

R&A

Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

VOL 2, ISSUE
One



Helping to
support the
growth of golf
around the world

Phil Anderton, The R&A's Chief
Development Officer, on the expansion of
the Golf Development team

“ Alongside developing long-term relationships with donors that will enable us to invest in great programmes, we want to build a philanthropic culture around golf ”

– Caroline Wallard,
Director of Philanthropy

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Contents.

04. Golf Development

The R&A's Chief Development Officer, Phil Anderton, discusses how the Golf Development team will continue to help the growth of the sport

12. The R&A Foundation Philanthropy Programme

The programme that is helping to transform lives and communities around the world through golf

18. The R&A World Golf Museum

Angela Howe, Director - Museum & Heritage at The R&A on the St Andrews museum and the 400 years of golf history on display

26. Case Study: Japan

With the High Performance Programme, Gareth Jones is helping Japan's national team players to compete successfully on the world stage

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





'We are putting more R&A boots on the ground'.

Phil Anderton, The R&A's Chief Development Officer, discusses plans for the year ahead and beyond as the Golf Development team undergoes a restructure





The R&A's Golf Development team operates across a broad spectrum but with a clear focus – growing the sport of golf.

Chief Development Officer **Phil Anderton**, whose own wide-ranging responsibilities include oversight of Golf Development, reveals what's on the agenda for the team amid some key changes to its structure and personnel.

What is the purpose of the Golf Development team?

It's about helping to support the growth of the sport around the world. We do this by working with our affiliates, the federations and other major bodies within golf in our jurisdiction outside of the United States of America and Mexico.

We use the significant revenue that we make predominantly from The Open to help to drive that growth in partnership with those affiliates around the world.

Can you explain how the team's remit has evolved?

We used to just have a small team based in St Andrews and it was largely a programme where we would allocate grants to affiliates. That remains an important part of what we do because it really helps our partners, particularly those smaller nations who may not have access to significant funds to enable them to grow the sport. But we now also create programmes and assets that can work across a number of affiliates and partners. This follows a model that many multinational organisations adhere to, where instead of having each country doing their own thing, there is a central body that will create programmes which can then be tapped into by a whole range of different countries.

The thinking behind it is firstly the fact that there are a lot of similarities across countries in terms of motivations and barriers, and people's approach to spending time or money on a pastime, a brand or a product.

Secondly, if it's done centrally a lot of



“Our Golf Development team is there to help to support the growth of the sport around the world”



The Golf Development structure

- Chief Development Officer: Phil Anderton
- Executive Assistant, Golf Development: Alison McDonald
- Co-Ordinator, Golf Development: Jane Fleming
- Director, GB&I and Africa – Golf Development: Kevin Barker
- Managing Director – Latin America and the Carribean: Mark Lawrie
- Director, Golf Education – Golf Development: Jackie Davidson
- Manager, Golf Education – Golf Development: Gavin Forrester
- Director, Europe, Canada & Latin America – Golf Development: TBC
- Director, Strategic Programmes – Golf Development: Kate Brewer
- Managing Director – Asia-Pacific: Dominic Wall
- Director, Asia-Pacific – Golf Development: Jerome Ng
- Assistant Director – Asia-Pacific: Nick Shan
- Development Manager – Middle East and India: Neal Graham
- Development Manager – Africa: Eden Thompson
- Rules, Handicapping and Development Manager – Africa: Vincent Wangombe
- Development Manager – Latin America and the Carribean: Andy Schonbaum
- Manager, Global Assets – Golf Development: Jack Haydon
- Assistant, Global Assets – Golf Development: Lisa Davie
- Assistant, CRM – Golf Development: Fraser Sturgess



money can go into the research and the creation of the programmes and assets without that initial investment having to be duplicated. That feeds into the third point, which is that it's just a more efficient way of operating rather than having everyone going off and doing their own thing.

How is the team's structure changing in order to meet its goals?

We are putting more R&A boots on the ground, so instead of just having a few people based in St Andrews – as important as they are – we're trying to have a more international outlook.

