

GOLF DEVELOPMENT.



This is a busy time of year for the Golf Development Committee and the executive team. We have evaluated the first applications from various affiliates for National Body Development Grants. These applications have been reviewed in person and processed through the committee. The grants are aimed at programs around the world that focus on beginners, intermediate players, and elite golfers.

We hope this overview of activities is informative and interesting by way of update on our progress as we seek to support our collective ambition to grow the game and increase opportunities for all.

Nick Peel

CHAIRMAN OF THE GOLF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

R&A Global Alliance Golf Development Portal – Now LIVE!

We are delighted to share that the new R&A Global Alliance Golf Development Portal is now live.

The Portal provides national federations, affiliates and partners with access to a huge and valuable collection of news, resources and research centred around golf development excellence, best practice and case studies as well as thought leadership from some great individuals known across golf and sport.

The Portal will also facilitate grants and the new Balance Scorecard as well as featuring a directory of R&A Golf Development contacts and key contacts from other R&A departments, including Sustainable Golf, Philanthropy and Governance.

The work supports The R&A's commitment to establish a Global Alliance – a global golf development community passionate about driving positive change and growth for golf around the world. The Portal allows affiliates to connect and collaborate with golf development experts and industry leaders, learn from innovative and exciting programmes and establish practices that will ensure, together, that golf continues to thrive in 50 years' time.



Kenya Junior Golf Foundation

The **Kenya Junior Golf Foundation** is an inspiring initiative to empower junior golfers by providing easy access to golf courses for practice and play. It is open to all junior golfers aged 21 and under for an annual fee of KES 1000 (about £6).

Many young golfers have faced challenges in accessing golf courses, with high green fees creating obstacles for families, especially those with multiple aspiring players.

Through the Junior Golf Foundation (JGF), a proud subsidiary of the Kenya Golf Union (KGU) and Kenya Ladies Golf Union (KLGU), they have forged partnerships with affiliated clubs to grant all paid-up JGF members access to any of these courses for just KES 100 (about 60p). A joint venture to nurture the future of golf.



Golf is Good in the Middle East

In October 2024, The R&A piloted a **Golf is Good – Dubai Fitness Challenge** initiative partnering with the **Emirates Golf Federation** and the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism.

This was the first time the industry had come together to showcase the health and wellness benefits of the sport and participate in the Dubai Fitness Challenge. The Dubai Fitness Challenge promotes health and wellness across the emirate in several sports, by encouraging 30 minutes of activity for 30 days. Across the nine venues, (on and off course facilities), just over 1000 participants took part in a range of activities.

Over 135 free activities were arranged and included, but not limited to, one to one lessons, group beginner classes, Golf Fitness taster sessions, simulator and game time, practice range sessions, community walk, Golf Sixes Mini League at the DP World Tour Championship as well as taster sessions of the R&A Unleash your Drive in Schools Programme led by the Emirates Golf Federation. Digital and printed assets along with merchandise were provided to amplify the messaging.

At the recent Hero Dubai Desert Classic in January, the Golf is Good initiative continued with a Golf Sixes Mini League tournament, Unleash your Drive in Schools programme "Trophy tour" and a Step Fore Challenge for spectators. The tournament also provided an opportunity to show case key Golf and Health messaging.

Roblox Active Play roll out

Roblox is one of the most popular online gaming platforms in the world and at the time of writing, has a global reach of circa 90 million Daily Active Users. In June 2024, the Golf Development team launched 'Just Swing', The R&A's Roblox experience, with the objective of engaging younger audiences in golf and creating new entry routes into participation. To date, the experience has been visited more than 3.5 million times from players across 220 countries around the world.

Since the start of 2025, the team have been rolling out new and engaging initiatives in **Indonesia** and **Dubai** using the Just Swing Roblox game as a way to engage younger audiences with golf. The initiative has seen golf become the first sport on Roblox to incorporate a pathway transitioning players from the virtual gaming world to playing the sport in real life.



The initiative in Indonesia invited players to compete in a three hole challenge within the game where they would win a voucher for one hour of free gameplay at Topgolf Jakarta.

The campaign which lasted three weeks saw over 2,000 players per day engage in the challenge, with over 150 redeeming their voucher and playing at the facility. On average, each player brought a further three friends and family with them, resulting in over 450 people visiting Topgolf Jakarta as a result of the activation.

In January 2025, a further Active Play initiative was delivered at the Hero Dubai Desert Classic where a gaming station was created enabling young spectators to play golf in the virtual world. During the event, over 700 children took part in a three hole challenge where the top five scores each day won a voucher to play at Topgolf Dubai.

The popularity of Roblox and gaming with a younger audience is clear to see and further activations are being planned with Federations and at golf events throughout 2025.

Women's Golf Now in Japan

Since March 2024, the **Japan Golf Association**, with support from The R&A, has been actively promoting initiatives for women and girls in golf through a new programme called "Women's Golf Now (WGN)," which features its dedicated logo. The aim is for all facilities, partners, and organisations involved in the programme to promote women's golf in Japan throughout the year.

