which is vital to improving gender balance at the senior levels of organisations operating in the sport.

We believe that golf should be open to everyone regardless of race, gender or background. We have introduced a range of initiatives to help modernise golf and make it more accessible, appealing and inclusive for the modern society we live in. We know that golf has a lot of work to do to make it more appealing, which we believe is vital for ensuring that it continues to be enjoyed not only today but by future generations.

Sustainability is an important area of work for the organisation. We were delighted to launch The Open Water Project at Royal Portrush and the removal of all single-use plastic water bottles from the venue is an important step towards our aim of significantly reducing the environmental impact of staging the Championship. We also funded several organisations to carry out vital research into the sustainability issues affecting golf to assist in providing insights and best practice that can be shared with the industry.

**Martin Slumbers**  
Chief Executive, The R&A

# COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all areas of society, including sport, and the organisation's work in 2020 has been affected in many different ways. Difficult but necessary decisions were made across the entire organisation's activities, meaning that it has had to adapt and be flexible to deal with the many implications for golf which have been created by the pandemic.

## COVID-19 Fund

A £7 million funding package was created by the organisation to support the sport in mitigating the impacts of the pandemic, including temporary course closures and drastic reduction in domestic and international travel.

The fund was largely aimed at national federations and other affiliated bodies in Great Britain and Ireland, who will administer the allocation of money to support clubs and facilities in these countries, while around £2 million of the total was also awarded to affiliated national federations in countries around the world.

## Safe resumption of playing golf

The R&A, in collaboration with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Golf, led a working group of UK golf bodies in coordinating the safe resumption of golf in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales with the UK government and devolved administrations.

The group provided golf clubs and facilities with important guidance on operations and resuming play safely in these countries while greenkeepers were provided with Essential Maintenance Guidelines to help them prepare their courses for play.

Golfers were also advised about temporary modifications to the Rules and behaviours to be adopted to ensure golf is played safely during the pandemic.

## The Open for The Ages

The R&A invited golf fans around the world to take part in a very special celebration of golf's original championship following the cancellation of The 149th Open last year.

The Open for The Ages brought together many of golf's greatest champions for the first time to compete against each other over the Old Course at St Andrews in a compelling and innovative three-hour broadcast production.

This exclusive edition of The Open featured 50 years of archive footage expertly edited and woven together with modern graphics and new commentary to imagine a Championship contested by the legends of the sport including Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, Seve Ballesteros, Tom Watson, Sir Nick Faldo and Rory McIlroy.

The Open for The Ages was broadcast in a final round programme that aired on Sunday 19 July globally to fans around the world on TV, TheOpen.com and The Open's social media channels. It was supported by HSBC and NTT DATA, both Patrons of The Open.

The R&A has since won many industry awards in recognition of the pioneering concept.

## Promotional campaigns

A series of informative and entertaining social media campaigns were run to provide golfers with alternative means to enjoy golf during the period when lockdown measures were in place to mitigate the pandemic.

#GolfAtHome delivered creative content across The R&A's social media channels, covering fitness, nutrition, Rules, tips and trick shots to help keep golfers active, informed and amused. R&A Ambassador Georgia Hall also provided her very own #GolfAtHome series of tips and advice for budding golfers.

#RulesFromTheGarden with Grant Moir, Director of Rules at The R&A, proved a hit with golfers looking to brush up on their knowledge of the sport's regulations. A number of Rules situations were explained using props and objects from Grant's front garden to help golfers understand how to apply the Rules correctly in these circumstances.

The Open official films and episodes of Chronicles of a Champion Golfer were provided free to fans of the championship throughout the lockdown period, while a new podcast, 'The Open Conversation' was launched to enable fans to get up close and listen to their favourite golfers including Open champions Tom Watson, Pádraig Harrington, Shane Lowry, Louis Oosthuizen, Francesco Molinari and Mark Calcavecchia.

# 2019 Financial Summary

## Overview

The R&A is aiming to invest £200 million into golf over a ten-year period including its golf development activities, governance of the sport and staging world class championships.

This investment is largely supported by the proceeds of The Open. The 148th Open at Royal Portrush was a successful championship from a commercial point of view thanks to an increase in income generated by the sale of media rights to broadcasters in a number of key territories, sponsorship and commercial activities.

The proceeds generated by The Open enabled the organisation to invest £19.1 million into the sport in 2019, bringing the total investment made to £50.4 million since the current business strategy was initiated in 2017.

During 2019, The R&A provided grants totalling £3.0 million to various projects and initiatives, as well as charitable

donations to The R&A Foundation of £5.9 million to support the charity's work in developing the sport.

Significant investment was also made in enhancing the staging of world-class amateur championships in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as Asia, including The Walker Cup and the Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship.

Funding was provided for the development and launch of the World Handicap System, as well as the organisation's work with the USGA on the Distance Insights project.

After all costs, the organisation generated a profit of £18.1 million in the year to 31 December 2019. This profit included an upwards fair value adjustment of £11.4 million to the group's investment portfolio. The R&A's balance sheet at the end of 2019 was strong, with net assets of £148 million.