We've now got dedicated resources across the world and the idea behind that is they will work very closely with affiliates to help them formulate action plans against some of the key

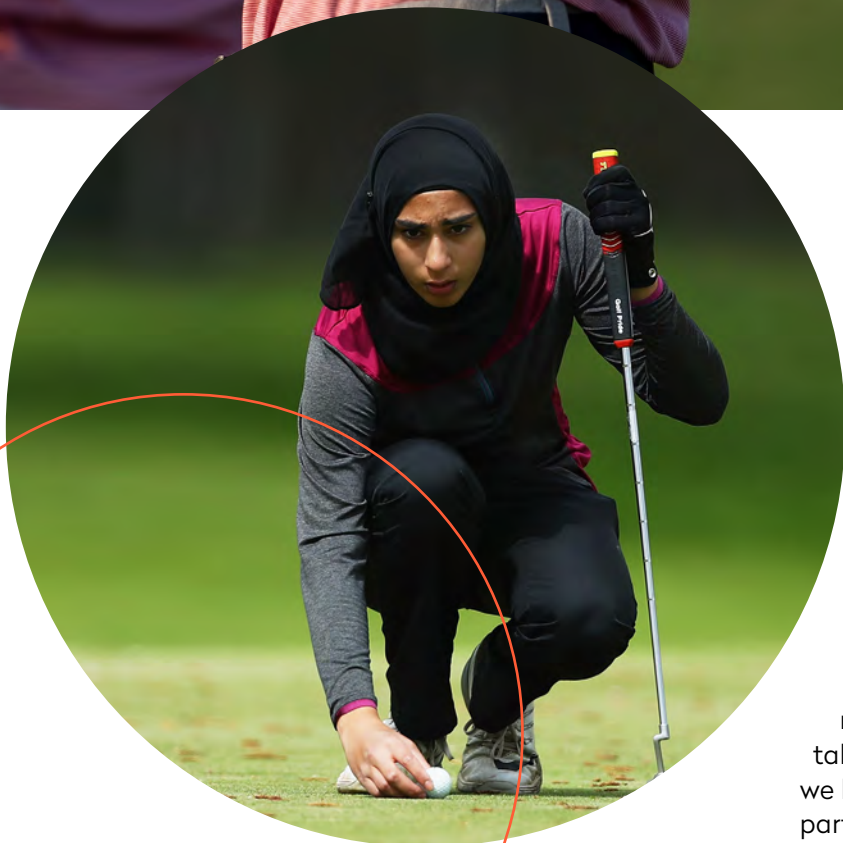
pillars of our development strategy.

They will play an important role in sharing best practice from around the world to those countries they operate in. It's much more difficult for each individual country to know what's going on in other countries around the world, but with this structure you retain and share all the knowledge and learning from various programmes.

The next phase of that restructuring will see the appointment of a Director for Europe, Canada and Latin America, and a Director of Strategic Programmes to further strengthen this global development alliance.

What are the key pillars of The R&A's development strategy?

Firstly, we aim to identify the strongest



propositions that we can bring to life and communicate to the most important primary audiences we should be seeking out within golf.

We want the sport to be open to all with no barriers.

When it comes to promoting the sport, there are certain groups of people who are not currently playing but, with the right messaging and the right activation, we can bring them into golf.

We've done a lot of work to identify the key benefits of golf – the things that would make those people more likely to want to take it up, whatever the format may be – and we know when we deliver that message, the participation intent jumps dramatically.



There is also focus on increasing participation among women and girls and engaging them with the sport. This is an area where some countries have enjoyed more success than others and there are a number of factors in that, but golf is the ultimate sport that can be played by men, women, boys and girls, and people of all abilities and ages – it's not good enough to accept much lower ratios of women playing.

Another key pillar is looking closely at the formats of the sport. Clearly 18-hole golf remains important and it's the predominant format at the professional level, but not everyone has the same access to the necessary facilities, the time to play 18 holes, or indeed the inclination.

