

WESTPORT GOLF CLUB

Carrowholly, Westport, Co. Mayo, Ireland.

GIRLS GOLF

DEVELOPMENT VISION

2019 – 2022



**LET THEM HAVE FUN
GROW THE GAME
BEAT THE COMPETITION**



TELL me and I forget.
TEACH me and I remember.
INVOLVE me and I learn

WELCOME

Message from
WESTPORT Golf Club
Mary McDermott
(Lady Captain 2019)



The Westport Golf Club Vision

**“LET THEM HAVE FUN,
GROW THE GAME,
BEAT THE COMPETITION”**

Sets out an agenda for the Club, the Members, the Staff and the many Volunteers who will deliver it over the next four years that will be challenging.

The Vision and associated strategy will focus on increasing the numbers of girls and young women playing golf and providing a wide range of high quality player centred programmes by highly motivated and skilled Volunteers and Staff.

To implement the Strategy successfully we will need to work collaboratively with and have the support of, our Club Council, our Ladies Committee, the Irish Ladies Golf Union and the Confederation of Golf in Ireland and most important of all, our Members and Staff.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the ILGU and CGI for the much needed support and resources they afford Clubs such as Westport.

With this strategy the Club are committing to delivering a growth in the number of girls and future young women playing golf at Westport and for life, by increasing the number of players and improving their skills development.

I am confident that the Vision, through the associated Strategy and its Action Plan, will be delivered successfully by 2022.

Sincerely, *Mary McDermott*, Lady Captain 2019

INTRODUCTION

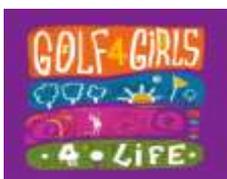
The landscape of Irish Ladies Golf has changed greatly over the past decade in relation to all aspects of the game from grass roots and retention through to development, player performance and the ladies professional game. Further changes are likely to occur in the coming years and the Club believe it is necessary to take a strategic approach to member development, especially with girls. This will be underpinned at Westport Golf Club by the Confederation of Ireland's **"Golf4Girls4Life"** programme so that Westport Women's Golf will achieve the profile and standards it both demands and deserves.

In order for us to achieve our strategic objective for our **"Golf4Girls4Life"** Pilot, it is essential that we engage with and develop close working relationships with the Confederation for Golf in Ireland (CGI), Irish Ladies Golf Union (ILGU) and the Mayo Local Sports Partnership (MLSP) regarding Recruitment and Retention, Coach Education, Volunteer Training and Safeguarding so as to enhance the general promotion and progression of golf in Westport, Mayo and Connacht.

We will ensure the relevant strategic objectives are aligned with our partner bodies and the programmes delivered by the Club drive a unified goal for increasing access to and participation in women's golf increasing the number and standard of those playing the game at our Club for the period of the plan and many years to come thereafter.

We will engage with supporting bodies such as Mayo Sports Partnership, Sport Ireland, 20x20.ie, the ILGU and CGI to avail of professional resources to utilise relevant skills and expertise as well as funding opportunities when and where practical to do so.

We will engage with Local Business to endeavour to create awareness and avail of mutually beneficial associations to promote the game to a wider audience in return for benefits to assist with the resourcing of our Club programmes and initiatives.



**LET THEM HAVE FUN
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VISION

LET THEM HAVE FUN

GROW THE GAME

BEAT THE COMPETITION



MISSION

Create a challenging environment in which young girls, coaches and volunteers can each realise their full potential through programmes that are constantly reviewed and improved in order to establish a safe, fun, progressive system that encourages participation and strives for personal development whilst providing a platform and pathway to achieve a lifelong love for the game and sporting excellence for those who may wish to pursue the game competitively.

Better People Better Programmes Better Participation
Better Players Better Performance

YOU CAN MAKE
EXCUSES OR YOU
CAN MAKE PROGRESS.
NEVER BOTH AT THE
SAME TIME.



