

Junior Golf at HxBH

1. I have been talking to Dave Delaney about what we have and what we will do for Junior members going forward. I have also been speaking with other local club captains who, with one or two notable exceptions (Woodsome and Fixby) share the same issues listed below. Indeed, many have dropped out of H&H Union Junior league or are in danger of doing so this year despite good intention.
2. Below is some background and a number of questions that need serious consideration before you decide what HxBH does for junior golf going forward.

2017 Season

3. In 2017 we had 31 paid up Junior members of which three were regular players and a further three or four may be classed as keen but only occasionally available! (We are likely to lose two of the regulars this year because of her part time job commitments.)
4. This has caused serious problems for HxBH (esp Dave) in fielding a three-person team for Halifax & Huddersfield Union League commitments, holding club competitions and in the club building upon Dave Delaney's obvious passion to support Junior golf.
5. Dave coordinated our Junior team, organising HxBH participation in the H&H Union League Competitions. This was challenging given the number of Juniors willing to play, as was the requirement for the nominated team coordinator, who must be DBS checked, having to attend for the whole of the golf match and the post-match meal.
6. Dave also faced serious challenges with last minute withdrawals and un-availability due to conflicting sporting and lifestyle choices open to our young golfers. Or transport problems faced by parents and their own work commitments. Our fixtures are again not local.
7. To help promote and support Junior golf Dave and his team delivered/supervised
 - Weekly (Wednesdays) coaching sessions from April to September – cost per session £6 with an average of eight attending.
 - Organised "Play with the Pro" in school holidays, providing the Junior with a coached round of golf.
 - a free lesson with the Pro team when joining
8. On a positive note for the first time in the H&H Union, two Junior **girls** (both from HxBH) attended H&H Union coaching events, as well as Ladies Golf Union Junior coaching days. We were unable to share the Union coaching amongst all the HxBH Juniors due to the Union's expectations regarding their (existing) standard of golf.
9. In terms of HxBH competitions, we did not hold any specific Junior club competitions. The Junior competition within Open week was cancelled due to lack of entries.

10. The best Junior was however recognised in club competitions such as Captain's Day and President's Day – Hettie and Caitlin.

2018

11. We have a number of options

- 1) Do nothing
- 2) Actively seek to develop the current Junior golfer at HxBH
- 3) Seek to increase the number of Juniors from existing members playing at the club
- 4) Seek to increase the number of Juniors from the local community

Whichever we choose we must be mindful of limited resources and we should not spread these resources too thinly.

Existing Junior Golfers

12. We need to understand what the existing Juniors are wanting from their golf experience and the barriers that get in the way of their playing golf and participating in H&H Union League and individual club competitions, and we will do this by means of a questionnaire to Juniors and their parents.

New Junior Members

13. Most Junior golfers come from golfing families. We propose to survey members asking what would encourage their children and grandchildren to take up golf at HxBH.
14. We propose that any Junior who is the child or grandchild of a full member will automatically become a member free of charge. There would be two provisos –
- the child is the responsibility of the member (and any solo Junior on the course under the age of 12? must be accompanied by their parent/guardian)
 - before the Junior can play on their own on our course they have had to have attended golf lessons and been signed off as proficient by the Pro team.

Outreach Opportunities for non-member junior golfers

15. Dave is willing to go into schools (if we have any contacts to open the doors) and promote golf and HxBH. The club will have to make the contacts/introductions with schools through parents who are members
16. To support this and sow seeds of interest I suggest we would support this by providing all local schools and PTAs with an update and marketing materials about what's happening for Juniors at HxBH.
17. Using our driving range as a less physical sport option for the PE timetable or after school clubs - supervised by our Pro team. This activity could be financially supported by

The PGA or Golf England. Dave will be exploring how his time is funded. We would need to provide the range free of charge.

18. As a club we need to be aware of two key things golf is not a visible sport to young people and Dave has his wider obligations to the club and his own business to take into consideration.

Golf for Juniors at HxBH is 2018

19. There will be a Junior Captain's Day on 8 September 2018 – this will include the traditional medal comp for all members, plus special within the field for juniors and intermediaries. There will be an early evening informal function to compliment the day. All proceeds raised from the day will go to the development of Junior golf at HxBH.
20. All "club golf days" and Opens should host a putting comp to raise money for the junior section. MC will sort this.
21. From June, one Sunday afternoon per month until September there will be a range of small comps for all ability juniors, from no handicap to scratch played on parts of our course in the afternoon.
22. We will also explore with the H&C Committee how we can use the red tees - perhaps on the back nine - for Junior club competitions. In the summer we will reintroduce the blue tees. We can create our own HxBH handicaps for the Juniors, so they can see their improvement as the holiday period goes on.
23. The following communications and coaching opportunities will all work towards playing in Junior Captain's Day and hopefully building a base so that HxBH can fulfill our Union golf fixture obligations in 2018:
 - We will launch a newsletter on paper and social media so that the Juniors and their parents are aware of what is happening and to celebrate our participation in Junior golf competitions
 - We will have a clear and well publicised programme of coaching opportunities
 - One free lesson with the Pro when joining.
 - Weekly Junior coaching sessions with the Pro from April to September at a cost of £6 per session, to be held on a Wednesday evening, and also introducing Saturday morning coaching from July (£6 per session).
 - "Play with the Pro" in school holidays
 - Dave is considering hosting golf summer camps.
 - Reintroducing the monthly "Get into golf initiative" – probably an evening session in spring and summer targeted at families.
 - A couple of novelty "night golf sessions" for Juniors
 - We will look to get an article in the Halifax Courier promoting all that happens at HxBH for Juniors and then repeat this just before the school summer holidays.

Some questions to ponder

24. Why are we taking so much time to consider Junior Golf? Do members really care about it as something HxBH should support?

25. What do we want to do next?

- Do nothing, pull back completely from all Club junior activity
- Let Dave carry on the way he has with his coaching but it's his activity not the clubs.
- Actively seek to develop Junior golfers at HxBH in partnership with Dave.

If we want to support Junior golf, should we?

- Seek to increase the number of Juniors from existing members playing at the club as a priority for 2018.
- Do nothing in the local community.
- Only take a limited approach to increase the number of Juniors from the local community.

Whichever we choose we must be mindful of limited resources and we should not spread these resources too thinly. We should not forget that Dave has his own business and his family time to balance.

26. Given all the above-mentioned problems in fielding a team, and the lack of juniors should we withdraw from the Union League for the time being? I notice the fixtures are hardly local which makes finding a team even harder.

27. A Junior is a golfer under the age of 19. But what do we expect in terms of Juniors under 18 being accompanied by an adult on the course? How does this fit with our club rules and safeguarding policies?

28. We need to be clear about how development of Junior golf is funded at clubs by Golf England and Sport England (and any other bodies) and how this impacts on Dave and his team.

29. Who monitors and checks the club's safeguarding policy?

Plenty to think about.

Gary Williamson
GJWFeb18