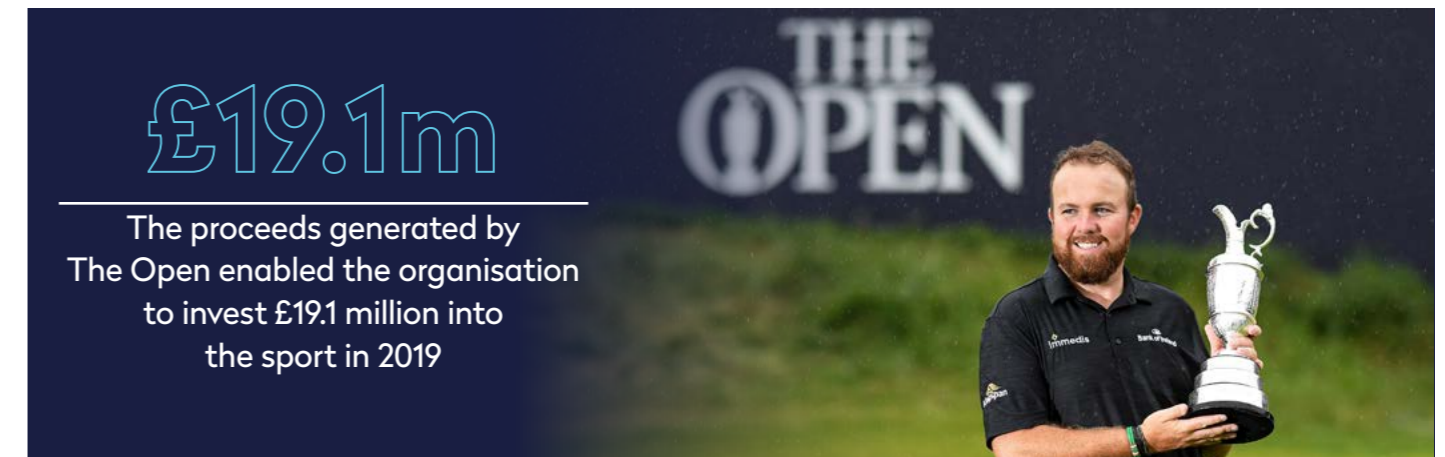
## Group Financial Results

The parent company of The R&A's Group of Companies is R&A Trust Company (No. 1 Limited). The consolidated financial results for the group are recorded in this entity. The figures set out below are not the statutory accounts but a summary of information extracted from the group's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019.

The R&A's primary charitable entity is The R&A Foundation. The R&A Foundation prepares standalone financial statements which do not form part of the consolidated financial results of The R&A Group of Companies. The R&A Foundation is a registered Scottish charity.

# £18.1m

After all costs, the organisation generated a profit of £18.1 million in the year to 31 December 2019



# 2020 Financial Summary

The R&A's financial results for the year ended 31 December 2020 are scheduled to be published in the summer of 2021. Those financial results for 2020 will be included in the next edition of the Annual Review.

The R&A's championships in 2020 were significantly impacted by the pandemic and the commercial aspects of those championships were also affected. However, the group had invested in an extensive programme of insurance which has helped to mitigate to a large extent

the financial impact of the pandemic on our championships and the business more widely during 2020. The R&A therefore remains in a strong financial position at the end of 2020 and well positioned to continue its role in the development of golf around the world.

## 2019 Financial Highlights

# £108 million

The group's turnover exceeded £100 million for the first time in its history.

### £3m

The group made direct golf development grants of £3 million, up from £1.2 million made in 2018

### £121m

The market value of the group's investment portfolio grew to £121 million from £103 million last year

### £13.5m

The group's operating profits increased by 12% on the previous year to £13.5 million

### £5.9m

The group made charitable donations of £5.9 million to The R&A Foundation in support of its charitable activities, up from £5.6 million made in 2018

### £148m

The group's net assets increased to £148 million from £129 million in the previous year

## Summary of 2019 Financial Results

The financial results for R&A Trust Company (No. 1) Limited for the year ended 31 December 2019 are summarised as follows:

### Group Income Statement

	31.12.2019 £000's	31.12.2018 £000's
Turnover	107,978	99,196
Cost of sales	(66,982)	(63,294)
Gross profit	40,996	35,902
Administration expenses	(24,526)	(22,603)
Grants payable	(2,963)	(1,195)
Operating profit	13,507	12,104
Charitable donation	(5,863)	(5,607)
Investment gains/(losses)	13,635	(2,665)
Net interest income	610	457
Profit before tax	21,889	4,289

### Balance Sheet

	31.12.2019 £000's	31.12.2018 £000's
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	13,063	11,035
Intangible assets	671	456
Investments	121,049	102,894
Negative goodwill	(602)	(633)
Loans recoverable	5,037	5,360
Sub-total	139,218	119,112
<b>Current assets</b>		
Stocks	365	337
Debtors	29,963	30,065
Currency hedge assets	8,498	15,536
Cash and short term deposits	27,051	21,857
Creditors falling due within one year	(50,243)	(45,918)
Net current assets	15,634	21,877
Creditors falling due after one year	(6,662)	(11,052)
Pension asset/(liability)	-	(538)
Net assets	148,190	129,399
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Called up share capital	5,000	5,000
Currency hedge reserve	-	(107)
Profit and loss reserves	143,190	124,506
Net assets	148,190	129,399

# Our Investment in Golf

In 2019, The R&A invested £19.1 million into golf. Since launching The R&A Playbook in 2017, the cumulative investment in the sport by the end of 2019 was £50.4 million, which includes £20.6 million in golf development, £16.4 million in governance of the sport, £8.8 million in staging world class amateur championships and £4.6 million in supporting other golf activities.