MCCAWMETHOD
SPORTS PERFORMANCE TRAINING

**HARD WORK BEATS
TALENT, WHEN TALENT
DOESN'T WORK HARD.**

Allistair McCaw
M

VALUES

Core

SAFETY Physically and mentally for all Members, Coaches and Volunteers

HONESTY Open and transparent in order to maintain integrity and fairness

RESPECT Afforded by all stakeholders to the game and to all others involved in the game

Let them have Fun

CHOICE Player lead programme design of activities focused on enjoyment rather than competition

Development of bonds and friendships through activities, linked to but not dependent on, playing golf in order to enhance the “Club” experience for all.

Grow the Game

FUN Learning, Friendship and encouragement

INCLUSIVE A game for all girls to participate in, irrespective of ability, location or social economic circumstances of parents/guardians

BETTER Continuously evolving and improving programmes

EMPOWERING Shaping development in a way that meets the needs of the girls rather than the Club

Beat the Competition

EXCELLENCE Never compromise on the standards required to achieve it

DISCIPLINE Do things right when no one is watching

FOCUS Be committed and prepared for the challenge

BALANCE Knowing the difference between priority and obsession

PHILOSOPHY

We will deliver activities which attain the highest standards of preparation and organisation as we pursue an overall goal to achieve excellence. Westport Golf Club is committed to operating a system which undertakes continuous review and improvement of our development, our staff, our volunteers, our coaches and our members.

Our philosophy in development and performance, including the programmes, is to firstly equip girls with the skills to enable them to participate in the game for life but also to give **all girls and young women the opportunity to achieve their potential** whether that be merely to become competent in the game, achieve representative honours, become an Irish Champion or to become the best Women's Golfer in the World.

Westport Golf Club does not envisage an immediate need to run competitions for the girls as we are primarily focused on the development of the girls to become regular and consistent golfers. We aim to educate the girls (and their parents/guardians) to become aware of the skills and knowledge required to progress to the next stage of development, competitions, in order to empower them to take control of their personal progression within our Club. With this in mind, we endeavour to implement **coaching and training programmes with clear aims and objectives** which are suitably aligned, in order to ensure girls advance at a rate that is appropriate to them as individuals.



It is **our duty to prepare girls to the best of our ability and then trust the girls themselves to perform when they are ready to do so.**

Westport Golf Club members will adhere to a **Code of Conduct** which places emphasis on honesty, pride and commitment whilst always treating fellow members, coaches, volunteers and club staff with respect.

We firmly believe that all stakeholders in Westport Golf Club have a role to play in embracing this philosophy and creating what is required to develop our Club as a whole and develop individual members worthy of Westport Golf Club.

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Volunteers

Westport Golf Club is a volunteer lead organisation and the role played by volunteers in all activities in the Club is critical to the success of the Club. The time, energy and dedication provided by volunteers cannot be quantified but their contribution and value to the development of the game of golf cannot be underestimated.

Regular engagement with our volunteers as the gatekeepers of our Club and sport is critical to achieving our vision – **“Let them have Fun, Grow the Game, Beat the Competition”**. Consistent standard communication of key messages regarding all areas of member development and club performances is key to its success.

Staff

It is expected by Club Management and Staff, charged with designing and implementing initiatives and programmes to progress Westport Golf Club, continue to operate to the highest standards. The Club are committed to ensuring that Staff are afforded opportunities to upskill and gather knowledge relevant to their role and area of expertise.

Members (Girls)

To maintain Girls as golfers for life, and more to ensure to nurture some of those girls on the road to becoming the best golfers they desire to be, it is **vital that we commit to encouraging girls to become self-sufficient, whilst simultaneously offering support as they make decisions and choices regarding the game of golf.**

The Club will endeavour to create an environment which affords girls access to mentors and peers with whom they can honestly discuss their options. Parents/Guardians and Coaches will be included in all development plans for individual players. This will create an open and inclusive approach to progression that is always player centred and an aspiration for younger girls who follow to replicate.

The Club will always be acutely aware of the pressures and stresses that young women face in terms of their personal development outside of club life, including academic pursuits, family and other sports.

The Club will afford girls understanding at various developmental stages through their lifetime at the Club and support them to forge a path which is suitable for them as an individual.