Cost is another factor to consider. We need to look at golf as a multi-flavoured sport. If people want to get into golf by going to a driving range, or pitch and putt, or a putting facility, we're happy with that.

We know the short formats are the most attractive vehicle for driving participation among the audience with the highest potential number of future golfers.

The other thing we're trying to do is help our affiliates create elite amateur pathways. In addition to growing golf as a leisure activity, we want to ensure there are opportunities for those with the talent and desire to play at the highest level.



Golf and health

The R&A did a lot of work to identify that golf is good for your health and doctors will endorse it across a range of areas.

We undertook research and found that many prospective golfers did not know that golf was as good for health as it is, and they find that highly appealing, meaning their intent to play increased significantly.

Armed with this information, we worked with an agency and created a global campaign with different assets – digital advertising, TV advertising, posters for clubs, you name it – and we teamed up with our ambassadors to help get the message out.

We conducted a market test in Wales with Gareth Bale as the ambassador and found the people who saw the campaign played more golf than those who didn't, and their intent to play more golf in the future increased, and if they didn't already play golf, they were now more likely to if they saw the campaign.

Our affiliates can use the same assets and materials free of charge to run these campaigns in their country and hopefully achieve similar results.

“We want the sport to be open to all with no barriers in anyone's way”

If you can get an elite player playing at the top level being shown on television and in the media, that has an impact on the desirability and the appeal of the sport for others to play.

How does the funding work?

We are increasing the amount of funding we can offer via national body development grants. This has been made possible by the fact The R&A is producing more income through professional championships and by diversifying our business model. For example, we have raised significant monies through the philanthropy programme and that can go back to the affiliates to help them support their strategic programmes. ●

The R&A Foundation Philanthropy Program transforming lives th

In conversation with Director of Philanthropy, Caroline Wallard



Programme – through golf.



The launch of the Philanthropy Programme represents a new phase in the growth of The R&A Foundation.

Formed in 2003 with a mission to transform lives through golf – having been previously funded solely through the profits of The Open – the Foundation has been pivotal in growing the sport globally, creating opportunities for more people to enjoy its many benefits.

By engaging passionate and generous donors with all that The R&A does, an even greater impact across the globe can be created.

It is part of The R&A's commitment to ensuring that golf is thriving 50 years from now, from grassroots to elite level, while having a positive impact on individuals and wider communities.



Director of Philanthropy at The R&A
Caroline Wallard discusses the programme and its aims.

How did the philanthropy programme come about?

Historically, The R&A Foundation was funded entirely by commercial proceeds from The Open and it was used to grant money to affiliates and R&A programmes.

When Covid-19 hit, that forced a rethink because we had a lot of programmes that required funding, but we didn't have that revenue coming in from The Open.

We considered if opening up the Foundation to individual and corporate donors would be a sensible thing to do, and the decision was yes.

There are a lot of people who are incredibly passionate about golf and very keen to support its future and contribute to all the wonderful things it can do for people and communities.

“There are a lot of people who are incredibly passionate about golf and very keen to support its future”

What are the main areas of focus of the philanthropy programme?

We have five main areas that we focus the fundraising on, and those are in line with the charitable aims of The R&A Foundation, which are in turn aligned to The R&A's overall strategy, namely: accessibility, sustainability, health, heritage and talent.

That is quite a broad remit and a lot of the work we've been doing is around R&A owned and operated programmes, to complement and augment the fantastic work delivered by national governing bodies and affiliates.

Can you give any examples of programmes that are being supported by philanthropy?

Golf It! in Glasgow is one that we've been talking about a lot and people have been giving to.

That speaks to the idea of bringing golf back to the heart of the community and demonstrates the positive impact it can have upon people's lives.

Alongside that primary objective of securing the future of the sport and getting more people playing, we're also focusing on what golf can give you – it can make you healthier, happier, it can build community connections, develop employability skills, and improve your confidence.

