

SECTION 4

MEMBERSHIP & COST

- WHAT MAKES A GOOD MEMBERSHIP PACKAGE?
- MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES
- MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS
- ADDITIONAL FEES
- CASE STUDY
- SUMMARY



INTRODUCTION

Junior golfers are the future of the game and therefore every opportunity should be taken by golf clubs to ensure they welcome these young people into membership, without placing any unnecessary barriers, financial or other.

Golf can often be PERCEIVED as expensive in comparison to other sports and it is the responsibility of the golf club to ensure they are promoting a range of packages which do not restrict participation. With a high proportion of golf clubs having junior vacancies, competition is great and parents/guardians will look for membership offers that

provide the best value for money.

Although the income obtained through the junior section only accounts for a small proportion of the overall golf club income, it is important to remember that these members are the potential adult paying members of the future and it is therefore essential to ensure they have a quality experience of the game at junior level. Through juniors, there are also opportunities to recruit family members and their friends.



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Below are some examples of different Junior Membership packages, all of which can be adapted and re-named to suit an individual golf club's requirements (some of the categories do overlap):

TRIAL MEMBERSHIP

This type of package is beneficial for the potential member and parents as it gives them an opportunity to experience the golf club (without having to financially commit) for a limited amount of time. A nominal fee can be charged that should include coaching and playing opportunities.

INTRODUCTORY/ACADEMY MEMBERSHIP

Usually run for a limited period of time (between 3 and 12 months), this package would include regular coaching and use of some facilities (for example, a short course), all helping to encourage a new player into membership. Some golf clubs offer this type of package to younger players prior to junior membership with emphasis on game based activities utilising adapted equipment.

SHORT COURSE/PAR 3 MEMBERSHIP

Golf clubs that have a short course or pitch & putt course can offer a specific package whereby members can access this course, receive coaching and use the golf club facilities. This is ideal for juniors, beginners and families who are not ready to play on the main course yet, but want some form of playing opportunity. GUW also offer course ratings for short formats within existing 18 hole golf courses.

6 OR 9 HOLE MEMBERSHIP

Although not possible at all golf clubs, this is appealing as it gives juniors the opportunity to play in a shorter timescale. This again may be more appealing to a family, who may struggle to justify committing to full membership due to time constraints and playing other sports.

JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP

The junior package should include a variety of activities which are enjoyable and affordable. Regular coaching and competitive opportunities should be available for all ages and abilities, with an opportunity for juniors to develop to whatever level they aspire to.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

This is ideal for those who go away to university as it allows them to retain their links with the golf club at a reduced rate so they can still play during holiday periods. If located near a local university golf clubs should look to develop relationships and make links to support students who want to take up the game, occasionally play or are members of the University golf team. Low cost opportunities can be available at times when the course is quiet.

INTERMEDIATE MEMBERSHIP

A section of membership that falls between junior and adult is ideal as this is an age when many younger players may leave the game due to financial constraints. Intermediate membership can be staggered up to the age of 30 for example to help young people adjust to the increase in subscription from junior to adult and retain them within the game.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

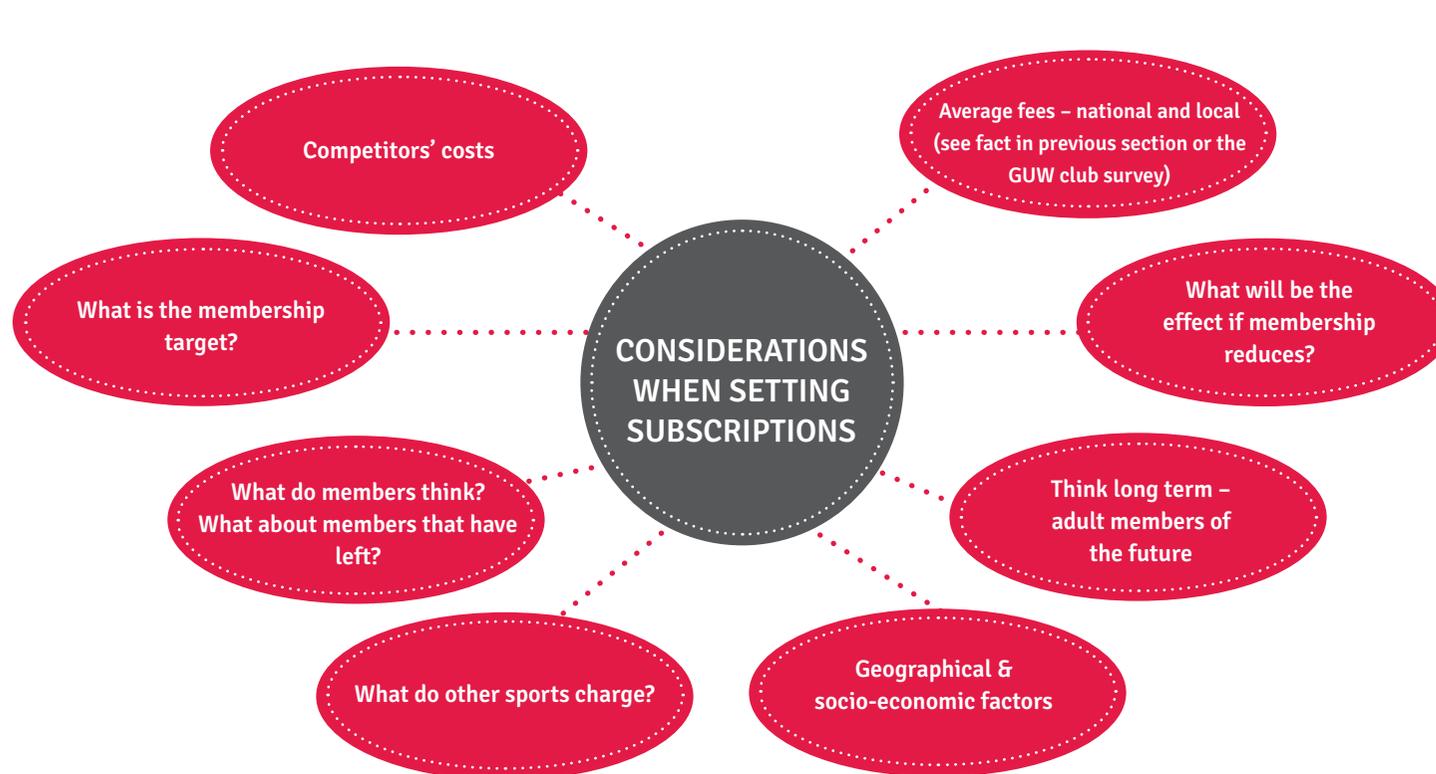
A discounted package can be offered to families, whereby children go free or one adult pays half price. By financially encouraging and supporting members with families they are more likely to remain within the game as leisure time is limited and therefore undertaking an activity as a family is more favourable.

