

SECTION 3

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

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- WHY DO JUNIOR GOLFERS LEAVE THE GAME
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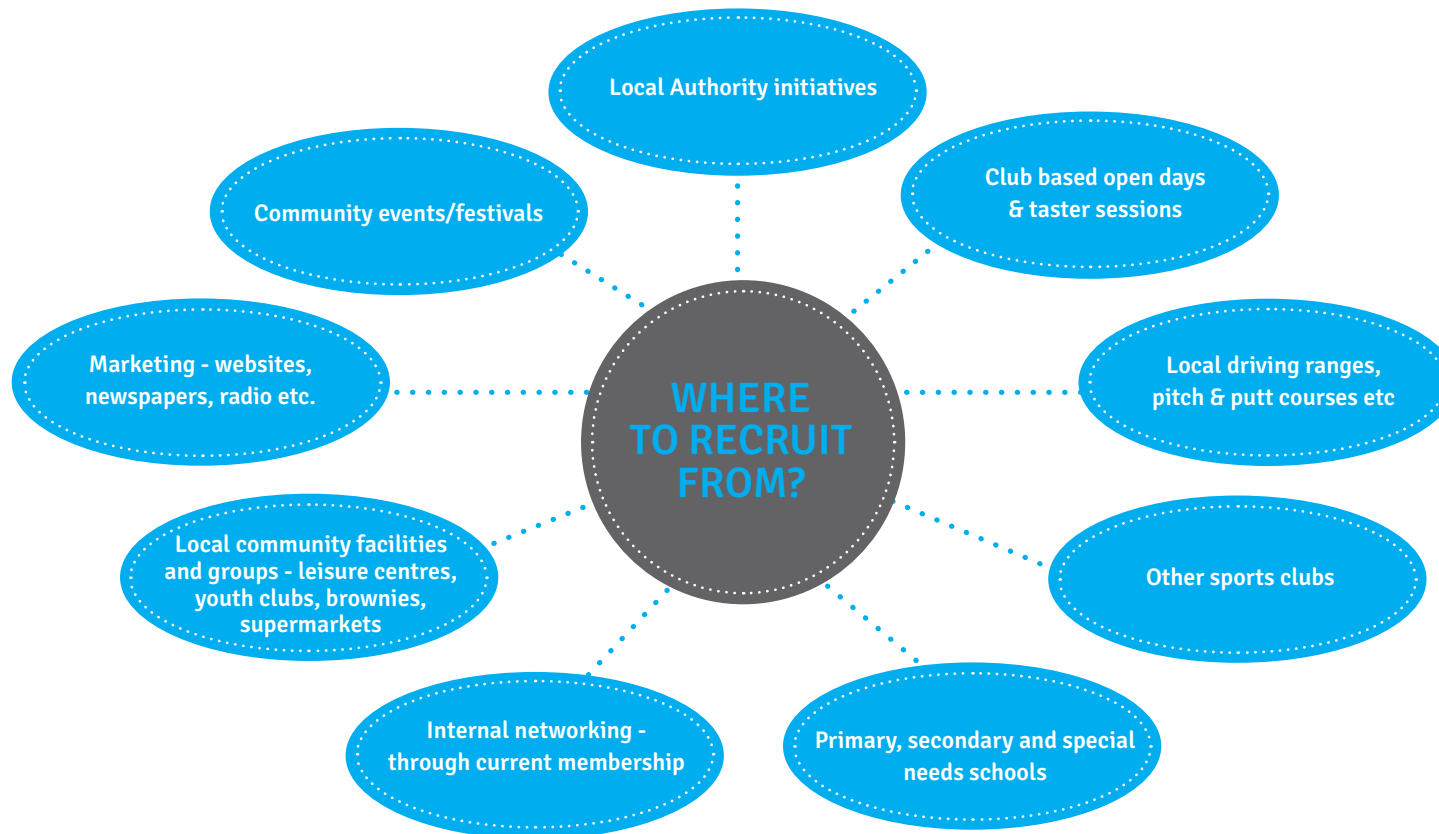
INTRODUCTION

The recruitment (including induction) and retention of juniors is arguably the most important and challenging role of the Junior Section. Juniors need to be given the best possible start to their golfing experience in an environment which will allow them to develop their skills. Once recruited, juniors will then need to be given a good welcome and induction. As well as this it is important to offer group lessons, fun and competitive playing opportunities and social events to support their continued participation both in the game and at the golf club.

