

R&A

Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

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Three



Changing perceptions in golf

How Stephen Curry's UNDERRATED Golf
Tour aims to empower young golfers

“Our partnership with the **UNDERRATED** Golf Tour is an exciting step in continuing our mission to make golf more accessible, inclusive and appealing to a broader audience”

– Phil Anderton
Chief Development Officer –
The R&A

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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



Gallacher lauds the health-enhancing benefits of golf.

Golf's power to help people live longer, healthier lives was the focus at the 3rd International Congress on Golf and Health

Ryder Cup star Stephen Gallacher has seen golf's approach to health and wellbeing transform during his distinguished career.

The four-time DP World Tour winner was among the attendees at the 3rd International Congress on Golf and Health, which highlighted the many physical and mental health benefits of the sport.

The event returned to Scotland earlier this year as the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh hosted the world-leading scientific congress over two days of sessions, with experts in attendance from The R&A, Ladies' European Tour, DP World Tour, G4D Tour, the Confederation of Professional Golf and delegates from over 20 countries.

The conference shared insights on the wide range of health benefits associated with golf, with those who play it enjoying a reduction in over 40 major chronic diseases, better wellbeing and extended length of life.

Gallacher took part in the discussions as delegates learned about the mental fitness of competing at the highest level.

"The great thing about the conference was that it was all about golf, all about the positives of the sport for longevity of life," said Gallacher, who played for 28 years on the DP World Tour.

"You can start at such a young age and you can still be playing at such a late age. It was important also to discuss how much the golfing world has changed, how much the health side has come into it.

"It's changed a lot since I was a kid, like proper advice on nutrition, recovery and hydration. There is so much data and technology to plot their goals.

"As Scotland is the home of golf, it was also fitting to be in such a beautiful place to talk about it."

Dr Andrew Murray, Chief Medical and Scientific Officer for the DP World Tour and a Health Consultant with The R&A, was at the forefront of organising the event.

"It was a congress bigger than ever before, with more speakers too, which was fantastic," said Murray. "It was a great opportunity to get together and then think about the health

benefits of golf – how we can promote health through major events, how we can help people be at their best, maximising performance and decreasing illness and injury. Then it's just about giving everyone the opportunity to play golf.

"I think everyone who attended is very passionate about golf and health, very knowledgeable as well, and I really enjoyed the two days."

Maree Todd, Sport Minister at the Scottish Government, said, "Regular physical activity and participation in sport is one of the best things you can do for physical, mental and social health."

"The congress was a fantastic opportunity to share knowledge and experience, to celebrate what golf is accomplishing and to understand barriers to participation and how we can work to remove them."

Dr Julia Kettinen, researcher and Golf Exercise Medicine Specialist, added, "Our research highlights that golf can help people achieve

the physical activity they need. Golf also kept senior golfers active during the pandemic and supported their quality of life.

"Even a single 18-hole round can offer significant cardiovascular and cognitive benefits, particularly for older adults, compared to regular walking."

"Globally, more and more people are playing golf – over 100 million now – which is great for both individuals and populations."

Gallacher, the founder of the Stephen Gallacher Foundation which continues to blossom, summed the sessions up.

"Our mission is to help and encourage golfers to live a healthy life and enjoy their golf," he added.

"This scientific congress coming to Scotland was great as it helps us understand the health benefits, hear about how golf is even being prescribed now in Scotland and further afield, and also look at supporting the mental health of players."

"I have had some incredible highs like winning

Research presented from Finland, Sweden and Scotland highlighted that

- Golf can provide health enhancing physical activity for people of all ages
- Regular physical activity achieved through golf can help prevent and treat more than 40 major chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, breast cancer, depression, anxiety and dementia
- Golf also promotes mental wellbeing, social connections and connection with nature
- Golf has additional benefits compared to walking

“Our mission is to help golfers live a healthy life”

in Dubai, India and Scotland, and being on the winning side at the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, but life in professional sport can be lonely and tough, so the work on mental health is so important.”

