

# CHESHIRE COUNTY GOLF PARTNERSHIP

**Press release**

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**For immediate release**

CAPTION: PGA professional Mark Pilling with Maya Thomas, Isobel Wardle and Maisie Bray at the County Academy coaching sessions at Prestbury Golf Club

CHESHIRE'S new golf Academy is proving a big hit.

The county-wide scheme is aimed at encouraging young golfers with the potential to develop their skills.

Not all those taking part are members of clubs or have much golfing experience, but the project – organised by the Cheshire County Golf Partnership – offers high quality group coaching at nine different venues.

Nearly 100 youngsters are now taking part on courses in the first year of the project.

The only all-girls sessions are held at Prestbury Golf Club, where teaching professional Mark Pilling has a 13-strong group from the ages of eight to 15.

“It is a mixed group in terms of golfing knowledge,” explained the Professional Golfers Association qualified coach, who was the north's trainee of the year in 2010 and finished runner-up in this year's prestigious Titleist PGA Assistant of the Year awards. “There are a couple of girls who are new to the game and are not members of clubs yet while some of the older girls are more experienced and are looking to progress their game.

“The Academy is aimed at anyone with potential who is looking to develop their golf game – whether that be beginners starting out or players who may not have a particularly low handicap now, but have the potential to do so given the right direction and the right coaching.

“The coaching is more games based with skills challenges, for example, but we also cover areas like golf course management and golf psychology. We set them challenges to do when they are away from the coaching sessions and I keep in touch with the parents to help monitor their progress.

“It has worked well having an all-girls group because they are able to feed off each other.”

Pilling enjoyed a distinguished amateur career before turning professional in 2004, having won the the 2002 British Boys Championship at Carnoustie, the 2003 Faldo Series and the 2003 Cheshire County Championships.

Now he is relishing the chance to help the next generation of players expand their golfing education.

“The Academy is a very exciting project to be involved in,” he added. “The Academy gives everyone the chance to progress their golf in the future.

“It is an opportunity to enjoy high quality coaching, to work together as part of a team and make new friends and visit different places.

“Hopefully it will help introduce the game to new players, who might go on and become golf club members, and for the more experienced it will help them develop their game and give the county teams a greater pool of players to choose from.”

The girls taking part at Prestbury are: Madeline Ashworth, Erica Sanders, Isabelle Broadhurst, Jessica Hill, Isobel Wardle, Ellie Farrer, Sophie Bollam, Maya Thomas, Maisie Bray, Jodie Robertson, Georgina Challinor, Sophie Miller and Milley Hubbard.

The Cheshire County Golf Academy is one of a number of initiatives undertaken by the Cheshire Golf Partnership, a collaboration of the major stakeholders in golf, including the English Golf Union, 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 PGA.

For more details of the activities in Cheshire visit [www.cheshiregolfpartnership.com](http://www.cheshiregolfpartnership.com).

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