

COACHING REPORT 2007

James Erskine
P.G.A Professional

Please find my end of year report with regards to the coaching I have provided to the following golf clubs on behalf of Kirkcudbrightshire Golfers Association.

New Galloway Golf Club

- In total around 20 juniors took part in all sessions from an age of 5 – 16 years old.
- The golf club also added to the 5 hours funded coaching and this enabled them to have more frequent sessions throughout the season
- The standard here was surprisingly good for such a small club, I feel that the kids certainly gained from the coaching as it was regular where as in the past I believe they maybe only received a couple of hours annually.
- The younger golfers here need to have regular coaching maybe from a level 1 coach at the club in order to keep progressing into future.

Dalbeattie Golf Club

- The numbers at Dalbeattie were fantastic with some sessions reaching as many as 30 children the age range was 8-12 years old
- Dalbeattie is one of the only golf clubs within your area to be working closely with Club Golf due to this partnership and the work of Jean Forrest they seem to be heading in the right direction
- The sessions were held every Tuesday throughout the season. I visited once a month during this period anyway before your funding was announced. Your funding allowed the club to “double up” the coaching from a P.G.A professional. Both boys and girls took part and if they continue to work as hard and the commitment of volunteers continue Dalbeattie Golf Club will have a strong junior section in the not so distant future.

Kirkcudbright Golf Club

- The coaching took place on a miserable day and thanks to Brighthouse Bay Golf Club in could go ahead, they so kindly allowed us use of their driving range for the day
- Again around 20-30 kids took part on a cold day from all abilities and ages.
- Both boys and girls attended
- The standard again was very good, having worked with the club before I knew a few of the kids from the past and the development was promising again like most clubs in this area the shortage of coaching is a problem.
- Malcolm Kirkwood and helpers are on the right track though
- Due to the weather and shortage of bays we focused mainly on basics with the younger or less able kids, The thing I enjoyed most about this session was the lower handicapped golfers that attended (handicaps of mid teens to twenties) that were not attending at other clubs. This enabled me to work with juniors past grass roots level. I could therefore have a little bit more impact on their golf swings, at other clubs in the area there was not many golfers on the “in between stage” which I feel is s key area within your region that needs to be addressed.

Colvend Golf Club

- This was the last session I undertook on a cold November Morning
- Due to the time of year only a handful of Juniors attended
- I spent 2 hours with these juniors on the range and short game the abilities of these kids again was beginner however again the standard was good. Following this I decided to play a round with these kids to aid their on course problems and show how I would play a shot this seemed to be a success even losing a par 4 to a 3 net 1 which was rather annoying on my behalf.
- I spoke in depth to the junior conveners here and are willing to improve the junior section and will contact myself and Club Golf to help
- Yet again although the lower numbers the Juniors and conveners certainly benefited from the funded coaching

Castle Douglas Golf Club

- Again the weather was not the best however the turnout was superb with around 15 kids taking part
- Ages again from 6 yrs old to mid teens
- Abilities beginner to prob mid 20's
- I focused mainly on grip, posture and general set up firstly, then moved on to swing mechanics all kids seemed to improve, this was followed by a short game session and mini competition

Gatehouse of Fleet Primary School

- This was an experience, 93 children took part in this day, with the lower school I brought my Tri Golf equipment and target which is what I do all winter in the Wigtownshire Primary schools. This is in my opinion the best way to introduce kids aged 5-9 years old into the game as it's easy to get the ball in the air and basic fundamentals but at the same time fun. It was a glorious day which helped as I could take these sessions outside. With the upper school we used real clubs most of the kids hadn't played golf so this was by far my biggest challenge however the response was great. I focused on fundamentals with the complete beginners and with the few golfers worked on whatever difficulty they were encountering within their personal game.
- The only downfall I found here was that out of all these kids less than 10% were playing or members of local golf clubs. Something I feel that the clubs within your association should target as the response from this day was very good

Now the conclusion, Firstly I would like to thank the association for giving me the opportunity to visit most of your Golf Clubs I thoroughly enjoyed it all of the Clubs visited treated me fantastic and was great experience working with so many talented children.

A few points to take on board.

- I feel that there is too big a gap between grass roots golf and top junior golf not only in your area but throughout the region. As an association you must encourage the clubs to try and put in place some sort of coaching programme in order to reap the rewards of your funded coaching
- All clubs should have a meeting with Club Golf. More level 1 coaches are needed to allow the likes of myself to work with the "in between" golfer rather than the beginner which the level 1 coaches job is. Dalbeattie are like I stated earlier on the right path also due to this have received funding.
- More competitive junior golf at the clubs and even as an association. Juniors love competing it also allows handicaps to fall etc
- Brighthouse Bay offered the use of their facilities anytime maybe having under 10 yr old pitch and putt competitions in where you get all these mini-tigers together and give them some competition?

Finally, I am available and more than willing to meet with yourselves or any club for any advice that is required in order to improve junior golf within your area, so give me a call anytime I will not be offended. Hopefully, I will continue working with Kirkcudbrightshire Golfers Association in 2008. May I wish you all the best for 2008 and look forward to hearing from you.

Many Thanks,

James