## 2019 Investment Highlights

# £8.5 million

made in grants to support golf development around the world:

### Golf Development



# £1.7m

provided to national associations affiliated to The R&A



# £1.2m

in support of Women in Golf initiatives



# £1m

in support of the British Golf Museum



# £513k

in support of university golf, including student scholarships

# £884k

in support of championships and events, including junior golf



# £755k

in support of professional golf

# £500k

to The Golf Foundation



# £551k

on sustainability projects



# £122k

on greenkeeping scholarships

### Governance

# £5.2m

£5.2 million invested in governance of the sport including Rules of Golf, Equipment Standards and the World Handicap System

### Amateur Championships

# £3.8m

£3.8 million invested in staging world class amateur championships including 16 championships for men, women, boys and girls



### Other activities

# £1.6m

£1.6m in supporting other projects, including the legacy funds which provide support to the local communities in which The Open is staged each year



## Governance

The R&A and USGA issued the Distance Insights Report in February last year, providing comprehensive research and analysis on the contributors to and long-term impacts of hitting distance in golf.

After extensive stakeholder research, the report featured more than 100 years of data, informed by a library of 56 supporting documents. It was accompanied by a 15-page conclusions paper from the governing bodies that summarised their perspectives on the potential implications for the sport.

The impact of long-term hitting distance increases on some of golf's essential elements are clear – including changing the strategic challenge of the sport, altering the balance of skills needed to be successful and risking courses being less challenging or obsolete.

The R&A and the USGA will work with the key stakeholders in golf to address this issue in a way that brings the sport together and which ensures it continues to thrive for many years to come. To encourage contributions from manufacturers and other stakeholders in the golf community, specific topics of further research will be identified and published.

This next stage of the process was delayed in March 2020 to allow the wider golf industry to focus on its response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on golf worldwide. The release of equipment research topics is now planned for the first quarter of 2021.

The 2019 Annual Driving Distance report, which examines driving distance on the major professional golf tours including the PGA TOUR, European Tour, Japan Golf Tour, Korn Ferry Tour, PGA TOUR Champions Tour, LPGA Tour and Ladies European Tour going back as far as data are available, was published last year. A comparison of these major professional tours, both men's and women's, indicates that the average driving distance on both the men's and women's tours has increased by approximately 2.6% from 2003 until the end of the 2019 season.

Golfers around the world are benefiting from the roll-out of the new World Handicap System (WHS) that was implemented worldwide throughout last year and provides them with a unified and more inclusive handicapping system. The introduction of the new system was the culmination of a collaborative project that started in 2011 and has been led by The R&A and the USGA with the support of the six existing handicapping authorities around the world.

The new system is more in tune with the way modern golf is played, will be more inclusive by embracing all golfers whatever their level of ability and is helping to broaden the sport's appeal to a much wider audience. The introduction of WHS will mean that golfers are given a consistent measure of playing ability, with handicaps calculated in the same way wherever they are in the world and enable more golfers to obtain and maintain a handicap.

The Rules of Amateur Status are being reviewed by The R&A and the USGA to make them easier to understand and apply. The comprehensive evaluation is part of the continued joint effort to modernise the Rules by reducing complexity and ensuring the Rules effectively guide how the sport is played today.

As part of a review process that began in 2019, the governing bodies will seek the perspectives of golf's stakeholders as an integral component of the review process, including elite amateur golfers, golf event organisers, national golf federations, professional golf associations and other industry partners. The aim is to provide the golf community with a modernised set of Amateur Status Rules in late 2021, with the goal of them taking effect on 1 January 2022.

Providing education for golfers, officials and administrators around the world has continued to be a strong focus since the introduction of the new Rules of Golf at the beginning of 2019. In the year after the launch, The R&A conducted three Level 3 Tournament Administrators and Referees Seminars in Asia and Europe,

while 107 Rules seminars were held by 34 different affiliates of which 64 were Level 1 seminars and 43 Level 2 seminars.

The organisation also continues to support golfers with both digital and printed versions of the new Rules of Golf. Over 2 million copies of the Player's Edition of the Rules of Golf have been produced while the Rules app for smartphones, which covers 15 languages, has been downloaded by more than 420,000 users worldwide.

The R&A's Rules Academy is an online resource available in multiple languages and provides educational materials for learning about the Rules and sitting the Level 1 exam. Over 13,000 users have registered with the Rules Academy, with the highest number of users coming from Australia, Canada and Great Britain and Ireland.

Last year, The R&A and USGA issued a set of temporary modifications to allow the safe resumption of golf during the COVID-19 pandemic. These related to scoring in stroke play, use of flagsticks, the hole and definition of holed, and use of bunkers. Guidance was also provided to administrators running competitions.

A video series featuring Grant Moir, Director of Rules at The R&A, was produced and published across the organisation's social media channels to provide a fun and entertaining take on learning the Rules of Golf during the lockdown period in 2020.