Improving mental health

Although there is compelling evidence of mental health and wellbeing benefits through golf and other sports, life as a professional athlete can be incredibly demanding, with pressure to perform, much time away from friends and family, and at times intense and unwanted scrutiny in social media and in the media.

The golfing industry has recognised these challenges and conducted research with the players to implement mental health and wellbeing toolkits, emergency action plans, mind gyms and a network of specialists for the players, collaborating with tennis and Formula 1 experts who also have intensive travel schedules.

Dr Phil Hopley, Consultant Psychiatrist at Cognacity, who has been instrumental as Mental Fitness Coach with the McLaren F1 Team on their journey from also-rans to world champions, said, "I felt honoured to be at the conference. We've all got mental health, but it changes sometimes across the course of a week, sometimes during the course of the

day. So we can be flourishing or can be mentally well, or we can be struggling a bit, have a mental health problem or a mental disorder.

"There are so many mental and physical benefits to participating in sport, and we know how important the mind is to being at your best, be that on the Formula 1 track, playing in the Champions League, playing in a golf major or just in life in general."

"Cognacity are delighted to be working with The R&A and the DP World Tour providing psychology and mental fitness support to players, caddies and Tour staff. The untimely passing of top professional golfer Grayson Murray last year was a painful reminder of how challenging life on Tour can be."

"That is why the collaborative work that golf is prioritising with IOC mental health experts and the provision of industry-leading facilities like the Mental Fitness Centre at the Dubai Desert Classic is so important."



The 3rd International Congress on Golf and Health

Changing perceptions in golf is UNDERRATED.

The R&A have partnered with Stephen Curry's UNDERRATED Golf European Tour with the aim of empowering young golfers

Main pictures are courtesy of UNDERRATED Golf



The **UNDERRATED Golf European Tour**, a purpose-driven junior golf tour founded by **multiple NBA Champion Stephen Curry**, has partnered with The R&A.

Its aim is to remove barriers, change perceptions and empower the next generation of golfers by promoting an inclusive and accessible future for the sport.

Key to that vision is expanding opportunities for young golfers from all backgrounds. Curry has also become a Global Golf Development Ambassador for The R&A.

He is joined in that role by **former Ladies European Tour player turned broadcaster Henni Zuël**, who works closely with The UNDERRATED Golf Tour as a European ambassador.

Launched three years ago in the United States, UNDERRATED Golf aims to give golfers from diverse communities the chance to show their talents on a world stage.

Its mission is to “provide equity, access and opportunity to student-athletes from every community by balancing participation in the sport to truly reflect our society”.

That is done by hosting regional tournaments, which culminate in a season-ending Underrated Tour Championship, also known as the Curry Cup.

Following huge success in the USA, UNDERRATED Golf launched last year in Europe and has continued in 2025 with events at Foxhills and Fairmont St Andrews in the United Kingdom.

“I’ve been blown away working with the organisation,” said Zuël, who was motivated to get involved with UNDERRATED by a dream of helping people get into golf.

“Their heart is in such the right place. The kids basically don’t pay for anything. They just have to get themselves to the venue.

“They don’t pay for any accommodation or food costs, or entry fees – everything is covered for them and a parent and I think we’ve had 50 or so go through the years to get college educations because we have scouts at the Curry Cup finale.

“It’s amazing to see the footprint and have graduates come back and tell their stories. Obviously, as an English golfer, to be able to bring UNDERRATED to Europe and see the amazing work they’ve done in the US continue, to give kids playing opportunities and see their response and the response from parents, it’s really cool. I’m really grateful to be involved.”

Through the partnership, The R&A will work with The UNDERRATED Golf Tour and will



Stephen Curry and Henni Zuël are just two of the growing number of Global Golf Development Ambassadors for The R&A. The Ambassador programme is part of The R&A’s broader commitment to ensure golf is more inclusive, accessible and appealing.

Ambassadors include Irish singer Niall Horan, Welsh footballer Gareth Bale, American actress Kathryn Newton and Korean actor Song Joong-Ki.

