

CHESHIRE COUNTY GOLF PARTNERSHIP

Press release

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For immediate use

CAPTION: Prestbury GC receives GolfMark (left to right) junior organiser Sean Hammill, Cheshire County Golf Partnership county development officer Craig Thomas and PGA professional Mark Pilling.

A CHESHIRE golf club which caters for young golfers of all abilities – from beginners to England international standard – has received national recognition for its drive to encourage more people into the sport.

Prestbury Golf Club, near Macclesfield, has been awarded GolfMark, a national seal of approval for junior and beginner friendly facilities which play an important role in the development of the game.

The club offers a wide range of coaching for those starting out in the game while also helping develop the talent of players like James Newton, who is now a member of the England Under 18 squad, 2011 Junior Captain Dan Young and Junior Captain Josh Garside, who are both regular Cheshire county players.

The club is one of the Cheshire County Golf Partnership's County Academy centres with PGA professional Mark Pilling running the county's only all-girls group.

The club has seen the number of active junior members grow in recent years with players of all ages and abilities having the opportunity to receive coaching and participate in competitive golf. In addition, and to encourage the players to get more regularly involved in competitions throughout the year, the junior section has introduced a new Order of Merit.

Explains junior organiser Sean Hammill: "The idea is to increase participation in the competitions we organise for the juniors. Everyone who takes part gets points towards the Order of Merit, with extra points for those who are successful in the individual events.

"The club offers coaching to suit all abilities, but the Order of Merit provides further encouragement for the players to take what they are learning out onto the golf course in a competitive situation."

The Order of Merit winner was Josh Thurnock, who is in his first year as a member and has seen his handicap fall by more than 10 shots to 28. The junior section's award for the most improved player of the year went to Finlay McCance, who halved his handicap to 14. Player of the year was awarded to James Newton in recognition of his outstanding year at club, county and international level.

"GolfMark shows that we have the right policies in place to provide a welcoming and safe environment in which young players can start out in the sport," adds Sean Hammill, "while the success of players like Josh Garside and James Newton shows what can be achieved by hard work and dedication.

"We encourage a very strong family involvement and have received a lot of support from both members and staff at the club in developing such a positive junior structure."

Says Craig Thomas, county development officer for the Cheshire County Golf Partnership: "Prestbury are strong supporters of junior golf – whether that be creating a fun environment for youngsters to try out golf for the first time or in encouraging players who have the skills to go on and reach the highest levels of the game.

"GolfMark means a parent dropping off their child knows they are in a positive environment with the emphasis on the right care and responsibilities while the success of the individual club members shows the quality of coaching on offer."

Note to editors

GolfMark is a national scheme that incorporates ClubMark and recognises junior and beginner friendly golf facilities that focus on Coaching and Playing, Club Environment and Child Protection, and Duty of Care, all of which are extremely important to parents and children alike.

GolfMark is an initiative jointly provided by the EGU and EWGA via the England Golf Partnership's 'Whole Sport Plan' for golf and is an integral part of the England Golf Partnership's vision to 'Grow the Game'.

The England Golf Partnership is a collaboration of a number of stakeholders in the sport including England Golf – the new organisation formed by the merger of the English Golf Union and The English Women's Golf Association - the PGA, the Golf Foundation and Sport England.

In Cheshire the partnership is supported by the Cheshire Union of Golf Clubs, the Cheshire County Ladies Golf Association and the Cheshire and North Wales PGA.

For more details of the activities in Cheshire visit

www.cheshiregolfpartnership.com

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