

# THE NEW GOLFER JOURNEY YEAR 1



NEW2GOLF  
BACK2GOLF

# THE NEW GOLFER JOURNEY

In 2016, GDW talked to new and lapsed golfers taking part in New2Golf and other beginner coaching programmes in 9 of our clubs, to find out how they felt about their progress, what was important to them, and how clubs could best support them in their golfing journey.

From their responses, we've put together some guidance which we hope all clubs will find helpful.



# BEFORE THEY START . . .

The majority of participants heard about the programme through word of mouth -

so encourage your club members to spread the word! Print some flyers for them to give to family, friends, work colleagues, fellow gym members, local coffee shops .....



## SOME BIG CONCERNS THAT CLUBS CAN ADDRESS WERE;

### What to wear

(even if assured there was no dress code for beginners, they didn't want to look inappropriately dressed).

How about putting some photos of previous N2G groups on your website or flyer to show what people wear?



### Equipment

Make it clear on your website/ Facebook/flyer and any other printed material that golf equipment is all provided!



Finding

Around

Way

Clear signposting is a must!  
A new golfer may not even know what a driving range looks like.





# IN COACHING . . .

Of course your PGA Professional/Coach will be patient, positive and encouraging!

Here are some other things beginners liked:



**Integration of the 'science' and 'theory' of golf with the coaching and practice of the skills**

**Continuity of coaching – same coach each week**

**Use of technology – video analysis, e-mailing lessons so they could practise at home**

**Social interaction, e.g. having coffee together in clubhouse after lesson**



However they weren't so keen on mixed groups (beginners and improvers, or adults and children) – so consider the make-up of the group carefully.

# ON THE COURSE

Your PGA Professional's approach and the nature of your course and facilities may determine when beginners first go on the course during a lesson. But going on the course to practise outside of lesson times is totally different – beginners talk about feeling 'intimidated', 'daunted', 'nervous' or upsetting others, and their lack of knowledge on rules and etiquette such as letting people play through. Some even practised elsewhere due to apprehension about going out on the club course!

## SO WHAT HELPS DIMINISH THESE FEELINGS?



# MEMBERSHIP

**HOW CAN CLUBS MAKE IT MORE LIKELY THAT THE BEGINNER WILL CONTINUE IN MEMBERSHIP?**

**Offer a menu of membership options.**

Your new golfers could;

Be Retired

Be working full time

Be working shifts

only be able to play in school hours

need the flexibility of a points membership

How can you provide good value membership for each?

By providing a 2 to 3 year structured pathway, including continued coaching, from trial to full membership

By giving new golfers an informative membership pack - info on membership options, weekly club programme, club contacts, golfing etiquette, etc.





# INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING MEMBERS

The majority of beginners don't just want to learn to play golf, they want to be part of the club. But getting to know existing members can be difficult if clubs don't help: new golfers appreciate all efforts made by clubs to include them in activities and introduce them to others. Some suggestions:

A beginners' welcome evening

Organising tea/coffee with members after lessons

Buddying/mentoring from club members, including previous New2Golf participants who may understand best how a beginner feels

Fun competitions where groups comprise at least one member and at least one beginner (adapt rules/scoring to ensure beginner plays a part in the team)

Encouraging members to take the initiative to talk to new golfers in the clubhouse – without being too pushy about joining, handicaps, etc.

Encouraging members to consider new golfers if they have second-hand clubs to sell/give away

A member (or rota of members) helping with beginner coaching



# PROGRESSION

A progression ladder – how fast new golfers climb will depend on their reasons for playing, ambitions, and the time they have available. Better to encourage steady progress than push them too hard and see them fall off the ladder and out of the club!

But even if some currently aspire only to step 2 or 3, once they get there they may have the confidence to climb higher!



High competitive ambitions	8
Competitive ambitions	7
Getting a handicap	6
Looking forward to getting a handicap in future	5
Confidence and competence to play golf anywhere / with anyone	4
Confidence and competence to play in club and/or with family and friends	3
Able to play club course competently	2
Master basic golf skills	1



# ANYTHING ELSE?

Here are a few more things new golfers asked for; your club is probably doing some of them already, but there may be others you could consider:

More advice on equipment/clothing, more availability of ladies' equipment/clothing in the pro shop – otherwise, discount arrangements with local stockists.

More dialogue between PGA professional/coaching staff and club management so management have a better idea of new golfers' needs.

Monthly socials for all new golfers

More information on handicaps (including 9 hole options)

'Starter sets' of golf clubs available to buy

Reciprocal arrangements with other clubs for New2Golf participants to play at a reduced rate.

Weekend course time available for new golfers

More consistent communication channels - e-mail, text, Facebook or What's App, whichever works best – ask the group!



# FINALLY....

The new golfers we spoke to described golf as ...



They want to continue playing and progressing – your club is an important part of their golfing journey!

**We're going back to talk to them in 2017 and will keep you updated with new insights!**