Golf is a popular sport and with the increased profile and positive role models, there are more youngsters who

want to experience the game and therefore golf clubs must look at the different recruitment options and ideas which can be implemented. Promotion within the existing membership may no longer provide a sufficient number of juniors.

The retention of young people is also essential and golf clubs need to consider ways in which they can retain junior members into adult membership, or at least ensure they keep playing the game and perhaps return to membership in the future.



RECRUITMENT PATHWAYS

LOCAL AUTHORITY INITIATIVES

Some local authorities offer golf specific activity as part of their sports development plans. Contact your Local Authority Sports Development Officer for more information.

CLUB BASED ACTIVITY

By running open days and taster sessions golf clubs are able to open themselves up to new participants. These participants should be made to feel at ease within the golf club environment to provide them with a good experience and to support their continued participation. Follow on opportunities and structured coaching packages should always be offered to support those looking to take up the game.

LOCAL DRIVING RANGES & SHORT COURSES

For many beginners, this can be their first taste of golf and where they feel most comfortable, therefore golf clubs should not only see them as an ideal place to recruit beginners from, but they can also look to create a reciprocal link with a local facility to work in partnership with.

OTHER SPORTS CLUBS

Other sports clubs provide a good source of juniors who already enjoy sport. Golf clubs may be able to work in partnership with other sports clubs to promote each other's opportunities or even hold a multi sports taster day.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

Working with local schools can be an effective way of attracting more juniors into the golf club and engaging with the community. Activities can be offered in schools using the adapted equipment such as Tri-Golf, Street Golf and Golf Xtreme. GDW is able to support golf clubs in creating partnerships with local schools ([see Section 9 for details](#)).

INTERNAL NETWORKING

Promotion within the golf club is probably the easiest and most cost effective way to recruit juniors, however golf clubs should not solely rely on this method. Incentives can be offered to those members who introduce new participants to the golf club. How about trying a bring-a-friend to a junior coaching session/event?

LOCAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND GROUPS

Local leisure centres, doctors surgeries, businesses and super markets etc. may be willing to promote opportunities on their notice boards and perhaps develop reciprocal arrangements. Clubs could also work with local groups such as youth clubs, brownies etc to provide fun taster opportunities.

MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

Advertising doesn't necessarily have to be expensive such as more traditional methods like placing adverts in newspapers and on local radio. Adverts can be added to the club's website, the Golf Union Wales & Golf Development Wales websites. A very inexpensive and popular way to advertise is through

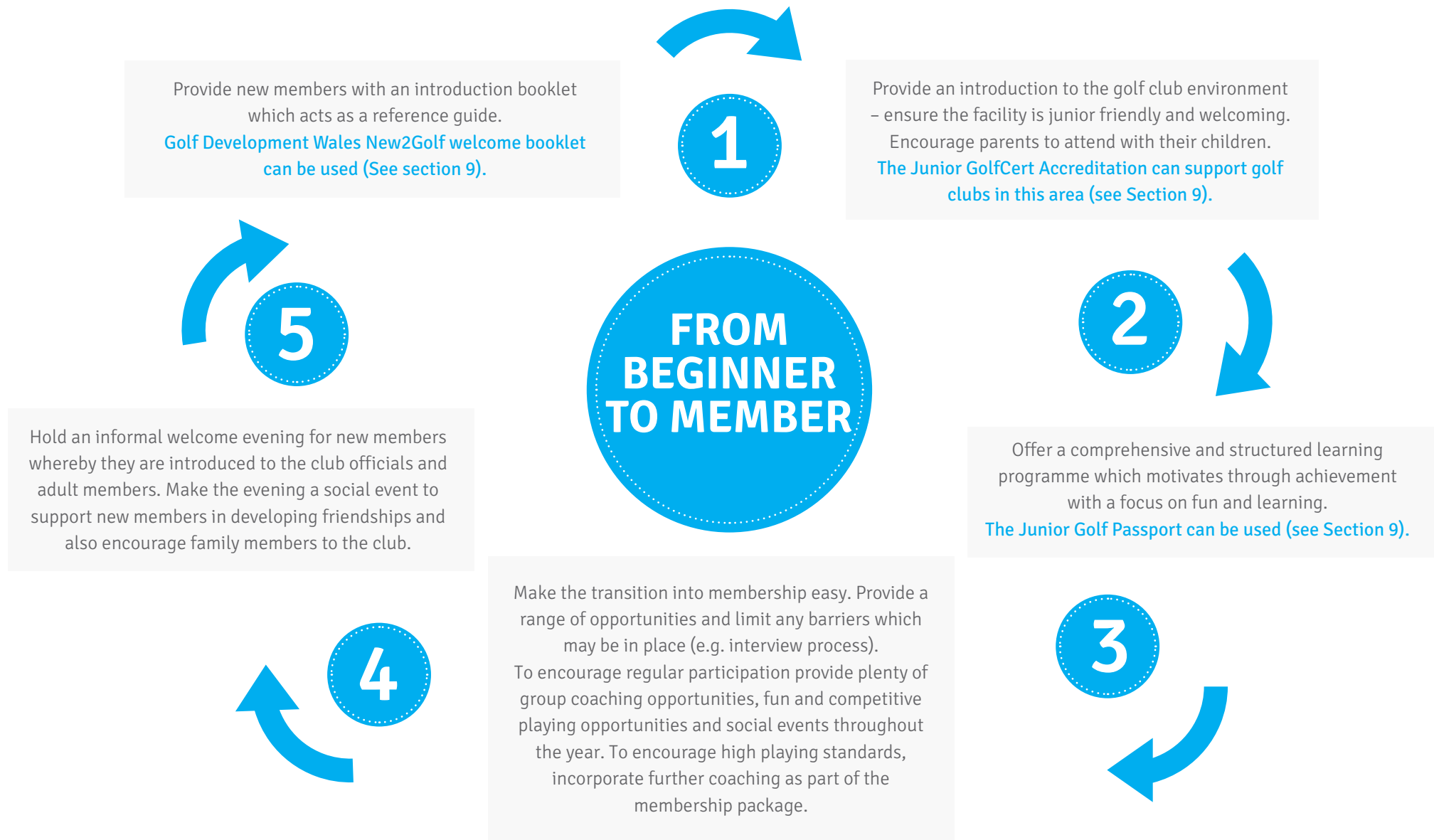
social media, for example, Facebook & Twitter. GDW have also electronic and hard copy versions of marketing posters to attract a wide range of participants available free of charge to clubs.