Coaches & Volunteers

Westport Golf Club seeks to create an inclusive environment for all Coaches and Volunteers interested in becoming involved in any of its programmes. It is the aim of the Club to support Coaches and Volunteers as they strive to make a difference with the girls and young women with whom they interact, regardless of the standard or ability of the girls. The Club encourages and will facilitate all our Coaches and Volunteers wishing to engage in continued professional development.

Facilities

Westport Golf Club will continue to strive to provide its membership with the best possible playing and practice facilities for Golf in the region to compliment the efforts made by all stake holders in attracting new members to the game of golf and improving their overall experience.

Parents/Guardians

Westport Golf Club acknowledges and appreciates the vital role played by parents/guardians in the development of young girl's interest in playing golf, particularly at a younger age as players express their interests in so many activities and pursuits.

It is imperative that we support parents/guardians in their role as the constants in a girl's 'Team' and communicate with them regularly.

Regular consultation and communication with this group, through welcome meetings, coffee briefings, etc. is essential in ensuring that girls learn to, and are trusted to, becoming self-sufficient.

Additionally, this group acts as a useful resource for gathering feedback and determining the needs of players at different stages, as well as guiding how we can provide the correct support at the correct time in a girls progression through the game and the Club.



Introduce them to their Heroes and install the belief system that they can be whoever they want to be too!



STRATEGIC SUMMARY

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

RECRUITMENT

The decrease in numbers participating in golf over the past decade is very well documented and noted. This decrease, particularly in club membership, has affected men and women in equal measure, across both adult and junior categories.

Without doubt, the recruitment and retention of junior golfers is the most important and challenging role for the Junior Committee and the junior section in general. A child's first introduction to golf must not only be **safe, fun and educational but also inspirational**. From the outset, golf activities and coaching need to remain fun, challenging and for junior members that includes lessons from a PGA Professional and support activities from club members. As mentioned in the previous section, CGI can also train volunteers to deliver fun golf sessions and the PGA offer a number of CPD courses in this area.

It should be noted that without planned and organised follow on activities available, recruitment days typically lead to poor conversion into membership.

The CGI reported that in 2015, clubs that ran stand-alone recruitment days converted on average 22% of participants into membership, compared to a 60% conversion rate where a structured programme (that included both PGA Professional and Club Volunteer support) which offered follow on activities and suitable membership packages options.

The checklist below will be used for planning recruitment days:

Why are we running an awareness day?

- is it to grow awareness about what your club offer?
- is it to get children in the community interested in participating in a camp/ programme?
- is it to gain more junior members that are already golfers?

Who

- are the potential new members?
- will help you at coaching or activity sessions?

What

- activities are we planning on the day, e.g. – fun games, coaching, parents meeting?
- age category are you targeting (Primary school/secondary school)?
- are the follow on activities (**Girls4Golf4Life** programme)?
- follow on membership packages do your club have in place?
- will the price of the PGA Professional be for coaching?
- will the price of the activities be?
- will the club provide in addition to the activity? e.g. refreshments

Where

- will you hold the activities – e.g. practice ground/putting green/section off some of the course?
- will you hold the information session?



MEMBERSHIP

Golf Club membership is often perceived as expensive when compared with other sports.

Club membership that is suitable and value for money is an important part of improving the offer of golf for children and young people. Many clubs use one standard junior membership offer.

We recommend tailoring junior membership categories to match the access, activity and ability levels of junior members while also considering the safety, physical, cognitive and social development needs of the child.

Having suitable membership packages options available in clubs can assist with recruiting new junior members.

Westport Golf Club propose to categorise Junior memberships into age groups or ability,

Example: Academy Membership may be for juniors between certain ages, such as 8 - 16 year olds, or it may be for juniors who have not yet obtained a handicap. In order to keep Juniors progressing, it is strongly recommended that juniors can only avail of two years in each of the academy stages of membership and therefore must move onto paying full junior membership fees by year five, regardless or not if they have progressed to that stage of play.

Through junior membership, the Junior Committee will be proactive about promoting the club's ethos and aims. The Club shall take a sustainable and long term approach to junior membership, which not only looks after new members, but considers the transition of junior members to student membership and into adult membership.