As Ambassadors, Curry and Zuël will use their platforms to inspire the next generation of golfers, while advocating for greater diversity and amplifying those initiatives designed to drive meaningful change in golf.

support its development – with a focus on nurturing future talent and creating pathways for young people to grow and thrive through golf.

The R&A will also engage with regional golf federations and affiliates to assess potential for expansion, provide support and build connections to ensure long-term impact.

This strategic approach aligns with The R&A’s global mission to broaden the appeal of golf to new audiences and grow the game’s sustainability and inclusivity.

Zuël added, “I’m incredibly proud to be part of this powerful collaboration between The R&A and UNDERRATED Golf.

“This partnership is about so much more than just golf, it’s about changing lives, creating opportunities and making sure every young person, no matter their background, can see a place for themselves in this sport.

“I’ve seen first-hand the impact UNDERRATED Golf has on young athletes, not just on the

course, but in how they see themselves and their futures.

“With The R&A’s support, we can reach even more young people, break down more barriers, and build a truly inclusive and exciting future for golf.”

One organisation that has seen the impact UNDERRATED Golf can have first hand is the Muslim Golf Association (MGA), which provided ten players to its European event at Walton Heath last year.

Founded by Amir Malik five years ago, the MGA provides an opportunity for Muslim men and women to enjoy golf in a “safe, inclusive and non-intimidating environment”.

It has also had huge success opening doors for new players through taster sessions for women, juniors and those with disabilities.

Malik was introduced to UNDERRATED Golf by Zuël at an LPGA event focusing on diversity and inclusion and she soon found a willing audience.





The 2025 UNDERRATED Golf European Tour continues at Fairmont St Andrews from 13-15 August. The championship features 48 boys and 48 girls and showcases emerging talent from across the continent. The winners will travel to the US to compete in the Curry Cup at Liberty National Golf Club.

Phil Anderton, Chief Development Officer at The R&A, said, "Our partnership with the UNDERRATED Golf Tour is an exciting step in continuing our mission to make golf more accessible, inclusive and appealing to a broader audience."

"We're inspired by the work Stephen Curry and the UNDERRATED Golf Tour have been doing and we believe by working together, we can connect with young people in meaningful ways, open up new pathways into the sport and provide opportunities for development, both on and off the course."

"We are also very much looking forward to working with Stephen and Henni in their roles as Global Golf Development Ambassadors for The R&A, as we work together to inspire the next generation of golfers around the world, and we're excited for the months to come."

"Henni asked if the MGA had any players that would be interested in taking part at Walton Heath," he said.

"It gave me a chance to really go out and uncover hidden talent and say, 'there is this amazing opportunity the MGA has been given, and I want you to be part of it'."

"I had to go and find these players and families and they were all devoted parents working in silo and trying to get their kids recognised at local, county or national competitions."

"When I reached out, I felt it was giving them a lifeline, a recognition and some support. They all snapped it up. We ended up with ten players – one girl and nine boys."

"It was an unbelievable opportunity and everyone was made to feel like a million dollars. I think the parents – possibly more so than the children – appreciated what was put on for them."

"The course, the setting – everything was done properly and professionally and as someone who puts on events, I looked and thought, 'I want to be a part of this. How can I take some of this and put it into my events?'"

"It was a brilliant and phenomenal experience."

To learn more about UNDERRATED Golf visit underrated.golf

Driving junior participation in Scotland.

The Unleash Your Drive programme is helping to establish a pathway between schools and golf clubs

Scottish Golf has developed a strategy that it hopes will bolster junior participation and safeguard the future of the sport in a country synonymous with golf.

With the latest golf club membership numbers showing a total of 25,837 junior members, making up 12.3% of the overall membership, the need to encourage more children into the sport is a key priority for the organisation.

In 2024, Scottish Golf, with investment from the Golf Foundation, established a Community Impact Manager position to engage with more diverse audiences from a broader range of backgrounds.



