

Portmore Golf Club: Attracting New Golfers with Get into Golf

Portmore Golf Club is a private, parkland club consisting of two courses – one nine hole, one eighteen. Set in beautiful North Devon, Portmore offers great golf for players of all standards.

The Issue:

Portmore Golf Club has always welcomed new golfers, including those new to the game. Driven by a desire to introduce golf to a wider audience, the Club introduced a Get into Golf programme, as part of the national Get into Golf campaign. This is designed to inspire people from all walks of life to try golf and, crucially, sets out for every participant a clear journey from beginner to experienced golfer.

The Solution:

Portmore Golf Club took the opportunity to connect with the Devon Golf Partnership and take advantage of its knowledge and insights. In conjunction with England Golf, they worked together to implement a Get into Golf initiative at Portmore. This offers beginners an excellent value package of five group lessons for £25, followed by an on-course activity and an introductory membership offer. The initiative has been run at least once a month since January 2014.

The affordable group lessons were designed to make golf more accessible to the community while also promoting the social aspects of golf: it encouraged participants to meet new people and to learn the game together. The Club hoped that by offering this three-phase programme of learning and participation they would enjoy good levels of take-up and see many new participants become full members of Portmore Golf Club.

The Challenges and Benefits:

The Get into Golf programme is designed to enable Portmore to address the challenge of accepting participants with different levels of golfing knowledge and expertise.

At a Glance ...

- The Club implemented a Get into Golf initiative in January 2014 with the support of the Devon Golf Partnership.
- Participants are offered five discounted group lessons, an on-course activity, and an introductory membership offer.
- Between January 2014 and February 2015, 102 beginners participated; of these, so far 32 have become members.
- The social side of golf is encouraged and the Clubhouse has benefitted from increased revenue.
- The Club will continue to run Get into Golf activities and is recognised as a Get into Golf partner in Devon.



ENGLANDGOLF

The five lessons for £25 group-based offer focuses on attracting beginners who wish to experience playing golf for the first time. The second and final phases of the Get into Golf programme are designed to attract lapsed and returning golfers. It is regarded as vital that golf novices are given the opportunity to experience “real” golf, so the programme includes on-course tuition intended to encourage participants to play regularly, and ultimately encourage them to become full members of the Club.

The bar and restaurant has unexpectedly benefitted from Portmore’s Get into Golf programme. The Clubhouse has enjoyed increased revenue as a result of participants enjoying the facilities before and after their lessons.

Impacts:

Get into Golf at Portmore Golf Club has been very successful, with a total of 102 participants between January 2014 and February 2015, 32 of which subsequently took out one of the Club’s range of membership options. Prior to their participation in Get into Golf, these new members had all been complete newcomers to the game. The Club believes that they were attracted by the accessible and affordable group-based coaching opportunity offered by the programme.

“ Lifestyle membership categories that factor in time and cost have facilitated the take-up of membership by golfers of all ages. ”

Although the remaining golfers who took part in the Get into Golf initiative during this period have not yet taken out a membership, many continue to play or receive lessons at the Club and some plan to join when the weather improves.

Next Steps:

The Get into Golf programmes continue to evolve, being adapted to meet the needs and demands of participants. Portmore will continue to be involved in the Get into Golf campaign throughout 2015 and is recognised as a Get into Golf partner in Devon.

Tips & Advice:

The Devon County Golf Development Officer tells us that the key to success is giving the participant an idea of how long it will take to become “course ready”, and as many opportunities as possible to learn and play on the course during this time. This encourages them to continue to strive towards the end goal: to become a regular golfer and to recognise why so many play this wonderful game.

“ The key is to give the participant an idea of how long it will take to become “course ready” and provide them with plenty of opportunities to learn and play on-course. ”

A final word from Portmore Golf Club:

Our Get into Golf programme has worked very well for the Club as a way of generating new members, largely because every effort is made to ensure that the participants are made to feel comfortable right from the moment they arrive for their first lesson. This is then carried right through onto the course where they don’t feel intimidated by long holes, or the fear that they will be getting in people’s way. We then try to integrate them into the Club through golf and social events and are very lucky to have a fantastic group of members who help in making the new players feel very welcome.

Based on surveys and follow up interviews, the UK and Ireland’s Golf Home Unions have identified and showcased examples of “what works” in golf club management in a series of case studies. The focus has been on clubs that have been successful in achieving more players, more members and stronger clubs. The intention is to share information and guidance on effective practices in business planning, customer service, membership, and women’s and girls’ golf. For further information about this and other case studies and for further support, please go to www.golfcasestudies.businesscatalyst.com.

