



**LEINSTER
ELITE GOLF**

UNDER 18 PLAYERS

&

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

GUIDELINES

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COUNCIL SUMMARY

This Booklet gives an insight into the structure and operations of Leinster Golf with respect to underage golf in Leinster.

It provides guidance to both underage players and their parents/guardians and is devised to assist the progression of an individual beginner through to senior golf.

BACKGROUND

Golf can be played at any age and the Leinster Golf encourages players to take up the game as early as possible. There are a number of programmes and competitions geared to the very young player, Under 13, Under 15, Under 18, Inter Club and Irish Championships. Tournament stroke play and match play competitions facilitating all handicaps have been devised to support players at club and elite levels targeting all abilities in the game.

Who can play?

- Everyone – all ages, all abilities – most clubs are actively seeking members
- Golf is no longer an elitist sport – it can be enjoyed by everyone
- Golf is one of the few sports that all members of the family can participate together
- The handicap system ensures a level playing field for all abilities

Why Play?

- It is a sport that presents a great challenge where players invariably seek to improve their skills
- There is a clear progression from beginner to elite player and in many cases to professional golfer
- It is a sociable sport, played by over 70,000 club members in Leinster
- It is good physical and mental exercise
- It challenges as one of the best competitive structures at Club, School, Province, National and International level of any sport
- It is a healthy activity

GUI PROFILE

The GUI, founded in 1891, is the National Administrative Authority for Men's amateur golf in Ireland.

The Rules of Golf are governed by the R & A Rules Limited and administered on their behalf by each of the Provincial Branches of the GUI.