The below table displays an example of how Junior Membership may be set out at the Club in years to come, subject to approval by the Members through an AGM:

Type of Membership	Aim of Membership	Standard	Cost of Membership	Club Access
Academy Membership (Stage 1)	Give junior participants the opportunity to golf in a FUN environment	Introduction to golf	(25%-40% of full junior membership)	Use of clubhouse facilities and practice facilities, Use of Pitch & Putt
Academy Membership (Stage 2)	Retain junior participants through appropriately engaging challenges and tasks	Limited experience of golf	(50-70% of full junior membership)	Limited/ supervised use of course during arranged activities and competitions
Full Junior Membership	For junior members who participate independently	Attends club activities and competitions	Full junior membership (no more than 15% of clubs full membership)	Full use of course, junior and main club competitions



PARTICIPATION

One of the main drivers of Westport's Strategic Vision is to ensure that every junior female who has been in contact with the club, through summer camps, family memberships or other programmes or competitions at any level, continues to **'play for life'**. This goal is paramount to the growth of junior golf for girls at Westport Golf Club and ultimately the sustainability of women's golf at our Club.



The Irish ladies Golf Union advise us that in contrast to the declining number of registered girl members over the past decade, it is encouraging to note that between this same period, participation at Club level has shown a small but significant increase. This is seen as a positive statistic which amounts to an absolute increase in the number of girls with a handicap, from 1440 to just under 2000. This increase, when coupled with a decreasing membership marks a 15% increase in girls with handicaps to 46% in 2018.

Concurrently, there has been an increase in those with a handicap of 35 or less which has shown an increase of 57% from 650 to 1020 girls. This is a significant benchmark as it reinforces our belief that, **once a girl obtains a handicap of 35 or less, she has achieved the necessary level of skill and knowledge to enable her continued participation in the game, allowing her to "Play for Life",** should she chose to do so.

The ILGU Club Coaching programme emphasises the social element of the sport, promoting learning through fun activities and enjoyment in the Club environment, all of which are seen as being vital elements of the programme that combine to achieve sport engagement. Grants amounting to €40,000 are awarded annually by the ILGU to approximately 120 clubs, ranging from €200 - €350. Westport Golf Club shall strive to ensure it avails of such grant assistance for the duration of its Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2022.



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PROGRESSION

One clear and objective measure for the success of a development programme is the number of girls with the appetite to progress to meet the eligibility criteria for ILGU Regional Training.

The Westport Golf Club vision will seek to enable some of our girls achieve the eligibility criteria by assisting them to meet the required standard of play at Club level. Our aim shall be to provide a relatively inclusive programme which does not de-select players but rather provides a stepping stone toward the performance level of the game required.

Currently, 38% of Regional Training panellists with the ILGU are from just 3% of the 382 affiliated Clubs which indicates a strong and urgent need to address the communication, promotion and advertising of opportunities available through the ILGU programmes.

At 1st October 2018 no Westport Girls currently meet the criteria. Therefore, a primary focus in this area for the upcoming years will be enabling our girls achieve the eligibility criteria. Coupled with this is our commitment to provide all our girls with the desire to play golf for life and at whatever level provides them with the most fun, enjoyment and sense of achievement regardless of their standard.

CONCLUSION

In simple terms, success of our **“Let them have Fun, Grow the Game, Beat the Competition”** vision will result in Westport Golf Club seeing the following targets achieved by the end of 2022 –

50 x Westport Junior Girls as members;
5 x Westport Junior Girls capped for Connacht;
1 x Westport Junior Girl capped for Ireland.

While to some, these targets may appear extremely ambitious if not aspirational, we are confident that they can be achieved as we believe we have the right people in place to drive this vision.

If this vision is to be realised it is the will of all stakeholders to embrace, support and champion the vision to –

“Let them have Fun, Grow the Game and Beat the Competition”

If any of you who have read this wish to become involved in a more hands on way, as a Patron, or a Volunteer then please contact, in strictest confidence the undersigned.

Mr. Enda Lonergan, Children’s Officer, Westport Golf Club.

Email: WestportG4G4L@gmail.com