'Rules from the Garden' was distributed to audiences via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, while new episodes were filmed at the Old Course in St Andrews with Sky Sports presenter Nick Dougherty and the Championship Course at Carnoustie with George Harper Jnr once lockdown measures had been relaxed.

The videos proved a hit with golfers looking to brush up on their knowledge of the sport's regulations. A number of Rules situations were explained using props and objects from Grant's collection to help golfers understand how to apply the Rules correctly in these circumstances.

# Professional Championships

## The 148th Open

A new attendance record for a Championship outside of St Andrews was set when 237,750 fans flocked to Royal Portrush to see Ireland's Shane Lowry lift the famous Claret Jug after winning The 148th Open.

A key aim of The R&A is to attract a younger audience to the Championship and this attendance figure included 30,000 fans under the age of 25, of which 21,000 were children under the age of 16 who attended free of charge thanks to the long-running Kids Go Free initiative.

The Open Camping Village continued to prove a popular accommodation option for fans with more than 6,300 fans booking a place to stay at on site which was an increase on the 4,000 spectators who stayed at Carnoustie in 2018.

A survey conducted with fans who attended The 148th Open produced very positive results with improvements across several elements of the Championship. The Net Promoter Score, an indicator of customer satisfaction, was +82 and the overall satisfaction of The Open

scored an average of 9.2 out of a possible 10, demonstrating considerable improvements on previous years.

The Open generated more than £100 million of economic benefit according to an independent study commissioned by The R&A and supported by Tourism Northern Ireland and Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

This benefit included a total economic impact of £45 million according to the study by Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC). The SIRC study concluded that the Causeway Coast council area alone received a £26.2 million injection of new money from The Open.

Northern Ireland also gained £37.3 million in destination marketing benefit from over 5,400 hours of global television coverage. An additional £23.7 million was identified by Tourism Northern Ireland in Advertising Equivalent Value for Northern Ireland Golf Tourism monitored in other media coverage across the island of Ireland and internationally.

Ten community initiatives in Portrush shared in a £100,000 windfall from The Open Legacy Fund after being successful in applying for grants provided by The R&A. The funding was distributed to groups that work in the areas of social cohesion, environmental issues and health and well-being.

A new custom-built player facility was introduced for the first time at The 148th Open, providing significant improvements and enhancements to the experience for the competing golfers and their guests. A player survey conducted by The R&A showed that golfers rated The Open as 9.7/10 as an experience, while the player facility was rated 4.7/5, compared to 3.4/5 in 2018.

## The 149th Open

The R&A cancelled The 149th Open due to be played at Royal St George's from 12-19 July 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Championship will now be played at the famous Kent links in 2021. It was the first time since the Second World War that golf's original Championship, first played in 1860, was cancelled.

## 2019 AIG Women's British Open

An increase to the prize fund for the AIG Women's British Open was announced ahead of the 2019 championship, rising almost 40% to US \$4.5 million in recognition of the importance of the championship and women's golf.

The increase came in the first year of AIG's partnership as title sponsor and offered a first prize of \$675,000. It became the second highest prize fund of the five Major Championships in the women's game.

The championship at Woburn was won in fairy-tale fashion by Hinako Shibuno who won her maiden major title in her first competitive tournament outside of her native Japan. Around 65,000 fans attended throughout the week and nearly 1,500 broadcast hours were watched by 11.3 million TV viewers around the world.

## 2020 AIG Women's Open

Title sponsor AIG reaffirmed its commitment to women's golf by extending its support of the championship by two years to 2025,

while it was announced that it will now be known as the AIG Women's Open as part of a new brand launch.

The AIG Women's Open was able to go ahead without spectators at Royal Troon thanks to the vital work undertaken by The R&A with the UK and Scottish governments, its medical advisors and local agencies in South Ayrshire to create robust health and safety protocols around staging the championship.

The R&A also underlined its commitment to enhancing the AIG Women's Open's status as a leading major sporting event by announcing five world-class venues for championships being played from 2021 to 2025. Future championship venues were announced as Carnoustie, Muirfield, Walton Heath, St Andrews and Royal Porthcawl.

It was the first women's Major Championship to be played in 2020 and was broadcast globally to more than 11 million fans, who were captivated by the feats of Germany's Sophia Popov

as she claimed a magnificent first major title, holding off the challenge from many notable names.

The 27-year-old, who came into the championship ranked 304th in the world and without a main tour victory, secured the title after a stunning two-stroke success over the famous Ayrshire links to become the first German women's golfer to win a major championship.

## The Senior Open presented by Rolex

Bernhard Langer created history at the Senior Open presented by Rolex when he won the title for the fourth time at Royal Lytham & St Annes. The German pipped 2016 champion Paul Broadhurst by two strokes on the north-west coast of England to lift his 11th senior major.

The 2020 championship at Sunningdale was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will now be played there in 2021. It was announced that the 2022 championship will be played over the King's Course at Gleneagles.





# Amateur Golf

The R&A makes a significant investment in the staging of world class amateur championships for men and women and boys and girls each year to enable them to develop and excel to their full capabilities. Enhancing the profile of flagship amateur events is also a key aim for the organisation.

