

CHESHIRE COUNTY GOLF PARTNERSHIP

Press release

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For immediate use

CAPTION: Styal Golf Club receives its GolfMark award (left to right) Glynn Traynor, director of golf, Mark Johnson, PGA golf professional, Simon Tracey, volunteer, and Craig Thomas, county development officer for the Cheshire County Golf Partnership.

The home club of European Tour star David Horsey has received national recognition for its work in introducing young people to the sport.

Styal Golf Club, near Wilmslow, 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 has been a long-time supporter of junior golf but has further developed the junior programme and plans to continue building closer links with local schools and the community.

The result of the club's hard work is a healthy and active 70-strong junior group which is supported by other sections of the club as well as the parents.

Explains PGA professional Mark Johnson: "Styal is an ideal place to start playing golf. As well as the main course we have a par 3 course, which is a great starting point for the younger players, and a 24 bay floodlit driving range so players can practice as often as they want.

"We have always done a lot of work with the 8-12 years-old age group, but as part of working towards GolfMark we have improved the offering for all ages through new competitions, prize presentations, support from volunteers at the club and the backing of the committee.

"The duty of care policies that we have in place as part of GolfMark means parents know when they drop off their children that they are in a safe and positive environment.

"There is a real buzz about the club over the juniors. We have some very good players coming through, such as Charlotte Leathem who plays for Cheshire, and 16 of the junior boys have been selected for the Cheshire County Academy programme.

"The presentations after each competition have introduced the players and parents to the social side of the sport, with plenty of good-natured banter flying around. We finished the season with a well-supported dads v lads competition, which was rather predictably won by the lads.

"We have had volunteers like Simon and Daniel Tracey – both former junior members themselves – who have put a lot of time and effort in while a number of the senior players have also offered their services to help out."

The club has appointed a new junior organiser in Gavin Tilbee while also attracting sponsorship from Warburtons Bread, ajob.com and Travis Perkin. It is one of the centre's for the Cheshire County Golf Partnership's County Academy programme, where Mark Johnson coaches two Academy squads. The Academy uses the latest technology including 3-D motion analysis,

Trackman, video and computer analysis.

Former Walker Cup player Horsey, winner of two tournaments on the European Tour, is a product of the club's junior programme in the past and is still a regular visitor to the club, where he is happy to pass on tips to the youngsters out on the range.

Adds Mark Johnson: "Styal is a very accessible club, is very friendly and welcoming.

"We have made significant progress over the past 12 months and hopefully the club will see the long-term benefits of the work with the juniors."

Says Craig Thomas, county development officer for the Cheshire County Golf Partnership: "Styal have worked hard to make sure their junior offering is as up to date as possible and GolfMark is a well-deserved recognition of the time and effort that have been invested in the future of the club.

"Styal's junior section shows how to enjoy both the sporting and social side of the sport and it is great to see the support Mark is receiving from other sections of the club. A strong and healthy junior section bodes well for the future of any club."

Styal Golf Club, which can be found in Station Road, was formed in 1994.

Further details can be found at the website www.styalgolf.co.uk

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 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 and North Wales PGA.

For more details of the activities in Cheshire visit www.cheshiregolfpartnership.com

For more information on the work of the Cheshire Golf Partnership contact Craig Thomas, County Development Officer, Cheshire County Golf Partnership.

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