The GUI is made up of four Provinces with four Branch offices:-

- Connacht
- Leinster
- Munster
- Ulster

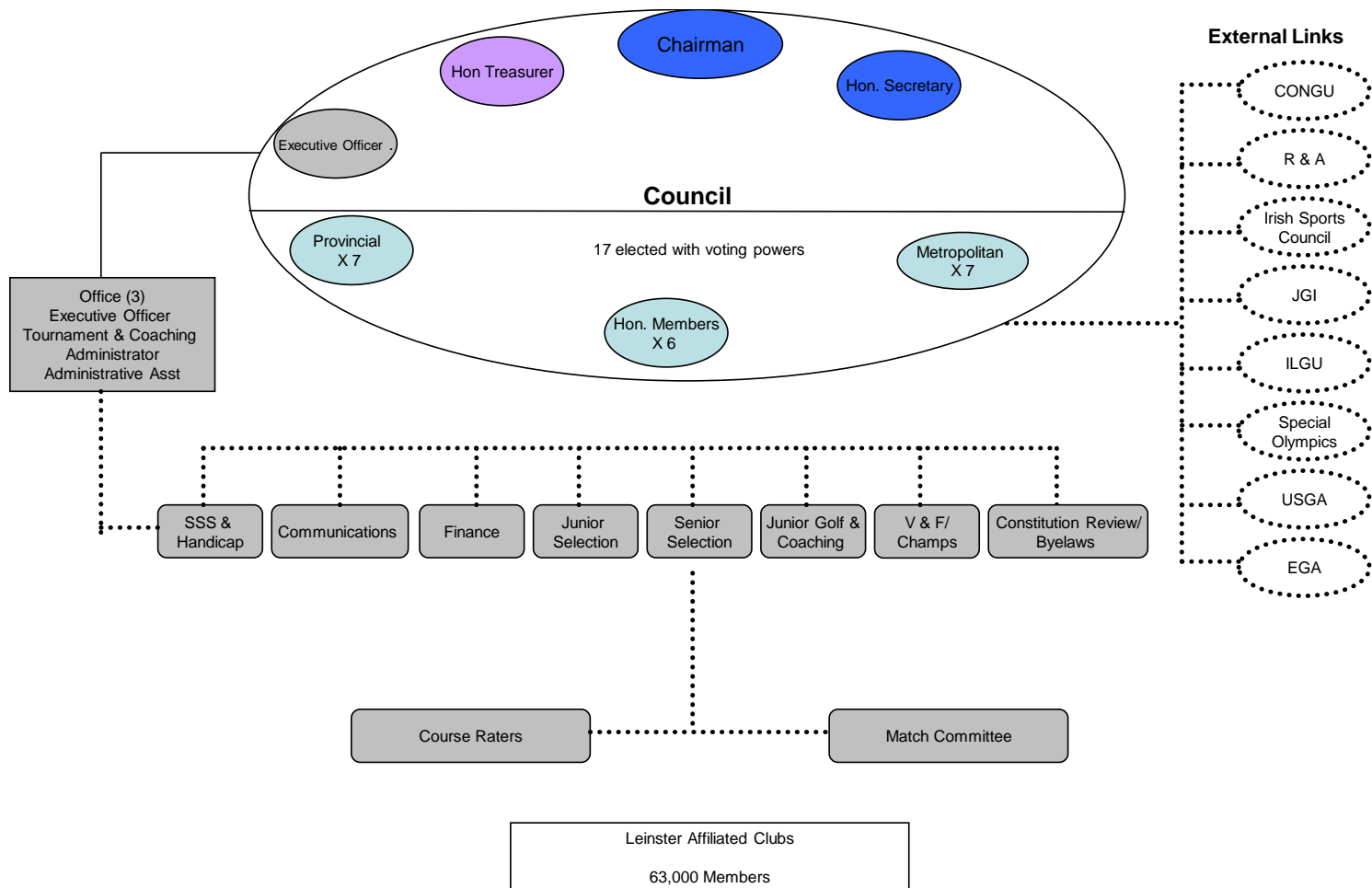
LEINSTER ELITE GOLF WEBSITE

The Leinster Elite website www.leinsterelitegolf.com developed exclusively for members of Leinster Coaching panels and their Provincial Coaches and is an excellent source of information. It is also a communication tool and must be visited regularly as all future dates for coaching will be updated on this site. In addition an App has been developed to improve communication between boys and their Coaches. Full details on the use of the App can be obtained from the User guide contained on the website.

Within the main GUI website www.gui.ie each Province has their own section (see navigation bars across the top) with news, fixtures and results listed. The Leinster page can be located at www.gui.ie/leinster

Handicap information can be viewed by clicking the "Golfnet" icon or at <http://www.golfnet.ie> Players need to know their membership number on the back of their swipe card and password to gain access to their handicap record. Every member of a golf club should have a Golfnet card which is organised by the members club.

LEINSTER GOLF ORGANISATION STRUCTURE



STRUCTURE OF JUNIOR GOLF

There is an appointed Junior Convenor on the Provincial Council and Junior Golf & Coaching Committee comprising of 6 members.

Responsibilities of Junior Convenor/Junior Committee

- To promote Junior Golf in the Province
- Arrange and run Under 18 competitions
- Provide a link between the Junior Convenor in a Golf Club and the Province
- Encourage juniors to enter the Provincial and National Championships, for example;
 - Irish Boys Championship
 - Provincial Boys e.g. Leinster Boys, Munster Boys etc
 - Junior Interclub events e.g. Leinster Under 15 Interclub, Irish Junior Foursomes
 - Under 15 and Under 13 events e.g. Leinster Boys U15 Open, Leinster Boys U13 Series
- Encourage juniors to enter the Schools Championships, for example:
 - Irish Schools Match Play Championship (Match Play)
 - Irish Schools Junior Championship (Stroke Play)
 - Leinster Inter Schools League Match Play
- Encourage juniors to enter regional/local Open competitions, for example:
 - Dublin Boys at the Grange GC
 - Wicklow Boys at Greystones GC
 - Kildare Boys at Naas GC

Note – these competitions are hugely beneficial to compete in as it allows boys at different levels to gain experience outside of their home clubs
- Consider any talented junior for Provincial/National coaching
- Encourage clubs to put in place a Junior Programme to increase the number of boys taking up the game at an early age.

JUNIOR GOLF IRELAND (JGI)

JGI is a partnership between the Golfing Union of Ireland (GUI), the Irish Ladies Golf Union (ILGU), and the Irish region of the Professional Golfer's Association (PGA). Their primary responsibility is the development of golf outside of golf clubs.

Their target audience is children whose parents do not necessarily play golf or children who have not had previous golf experience. There is a strong link between the activities of Junior Golf Ireland and the Junior Golf Programme in golf clubs. JGI can assist clubs in setting up their Junior Programme and will assist local schools to develop links with their local club so that more juniors get started in the game. For information on JGI please refer to the website: www.juniorgolfireland.com

Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport

In line with the Irish Sports Council's Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport the GUI, ILGU and PGA produced a child protection policy, 'Code of Ethics for Golf for Young People'. The policy contains codes of conduct for leaders, players and parents, a bullying

policy and guidelines for travelling, supervision, overnight trips and physical contact, along with guidelines for recognising and reporting child protection concerns. To view a copy of the policy go to: www.juniorgolfireland.com

Leinster Golf officials, staff and provincial coaches have all undertaken Child Protection courses.