The programme has successfully fostered unity across the golf industry, encouraging women and girls to take up the sport and providing more opportunities for them to learn. In just nine months, WGN has engaged nearly 50,000 women through various activities, including existing championships, clinics, introductory sessions at driving ranges, regional collaborations, and promotional campaigns.



One notable initiative is the "Women's Golf Week" campaign, successfully held during the Spring and Autumn seasons. This campaign ran for two weeks leading up to Mother's Day and another two weeks prior to the final day of the Japan Women's Open. During these periods, over 115 golf courses and 150 driving ranges participated by offering free lessons for women, lessons on a 9-hole course for existing female golfers, gift coupons, and complimentary range balls for participants in the organized activities. This campaign positively impacted over 5,000 participants nationwide.

Looking ahead to 2025, WGN plans to facilitate more beginner programmes specifically tailored for women and girls, along with larger engagement efforts involving families and communities.



Flavia: Inspiring a New Era for Female Coaches

Flavia Namakula is a professional golfer and the National Coach for Uganda. With the support of the **Uganda Golf Union** and The R&A she is presently going through the PGA of South Africa's Pathway to Membership Program. Since joining the programme, Flavia has shown remarkable commitment and progress, establishing herself as a key figure in coaching both in Uganda and across Africa.

As the Ugandan National Coach, Flavia works with the men's, women's, and junior teams. She has also played a crucial role in developing the first structured national performance programme for Uganda in a joint project with The R&A.

As one of very few female coaches in Africa and one of even fewer female national coaches, Flavia has become an inspirational role model for aspiring coaches and players throughout East Africa. By investing in coaches like Flavia, we aim to increase the influence of females in the sport, improve the level of coaching, and, ultimately, generate more inspirational golfers from more countries around the world.



The inaugural Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Academy

The inaugural Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific (WAAP) Academy was held at the Siam Country Club's Waterside Course in **Thailand** from 9-13 December 2024. Siam Country Club has been a key partner in the WAAP, having hosted the event in 2022 and 2024, as well as the annual Honda LPGA Championship.

The WAAP Academy aims to develop women's golf in the Asia-Pacific region by nurturing emerging talent and providing high-quality training. Support from Samsung, The R&A Foundation, and Siam Country Club enabled the Academy to assist young female golfers from developing countries.

Focusing on improving the abilities of players from less developed nations, the Academy aims to raise the overall quality of golf in the WAAP. It covers all expenses for participants, including travel, accommodation, uniforms, meals, coaching, and custom equipment. The inaugural Academy hosted 13 players from seven countries, including notable competitors Rianne Malixi and Mirabel Ting, who ranked third and fourth in the World Amateur Golf Ranking.

The coaching and technical experts were experienced professionals in strength and conditioning, short game, swing analysis, data analysis, and sport psychology.



R&A Development and Performance Education Programme

The R&A Development and Performance Education Programme, developed in collaboration with the **PGA of Australia**, is designed to equip employees of National Golf Federations and Associations working in Grassroots Development and High Performance with the skills, knowledge, and competencies necessary to grow and develop golf in their regions. The programme aims to help participants perform their roles more effectively.

Participants will engage in self-paced study, with the programme structured to be completed within a nominal five-month timeframe. This will include a combination of face-to-face sessions, webinars, and e-learning modules available through the PGA of Australia's eLearning platform.

Upon successful completion of the programme, participants will gain the skills and framework needed to review, plan, and implement strategic improvements in their regions to promote the growth of the sport. Certificates for the programme will be jointly awarded by The R&A and the PGA of Australia.

Our first cohort from the Asia-Pacific region commenced with a face-to-face workshop that took place over four intensive days at the PGA Australia Learning Hub in Melbourne in December 2024. Participants included representatives from Pakistan, South Korea, China, New Zealand, Vietnam, and Thailand. This inaugural cohort is expected to graduate from the programme in April of this year.



Golf Development presentations

The Golf Development Team, with the support of the committee, has organised a series of presentations at The Open venues.

These presentations will provide insights into how the funds raised by The Open are utilised to promote and grow the game of golf globally.

The first presentation took place at **St Andrews Links Trust**, with upcoming presentations scheduled at Carnoustie, Royal Portrush, Royal Liverpool, and Royal St George's.

R&A Developing Golf digital magazine

This newsletter provides only a brief summary of the broad range of the activities of Golf Development. For those of you who wish to understand more about what we do and how the Golf Development executive team is structured, read our Developing Golf digital magazine.

This is produced every two months and is distributed to all our affiliates. Each publication provides more detail of the work of Golf Development, including case studies, as well as an introduction to different members of the team.

The latest edition of this is to be found on **The R&A website**, where you can also find past copies.

If you have any further questions regarding Golf Development, please contact GolfDevelopmentTeam@randa.org