Over 11,000 fans attended the 43rd Walker Cup between Great Britain and Ireland and the United States of America at Royal Liverpool in September 2019, which was won 15½-10½ by the USA. A comprehensive digital content strategy to raise the profile of the match produced 1.3 million video views, 6.5 million impressions, a reach of 2.8 million and 680,000 engagements using website and social media channels.

In what was a significant year for championship golf in Ireland in 2019, The Amateur Championship was held at Portmarnock where over 3,000 fans

enjoyed watching home favourite James Sugrue defeat Euan Walker in the Final. The Women's Amateur Championship was played at iconic Royal County Down and was won by Emily Toy. Over 170,000 views of supporting video content were achieved while social media coverage reached over 400,000 users.

The 2020 season of championships and international matches in Great Britain and Ireland was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with The Amateur Championship going ahead at Royal Birkdale and the Women's Amateur Championship being played at West Lancashire.

The two championships were able to go ahead in late August thanks to the health and safety protocols introduced by The R&A and its medical advisors which ensured that the wellbeing of all competitors, officials and staff was protected.

Englishman Joe Long savoured success on home soil to win The 125th Amateur Championship, while Germany's Aline Krauter held her nerve to claim the biggest title of her career after winning the 117th Women's Amateur Championship.

The organisation continues to stage elite amateur championships in regions around the world with its partners in golf each year to help support the growth and development of the sport globally.

The 2019 Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship (AAC) was won by Lin Yuxin at Sheshan International Golf Club in Shanghai from a full field of 120 players from 41 Asia-Pacific nations and was broadcast to viewers in more than 160 countries worldwide. The 2020 championship was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the first time in the championship's history, the winner of the 2020 Latin America Amateur Championship was

awarded an exemption into The Open. Abel Gallegos became Argentina's first ever champion as he won by four strokes at Mayakoba's El Camaleón Golf Club in Mexico.

The second Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific was played at The Royal Golf Club in Japan in 2019 and was won by home favourite Yuka Yasuda. Eighty players from 19 countries in the region took place and the championship was broadcast to millions of TV viewers in countries around the world. The 2020 championship was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The R&A supports initiatives to grow and develop women's amateur golf around the world and has launched a new amateur event for women in Latin America in partnership with the ANNIKA Foundation. The Women's Amateur Latin America championship will provide many of the region's most talented women golfers with opportunities to compete in a world class environment. The inaugural championship will be played in 2021.

The World Amateur Golf Ranking® (WAGR®) is the definitive world ranking for elite amateur golfers around the world and is administered by The R&A and the USGA. In 2020, the men's ranking encompasses more than 2,800 counting events, ranking 6,777 players from 106 countries, while the women's ranking has a calendar of around 2,000 counting events with more than 3,375 ranked players from 78 countries.

At the start of last year, a significant enhancement to WAGR® was introduced and applied to better reflect the current performance of golfers by placing greater importance on their current form and results. The Power Method will improve the algorithms used to determine and update the ranking providing a true indication of their current form and results compared to other golfers.

The leading golfers in the World Amateur Golf Ranking® each year are awarded the Mark H McCormack Medal and in 2019, Andrea Lee and

Cole Hammer of the United States of America were each awarded the medal for finishing as the number one amateur golfers. Last year, Takumi Kanaya of Japan and Rose Zhang of the United States of America were each awarded the McCormack Medal for the men's and women's ranking.

The World Ranking for Golfers with Disability promotes inclusivity within the sport and is administered in tandem with WAGR®. There has been a sizeable increase in the number of players included in all three ranking categories since its introduction.

In 2019, the ranking included 854 players from 32 countries who competed in 43 ranking tournaments played in 18 countries. In comparison, there were 594 players who competed in 23 ranking events in 2018. Gross Rankings featured 299 players (an increase of 52% from 2018), Nett Rankings featured 311 players (an increase of 45% from 2018) and Stableford Rankings featured 244 players (an increase of 34% from 2018).





## Golf Development

The R&A works to enhance golf's appeal globally, supporting its affiliated national federations and other organisations by providing services, expertise and resources appropriate to their various needs.

The Women in Golf Charter, which now has over 200 signatories around the world, encourages more women to seek opportunities and careers within the sport and in 2019, a new Women's Leadership Development programme was launched by The R&A in support of this aim.

The first two programmes were delivered in Great Britain and Ireland and it is planned to expand into the other regions of the world in The R&A's jurisdiction. It is open to signatories of the Charter and will support the development and progression of women who have the potential to become future leaders within the golf industry.

In October last year, golf venues across Great Britain and Ireland were invited to participate in a ground-breaking campaign that will provide them with the knowledge and materials to recruit and retain female golfers, helping to safeguard the sport for the future.

Launched by The R&A in connection with the Women in Golf Charter, #FOREeveryone is the start of a long-term programme of support for the industry and began with the distribution of a toolkit resource, designed to provide guidance on operational and marketing improvement to help attract more women and girls to the sport.

The campaign is supported by England Golf, Golf Ireland, Scottish Golf and Wales Golf, as well as The PGA and Golf Club Managers Association, and represents a cohesive drive by the national federations to create a more inclusive culture, nurturing greater female participation and encouraging more women into roles within the golf industry.