I think in that sense we're able to look at things from a slightly different perspective within the philanthropy programme and really focus on the wider benefits of the sport, as opposed to just golf in and of itself.

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club Scholarship is another programme of note, which is about seeking out the next generation of leaders of the game and giving them an opportunity to develop and fulfil their potential.

What level of support has the philanthropy programme received?

We formally launched the programme in September and at that point we'd secured around £5 million in funding, closing in on £6 million by the end of 2023.

We have a lot of donors who wish to remain anonymous, but we do also have some high-profile supporters such as Rolex, AIG and The Arnold & Winnie Palmer Foundation, with the latter incredibly generous with their support of the education programmes at Golf It!.

What does success look like for a programme with such long-term objectives?

Alongside developing long-term relationships with donors that will enable us to invest in great programmes now and in the future, we are also building a philanthropic culture around golf.

Golf can transform lives and communities around the world – philanthropy can provide funding that both demonstrates and enables that. Golf matters!



A better future through golf

The R&A Foundation is delivering an impact in five key areas:

- Accessibility – developing facilities and programmes that enable people to get into golf.
- Sustainability – increasing understanding of the environmental impact and benefits of golf.
- Health – investing in research and programming which use golf to improve people's health.
- Heritage – expanding the reach of The R&A World Golf Museum.
- Talent – supporting the pathways that enable people to reach their potential through golf.



The Royal and Ancient Golf Club Scholarship.

Shaping the future of golf

Dedicated to identifying, supporting and developing the next generation of golf's leaders, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club Scholarship is a new international award that will help to shape the future of the sport.

Providing Scholars with financial support and the benefit of unique connections to The R&A, The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews,

and St Andrews, the Scholarship represents an outstanding opportunity for 18-25 year olds.

Each Scholar will embody the qualities to be leaders in their field, making notable contributions to golf and their communities across a variety of roles.

Recipients will receive a bespoke package of support, composed of the following core elements:

The Scholars

Each cohort of Scholars will be drawn from an international pool of young candidates who demonstrate exceptional commitment to golf.

The award will identify and recognise young individuals who show outstanding dedication and promise, from players, coaches and caddies, to agronomists, volunteers and club managers.

The Scholarship will enable them to fulfil their potential as leaders in their chosen discipline, bringing their influence to bear for the benefit of the sport.

Candidates from non-traditional golfing backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

2024 selection timeline

March – Aspiring Scholars are invited to apply.

April – The R&A Foundation will engage referees to provide insights into applicants.

May – Interviews will be conducted by a panel of experts.

June – Cohort 1 Scholars will be confirmed.

September – Successful Scholars will receive funding and be introduced to their Club mentor.

June to August (from 2025) – Club members have the opportunity to meet new cohort of Scholars during visit to St Andrews for Annual Leadership Conference.

For more information, contact RAClubScholarship@randa.org



The Royal and Ancient Clubhouse, St Andrews

Education bursary

Financial support of up to £10,000 per annum towards fees for the duration of the Scholars' chosen course.

The funds can be directed towards a variety of educational paths, golf and non-golf related, including university tuition fees, coaching or agronomy qualifications, or vocational courses.

Golf engagement bursary

Financial support of up to £5,000 per annum to sustain Scholars' involvement in golf-related activities while pursuing their academic or vocational studies.

Mentorship from a member of The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews

Scholars will be allocated a mentor from the Club's membership through a holistic matching process.

Guided by relevant interests and motivations, geographical proximity and off-course aspirations, these pairings will foster meaningful connections between Scholars and mentors.

International peer-to-peer networking

Scholars will become members of an exceptional cohort of future leaders, learning from each other and growing together in service to their local communities and the world of golf.

This programme provides opportunities for participation and collaboration in physical and virtual events throughout the year, fostering connections between participants and with The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and The R&A.

Week-long leadership conference in St Andrews

The Scholarship includes an unforgettable visit to St Andrews, where each cohort of Scholars will embark on a week-long immersive experience in leadership development.