Alex Knight took on the role, which includes connecting new golfers to golf clubs within their communities. The clubs provide participation programmes, a player pathway, and the ability to tap into support from Scottish Golf to recruit, develop and retain players.

A key focus is the roll-out of the Golf Foundation's Unleash Your Drive programme in schools. Knight explained, "The programme

is designed to be delivered by teachers within curriculum time, introducing pupils to basic golf skills and mental toughness tools that contribute to the well-being curriculum.

"Schools can apply for fully funded packages that include a bag of adapted equipment for indoor and outdoor use, online training for teachers and class resources for the delivery of the six-week programme.

"The programme involves fun group chipping and putting games as well as mental toughness tools linking to confidence, concentration and resilience, all of which are transferable to other aspects of a child's life."

Scottish Golf is using the programme as a catalyst to get more juniors involved in the sport by developing school-to-golf-club links with all Unleash Your Drive schools. These links will differ depending on the schools and clubs involved, but encouraged activity includes lunchtime or after-school sessions, class visits to the club, coaching and membership offers to all pupils and promotion of these opportunities to parents.

Knight added, "This activity will help break down barriers to participation and will showcase



golf clubs as fun and welcoming environments for new golfers."

Scottish Golf is working closely with partners to ensure the roll-out is carried out in a planned and systematic way to maximise the impact of the programme on member golf clubs.

In addition to the Golf Foundation, schools and golf clubs, sportscotland's Active Schools network has played a role in promoting the programme to school contacts and bridges the gap between schools and golf clubs.

Tasked with increasing sport and physical activity levels within their school clusters, Unleash Your Drive is offering the potential for golf sessions to be run alongside extra-curricular activities such as football, hockey and dance on a wider scale to previous years.

In Active Schools monitoring figures from 2023-24, golf ranked as the 33rd sport in terms

of attendances at extra-curricular sessions, with fewer than 8,000 attendances out of a total of almost 5 million and only 46 school club links officially recorded across the country.

The aim is to increase the number of attendances, number of sessions and number of school club links over the next two years.

"Without effective partnership working, the roll-out of the programme would not have been so effective over the first academic year it was introduced in Scotland," said Knight.

"There are now 117 Scottish schools accepted onto the programme from a total of 21 local authority areas, some that were targeted directly by Scottish Golf and some that have come about through school or golf club enquiries as the word spreads about the programme and its potential to revive junior numbers."

As well as the curriculum delivery and the

school club links, Scottish Golf is working towards regular festival opportunities for participating schools, the first of which took place in Dundee in March 2025. Another focus is school competitions for all abilities, linking to the well-established and successful National Junior Framework utilised by Scottish golf clubs in large numbers, which comprises a package of off-the-peg programmes that can be implemented quickly by clubs who want to attract juniors.

Knight concluded: "The early signs are positive, and Scottish Golf is hopeful that over the next couple of golfing seasons, the trend in junior participation figures will be increasing across the country."

"Thanks to all the partners – schools, Active Schools, golf clubs and the Golf Foundation – that are contributing so effectively to this development work."



“This activity will help break down barriers to participation”



Community Impact Manager

In her role as Scottish Golf's Community Impact Manager, Alex Knight works with schools, Active Schools Coordinators, sports development teams and golf clubs to develop participation pathways making it as easy as possible for Unleash Your Drive participants from all backgrounds to take part in the sport beyond the initial school sessions.



Rolling out the CGI in Southeast Asia.

The roll-out of the Community Golf Instructor (CGI) programme in Southeast Asia is demonstrating the initiative's scalability

Building on the success of its initial pilot in Romania, the Community Golf Instructor (CGI) programme has expanded into Southeast Asia.

The initiative has been rolled out in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, forming part of a broader strategy to make the sport more accessible by training a new workforce of entry-level instructors who can help grow participation at the community level.



Project lead Gavin Forrester,

Manager – Golf Education at The R&A, said, "The main purpose of the trip was to deliver training to an

initial cohort of around 20 instructors in each country, and we're working with the federations to see where they can be deployed.