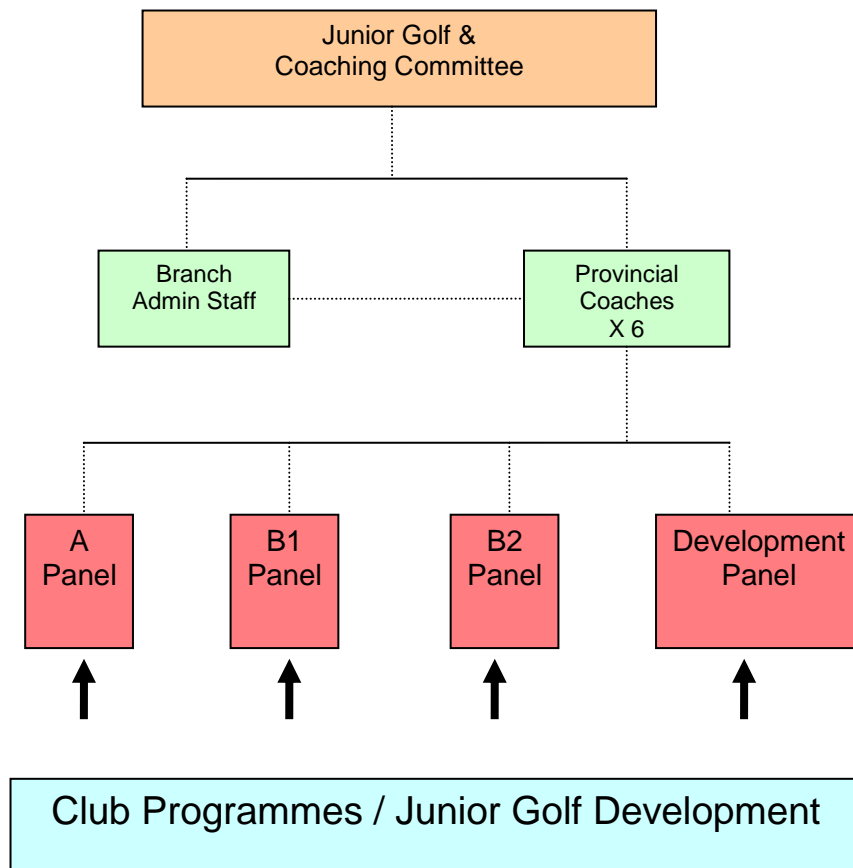
PROVINCIAL COACHING PROGRAMME

Leinster Golf provides coaching during the months of September – March to promising players. Along with the Provincial Coaches (6) and Branch Selection Committees panels are selected as follows:-

- A Panels – Elite Under 18 years
- B Panels – Under 18 years
- Development – Under 13 years

The aim is to put in place a structured training programme which provides our best players with every opportunity of reaching their full potential and represent Leinster at the highest level. The panels are selected on ability, potential and commitment to the programme, irrespective of age and results from the Order of Merit during the previous season.

Weekend sessions are totally golf orientated i.e. technique, high emphasis on short game, course management, nutrition, psychology, Rules of Golf. Each Provincial Coach has also been trained to assess the functional competency of each panel member and if required recommend flexibility exercises to prevent injury. Players are supplied with a training manual which they are expected to complete during the winter programme.



TOURNAMENTS

Provincial Competitions

Leinster Golf publishes a fixture list each year which includes Provincial & National Championships which can be accessed on www.leinsterelitegolf.com
In addition a fixtures calendar is sent annually to each affiliated Golf Club - you should find this poster on the men's notice board in the Clubhouse.

A player must be a member of an affiliated golf club with a CONGU handicap for all GUI Leinster Golf competitions with the exception of some Under 13 competitions. Players must be within the age and handicap limit as stated in the conditions of competition. Entry forms for the championships can be downloaded or entered on line.

Players and Parents/Guardians together with their Provincial Coaches should decide on their tournament schedule in advance of the season.

Boys Open Championships These are individual championships held both nationally and provincially in both Under 18 and Under 15 Categories.

Leinster Boys Under 13 Series – Qualifying rounds held at a number of venues throughout the province, qualifiers proceeding to a Series final.

Irish Junior Foursomes and Fred Daly Trophies (under 18) and Leinster Under 15 Inter Club Match play - Inter Club competitions in Foursomes and Singles format.