The conference programme will include career talks, professional skills development, network building and friendly competitions. ●

The R&A World Golf Museum: Over 400 years of history.

Exploring the past, present and future of the sport

The R&A World Golf Museum captures the rich history of the sport through a stunning collection of objects.

Spanning over four centuries, the artefacts housed at the home of golf, St Andrews, speak to an enduring affection for the sport.



Angela Howe, Director – Museum & Heritage at The R&A, discusses the museum's origins and objectives, as well as revealing her personal favourite items among the collection.

Can you tell us a bit about the history of the museum?

The museum was established by The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in 1990. The Club's collection was vast and had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to think about how it could best be displayed and managed. The result was the creation of the museum, which was originally known as the British Golf Museum.

As we were approaching the 30th anniversary of the museum in 2020, which was also the year The 150th Open was meant to be played at St Andrews, it was considered a fitting time for a refresh.

There had been some upgrades to the galleries over the years, but the thinking was we needed to strip everything out and start again.

We undertook all the planning for that during the pandemic and reopened in June 2021. As part of the funding The R&A provided for the redesign and refurbishment, we were asked to revisit the name and the branding.

Working with a consultancy firm, we came up with the name The R&A World Golf Museum. This was to signpost our connection to The R&A, but also to reflect the fact our collection had grown significantly since 1990 and we felt justified putting 'world' in the title.

What sort of things can visitors see and do?

We continue to update our collections and keep them current and relevant for our visitors,



R&A WORLD GOLF MUSEUM

The museum in brief

The R&A World Golf Museum's immersive galleries bring the past, present and future of golf to life around you.

Thousands of fascinating objects reveal hidden stories of the game and personalities. Explore over 400 years of golf's history on your tour of this outstanding sporting collection, rooted in St Andrews, recognised worldwide as the home of golf. Connect with the medieval origins of the game and discover its global development through golf's earliest societies, evolving equipment, groundbreaking fashion and world-class championships – including golf's oldest major, The Open.

particularly around the championships The R&A is responsible for.

We always try to acquire something from the winners to represent their championship victories.

We also have within the museum a 'World of Golf' gallery, where we explore how golf expanded around the world to become a global sport. It allows us to cover some of the initiatives The R&A is undertaking to develop the sport, making sure it's more accessible and ensuring it's thriving 50 years from now.

The museum runs a Learning and Access programme, providing activities such as lectures, workshops and community engagement.

That is something that ties into the accessibility ethos as well, which is so important for museum work because we are also part of a wider museum community.

We have contact with the World Rugby Museum, the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, the MCC Museum at Lord's, and we're also part of the Sporting Heritage Network.

As well as looking after the collections on display and in storage, we plan new displays and exhibitions.

What are some of the temporary exhibitions the museum has put on?

In 2023, for example, we had two temporary exhibitions, one of which was called 'Fairways and Railways', and it focused on a collection of railway posters, which had been donated to the museum.

They dated from the 1920s and 1930s and really demonstrated how important the railways were for spreading the game of golf and helping locations like St Andrews become golfing and holiday destinations.

The other temporary exhibition was on the Walker Cup to coincide with the centenary of the match, which was played at St Andrews, and this year we're going to focus on the AIG Women's Open and women's golf more broadly. We're going to use both the temporary exhibition gallery and part of the main gallery space to display the collection that we have relating to the AIG Women's Open and women's golf.

With the merger between the Ladies' Golf Union and The R&A in 2017, we acquired a whole new collection to look after and this is a great opportunity to highlight the strength of the collection.

The oldest golf clubs in the world

We have in our collection the oldest known set of golf clubs in the world. It's a set of eight clubs – two irons, thought to date to the late 17th century, and six woods, dating to the early 18th century. They were found in a place called Maister House in Hull. The house had been destroyed in a fire and when the ruins were being excavated, a sealed cupboard was discovered and contained within was this set of golf clubs wrapped up in a newspaper dated 1741.