INCENTIVE MEMBERSHIP PACKAGES

For example buy 12 months and get 2 free or buy 6 months and receive a free voucher for the Professional shop. With competition for leisure activities, golf clubs need to demonstrate that they are providing good value for money.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Junior Membership fees vary across the country and there are a number of factors which influence this and these should be considered when setting fees:



FACT

In the **2013/14** Welsh Golf Club Survey the average junior membership subscription was **£96** ranging between **£0 – £385**

QUESTION

Does your golf club regularly review its membership categories to establish whether they are meeting member requirements through consultation and assessing what neighbouring clubs offer?

It is essential that golf clubs regularly review their subscriptions to ensure their packages encourage the recruitment and retention of young people into membership. Being creative with payment methods can also be advantageous in supporting parents/guardians of juniors, who may not be able to financially commit once a year.

Spreading the cost through monthly payments or offering units of membership which can be bought as required provides a much more consumer friendly approach to golf club membership.

CASE STUDY

Carmarthen Golf Club, Carmarthenshire

A range of membership opportunities available for everyone

Carmarthen GC are leading the way as one of the most proactive clubs in Wales with a range of membership options to suit a variety of lifestyles.

To support juniors getting into golf and retaining them within the game the club has staggered fees available up to the age of 25. There are junior, colt and student membership packages available to encourage young people to play at the club and be retained moving forward.

All the membership packages at Carmarthen GC provide access to the main course and short course as well as the excellent practice facilities at the club. All junior, colt and student members receive a 10% discount on drink, handicap and affiliation to the Golf Union of Wales, social events, access to weekly coaching sessions, online tee booking and regular club communications.

More information on all of the above along with the full list of member benefits can be found on the Carmarthen GC website <http://www.carmarthengolfclub.co.uk/golf/membership/>

The club is also part of the Golf Development Wales New2Golf scheme that aims to encourage more young people to take up golf through subsidised lessons. Lessons take place regularly at the club's excellent facilities. The club recently achieved the Disability Sport Wales InSport Ribbon Award recognising the club's commitment to the delivery of inclusive golf.

Recruiting new juniors and young people can be tricky but Carmarthen GC are showing that providing a variety of membership packages with the right benefits can encourage membership and loyalty.



MEMBERSHIP TYPES AT CARMARTHEN

FULL MEMBERSHIP

7-Day membership with benefits such as advanced tee booking, access to 10 courses across Wales for FREE, member only tee times, 10% discount on drinks, special rates for society and function booking.

POINTS2PLAY MEMBERSHIP

Membership under this category is £99 and £10 off a standard green fee 7 days a week.

JUNIOR, COLT AND STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Full 7 day membership with benefits listed in the main text.

COUNTRY MEMBERSHIP

Available to those who have a full time residence 25 miles from the club and are a member of another club.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

4 X clients/employees may play one round of golf 7 days per week.

OCCASIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Available to those who are only able to play golf at limited times.

SUMMARY



There are a number of factors which contribute to a good membership package, which will encourage junior golfers into membership and although they may only be paying a fraction of the adult fee, they should still be receiving value for money and a range of opportunities to support their retention within the game.



Having a range of affordable membership categories will hopefully provide something for juniors of all ages and abilities. Family membership categories are also a great way of supporting adults and juniors to participate both individually or together.



Retaining players once they reach 18 is difficult, however offering a student or retainer package may be of benefit. It is not just students from the golf club who should be considered, students from a local university may also want to participate whilst away from home and golf clubs should look at what affordable offers they can provide.



Membership costs have to be competitive, provide value for money and be regularly reviewed to ensure they are meeting the needs of the customer.