As part of a drive to significantly grow playing opportunities, financial incentives and television exposure for

women's professional golf in Europe and around the world, The R&A and the European Tour committed to help a newly formed joint venture between the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) and the Ladies European Tour (LET).

As well as providing financial support and leveraging other assets they manage, the bodies will each have one seat on the new LPGA-LET Joint Venture Board of Directors. Building a strong and sustainable Ladies European Tour is fully consistent with the aims of the Women in Golf Charter, including providing more opportunities for women and girls to pursue their ambitions and to inspire future generations to take up the sport.

The organisation is involved in raising awareness of the health benefits of golf through the Golf and Health Project and last year, an international research study backed by The R&A found new evidence to suggest golf can provide significant health benefits to older participants in the form of improved muscle strength and balance.

The Strength and Balance Study, carried out with two sample groups over two years by Professor Maria Stokes OBE at the University of Southampton and Dr George Salem at the University of Southern California, has indicated that older golfers have and develop strength and balance benefits.

A new golf and health report was also published to help further educate existing golfers, non-golfers, golf bodies and policy makers in government and health on the physical and mental benefits of the sport. Highlighting The R&A's work and the endeavours of others in this sphere since 2016, the 28-page document provides a comprehensive overview of golf as a health-enhancing activity for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. Through striking graphics, data and imagery, the report details the benefits by summarising the scientific research, the public exposure and increased interest among national federations, policy makers and other organisations.

In the Asia-Pacific and Latin America regions, the organisation increased its support for affiliates following the pandemic outbreak with an expanded educational programme through a series of online workshops, conferences and seminars covering a range of topics relating to golf development.

A new Student Tour Series was introduced by The R&A to provide leading student golfers outside of the United States of America and Mexico with elite amateur championships to enhance high performance competition. The Series builds on the organisation's support for student golf and each year, The R&A invests around £500,000 in student and university golf, including the Foundation Scholars programme. In 2019, the organisation supported golf programmes at 17 universities and awarded 170 individual Foundation scholarships.

Around 40,000 golfers in the UK, Ireland and Australia entered nine-hole qualifying events in a bid to secure a place in the Final of The R&A 9 Hole Challenge, which was played on the eve of The 148th Open at Royal Portrush. The initiative is central to the organisation's wider drive to promote shorter formats of the sport, either recreationally or competitively for handicap purposes.

The 2019 Coronation Foursomes was entered by almost 22,000 female golfers from over 1,100 clubs in 2019, continuing its status as the biggest domestic competition for women and girls. Local competitions were organised by clubs across Great Britain and Ireland to give golfers the opportunity to reach the Area Finals, before the top 16 teams booked their trip to St Andrews for the final.

The inaugural R&A GolfSixes Challenge was played on the Marquess' Course at Woburn ahead of the AIG Women's British Open. Organised by The R&A and England Golf, 48 players teed it up, forming eight teams and representing 22 golf facilities.

# The R&A Foundation

The R&A Foundation provides grant funding from the proceeds of The Open to support the development of golf around the world. These grants aim to advance participation in the sport by providing playing facilities and equipment and by funding golf events, coaching programmes and projects to promote the health benefits of golf.

The Golf Foundation receives £500,000 in funding each year to support its aim of inspiring more young people to play golf and to increase the retention of juniors in the sport to boost membership. In 2019, its GolfSixes League, a shorter format of golf to attract new young players and families, was played by around 2,700 boys and girls from 233 golf clubs in 52 junior leagues, leading to a 35% increase in junior membership in the UK and Ireland. It is planned that the initiative will be expanded each year to increase the number of leagues, clubs and golfers participating.

The R&A provides £115,000 to support the China Golf Association-HSBC Junior Golf Programme, ensuring that young golfers can play in competitions across the entire country each year. Since its inception, tens of thousands of juniors of all levels of ability have participated in the programme with many of them going on to play at the highest level of golf.

Substantial funds are also provided to the Ladies European Tour, the PGA of Great Britain and Ireland, Golf Canada and New Zealand Golf each year to cover a variety of activities across golf development, junior golf and women's and girls' golf.

The organisation awards development grants to national associations each year to support their initiatives in countries around the world. In total £1.7 million was awarded to 76 applicants to fund projects across important areas of golf development including adult and junior participation, player development, high performance programmes, coach education and development, and school golf.

The R&A works with professional golfers to support and further the aims of their charitable foundations by providing

funding to support their activities in golf. Many of these players are Champion Golfers who receive funding to help grow areas of the sport in their countries and localities.

The organisation is a longstanding supporter of the Faldo Series, led by three-time Champion Golfer Sir Nick Faldo, and to date over 40,000 golfers aged 12-21 have participated in its events around the world. A new £200,000 funding agreement will support the expansion of the Faldo Series into existing and new territories, including developing nations, to provide more opportunities for young people to play golf.

Other golfers and organisations receiving support include the Paul Lawrie Foundation, which runs activities and competitions for junior golfers, Henrik Stenson's Handicap initiative that provides golf activities for disabled golfers, and in South Africa, the foundations of Ernie Els and Louis Oosthuizen which support a variety of projects in their native homeland.

Funding is also provided to support the staging of events for elite amateur and junior golfers in regions and countries around the world. Notable events that were funded by The R&A in 2019 include the All Africa Junior Trophy, the South American Junior Championship, the South American Amateur Championships, the World Junior Girls Championship and a number of European championships for men, women, boys and girls.