Boys Interprovincial Championship This team is selected by the Leinster Junior Selectors and is made up of the top performing boys in the province (see page 12).

U15 Boys Interprovincial Championship This team is selected by the Leinster Junior Selectors and is made up of the top performing boys in the province at this age level.

Schools Championships - Schools receive entry forms from the Branch office and are invited to submit teams.

ORDER OF MERIT

Leinster Golf awards Order of Merit points in four categories, Senior Over 21; Youths Under 21; Boys Under 18; Boys Under 15 based on performance in various tournaments. Winners in each category are invited annually to attend the Branch Annual Delegates Meeting where they are awarded prizes. Further information on the Order of Merit is available at www.leinsterelitegolf.com

Order of Merit table

Placings in Stroke Play Events	Points awarded	Placings in Match Play	Points awarded
1 st	50	Winner	50
2 nd	40	Runner up	40
3 rd – 4 th	30	Semi Finalists	30
5 th – 8 th	20	Quarter Finalists	20
9 th – 16 th	10	Last 16	10

20 points will be awarded to a player who is unable to compete in a counting event because of a clash with National team duties.

The Order of Merit will be split into four categories as follows:-

Senior Over 21
 Youths Under 21
 Boys Under 18
 Boys Under 15

The Counting Events to determine the winner in each category are as follows:-

Senior

East of Ireland
 Irish Amateur Close
 Irish Amateur Open
 South of Ireland
 West of Ireland
 North of Ireland

Youths (Under 21)

East of Ireland
 Irish Amateur Close
 Irish Amateur Open
 South of Ireland
 West of Ireland
 North of Ireland
 Irish Youths Close
 Leinster Youths Close

Boys (Under 18)

East of Ireland
 Irish Amateur Close
 Irish Amateur Open
 South of Ireland
 West of Ireland
 North of Ireland
 Irish Youths Close

Leinster Youths Close
Irish Boys Close
Leinster Boys Open
Munster Boys Open
Connacht Boys Open
Ulster Boys Open

Boys (Under 15)

Irish Boys Close
Leinster Boys Open
Munster Boys Open
Connacht Boys Open
Ulster Boys Open
Irish Boys Under 15
Leinster U15 Close
Leinster U15 Open
Munster U15 Open
Ulster U15 Open
Connacht U15 Open

Conditions (subject to change from time to time)

Open to all players whose Home clubs are situated in Leinster.

No player may win more than one category.

In the event of a tie in any category the winner shall be decided by the player with the highest points in any one counting event. If still a tie, the winner will be decided by the Provincial Council. **Note: The results of the Order of Merit table are taken into consideration when Leinster Coaching Panels are being selected.**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Introduction

The payment of financial assistance was first introduced by the GUI Leinster Branch in 1997 to assist “Elite Leinster golfers” to defray part of the expenses of competing in GUI tournaments both at National and Provincial level.

Eligibility

To be eligible for financial assistance, players must be a member of a Leinster ‘A’ Coaching Panel or a National Coaching Panel.

Note - Financial Assistance will not be paid to players who do not make themselves available for selection for Leinster teams. Payment of expenses are processed at the end of August each year.

A guide to allowances are as follows;

- Meals €15.00 maximum per day
- Accommodation €35.00 maximum per night
- Travel €25.00 maximum per event

CLAIM FORMS ARE POSTED TO ELIGIBLE PANEL MEMBERS BY THE BRANCH OFFICE BEFORE THE SEASON COMMENCES.

TEAM SELECTION

Selection Criteria for Teams

Structures have been put in place to encourage and support players by providing improved facilities, resources and coaching. These supports together with the improvement in standard means that competition for places on Leinster teams is increasing all the time.

The Branch Selectors know the importance of selection to the players. They know that selection provides the player with a number of psychological supports:-

- Affirmation of success in competitions
- Affirmation of the hard work, commitment and dedication that a player has given
- Confirmation of self belief, confidence, motivation and self evaluation
- Affirmation to all external personnel who have helped the player gain success.

The remit of the selection committee is to select the best players to represent Leinster at Provincial level.

