



Scottish Golf Union / Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation

SGU Vision

The Scottish Golf Union (SGU) is the governing body for amateur golf in Scotland, incorporating almost 600 golf clubs across the country representing a total membership of approximately 223,000 golf club members.

Based at the Home of Golf in St Andrews, the SGU's responsibilities span across most aspects of the game in Scotland. These include our original core business of staging national amateur championships and managing Scotland's national teams, expanding to encouraging more youngsters and adult beginners to play golf and providing increased support services to member clubs.

Through the Scottish Golf Strategy, our overall vision is to lead our clubs, develop champions and provide the opportunity for everyone in Scotland to play golf for life.

The following are the key goals that define the strategy:

- Stronger Clubs
- More Golfers
- Quality Coaching
- Winning Golfers
- Outstanding Events
- Excellent Governance
- Strong Partnerships.

Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation

Our relationship with the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation has helped us to achieve our goals, and will continue to do so when Scottish Golf Ltd is formed on 1 October (the amalgamation of the Scottish Golf Union and the Scottish Ladies' Golfing Association) into a single, unified governing body.

The support from the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation is invaluable to our activities and can be illustrated across three areas:

- Support for leading male and female amateur players for winter performance training in the UAE
- Early season competitive performance training programme in South Africa
- Under-18 competitive training, including for the Under-16 squads

Such support helped Scotland become champions of Europe at July's European Amateur Team Championship in Sweden – our second victory in the last six years.

It was a wonderful triumph for National Coach Ian Rae and his six-player side at Halmstad Golf Club, emulating the feats of Colin Montgomerie, who was part of a Scotland side who won the same event at the same venue in 1985.

While the Scots tasted success in Scandinavia, the roots of the triumph were certainly aided by the exposure of most of the players to the South African amateur circuit during winter months.

Building on previous successful trips to the Rainbow Nation, a nine-player group headed to South Africa for a competitive performance programme from January to March in 2015.

Thanks to the continued support of national team sponsor Aberdeen Asset Management, South African businessman Johann Rupert and the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation, coupled with funding from **sportscotland**, the youthful group, featuring five teenagers, travelled to South Africa for competition and training to mirror previous programmes.

Their schedule included four major events on the South African circuit, the annual Test Match against the host nation and a triangular match against the South African Golf Development Board and the South African Golf Association juniors, as well as a training camp to allow players to work on short game, swing and general fitness with support staff.

Golf was the ultimate winner in the annual International Triangular match which took place at Wanderers Golf Club in February. The SAGA Juniors amassed 15.5 points to claim the country's third successive victory in the contest, while Scotland finished a close second with 13.5 points and the SAGDB celebrated their best performance since the Triangular first launched in 2010 with seven points.

The SGU squad also worked off the course with the South African Golf Development Board, who help children from underprivileged areas to become involved in golf. The Scottish players taught young children golf skills in Soweto, with the SGU recently sending surplus clothing to South Africa for their use to continue the relationship between the countries.

"We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of Johann Rupert and the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation," said Hamish Grey, the Scottish Golf Union's chief executive. "The players involved in our European Amateur Team Championship win, the seventh title in our history, have benefitted from the support provided in South Africa in recent years.

"It is no coincidence that our consistent results align with the support we are kindly provided to allow our players to train and play in South Africa."

Grey added: "In addition this year, we hosted a Test match between South Africa, Australia and Scotland at Castle Stuart Golf Links in June. In all cases, young talent is being developed and life-long friendships made, with all the South African representatives representing their country in an exemplary manner."

A number of young Scots have also benefitted from playing in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship in recent years. For example, last year three young Scots amateurs teed-up eager to match Bradley Neil's success 12 months previously.

Then 17-year-old Neil, from Blairgowrie, finished third in the 2013 Team Championship – playing with American professional Peter Uihlein – and went on to win the 2014 Amateur Championship before joining the professional ranks earlier this summer.

Connor Syme, George Burns and Ben Kinsley enjoyed their experience last year and Syme, whose dad, Stuart, is a pro and based at Drumoig Golf Centre near St Andrews, said: “It was very exciting. I saw Bradley on TV in 2013 playing with Peter Uihlein and it was great to get the same opportunity last year. To be playing in the same tournament as Rory McIlroy was crazy.”

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