Several disability golf events were also funded, including the European Team Championships for Golfers with Disability, the ISPS HANDA Vision Cup, the ISPS HANDA British Blind Open and the English Disability Open.

The R&A also provides support to the ANNIKA Foundation, run by Annika Sorenstam, to help organise several events each year in Europe, Latin America, Australia and Asia. The foundation contributes to the growth of women's golf at the junior, collegiate and professional levels, while teaching the importance of health.



# Sustainability

Sustainability in golf is an important area of work for The R&A and it has introduced new initiatives to support its aim of contributing to and promoting environmental excellence and world class leadership in resource efficiency, conservation and social value.

In 2019, The Open became one of the first major global sporting events to completely remove the use of single-use plastic water bottles when The Open Water Project was introduced at Royal Portrush.

In a move supported by the UN Environment's Clean Seas campaign, over 100,000 single-use plastic bottles were removed from the venue and replaced by a pioneering new approach to providing fresh drinking water directly to fans, players, staff and officials using water refilling stations and reusable stainless steel bottles.

The project was implemented in partnership with Bluewater and aimed to raise awareness of the issue of global marine plastic pollution and the need to protect the world's oceans and coastlines, including the marine life that inhabits them.

More than 5,000 special edition reusable BPA-free stainless steel Bluewater water bottles were given to fans free of charge during The Open who were also able to bring their own refillable water bottles to use at the Championship. All golfers playing in The Open were given a personalised Players' Edition stainless steel Bluewater water bottle with their name laser-engraved on it.

A survey with fans who attended The 148th Open showed that 70% of attendees were aware of the initiative to remove single use plastic water bottles from sale at the Championship. 93% of attendees considered themselves 'very' or 'quite' happy about it.

The R&A also provides the golf industry with support and guidance on issues of sustainability through its Golf Course 2030 initiative. Golf Course 2030 was introduced in 2018 to address the challenges posed by climate change, resource constraints and regulation on golf course conditioning and playability, while also providing best practice in sustainability to those working in golf course management.

Over 2019 and 2020, around £344,000 was awarded to seven organisations to fund sustainability projects that will develop proactive solutions that can be shared with golf course managers, greenkeepers and organisations involved in the maintenance and conditioning of golf facilities around the world. This funding will continue in 2021 and 2022.

The organisations funded include Environmental Protection Group, Royal HaskoningDHV, Siskin Asset Management and Subsea Consulting Services, SRUC, University of St Andrews, STERF, STRI and University Centre Myerscough and they will research areas on course condition and playability, resource use and management, coastal change and greenkeeper education.

The results of each project will be published in reports to be made

available to the golf industry following their conclusion.

A new partnership with the RSPB was agreed at the start of 2020 to fund a new role at the UK's largest wildlife charity which will address wildlife conservation and the management of natural habitats at golf courses throughout the country.

Marie Athorn, who has a PhD from the University of Nottingham on habitat creation and is an experienced consultant ecologist, was appointed to deliver services to golf clubs and facilities, advising them on the management of wildlife species and development of best practice in support of conservation aims.

The R&A continues to invest in its Greenkeeping Scholarship Programme and now has nearly 400 scholars from 37 countries around the world benefiting from support for their learning and career development.

A further 31 students joined the programme over the last year. The programme has now expanded to include Australia thanks to a partnership with the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association (ASTMA) and six students have been funded to attend Melbourne Polytechnic.

The organisation bolstered its work in the Asia-Pacific region with the appointment of a new Head of Sustainability and Agronomy to undertake number of projects related to sustainability including a recycling study with Sentosa Golf Club looking at how both industrial and organic waste can be re-used on a golf course.



## Affiliated Organisations

The R&A, through R&A Rules Ltd, governs the sport worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, on behalf of over 36 million golfers in 144 countries and with the consent of 158 organisations from amateur and professional golf.

### Europe

Albanian Golf Association  
 Andorra Golf Association  
 National Golf Association of Armenia  
 Austrian Golf Association  
 Azerbaijan Golf Federation  
 Belarusian Golf Association  
 Royal Belgian Golf Federation  
 Bulgarian Golf Association  
 Cyprus Golf Federation  
 Czech Golf Federation  
 Danish Golf Union  
 England Golf  
 Estonian Golf Association  
 Finnish Golf Union  
 French Golf Federation  
 Georgian Golf Federation  
 German Golf Association  
 Hellenic Golf Federation (Greece)  
 Hungarian Golf Federation  
 Golf Union of Iceland  
 Golf Ireland  
 Israel Golf Federation  
 Italian Golf Federation  
 Latvian Golf Federation  
 Liechtenstein Golf Federation  
 Lithuanian Golf Federation  
 Luxembourg Golf Federation  
 Macedonian Golf Federation  
 Malta Golf Association  
 Netherlands Golf Federation  
 Norwegian Golf Federation  
 Polish Golf Union  
 Portuguese Golf Federation  
 Romanian Golf Federation  
 Russian Golf Association  
 Scottish Golf  
 Golf Association of Serbia  
 Slovak Golf Association  
 Golf Association of Slovenia  
 Royal Spanish Golf Federation  
 Swedish Golf Federation  
 Swiss Golf Association  
 Turkish Golf Federation  
 Ukrainian Golf Federation  
 Wales Golf