"For some it will be within schools, others within community programmes, but I think for a lot of them, the federations are wanting to run national beginner programmes for juniors, and this is a great workforce to do that."

A key learning from the Romania pilot was the importance of scalability and self-sustainability. Rather than continuing to send experts from the UK to deliver courses, The R&A is now identifying 'master tutors' within each region.

"We're looking at building capacity," Forrester explained. "Up until now, we've typically sent



Lessons from Romania

The pilot in Romania last September took the CGI to a country with only 2,400 registered golfers among a population of 19 million.

With just a handful of facilities, mostly clustered around the country's second-largest city of Cluj, golf remains a niche sport there – but the appetite for it is growing.

It was only last year that the capital, Bucharest, cut the ribbon on two new courses – Bucharest Golf Club and National Golf & Country Club.

The Romanian Golf Federation (FRG) recognised the value of running the CGI programme to help cultivate the workforce necessary to meet that rising demand and increase community engagement.

Vlad Florea, Vice President at the FRG, was full of praise for the impact the CGI is having in his country.

"We knew before we started that it could be something that would work very well here, but we didn't realise how good it would turn out to be – it's like a piece of the jigsaw that fitted perfectly," he said.

"There were some initiatives already running but it was hard to sustain them. In Romanian schools they have a Green Week every semester – a week of activities outside of the classroom – and, working with the Ministry of Education, we managed to put golf in the schedule.

"It's called Green Light to Golf and it was piloted in spring 2024, when over 2,000 juniors came to Theodora Golf Club near Cluj.

"There is also a sports festival every June when kids can try all different sports, and the golf clubs would bring their equipment and simulators, and the longest queue was always for kids wanting to try golf. We didn't have the workforce available to help them, but with the CGI programme, we are building that.

"The first generation of CGIs were people who got involved in one of those initiatives – Green Light to Golf, the sports festival or other activities promoting golf."



a couple of individuals from the UK – people involved in designing the CGI programme – to deliver training in each country. That's worked well to get things started, but it's not a sustainable long-term model.

"The aim is to make the programme scalable, so we've started identifying and recruiting what we call 'master tutors' from within each region. These are local individuals who will be trained to deliver CGI courses themselves, in their own countries.

"This approach means that in the future, they won't have to rely on The R&A sending someone

out – they'll have local expertise on hand. Our role will shift to supporting those tutors through mentoring and providing resources as they run their first few courses."

Underlining the benefits of developing that in-country resource, he added, "Having people who speak the local language and understand the culture is not only more effective, but also far more scalable in the long run."

Forrester also stressed that the programme would complement existing PGA coaching provisions within these federations, focussing on

CGI programme in brief

The CGI programme enables federations to create a dedicated workforce to help attract more people to the sport through the independent delivery of beginner programmes for juniors and adults.

CGIs can support the existing coaching workforce by extending their programme offerings at golf facilities and in the community. In addition, instructors can deliver programmes for facilities not serviced by a Qualified Coach/PGA Professional, ensuring new golfers are provided with an entry point into the sport.

beginner engagement to ultimately increase the pool of players and therefore bolster demand.

"We always coordinate with the PGA associations in each country," he said. "This joined-up approach is really important."

"The CGI programme is designed to create more opportunities for PGA professionals by increasing grassroots participation. Community Golf Instructors are focussed solely on entry-level, beginner activities – they're not trained to coach beyond that. Their role is to introduce new people to golf, generate interest and effectively bring more 'leads' into the game."

With the programme growing in scope and the foundations in place to broaden its reach further, there are plans in place to do just that.

"Our next step is to continue focussing on Southeast Asia, where we've started to build

some momentum," added Forrester. "After Romania, the team went out to the Philippines for a second round of delivery, and they gained valuable insights from that experience."

"This time, the approach has been more refined – we're really concentrating on identifying a small group of quality tutors."