Selection process is based on the following:

- Observation of players
- Information gained from competition results
- Result of performance in Provincial & National championships
- Commitment and technical improvements made at coaching sessions via Coaches report
- Performance in different types of events; Strokeplay, Matchplay, Foursomes, Team.
- Past performance on Leinster teams
- Handicap profile
- Behaviour and attitude
- Order of merit position

THE GOOD PARENT CODE

- Be familiar with coaching and training programmes so as to support the junior golfer where changes are needed.
- Be familiar with coaching methods.
- Share concerns where you have them with the coach.
- Re-enforce in the young golfer the importance to keep winning and losing in perspective, and encourage them to behave with dignity at all times, irrespective of the result.
- Support coaches in instilling these virtues.
- Remember that young people play golf for their own enjoyment, not their parents.
- Encourage young people to play golf without forcing them to do so.
- Focus on achieving goals in golf, not winning or losing.
- Be realistic with their goal settings.
- Provide positive verbal feedback both on training and during a round.
- Remember that persistent negative messages get in children's heads.
- Always show appreciation towards other junior competitors (Good Shot)
- Acknowledge good performance rather than win at all costs (Ethic)

Encourage all young golfers irrespective of their ability; never ridicule any individual player because their play is poor.

Emotional abuse in golf:

- Providing repeated negative feedback.
- Repeatedly demanding performances which the player is not capable of.
- Over-emphasizing the importance of winning.
- Repeatedly ignoring a player's efforts to progress.

ON THE GOLF COURSE:

Caddies

A person whose **age exceeds the age limit** in the following competitions is not permitted to act as a caddie.

- Boys Interprovincial Matches
- Irish and Provincial Boys Championships
- Boys Interclub events
- Leinster School Events

Over-involvement is a serious issue at golf tournaments. Over-involved and over-protective parents/guardians add pressure on the golfer and may reduce his ability to take responsibility for his own actions.

On the golf course a Parent/Guardian may:

- Exercise good golf etiquette
- Hand players food, drink, clothes between holes
- Help look for lost balls
- Help ball spotters on the course
- Help staff evacuate players after weather suspension

Parents/Guardians may not

- Give advice to a player on the golf course: Rule 8-1
- Give encouragement on the golf course as it could be interpreted as advice
- Give rulings or call penalties on players
- Shuttle players

- Be within 25 yards of a player during play/practice or walk on fairways
- Violate host golf course policies
- Use abusive language toward players or staff
- Withdraw a player without speaking to a Branch Official
- Act as ball spotters unless requested to by the Championship Committee

THE GOOD JUNIOR GOLFER CODE

It is important that Junior golfers

- Recognise and appreciate the efforts made by coaches, parents and Leinster Branch Officials and Administration Staff in giving you the opportunity to play the game at the very highest levels.
- Understand the values of loyalty and commitment given to Leinster Branch.
- Recognise that every young player has a right to expect their involvement in golf to be safe and free from all abuse.
- Understand that if an individual feels they are not being treated in a manner that is acceptable, then you have the right to tell a coach or Leinster Branch official.

Players should:

- Play because you want to play, not to please parents or coaches.
- Remember that skill development, fun and enjoyment are the most important parts of the game.
- Be attentive at all training sessions.
- Recognise good play by all other golfers you play with.
- Be a sportsman, whether Win or Lose
- Play by the rules of the game and abide by all ethics
- Control your emotions
- Treat all golfers the way you would like to be treated yourself.

ETIQUETTE

To ensure that you and others enjoy the game as much as possible you need good golfing etiquette and to understand the spirit of the game. Consideration should be shown to others on the course at all times.

PLEASE AND THANK YOU

It is important to send thank you notes, emails or verbal recognition as a form of respect on certain occasions. Examples are as follows:

- If you are in receipt of Provincial Coaching
- To your Captain & Manager after a team event
- Club hosting the event
- To your parents for giving you the opportunity to play golf

THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

Unlike many sports, golf is generally played without the supervision of a referee or umpire. The game relies on the integrity of the individual. All players should behave in a disciplined manner, showing courtesy and sportsmanship at all times.

Failure to play the game by the rules may lead to severe sanctions which can have consequences for a player's future in golf.

GENERAL ETIQUETTE

Good etiquette is important at all times, whether on the golf course or in the clubhouse:

- Observe and respect any dress code that the club & GUI Leinster Branch has established
- Check to see if there are any requirements concerning golf shoe spikes
- Check in with the official starter or professional's shop before proceeding to the first tee
- Be courteous to all club staff
- Control your temper, do not throw clubs or damage the course in anger
- Avoid littering the course
- Do not use bad language

BEFORE THE 1ST TEE

- Arrive at the club in plenty of time
- Know your handicap
- Be aware of the format of play
- Know the order of play in your group
- Put an identification mark on the ball you are going to play with
- Pay attention to the instructions given by the starter

