

Case Study

Introducing Young People to Golf

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Introduction

Golf is a sport that can be fun and engaging for all generations and the game has a broad appeal on a number of levels. It's social, potentially competitive, good for your health and the handicap system allows players of

varying abilities to enjoy a game together. It's a sport that should appeal to people of all ages, but it continues to be a struggle to attract and retain young people to golf.

Factors encouraging young people to participate in sport

To encourage young people to play sport and to keep participating requires an understanding of youth and what influences and motivates them. There are several factors that influence young people to start playing a sport;

- **Introduction by parents and/or schools**
The influence of parents and schools plays an important role in the uptake of sport among young people. Engaging in a sport in a familiar, supportive environment kindles interest among youth and helps with the development of basic skills. Family and schools have been identified as the two main triggers that encourage young people to start golf.
- **Developing skills at a young age**
Developing skills at an early age helps young people become confident, positively influences participation and can encourage a lifelong love of sport. Children should have the opportunity to play a number of different sports to develop general athletic skills and build social relationships.
- **Appreciating sport as a spectator**
Many young people engage in sports they watch on television. Following their favourite players or teams and seeing them as sporting heroes or role models is an important factor in encouraging young people to be active in a sport.

The main factors that motivate young people to participate in sport are;

- **Enjoyment and social opportunities**
Sport that is 'non-competitive' is highly rated by young people because their primary goal is having fun, spending time with friends and doing the best they can.
- **Competition**
Around 20% of young people are motivated by winning and see sport as being competitive.
- **Health and fitness**
Young people view sport as a way to get fit, develop skills, establish an identity and balance the demands of academic work.

Golf in Schools

Canterbury Golf has designed a successful introductory golf programme specifically for delivery in a school environment. It provides a pathway for primary and intermediate school children to develop and learn fundamental golf skills. The Golf in Schools pathway offers a SNAG programme aimed at years 0-3 and a Getting Started Programme aimed at years 4-8 which are both delivered by trained golf presenters to ensure a fun and safe environment for the children.

The SNAG programme uses modified equipment that allows children to learn the basic skills required to play golf. Colourful oversize clubs, velcro targets and soft tennis like balls are used in a fun and interactive way and accelerate skill development providing an engaging and rewarding experience for children. Over the three-session programme, children build on the fundamental skills of putting, chipping and full swing with games incorporated into the sessions.

The Getting Started Programme transitions children into using age specific golf equipment. The first three sessions cover chipping, full swing and a game-based session. Session four is held at a local golf club allowing the children to try out their skills on the golf course playing a modified ambrose format. The opportunity to experience playing on a real course is a highlight for the children and reinforces the fun and social aspects of the game. This is also an opportunity for clubs to showcase what they have to offer and promote junior golf at their club.



- Golf in Schools was delivered to 3,935 children in Canterbury in 2017.
- 2,262 children in Canterbury experienced playing on a golf course through Golf in Schools in 2017.

After School Programmes

A key factor for Canterbury Golf in providing a quality pathway through the Golf in Schools programme and beyond is working with schools that are in proximity to golf clubs offering a structured junior programme. Canterbury Golf engages with those clubs and local golf professionals to run affordable 4-week after school programmes as a follow-on from the school programme. Canterbury Golf advertises the after school programme through the school newsletter and gives children a 'Golf in Schools' sticker upon completion of the school programme to raise awareness with parents that their child has experienced playing golf. This call to action helps children and parents maintain momentum by providing a next step without requiring an immediate commitment to junior membership or a longer-term coaching programme.

Both the Golf in Schools programme and delivery of affordable after school programmes are made possible by KiwiSport funding. "It's important that we continue to provide multiple programme and event opportunities for children to get involved in golf which develop the skills learnt from our Golf in Schools programme." said Golf Development Manager for Canterbury Golf Rachel Thow. "We are fortunate to have the continued financial support from KiwiSport funding which allows us to engage more young people in our sport."



Hororata Golf Club

Hororata Golf Club is an example of a club that has partnered successfully with Canterbury Golf to grow youth participation in its local community. The key person driving junior golf at Hororata Golf Club is Junior Convenor Pip Deans who was recently awarded Canterbury Golf Volunteer of the Year for her outstanding contribution to the game. Pip has proactively engaged with Canterbury Golf by attending the sessions at local schools to form an understanding of the programme and connect the school children to the golf club by being a familiar face when they arrive at session four to play on the course. "The Golf in Schools program has introduced a new sport to children that may never have had the opportunity to give golf a go." said Pip Deans. "It is extremely rewarding to work with young children from all walks of life, providing them with basic skills that will last a lifetime and then to see some of them grow into very proficient golfers. It also draws parents and grandparents into picking up golf clubs and having a go as well. These initiatives ensure the future of golf in our regions and it has been a privilege to be a part of that."



In 2018 Golf in Schools has been delivered to 300 children at two local primary schools with 149 children playing golf on the course at Hororata as part of the Getting Started programme. After school follow-on programmes and other community events at the club have proved to be an effective feeder into regular coaching and on-course sessions for young people. Being located in a rural area with a small population, Hororata Golf Club recognises the need to engage all generations to ensure a sustainable future for golf in their community. This approach is paying off with year on year increases in overall membership and a growing junior golf programme.

Conclusion

There is genuine interest in our sport among young people, but we should be aware that the journey from introducing them to the game and then developing them into golfers requires a long-term approach. Programmes like Golf in Schools are giving young people the opportunity to experience golf and help raise awareness that golf can be fun, social and

accessible for all ages. It's up to clubs to create an environment that welcomes young people, provides them with a sense of belonging and gives them an opportunity to develop their skills.