"For example, Cambodia and Singapore have both requested CGI courses this year, and now that we've established local tutors in the region, we're well-positioned to support those requests."

"If we can successfully implement this regional model in Southeast Asia, the goal is to replicate it in other areas, such as Latin America or parts of Europe." ●

Email gavinforrester@randa.org to find out more about the CGI programme

Who is it for?

- Sports coaches/community leaders who would like to deliver a programme of golf
- An established player who has an interest in golf coaching as a future career
- An existing golfer/club volunteer who would like to get involved and upskill their knowledge to delivery programmes that will increase participation
- Educational institutions/local sports authorities with ambitions to deliver golf activity in schools and community settings





G4D Open: Strength in diversity.

The third G4D Open demonstrated the growing status
of the event and golf's power to champion diversity





R&A diversity ambassador Zane Scotland sees parallels between the thriving G4D Open and the growth of diversity within golf as a whole.

Scotland was at Woburn in May as Brendan Lawlor and Daphne van Houten both enjoyed their second success in the premier event on the G4D Tour.

It was the third edition of the Championship, and Scotland highlighted the strides it has made, drawing comparisons to the broader sport and noting golf's significant progress in becoming more inclusive of players from all backgrounds.

"The G4D Open has gone from strength to strength, and with the backing of The R&A and the DP World Tour, the G4D Tour will go from strength to strength," he said.

"That being said, we cannot get complacent and must build on this momentum – on the one hand to showcase the talent that was on show with the elite performers, but also for people who want to try golf and become a golfer.

"Sometimes I feel like I repeat myself and talk about how the game is wide enough to accommodate a wide range of cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and genders, but

About Zane Scotland

As an amateur, Scotland made a name for himself by becoming the youngest ever English golfer to qualify for The Open and earn a place in the Championship at Carnoustie in 1999. In the three years that followed he went on to win amateur championships and gain representative honours in the Great Britain and Ireland teams that won the St Andrews Trophy and Jacques L'eglise Trophy. In 2003, he turned professional, but a car crash resulting in a neck injury halted his progress. He recovered to earn a place on the European Tour and more recently has won ten times on the MENA Tour, the most by any player. He made his second appearance in The Open at St Andrews in 2010. He set up the Zane Scotland Academy to assist in coaching aspiring amateur and elite professional golfers and covers golf as a commentator with Sky Sports and the BBC.



Double delight for Lawlor and Van Houten

Brendan Lawlor and Daphne van Houten secured G4D Open victories for a second time after both eased to memorable successes at Woburn. Irishman Lawlor, who won the inaugural staging of the Championship in 2023, again lifted the men's trophy after a one-over-par final round of 73 for a 54-hole total of three-over 219 and a four-stroke win over Lachlan Wood from Australia. Van Houten enjoyed her own piece of G4D Open history as The Netherlands player defended the women's title she won 12 months earlier thanks to an 11-stroke victory over Germany's Jennifer Sråga after posting a 250 total.



when I think about it, that's because we still have a long way to go.

"There has been a shift over the last decade or so and it's trending in the right direction, but it's not at its destination yet."

In his role as a diversity ambassador, Scotland participated in a panel discussion, met with many of the players and took part in a PGA coach the coaches session.

"I left the week at Woburn feeling inspired and armed with new insight and information," he added. "There are so many people doing great things."

Although Scotland came to the sport at a young age, as a mixed-race person with a black father he was not immune to the participation barriers that can keep others away – and he is keen to use his position to help break those down for the next generation.

"It wasn't always straightforward going to a golf club," he said. "When I'd walk in with my dad, who's a black guy, you'd get 'the look'. I was fortunate to have a strong family who taught me how to deal with those situations.

“There are so many people doing great things”

"I think the fact these types of challenges exist has become quite apparent and The R&A is working to do something about it.

"They approached me asking if I could help to understand the challenges and connect with people from ethnically diverse communities to welcome them into golf.

"It's something I'm passionate about and it's pleasing to see it being made a priority by an organisation with the influence of The R&A." ●

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