THE 1ST TEE

- Arrive at the first tee at least five minutes ahead of your scheduled starting time
- If not already known to you, introduce yourself to the players with whom you are playing
- Wish the players in your group a good game
- Advise the players in your group of the type of ball you are playing and your identification mark
- Play from the tees indicated by the starter

SAFETY

- Ensure that no one is standing in a position to be hit by your club, the ball or any other object when you make a practice swing or stroke
- Do not play until the players in front are out of range
- Alert green staff nearby or ahead when you are about to play a stroke that might endanger them
- Shout "fore" if there is the slightest chance that your ball will hit anyone
- Seek shelter early from lightning. The Rules of Golf allow you to stop play and take shelter any time you feel threatened by lightning

PACE OF PLAY

Slow play affects everyone's enjoyment of the game. Players should make a real effort to play at a good pace. Priority on the course is determined by a group's pace of play. It is a group's responsibility to keep up with the group in front. If a group loses a clear hole, it is expected to invite the group behind to play through, irrespective of the number of players in either group.

- Avoid excessive practice swings
- Be ready to play as soon as it is your turn, i.e. have your club selected
- Proceed to your ball as soon as it is safe to do so and determine yardages while walking
- At the putting green, leave bags or carts in a position that will allow quick and easy movement off the green to the next tee
- Study your line of putt while others are putting
- When all have holed out, leave the green immediately and mark score cards
- If there is any chance of your ball being lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds, play a provisional ball
- If you have to search for a ball, signal immediately to the group behind to play through

CONSIDERATION FOR OTHERS

- Do not disturb the play of others by moving, talking or making unnecessary noise
- On the teeing ground, don't tee your ball until it is your turn to play
- Don't stand close to or directly behind the ball, or the hole, when a player is about to play
- Avoid standing on another's line of putt or casting a shadow over another's line of play
- Remain on or close to the putting green until all others in your group have holed out
- If you are marking a card, record the player's score after each hole and check with the player if necessary
- Avoid taking electronic devices onto the course including mobile phones

CARE OF THE COURSE

It is the responsibility of all players to make sure that they do nothing to spoil the condition of the course. Players should try to leave the course as they find it and should, for example, avoid hitting the head of the club into the ground, whether in anger or for any other reason.

TEEING GROUND

- Avoid taking divots from tees by practice swinging away from the teeing area
- Do not replace divots on tees as they will be filled by the greenkeeper on a regular basis
- If there is a fill mixture by the tee, fill any divot holes with the mixture to ground level
- Do not take trolleys or buggies onto tees
- Only play from tee markers in play when practising course

FAIRWAY AND ROUGH

- Avoid taking divots with practice swings - replace them if you do
- Carefully repair divot holes, either by replacing the divot or filling the hole with soil

BUNKERS

- Always enter and exit from the low side of the bunker
- Before leaving the bunker, carefully fill up and smooth over any holes
- After use, return the rake to the bunker and place in the direction of play

PUTTING GREEN

- Repair all pitch-marks on the green
- Avoid causing damage to the putting green by dragging your feet
- Avoid standing too close to the hole
- Do not use the head of the club to remove a ball from the hole
- Handle the flagstick carefully and replace it properly in the hole before leaving the green

PLAY BY THE RULES

As golf is, essentially, a self-regulating game, all golfers should have a good understanding of the fundamental rules. The official Rules of Golf as published by R & A Rules Limited should be consulted where any doubt arises. If still in doubt as to the procedure, the matter should be checked with the Committee before signing and returning scorecards.

GUI LEINSTER BRANCH UNIFORM

Example of Leinster Interprovincial Team Uniform provided is as follows:- (*subject to change and dependent of number of days of event*)

Description	Quantity
Playing Shirt	3
Trousers	1
Pullover	1
Slip over	1
Titleist Golf Balls	1 dozen
Base layer	1
Cap	1
Socks	3 pairs
Leinster Golf Umbrella	1
Back Pack	1

COLLEGE GOLF SCHOLARSHIPS

There are college scholarships available in Irish, British and American Colleges/Universities for men's golf.

These scholarships vary from College to College and it is up to the player and parent to contact the College directly.

In some cases a College or College Coach may get in contact with a player directly and offer them a scholarship.

However, most of the time if a player is interested in obtaining a College scholarship it is up to him to research which Colleges he may like to attend and then speak to that institution about a sports scholarship.

In American colleges it is required that players must have taken the SAT reasoning test before they can attend or even visit a college on an official recruiting trip.