### The Americas

Argentine Golf Association  
 Bahamas Golf Federation  
 Barbados Golf Association  
 Belize Amateur Golf Association  
 Bermuda Golf Association  
 Bolivian Golf Federation  
 Brazilian Golf Confederation  
 Golf Canada  
 Cayman Islands Golf Association  
 Chilean Golf Federation

Colombian Golf Federation  
 Costa Rica Golf Association  
 Curacao Golf Association  
 Dominican Republic Golf Association  
 Ecuador Golf Federation  
 El Salvador Golf Federation  
 Falkland Islands Golf Association  
 Guatemala National Golf Association  
 Guyana Golf Union  
 Golf Federation of Haiti  
 Honduras Golf Federation  
 Jamaica Golf Association  
 Nicaraguan Golf Federation  
 Panama Golf Association  
 Paraguayan Golf Association  
 Peruvian Golf Federation  
 St Maarten Golf Association  
 (Kingdom of the Netherlands)  
 Trinidad & Tobago Golf Association  
 Uruguay Golf Association  
 Venezuela Golf Federation  
 Virgin Islands Golf Federation

### Asia

Afghanistan Golf Federation  
 Bahrain Golf Association  
 Bangladesh Golf Federation  
 Royal Bhutan Golf Federation  
 Cambodian Golf Federation  
 China Golf Association  
 Chinese Taipei Golf Association  
 Emirates Golf Federation  
 Hong Kong Golf Association  
 Indian Golf Union  
 Indonesian Golf Association  
 Islamic Republic of Iran Golf Federation  
 Japan Golf Association  
 Jordan Golf Committee  
 Kazakhstan Golf Federation  
 Korea Golf Association  
 Golf Federation of Kyrgyzstan  
 Lao National Golf Federation  
 Lebanese Golf Federation  
 Malaysian Golf Association  
 Mongolian Golf Association  
 Myanmar Golf Federation  
 Nepal Golf Association  
 Oman Golf Committee  
 Pakistan Golf Federation  
 National Golf Association of the Philippines  
 Qatar Golf Association  
 Saudi Arabian Golf Federation  
 Singapore Golf Association  
 Sri Lanka Golf Union  
 Thailand Golf Association  
 Vietnam Golf Association

### Africa

Algerian Golf Federation  
 Botswana Golf Union  
 Cameroon Golf Federation  
 Democratic Republic of Congo  
 Golf Federation  
 Egyptian Golf Federation  
 Gabonese Golf Federation  
 Gambia Golf Association  
 Ghana Golf Association  
 Ivory Coast Golf Federation  
 Kenya Golf Union  
 Ladies Golf Association of Nigeria  
 Liberia Golf Association  
 Libyan Golf Federation  
 Madagascar Golf Association  
 Golf Union of Malawi  
 Mauritius Golf Federation  
 Royal Moroccan Golf Federation  
 Namibia Golf Federation  
 Nigeria Golf Federation  
 Seychelles Golf Federation  
 Senegalese Golf Federation  
 Sierra Leone Golf Federation  
 South African Golf Association  
 Swaziland Golf Union  
 Tanzania Golf Union  
 Tunisian Golf Federation  
 Uganda Golf Union  
 Zambia Golf Union  
 Zimbabwe Golf Association

### Oceania

Golf Australia  
 Cook Islands Golf Federation  
 Golf Fiji  
 New Zealand Golf Incorporated  
 Papua New Guinea Golf Association  
 Samoa Golf Incorporated  
 Vanuatu Golf Association

### Transnational Affiliated Organisations

Africa Golf Confederation  
 Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation  
 Asian Tour  
 Caribbean Golf Association  
 Confederation of Professional Golf  
 Council of National Golf Unions  
 EDGA  
 European Golf Association  
 Ladies European Tour  
 Oceania Golf Union  
 PGA European Tour  
 Professional Golfers' Association  
 South American Golf Federation

# Our world of golf



36

Million Golfers

144

Countries

158

Affiliate Organisations

10,000

Players in the  
World Amateur  
Golf Ranking™

28

Championships

2,500

Royal & Ancient  
Golf Club Members  
Worldwide

200

Employees



The R&A group of companies was formed in 2004 to take on The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews' responsibilities for governing the Rules of Golf, staging The Open, golf's original championship, and developing the sport. The British Golf Museum in St Andrews is part of The R&A Group.

Together The R&A and the USGA govern the sport of golf worldwide, operating in separate jurisdictions with a commitment to a single code for the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Equipment Standards. The R&A, through R&A Rules Ltd, governs the sport worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, on behalf of over 36 million golfers in 144 countries and with the consent of 158 organisations from amateur and professional golf.

The R&A has responsibility for running a series of world class amateur events and international matches in women's and girls' as well as men's and boys' golf. The R&A stages the AIG Women's Open and works with the European Tour to stage the Senior Open presented by Rolex.

The R&A is committed to investing £200 million over ten years in developing golf and supports the growth of the sport internationally, including the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. For more information, visit [www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org).



[RandA.org](http://RandA.org)

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