



Engaging with young people

Retaining juniors in the game will be easier if the club ensures decisions and developments are in the interest of junior golfers. Therefore consulting with and listening to young people at the golf club is key to both a successful junior section and an inclusive forward thinking club. It helps the juniors to gain respect from all members and teaches them valuable life skills which will benefit the golf club too.

The Golf Foundation and England Golf work with a group of National Young Golf Ambassadors who have made some suggestions about how to ensure golf can engage young people in development and decision making.

We believe that everyone should feel comfortable at their golf club no matter their ability, gender, ethnicity or age.

Everyone should be able to voice their views and suggest their ideas.

How can we make this happen?

Here are some ideas... 

Include young people on your current Junior Section Committee

- This could be as simple as including the Junior Captain(s) – ensure they know when accepting the role that this is their responsibility.
 - Consider 1 boy and 1 girl – even if you don't have many junior girls, a young female's perspective could be very different.
 - Junior – Captain, Ex Captain and Vice-Captain (encourages them to support each other and helps continuity).
 - You can simply include a couple of representatives who express an interest in volunteering and are passionate about sharing ideas or supporting others.
- When juniors are included in the conversation and informed about challenges or progress they are much more likely to get involved and help out.

Key consideration – Providing opportunities for a couple of juniors to sit on a majority adult committee will be much more appealing to them. Just being a single 'junior captain' on a committee is a less attractive offer.

Establish a Junior Committee – made up of juniors!

- Providing an opportunity for interested juniors to get together after an event or coaching session every couple of months to discuss any issues or 'hot topics' ensures everyone has a chance to be heard. Junior Captains could make notes then provide feedback to the main committee/ parents committee about the ideas and feelings of the group.
- Write a role description for these positions, define tasks and responsibilities – make it clear but allow for them to put their own spin on it! Focus on the personal qualities needed. The Golf Foundation and England Golf have templates which can also help with this.
- Make use of junior's specific interests and expertise, eg. Social media, creative marketing, photography, admin, hands on delivery of activity.
- Give them a title e.g. xxxxxx GC Junior Ambassadors and maybe reward them with a shirt or badge. The juniors on this group are likely to be the ideal youngsters to be the 'buddies' or role models for new participants or members starting out at the golf club.

Key consideration – While you may provide some basic ideas about how they could deliver roles or work as a committee, let them be creative, establish their own identity and discover the best way of working themselves.

Facilitate brainstorming sessions or social events where juniors are encouraged to have a say – Flexible, Informal, bite-sized opportunities

- Consider the experience they are having as a volunteer – make it FUN! Be creative in getting the message out about wanting their views. You could use the 'Dragon's Den' activity card from the Golf Foundation's Box of Tricks resources, to enable the juniors to pitch new activity or competition idea to the Pros and Junior Organisers.
- Communicate Young People's views from these sessions to the main committee to ensure they are genuinely influencing decision making.
- Allow them to challenge the status quo but make it clear that not everything they want will be possible!

Key consideration - You may not THINK they are interested but you must ask!



Build into the culture of the junior section that there is an expectation for all members to help with the running of the club and 'give back'

- Sell the benefits of volunteering and the importance of providing feedback as part of your junior induction/ handbook – life skills, building CV, work experience, it's rewarding! Make it a responsibility for all juniors and thank them for their involvement, even if this means just helping out at 1 charity event each year.
- Be flexible and realistic with what you are expecting of them.
- Work with the juniors to come up with some 'Junior Section Values'. You want to ensure they are proud of where they play golf and believe in the aims of the club as a whole as well as the junior section. You need to understand young people to be able to promote who you are as a junior section – and grow it.
- If they feel a valued part of the club they will naturally become advocates of the club and for golf.
- Advertise volunteering opportunities and make it clear that their input is genuinely valuable – use e-flyers, posters, newsletters, your website and social media.
- Be open and transparent in the provision of information about the junior section plans. Provide reports on progress and be honest about the challenges juniors are facing.

Key consideration - Juniors are an integral part of golf clubs and not just an addition.