The clubs passed through the hands of various owners and ended up at Royal Troon Golf Club. We're very fortunate that Royal Troon has allowed us to borrow the clubs for a number of years now, as they are so important and deserve to be seen and admired.

Accolades

- Five-star grading from VisitScotland
- A recognised collection of national significance
- Accreditation Status





Can you give examples of how the museum has helped other organisations?

We worked with the Netherlands Golf Federation back in 2014 when they were celebrating their centenary. They had an exhibition in the Haags Historisch Museum and we loaned them quite a lot of items from our collection.

There were clubs and balls from different eras, books on the Rules of Golf, The Amateur Championship trophy, the Dutch Open trophy and the Eisenhower trophy.

We created an exhibition with the Museum of Sport and Tourism in Warsaw that ran from November 2016 to January 2017. Although it was on for quite a short period, it was a substantial exhibition and again we provided items such as equipment, clothing, medals, championship programmes, and artwork, all of which gave a general overview of the history of the sport.

We've also worked with the Swedish Golf Union in a similar way, loaning them artefacts and sharing knowledge.

In addition, we can offer advice and guidance on how to care for, manage and display collections.

Sometimes people say they want to collect everything and we try to help them focus on particular areas so they can put together a comprehensive collection, but one that's relevant and meaningful. ●



Angela's top three objects

- The world's oldest set of golf clubs
- A Hugh Philp driving putter loaned to Old Tom Morris for his 1864 Open win
- The gold medal presented to Young Tom Morris in 1872 (for winning The Open the year before the Claret Jug was ready to be presented)

Meet The R&A Team: Shona McRae.

The R&A's Director – Rules on her early introduction to the sport of golf and the career path it has taken her on



Shona at the Latin America Amateur,
Dominican Republic, 2022



“I had just started playing golf when my dad took me to The Open at St Andrews in 1984, the year Seve won it”

As introductions to golf go, watching Seve Ballesteros win The Open at St Andrews has to be right up there.



That was one of **Shona McRae's** formative experiences as she witnessed the great Spaniard triumph at the home of golf – the place she also called home, and still does.

Though her job has taken her around the world, Shona is back where it all started and enjoying her role with The R&A.

What is your background?

I've always had an interest in sport from a young age. I used to swim a lot and did different sports in school. I had just started playing golf when my dad took me to The Open at St Andrews in 1984, the year Seve won it.

There was something about that experience that caught my interest and really got me interested in golf.

Being from the St Andrews area, it wasn't unusual to play golf and I did play quite competitively, but it was also a social thing as well as many people my age also played.

Living here I would see all these championships and events coming to St Andrews and I knew there was an organisation involved in running them, so from around the age of 16 or 17 I did have the thought that it might be something I'd quite like to do.

Ever since then I've actively tried to pursue a career in the golf industry and I've been lucky enough to do that since I graduated from university.

What was your career journey up to joining The R&A?

I went to university in Edinburgh to do a general business degree because they didn't have all these wonderful sports management courses they have now. When I graduated, I got a summer job at Gleneagles and worked in the golf shop there.

That led to an opportunity to do a trainee management programme at the hotel in golf operations. That gave me a really good grounding in how a golf operation works, covering everything from greenkeeping to hospitality.

After that I wanted to see a bit of the world, so I moved out to the Middle East, to Dubai, and worked at Emirates Golf Club for seven years running all their corporate days and members' events.

I think because I came from St Andrews, people there expected me to know the Rules of Golf and I quickly had to learn! I had an opportunity while I was out there to do The R&A Rules exams and that enabled me to referee out in the Middle East.

So I got some experience at quite a young age of being involved with the Rules of Golf and refereeing. After that, I joined The R&A.

What does The R&A mean to you?

I believe it's a well-respected and highly regarded organisation and the work we do is recognised globally, which is quite something.

Many people I meet are quite surprised when they learn the extent of the work we do, and it's also apparent how much the staff here at The R&A care about that work. We all have a focus on golf and we care about doing what's right for the sport.