COMMUNITY EVENTS / FESTIVALS

This is a great cost effective way to promote your club and give a taste of golf to potential members outside the club environment. Clubs have access to the use of Golf Development Wales inflatable nets, equipment and mascots which maybe used for any local community, county or club events.

Question WHAT RECRUITMENT PATHWAYS EXIST AT YOUR GOLF CLUB AND WHEN WHERE THEY LAST REVIEWED?

WELCOMING JUNIORS INTO THE GOLF CLUB

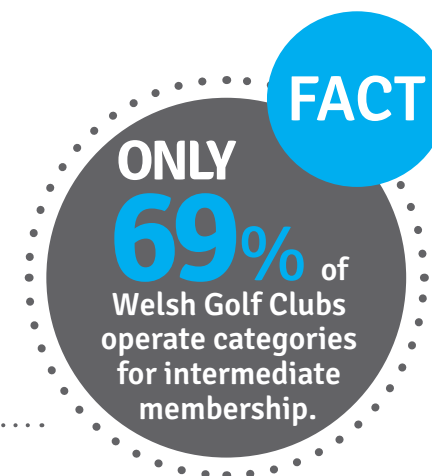


INDUCTION BOOKLET / HANDBOOK

It is good practice to provide all junior members with an induction booklet or handbook, which will act as a reference guide and will support them to feel at ease within the golf club environment. This booklet should include the following:

- Contact numbers for club officials
- Dress code guidelines
- Competition dates and times
- Competition regulations
- Details of the coaching programme
- How to obtain a handicap
- Rules of golf and etiquette guidelines
- How to fill in a scorecard correctly
- Junior committee structure (if appropriate).
- Rules of the golf club
- What a junior should commit to (expected coaching/completion attendance).
- Junior code of conduct
- Club Safeguarding Officer details

Contact GDW for good practice examples of junior welcome booklets if required. A generic 'Securing The Future Booklet' – a resource on the recruitment and retention of golfers is also available to purchase ([see Section 9 for details](#)).



WHY DO JUNIOR GOLFERS LEAVE THE GAME

Which of these factors can your club have an influence on?

