

R&A

Developing Golf.

Sharing best practice for the benefit of the sport

ISSUE
seven



A framework for diversity and inclusion

How England Golf are aiming to lead the way
on changing perceptions about the game

“ No matter how far you wish to progress in or with the sport, we want to be there to support you with passion and guidance. ”

– Jeremy Tomlinson

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Annual Review 2022

Our annual review for affiliates is now available to read – [click here](#)

About Developing Golf magazine

Developing Golf magazine is a key element of the golf development alliance we wish to create 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





England Golf's ED&I Framework: The path to a more inclusive sport.

Golf is a sport that should be open to all and England Golf is playing its part in making that vision a reality

A series of horizontal, wavy lines in a light orange color at the bottom of the page, creating a sense of motion and design.



The English
Amateur
Championship
2023



Danny Hennessey at the
English Open for Golfers
with a Disability 2023





England Golf CEO
Jeremy Tomlinson

England Golf's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Framework is helping to break down barriers and push the sport forward.

Jeremy Tomlinson is the organisation's Chief Executive Officer and he recognises the vital importance of making golf a truly inclusive game for all.

Can you explain the key principles of England Golf's ED&I Framework?

JT: The key principle of our ED&I Framework is to provide an influence and support guide to clubs, counties and facilities at all levels of amateur golf in England.

We simply must progress as an inclusive sport of today, championing the provision of equal opportunities for anyone and everyone who wishes to participate in golf – with of course the key message that there is no place in golf for any form of discrimination.

What are some of the barriers that have been identified as problematic for inclusivity in golf?

Like most sports, golf is not perfect, and we do

have challenges which we need to overcome. A lot of those challenges are perceptions of golf and many of those are long-held or historical, such as golf predominantly being a sport for old people, for old men, or for the wealthy.

It also revolves around people not wanting to go to golf clubs because they're perceived as 'stuffy' places with too many rules. Some people also think it's too expensive, that it takes too long to play, or it's too difficult to play. These perceptions exist because this is how golf has been portrayed and promoted for many years, not least by the media, so for people's thoughts about golf to change, then how it is presented must change too.

Most golfers are not reflective of the aged perceptions. You may have heard me state before that there are more good people involved in golf, in its leadership and in influential positions, than ever before. At England Golf, we care greatly about how golf engages with millions of people in many ways. Whether it's the driving range, adventure golf, a pitch and putt or a short course, if golf touches you in any way, then that's great!

Players at the
English Amateur
Championship in 2021



“ We are supporting a long-term cultural change in golf and how it is perceived. ”

And no matter how far you wish to progress in or with the sport, we want to be there to support you with passion and guidance.

Addressing our challenges head-on, we want our sport to move on from its many bad perceptions, that it is not open to change, not progressive in its thinking, or that it's too complex to be fun.

Those of us involved within the sport know that, despite its flaws, it is progressive, it is fun and it's certainly good for your health, both mentally and physically.

What do you hope will be the outcomes of introducing this framework?

Clearly the outcome we are targeting is increased participation from underrepresented groups. We have to champion success stories that help raise the visibility of diversity within the sport and help others recognise that golf can be a sport for them. It is imperative that we celebrate all the good in the game to inspire future generations.

We'd like to see people from all walks of life enjoying golf, in whatever form that might be.

We want people to feel comfortable when they pick up a club, recognising and enjoying the physical and mental benefits that the sport provides, and for golf to play a more prominent role in the community.

Having embedded our inclusivity ethos in all we do, we are supporting a long-term cultural change in golf and how it is perceived, consequently improving all access pathways to participation.

Can you tell us how the Respect In Golf movement embodies England Golf's mission to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment?

Respect in Golf runs through the heart of everything we do at England Golf on a daily basis.

Respect in Golf means that anybody, who is or wants to participate in golf in any way, shape, or form, feels that they are cared for and treated fairly, and are encouraged to progress further in the game without worry or concern that they're not welcome.

Respect in Golf isn't just words, it is a call to action for all who love our sport. ●

Robin Tiger
Williams, right, at
the English Amateur
Championship in 2018



A vision of golf as a truly inclusive sport

JT: Golf as a truly inclusive sport needs to show it deserves a different narrative from prior negative perceptions, by engendering a positive experience at all levels, with all different types of people, no matter of age, gender, background, or ability. Everyone must be recognised and see golf as a sport for them.

We want to help golf clubs inspire and support communities, not only through providing participation opportunities, but by promoting a greater health and social influence. Whether someone wants to reach the very top of the game, just become a regular club member, a recreational golfer, or simply just taking the family for a round of adventure/mini golf – we would love as many people as possible to be touched by golf in some way.

Likewise, with clubs and other golf facilities, it's about continually working hard to engender a welcoming culture, so that people from all walks of life can feel there is an opportunity for them to be part of and enjoy the game.