It's an organisation that I'm proud to say I work for and to know that, in my own small way, I'm making a contribution to golf by doing that.

What are some of the responsibilities of your role?

There is such a wide variety of tasks and also a fair amount of travel involved too. Just recently I was in Nairobi and Cape Town teaching a Level 3 Tournament Administrators and Referees Seminar to groups of referees there, and after that I was refereeing at the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai for the European Tour Group. Sometimes I will be in the office working on things such as the rules education programme, and we'll make plans for the championships that we'll attend and support at, as well as running our own flagship rules seminar at St Andrews in February.

The rules are updated every four years and it's part of my role to be on the committee that reviews and considers changes to the Rules of Golf. We're always looking at how we can make them more modern, easily understood and relevant to the sport now.

For any referee, it's not a case of learning the rules once and that's all you need to do – it's a process of continual review and even to this day, I'll open up the book and see something that makes me think, 'Wow, that's something I hadn't thought of before or appreciated in that way'. It's an amazing subject matter because golf isn't a sport that's played on a set pitch or court; it's played in different settings, different climates and conditions, so the rules have to address all of that and in some way treat different



At the Latin America Amateur in Puerto Rico, 2023



Shona's ideal weekend

Preferably there would be good weather and it would certainly involve some golf. After that, some nice food with a glass of wine and the company of some good friends. And even if the weather isn't nice, all the more reason to have a glass of wine or two!

“Having the opportunity to meet and work with our affiliates in their own countries is certainly one of the best aspects of my job”

situations similarly so there's a fair outcome for everybody.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Having the opportunity to meet and work with our affiliates in their own countries is certainly one of the best aspects of my job.

You get the chance to meet with like-minded people who care about the rules and who wish to learn and educate others about the Rules of Golf and encourage people to officiate and referee in the game. That applies at any level, it doesn't have to be world championship level – it's just as valuable to have well-run national and regional events.

I've been fortunate to referee at many championships across the world, from the United States of America to China, Australia and Latin America. That has provided me with an opportunity to meet with other referees and share our knowledge and best practices, which is something I find really valuable. ●

Land of the rising go the success of Japan's Performance Program

Under the guidance of Gareth Jones, Japan is developing a new generation of golf talent ready for the world stage



If talent – s High- mme.

Case Study



The Japan Golf Association (JGA)

had a watershed moment in 2014 after the country hosted the World Amateur Team Championships.

Things did not go according to plan in Karuizawa, and the governing body decided a change of direction was needed.

Gareth Jones was brought in as National Team Head Coach, and he set to work on transforming Japan's fortunes on the golf course.

What was the journey that led you to this role?

I started playing golf in the UK in the 1980s before I moved back to Australia and did my PGA traineeship in the early 90s in Adelaide. I tried to play for a while but wasn't good enough.

It was in 2000 that I got the opportunity to go to the Australian Institute of Sport as a scholarship coach, and that's where my background in elite development started, on a residential programme based in Melbourne.

The mantra was to treat golfers as athletes, and that's something I took on board when I went to work with Australian Golf.

I was coaching the Australian men's team in Karuizawa when Japan had a pretty poor World Amateur. It was then that they got in touch, and I had the opportunity to move into this role back in 2015.

What were your priorities when you first came into the role?

I wanted to bring to Japan a lot of the work I had been doing, or had learned, in Australia. It was a mixed time for golf in Japan because although Hideki Matsuyama was doing great, the national team was struggling.

I had been over to watch the girls' team in the Queen Sirikit Cup and it was obvious they had some talent, but what struck me was how poor their preparation skills were. They were spending a lot of time hitting golf balls, but there wasn't a great focus on the short game or on scouting the course, so that was where I started. I wanted our players to learn how to prepare for a golf tournament, to have the information they needed, to develop an understanding of how to play the course and then to factor that all in to how they practice.

Part of it came down to the environment – there are so many driving ranges in Japan, so the focus is often on the long game.