Availability

Further information on Scholarships at home and abroad is available on the Scholarship section of www.leinstergolf.com

DIET, NUTRITION & EXERCISE

While athletes in many sports have been advised to eat more nutritious meals for better sports performance, golfers have generally paid little attention to dietary requirements.

While golf is a slow-moving activity that does not tax the aerobic or anaerobic energy systems, all golfers can benefit their game from better nutrition and proper hydration as these factors play a significant role in energy availability and utilisation.

Over the course of a golf game, nutritional preparation can help or hinder playing performance.

Three Steps to Better Nutrition

An eating program that provides all of the essential nutrients but limits fat consumption requires careful food selection, substitution, and preparation.

The following suggestions should be useful for establishing more healthful eating habits:

Food Selection

Follow the Food Guide Pyramid recommendations which emphasises grains, vegetables, and fruit along with moderate amounts of milk and meat products for a diet that will be high in nutrition and low in fat. Be very selective in the fat category. Saturated fats such as those found in butter, cream, egg yolks, palm oil, and coconut oil raise blood cholesterol levels - consume these food items sparingly. Instead, select monounsaturated fats (such as olive, canola and peanut oils) or polyunsaturated fats (such as safflower, sunflower, and corn oils). Mono- and polyunsaturated oils tend to lower blood cholesterol levels and therefore help reduce the risk of heart disease.

The following contain less saturated fat than other choices in their category and are preferred selections: fish; poultry without skin; low- fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, olive, peanut, sunflower, corn and canola oils.

Food Substitution

Most people have favourite foods they don't want to give up in spite of the fat content. The good news is that simple substitutions can reduce fat content without detracting from taste. For example, using evaporated skim milk in place of cream cuts fat and cholesterol content by more than 65 percent and using plain non-fat yogurt or non-fat sour cream in place of sour cream on baked potatoes reduces cholesterol content by 90 percent-and supplies the body with twice as much calcium.

Other useful substitutes are two egg whites in place of a whole egg, herbs rather than table salt, low-fat frozen yogurt or ice milk instead of ice cream, cocoa powder in place of chocolate squares in baked goods and lemon juice or vinegar instead of high-fat salad dressings.

If you have a sweet tooth, we suggest dried fruit (raisins, dates, figs, prunes, dried apricots) in place of candy, cookies and fat-rich baked goods. If you prefer crunchy snacks like potato chips, consider low-fat alternatives such as pretzels, baked chips or carrot sticks.

Food Preparation

How food is prepared can increase or decrease the fat content. Frying can double and triple the calories in some foods. It also is better to cook vegetables separate from meat so they won't absorb the meat fats. We suggest baked or broiled meats and steamed or microwaved vegetables, for greatest retention of nutrients. Try not to add butter and salt to vegetables during cooking: It takes less salt and fat to make food taste good after cooking than during cooking.

Nutritional Overview

Dietary habits significantly affect your body weight, body composition and physical health. Consuming too many calories for the level of activity, predisposes individuals to various diseases and degenerative problems. Be aware that excessive body fat increases your risk of heart disease, joint problems, diabetes, low back pain, and many types of cancer. Of course, extra fat also interferes with proper swing mechanics and optimum golf performance. Conversely, reducing excess fat weight through proper nutrition and sensible exercise can result in improved swing technique and reduced fatigue during your game.

Understanding the problem is only the first step in making lifestyle changes that can lead to a more desirable body weight and better golf performance. Eating for the purpose of lower golf scores is advisable from a health and performance perspective. In addition to keeping weight down, keep your accessible energy stores up throughout a full game of golf. The physical improvements that result from strength training will motivate some golfers to modify their eating habits to further enhance their playing abilities. Others might need specific nutrition programs that present daily menus and dietary information. An excellent resource in this area is Nancy Clark's *Sports Nutrition Guidebook*.

In addition to knowing how to count calories and determine the fat content of various foods, be aware that eating too little protein or calcium can lead to a weak musculoskeletal system and even osteoporosis. Insufficient iron in the diet can cause anaemia while excessive sodium intake contributes to hypertension.

Eating foods high in fibre, low in fats and rich in vitamins and minerals is essential for optimum health and physical function as well as for disease prevention. Potassium, for example, which is abundant in bananas and cantaloupes, is involved in every muscle contraction. Vitamins A and C, found in many fruits and vegetables, are important antioxidants (nutritional bodyguards) that protect the body cells from potentially harmful chemical reactions.