Crucially, this means taking a harder line than ever before in stamping out discrimination of any kind, at any place, at any time.



“ There is
no place in golf
for any form of
discrimination.
”

Taylor Johnson
enjoys a golf
session with
Paul Aitkens at
Victoria School,
Birmingham

Jerome at the
AGLF Forum



Meet The R&A team: Jerome Ng.

The R&A's Director of Business Development on his golf background and vision for the future





Jerome Ng joined The R&A in 2021 after being drawn in by the opportunity to make an impact on the sport he loves.

A talented golfer himself, Jerome serves as Director of Business Development and is someone who takes great pride in his work.

Tell us about your background

I played golf from a young age and represented the Singapore national team at an elite level for more than 12 years, including while still doing my university degree and serving my national service.

My first job was in a Malaysian bank, but I was there less than a year when I got my calling back to golf.

I became part of the High-Performance Team at the Singapore Golf Association, working on the elite transitional pathway with national athletes and youth athletes.

Then I took over as High-Performance Manager, before becoming General Manager of the Singapore Golf Association. During my tenure, we won our historic team gold medal and subsequently individual gold medal at the South East Asian games. I hold a strong belief that we should develop people before golfers.

Describe your current role

I spend a lot of time with the Golf Development team, embedded in there, working closely with my colleagues in St Andrews and our regional teams and other regional directors.

There is a huge collaborative effort among a lot of people with a wealth of capability, passion and experience in the team.

My role involves spending time to get to know people, understanding them and hearing the experiences of the regions the teams are overlooking, and to develop an 'investment' approach with our affiliates to collectively ensure our sport remains thriving in the future.

As a team, we strive to be the catalyst of growth in golf internationally, leveraging on the assets we create to facilitate growth in golfer numbers and frequency of play across all formats of the sport. One of my main focuses is the Global Development Alliance, extrapolating and leveraging best practices in different ways to reduce duplication and multiply impactful and proven programmes or initiatives around the world. Then there is the affiliate portal, which we're putting a lot of work into with the technology team. The portal will be a central business marketplace for The R&A with our affiliates and other external

stakeholders, possess CRM capabilities to record and update activities, transaction and insights for effective data collection. This includes access to a library of resources and newsroom, support and administering grants, promotional and administration of events and more.

There's also an emphasis on promotion and participation, aiming to attract new audiences and encourage new golfers to play more golf. At the same time, we want to encourage those who play golf on alternative or off-course facilities to play on-course. The successful Golf and Health campaign is a great example of how we should proactively share and promote the benefits of golf. Our Golf.Golf digital platform pilot in Scotland provides an easy-to-use searchable list of all participating venues. Prospective players – from beginners to those who want to pick up the sport again – can use the platform to find their local venue and book sessions directly. Prices are set at an affordable rate so that cost barriers are reduced and venues can get involved at no cost and benefit from attracting an untapped source of first-time golfers. Golf.Golf is also being supported by The R&A's development ambassadors, who include tennis commentator and former player Daniela Hantuchová, singer songwriter Niall Horan, footballer Gareth Bale, cricketer Kevin Pietersen and golfer Michelle Wie West. We need to be actively promoting our sport and its benefits and become golf's greatest storyteller. Indeed, Golf is good!

A lot of it comes down to the question: what does the future look like? Not just externally, but internally. And we want to shape that by aligning the right business processes to help us achieve the impact we're after.

Technology advances all the time, but it's important for us not to just do things for the sake of doing them; we need to see that alignment with the overall strategy and, at the same time, it should enable us to be a lot more productive and as a team so effective that we can actually do more for the game of golf.

How would you summarise the value of The R&A?

As a kid growing up in Asia, The R&A brand was synonymous with The Open and the Rules of Golf. That brand and identity has evolved and encompasses so much more and its scope is much greater. It has a global footprint and much valued legacy.

And it's not just about providing investment in places and hoping it'll go well; it's more akin to planting a seed and nurturing it, creating the



“I'm just so thankful that I'm able to do something that I love and have passion for.”

environment for it to grow and flourish – this is what The R&A does with the game of golf around the world.

There is an emphasis on making sure the sport is appealing, inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible. It's also about empowering stakeholders, extrapolating the good that we do, learning from the experiences that we've had and ensuring that the sport is going to be in a better place in the years to come.

What do you enjoy about your job?

I'm just so thankful that I'm able to do something that I love and have passion for.

I remember the time when I had to hand in my resignation letter to the bank so I could head back to the golf scene, and my boss at that time told me, 'Look, at the end of the day, not many people find a job they really love doing'.

I'm not saying that it doesn't have its own challenges, because every job has its own challenges to a certain extent, but it could certainly be a lot worse.

