

Scottish Golf unveils scheme to allow golfers to maintain handicap without being member of club

Scottish Golf has unveiled its innovative new online scheme, OpenPlay, which, for the first time ever, will allow golfers throughout Scotland to register with the Scottish Golf App to maintain a handicap without being a member of a golf club.

The launch of OpenPlay, one of the biggest changes to the sport in a generation, will open up handicaps to an estimated half a million golfers in Scotland who do not currently hold a golf club membership.



On registering for a handicap through OpenPlay these 'independent golfers' will be able to play against other players on a level playing field, both for fun and in competitive play

OpenPlay, which is accessed via the Scottish Golf App, will cost golfers £5.99 per month through a flexible subscription with no long term commitment.

They will be required to register scores from 54 holes of golf, which can be made up from any combination of 18 and nine hole rounds, before receiving their OpenPlay handicap.

Karin Sharp, Chief Operating Officer at Scottish Golf, said: "This is an incredibly exciting development for Scottish Golf and today's launch represents three years of work developing an integrated software platform for clubs to engage with these golfers. Using our venue management system (VMS), clubs will be able to control exactly how they communicate with OpenPlay members, from the marketing of their club and Open events, to booking tees and controlling green fees.

“The way people consume golf has changed a great deal in recent years, as golfers look for a more flexible approach to the sport that suits their lifestyle and fits around their other commitments. For many modern golfers, the traditional club membership offering doesn’t suit their lifestyle or simply doesn’t represent value for money. OpenPlay provides a modern, flexible approach for golfers that will make the sport more accessible and inclusive.

“Whilst we’ve seen a really encouraging increase in golfer numbers across the last year, the longer term trend before the pandemic saw a consistent reduction of around 5,000 members a year over the previous 10 years. In order to reverse this trend it is vital that we explore alternative approaches to make sure the game remains relevant and accessible to the modern golfer and more people try the sport for the first time.

“It is estimated that there are half a million golfers in Scotland who are not members of a club. OpenPlay will provide clubs with the opportunity to market directly to those that sign up for the App, providing a channel of communication that does not currently exist.”

Alan Grant, Senior Golf Manager, EventScotland said: “Golf tourism is a significant contributor to the Scottish economy and with golf tourists, on average, spending a further £5 elsewhere in the visitor economy for every £1 spent on a green fee it can have a big impact on our economic recovery from the pandemic.

“While Scotland is renowned around the world as the Home of Golf, the pandemic has also encouraged those closer to home to rediscover the world-class golf tourism offering available on their own doorstep.

“As well as providing income for golf-related businesses and sustaining jobs, there are many social benefits as well. Golf

is a fun way to improve health and well-being by spending time with others in open green spaces. By utilising new digital channels we can remove more perceived barriers to playing golf, allowing more people to enjoy the game and support our golf tourism businesses, not only increasing visitor rounds but providing additional pathways to membership.”

OpenPlay is available now by downloading the Scottish Golf App to sign up for an official handicap as well as getting a free GPS and the ability to book tee times at courses throughout Scotland.