The younger generation aren't necessarily golf club members, or they aren't able to get out on courses like they can in Australia or the UK, for example.

Their practice time is more limited and so it ends up being more concentrated on hitting balls at ranges. As a consequence of that, they become pretty good ball strikers, but they lack in other areas of their game.

We really tried to change that and make the short game a fundamental part of their practice, instituting a 65-35 mantra – 65% short game and putting practice and 35% long game.

Another thing we introduced was statistical data to really get them to understand what they're good at and the things they needed to get better at. With that information, you can develop a game plan to help them grow and become better all-round players.

Then we wanted to look at nutrition and conditioning, all the inputs that go into making golfers the athletes that we want them to be and making those things part of the culture of the sport here.

Are you seeing overall growth in the talent pool in Japan or just a fine-tuning of the talent at the top end?

There is a very healthy school golf system, so there are thousands of juniors, and when you see the championships at that level, the scoring is very good.

But I would say that golf is very serious in Japan, and I'd love to see it become a bit more accessible and lighter at the grassroots level, where it should be less about competition and more about participation.

There are so many golf courses in the country that aren't accessible to juniors, so course access is a real barrier, but it's certainly a growing sport.

In my time, we've had three number-one ranked amateur boys, and our girls' programme has proven to be really strong in the past.

What is the pathway for those young hopefuls to get to the top of the sport?

In Japan, there is a system whereby children choose a sport or an activity which they do as an after-school thing throughout their time at school. If they choose golf, that will mean they can get a lot of time to play while they're still at school.

Then we have eight regions – basically like big counties – and each of those has its own programme built around junior high and high school players, so kids from 11 through to 18. The regions are a pathway to getting into the national team, but they're important in their own right.

As an example, Hinako Shibuno never made the national team, but she was a regional player

Matsuyama's major success: From apprentice to Masters

"Hideki's Masters win and his success in general has been a really positive thing for golf in Japan. In Japanese culture, particularly on the male side, there is an adherence to senpai-kohai relations, which is best described as a master and apprentice dynamic. There is a great respect for the senior person and Hideki holds that mantle. Coming up after him we had Kazuki Higa and Takumi Kanaya following this same pathway.

"Japan waited a long time to have a major winner, and people ask when will the next major champion come along, but what's important is that Hideki has shown it can be done.

"Everyone is on their own timeframe, and not everybody can shoot straight on to the PGA Tour and be a superstar. We want to give our players – both men and women – a good grounding and make sure they have their head screwed on; that will give them the best chance at realising their potential."

“We're trying to help create ambassadors who give back to the sport in Japan and throughout the Asia-Pacific”

and obviously went on to become AIG Women's Open champion. The pathway provides a platform for players; we support them as they move into their early professional careers, and we're trying to help create ambassadors who give back to the sport in Japan and throughout the Asia-Pacific.

What are the key objectives of the High-Performance programme now?

We want to become a dominant country in the Asia-Pacific because that's absolutely what we should be. Japan has such a strong golf history and, along with Australia and South Korea, it should be up there in the top three in this region.

Building on that, we want to become competitive as a national team at the World

Amateur Championships. We've done that with the girls, with a couple of recent podium finishes, and it's our aim with the boys, even if it's maybe a little tougher with the strength of the competition there.

We're also looking at improving the players' World Amateur Golf Ranking® (WAGR®). We feel that is critical for their future as it will lead to greater opportunities and a better shot at having a professional career.

But we also want to nurture people who are going to be more comfortable when they're playing on the global stage and travelling internationally. There are challenges in terms of culture and language, but it's important to take our players out of their comfort zone and create independent athletes and thinkers. ●

Inset: Jones and Ren Yonezawa
Australian Master of the Amateurs
(Victoria GC, 2020)

Main image: Craig Bishop (Assistant
Coach), Greg Rosenbauer (Physio)
and Jones with Tsubasa
Kajitani - Miyazaki



R&A



Contents 