And it's also like a big family when you work

in golf. You meet people, you talk with different stakeholders and they're so passionate about the sport – of course, sometimes you disagree and debate, but that's healthy because it helps create fresh ideas and discover new ways of going forward. ●

Jerome's perfect weekend

My perfect weekend would definitely include a good, long session in the gym. I'd have some time in church for self-reflection and pray for my family and loved ones back home in Singapore. I'd also include some reading and watching some television dramas. But I would definitely like to squeeze in a round of golf on any weekend if I can.

Boosting the game with roving golf pros.

Case Study

The Golf Union of Iceland has seen a number of benefits as a result of rolling out The R&A's Roving Pro programme to smaller clubs



“The Roving Pro programme has been beneficial in working with all the smaller clubs to focus on juniors.”

With around two-thirds of the golf clubs in Iceland not having a regular professional, the Golf Union of Iceland knew it needed to provide some support to those clubs, which are mainly based outside the capital region. With the help of The R&A, they introduced the Roving Pro programme, which sees PGA Professionals travel to clubs around the country to introduce juniors and new golfers to the game at two-day golf events.



We spoke to **Brynjar Eldon Geirsson**, General Manager of the Golf Union of Iceland, and



Olafur Bjorn Loftsson, Sports Director for the Golf Union of Iceland and National Coach, about the success of the programme.

Why did the Golf Union of Iceland introduce the Roving Pro programme?

BEG: We have 60-plus golf clubs and around 40 of them don't have a PGA Professional working on a regular basis. Most of the pros are in the Reykjavik area, and they would travel to two or three golf clubs every year to help out, but it wasn't strategic or consistent. They would just do half a day, and the members would buy all the time up, so there was no time for the kids or new members. We tried to spot our weakest areas, where clubs needed help and had a hard time finding pros and knowledge, and we started to think how can we help those smaller clubs to build up juniors and new members.

How does it work and has it been successful?

BEG: It's been going really well. We connect the PGA Pro to a golf club for what we call a golf day, that is actually two days, and they work with kids and members there, get some knowledge on board and give tips. It is basically an open house. We saw the downsides of just focusing on one group – when it was just juniors, we saw parents that had an interest in trying out golf just sitting in the parking lot. So we thought, 'why not just invite everybody?' Our goal is to deliver four to six days like that every year in our weakest areas.

How has the programme helped to increase junior participation in Iceland?

OBL: I think 90 per cent of all the national squad players come from the big clubs so the Roving Pro programme has been beneficial in working with all the smaller clubs to focus on juniors during the golf days and we see a lot of potential. One of the downsides for juniors in the capital



Golf in Iceland

62

golf clubs

23,300

registered golfers

15%

of golfers are children
and teenagers

67%

of golfers are male

>100

guests expected at each
Roving Pro golf event

region is that golf courses are packed with members, so they struggle to get on. In the other 40 clubs around the country, you can play as much as you want and you can play 24 hours. So it's really easy for us to put the emphasis on the juniors when we have the Roving Pros turning up.

What is it about the Roving Pro format that appeals to junior golfers?

BEG: We have a great set-up of different stations that you get to try in a fun, guided way. Really, it's trying to get them on the golf course, so they can play holes while the golf course is shut. You can just walk to the 2nd green and experiment, if you want to try a bunker shot, go ahead. This is an advantage of going to those smaller areas, it's easy to shut an entire golf course. We also have a lot of great golf gifts and a barbecue, it's a great event in every way.

Has the Roving Pro helped to discover junior players with potential?

OBL: We're not trying to get to that elite



programme until the age of 14 or 15, but what we need is more kids from all around the country to be active at the age of 11, 12 and 13, just before we take that step of picking out the best players who want to pursue this as their dream.

So, I think this helps let them know that anything is possible.

What other benefits have come from the Roving Pro programme?

BEG: The golf clubs can invite a local person to come to the golf day and learn to teach the basics - build them up to become a future pro at that area.

OBL: What's been really positive is the support of the Golf Union to new professionals from those areas outside Reykjavik. So, we've been giving financial support to future pros to study the PGA programme.

Two years ago, we graduated two or three pros from those areas but in the current graduating class, we have closer to ten from across the country.

Has The R&A supported the Golf Union of Iceland with any other programmes?

OBL: Through conversations with The R&A, we started the GolfSixes programme that we're planning to do in simulators for the first time in the winter. It's never been tried before in golf simulators, but we have one of the greatest TrackMan facilities in the world and we just discussed how we should try GolfSixes indoors as an extra opportunity.

We're really hopeful this is something that we can do all around the country.

It helps to meet with The R&A and talk about what we are doing and feed off ideas from other countries.

BEG: I told The R&A we needed knowledge about how to teach people with disabilities and they connected us with EDGA (the European Disabled Golf Association), who've got a programme for pros to teach golf to people with disabilities.

We get really good knowledge and financial support from The R&A. ●

R&A



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