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| • EDUCATION – GOING TO COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY | • BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND GETTING MARRIED |
| • STARTING A FAMILY | • PEER PRESSURE |
| • FINANCIAL PRESSURES – BUYING A HOUSE/CAR ETC | • NO LONGER HAVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM FAMILY |
| • LIMITED COACHING & COMPETITIVE OPPORTUNITIES IN ADULT MEMBERSHIP | • STARTING A CAREER |
| • MOVING AWAY FROM HOME | • COMPETITION FROM OTHER SPORTS |
| • PERCEPTION & IMAGE OF GOLF & CLUB MEMBERSHIP | • TIME CONSTRAINTS OF PLAYING GOLF |
| • HIGH MEMBERSHIP FEES & TRANSITIONAL FEES | • CLUB RULES & RESTRICTIONS |

SUPPORTING THE RETENTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

It is not just the retention of junior members that golf clubs need to address, looking after golfers once they reach 18 years of age is also vital to ensure they maintain their relationship with the golf club and continue to play.

BELOW ARE SOME QUESTIONS FOR GOLF CLUBS TO CONSIDER:

- Is there appropriate coaching provision?
- Are there a range of competitive opportunities for all abilities?
- Is there a smooth transition from junior to adult membership categories – intermediate packages, staggered fees?
- How attractive are the membership packages – do they include ample use of the facilities, different payment methods and social activities? Are they competitive? How do they compare to neighboring clubs or national average?
- Does the golf club offer a range of membership categories to suit different lifestyles?
- Does the club offer inclusive opportunities for all juniors irrespective of disability (see section 8 for more details).
- Do you run girls only beginner sessions? Some girls may prefer this to start before they gain the confidence to play golf with junior boys.
- Is a transitional fee necessary?
- When were the club rules and regulations last reviewed?
- Do they need updating? Are they equitable?
- Does the golf club have a development plan incorporating junior golf, which gives the golf club direction and continuity?
- Does the golf club consult with junior members and their parents to gather their thoughts on what will encourage them to remain within membership?
- Is there sufficient funding for the junior section to support a range of activities?
- Are all sections of the golf club working together to support junior members and players?
- Why not run a bring a friend week or session?
- Are there a variety of playing opportunities throughout the year (both fun and competitive)?
- Does the golf club run events, both golf and social, for friends and family of juniors?

IDEA

Recruit a retention officer to work with the junior organiser and professional to create a list of juniors who they have not seen in 2 months. Their role is to contact individuals to source the reason why they have not been to the club and find a solution to get them to participate again. It may be as simple as arranging a game for them.

CASE STUDY

Paeswood & Buckley Golf Club

Successful approach to recruitment & retention

To recruit juniors the club communicated with the local Primary and Secondary Schools explaining with the aim to introduce as many 8-11 year olds to the game and give them an opportunity to learn golf.

The club formed working relationships with the Head Teachers the local authority 5x60 officer which helped to promote the club initiatives. Developing the relationship with the Head Teachers has been crucial in getting access to the schools.

6 one hour coaching sessions were delivered at the schools and those children keen to continue we offered the opportunity to visit the driving range and golf club. With support and funding from Golf Development Wales the club offered lessons and introductory membership to the club. A tiered academy programme was offered based on age and experience which gives the juniors a structure and goals to work towards.

Within a year the club successfully introduced golf to over 200 children and have recently started working with children with learning difficulties.

The club now have a thriving junior section with 50 members and the club regularly see over 20 juniors playing in club competitions and representing the club. The Boys National Champion at U18 level and a girls U18 International our also members of the junior section.

“It is great to see such a thriving junior section at Padeswood & Buckley Golf Club, this is great for the club and for golf in general for Wales. Hopefully one day producing the next Major Champions!”



“ Building good relationships with the Head teachers has been crucial in getting repeated access to the schools. ”

Tony Davies, Mark Wilcock & Ian Rowlands
PGA PROFESSIONAL
PAESWOOD & BUCKLEY GOLF CLUB

SUMMARY

There are a number of different recruitment avenues that golf clubs can experiment with, including reaching out into the local community, creating links with schools and developing relationships with local clubs and facilities.

What works for one golf club may not be as effective for another and therefore it is important to try different methods.

Once juniors have experienced golf, they should be given an opportunity to continue their participation, including regular playing opportunities both fun and competitive and a variety of social events to include friends and family.

Through structured coaching programmes at welcoming environments, non members will hopefully develop their skills and take up membership opportunities, which complemented by a thorough induction and welcome will retain them within the golf club.

All sports experience a drop off in players once they reach 18 years of age and golf is not immune, however by carefully considering the needs and requirements of these golfers there may be an opportunity to limit this and ensure they return to the sport and hopefully the golf club at a later age.

Further support and guidance can be found on the Golf Development Wales website (see Section 9 for details).

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