While nutritional supplements can supply vitamins and minerals, dieticians recommend that such supplements do not substitute for well-balanced diets that include a variety of vegetables, fruits and whole grains, as well as lean meats and low-fat dairy products. Human nutrient requirements are too complex (and too little understood) to be adequately supported by pills and only a varied and well-rounded diet can provide the proper foundation for optimum nutrition. You should be familiar with the food categories and daily servings recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid. A well-balanced diet is not the same as a low-calorie diet designed for losing weight. Be sure your doctor or dietician approves any reduced-calorie diet.

EXERCISE

Youth sports, including golf, have increased in both numbers and popularity. With the appearance of new and young talent in the game, children are starting to view golf as being very “cool”. Because children have not completed their physical maturation, an injury at this time could result in permanent developmental disability and lead to long-term functional problems.

One of the ways to reduce injury risk for young golfers is to have them warm up and stretch before play. These same preventive procedures also should enhance their performance ability. Because the trunk serves as the link between the upper and lower bodies, it must be strong enough to transfer forces between these segments.

The child is at greatest risk from injury during a growth spurt, which is when large increases in height are observed. During this stage, the child has a tendency to develop tight low back, hamstring and hip musculature in combination with weak abdominal muscles and a swayback posture.

This can lead to compensatory manoeuvres and increased injury risk. Problems can range from common strains and sprains, to fractures, disc injuries, vertebral wedging, stress reactions, vertebral slippage, and over-use injuries.

Make training modifications for any golfers under 18, especially those undergoing the added vulnerability of a growth spurt. Rehabilitation and prevention programs can range from strengthening and stretching exercises to immobilization and, in some instances, rest.

Remembering that the muscles might not grow as fast as the bone, flexibility becomes imperative during this critical developmental period.

Common Nutrition Issues

Training Nutrition

Golfers of all levels require a diet which provides a wide variety of foods. The diet should focus on carbohydrate and be balanced with moderate amounts of protein and smaller amounts of fat. The following are key points:

- Enjoy a variety of foods each day. It is easy to fall into the trap of having the same or very similar foods day after day. Different foods contain different nutrients and chemicals so eating a variety of foods ensures exposure to all required substances. Priority should be given to nutrient-rich foods however, there is room for all foods including those that are fun to eat or part of eating socially.
- Focus on nutrient-rich, high carbohydrate foods. These include bread, cereal-based foods (rice, pasta, breakfast cereal), fruit, vegetables and sweetened low fat dairy products such as yoghurt and flavoured milk. These foods should form the bulk of your intake each day.
- Consume small quantities of high fat foods. These include butter, margarine, oil, cream, cakes, biscuits, pastries, fried foods and many takeaway and processed foods. Too much fat can lead to unwanted weight gain and increased risk of heart disease. It may also result in you under-consuming carbohydrate.
- Consume moderate amounts of protein and where possible choose low fat protein sources. Low fat sources of protein include lean meat, skin-free chicken, fish, eggs, low fat dairy products, breads, cereals, legumes and tofu.
- Look after fluid needs. The body needs to be hydrated to perform optimally. Consume fluids regularly during the day and during training sessions.

Tournament Nutrition

A top golfer must strive to maintain skills and concentration over three to five hours, perhaps for days on end. Once physical fatigue sets in, deterioration in skills can be expected. Both dehydration and low-blood sugar levels are possible during competition, and may impair golfing performance.

Sweat losses may be considerable especially when tournaments are played in hot and windy environments. Although many golf courses provide drink stations for players, they may be at infrequent intervals and not allow sufficient opportunity for fluid replacement during a game. Since players will usually miss a meal while playing a round, they may be faced with no carbohydrate intake for five or six hours. Combined with exercise and nervous stress, this situation may cause a drop in blood-sugar levels in susceptible individuals affecting brain function and skill.

When tournaments are played over several days the situation may be compounded. Chronic dehydration and an inadequate carbohydrate intake may cause fatigue, loss of weight and poor performance.

The following tips can help to avoid some of these problems:

- Have a carbohydrate-based meal before competition.
- Organise yourself to take adequate provisions onto the golf course.
- Experiment during practise rounds to develop a plan for fluid and food intake which best suits you.
- Carbohydrate drinks such as sports drinks, fruit juices and soft drink provide a simple way of consuming fluids and carbohydrates.
- Frequent ingestion of small volumes of fluid is recommended e.g. 150ml every 20 minutes.
- Experiment with foods such as sandwiches, fruit, cereal bars, dried fruit, nuts etc.