

# THE TRUTH ABOUT GOLF

9 UNIVERSAL TRUTHS







THE TRUTH ABOUT GOLF should be known by governments around the world. Golf is played and enjoyed by millions and its stars are among the most recognised sportspeople on the planet. Golf delivers a sporting challenge for all, benefiting participants across skill levels and from all parts of society.

Golf is universal, with National Federations on every continent. It is estimated that there are 60 million golfers (60,173,500) around the world and over 30,000 (33,161) golf facilities, occupying a total land mass of some 2.5 million hectares; an area close to that of Belgium. In regional terms, 30 million golfers play in the Americas (30,029,500), 20 million in Asia and the Middle East (20,062,800), 8 million in Europe (7,961,200), 1.7m in Oceania (1,750,000) and 370,000 in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

Golf facilities – sites where golf can be played on one or more courses - are also found on every continent; in the Americas (18,406), Asia and the Middle East (4,570), Europe (7,233), Oceania (2,067) and Africa (885).<sup>2</sup>

The universality of golf was key to the sport's re-admission to the Olympic programme in 2009 and contributed to the successful staging of men's and women's individual medal events at the Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. Golf is confirmed as a medal sport for the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020 and Paris in 2024.

Governments know that sport is good and when they know The Truth About Golf they understand why golf has the potential to give back more than other sports in key areas of public policy:

ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SPORT

**The Truth About Golf, including 9 Universal Truths on Golf, is compiled by The R&A and the International Golf Federation and is designed to assist more than 150 National Federations around the world to engage constructively with governments, their agencies and partners in sport.**

**The ambition of the authors of this report is for National Federations to use this evidence to reach a new consensus with policymakers and to secure additional funding for their work.**



---

# ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by heads of state and governments and High Representatives of the United Nations in 2015, gave unprecedented recognition to the role of sport for Development and Peace.

'Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives'<sup>3</sup>

The United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) highlights seven of the 17 UN Development Goals where evidence is manifest for the contribution of sport.<sup>4</sup> These goals cover health and wellbeing, education, gender equality, sustained economic growth, safe environments, accountable institutions and global partnerships. Golf leads by example in sport in its pursuit of these goals.

As a sport played in nature, golf often protects sensitive areas where endangered species flourish, enhancing degraded landscapes and occupying a special place in environmental sustainability. Golf can help to combat climate change, improve watersheds and alleviate flood pressure, protect and connect ecosystems, reverse land degradation and increase biodiversity.



# 74,480

UK Satellite Account study on golf reports 74,480 employed, an annual turnover of £10.3bn and £990m paid in government taxes.

# 39%

A global gender balance survey of 6,000 golfers found 39% of children who play golf do so with their mothers while only 18% play primarily with their fathers.



# \$84b

US golf economy is worth \$84bn in goods and services and the sport contributes \$3.9bn of charitable giving.

**United Nations finds evidence for the contribution of sport across seven key sustainability goals:**

- > health and wellbeing
- > education
- > gender equality
- > sustained economic growth
- > safe environments
- > accountable institutions
- > global partnerships

# +167%

Rio 2016 Olympic golf course records a 167% increase in vegetation cover and a net increase in biodiversity from 118 to 263 species.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF



# GOLF is demonstrating its economic value to society

Participation levels and medal performance are not the only measures in sport.

Participation levels and medal performance are not the only measures in sport. A value to society for golf and other sports cannot be found in the internationally standardised framework known as the System of National Accounts (SNA) that compares the relative economic scale of industries.

A Satellite Account technique was developed by the United Nations to measure the scale of industries not defined in National Accounts. In 2015 golf was the first sport in the United Kingdom, and internationally, to commission a Satellite Account study to determine the sport's importance to its host economy and to inform future contact with Government.

This independent report found that UK golfers spent £4.3 billion on their sport in 2014, accounting for 14% of all consumer spending on sport with £990 million paid in Government taxes.

Golf's Gross Value Added (GVA), the wages and profits measure of economic activity, was calculated at £2 billion or 7% of GVA attributed to all sport in the UK. The report also highlighted that the golf industry in the UK employs 74,480 people with a third employed directly by golf facilities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

After accounting for indirect and induced economic impact effects, the turnover of the UK golf industry was estimated at £10.3 billion for 2014.<sup>5</sup>

In the US, The 2016 Golf Economy Report employed a similar 'industry clusters' approach to identify the value of the sport to the national economy.<sup>6</sup> Researchers found that the US golf economy generated \$84 billion in goods and services. The headline number breaks down as \$49 billion in core industries (golf facility operations, course capital investment, golfer supplies, endorsements, tournaments and charities) and \$35 billion through enabled industries (real estate, hospitality and tourism). Charitable giving by the US golf industry accounted for \$3.9 billion in the year.

With indirect and induced economic impacts added, the total economic impact of golf in the US economy was \$191.9 billion in 2016, supporting 1.9 million jobs.

The remarkable feature of these studies is that a single sport moves the dial on national measures of economic activity. Golf has the power to do this in countries across the globe.

## UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF

02



# GOLF is demonstrating its commitment to diversity and access

Demonstrating golf's commitment to a more inclusive culture, National Federations around the world are signing up to the 'Women in Golf Charter' launched by The R&A in 2018.

Demonstrating golf's commitment to a more inclusive culture, National Federations around the world are signing up to the 'Women in Golf Charter' launched by The R&A in 2018.<sup>7</sup> The Charter is a call to action within the golf industry to foster an environment that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of golf, from playing to working within the sport in both paid and voluntary roles.

The spectrum of participation for women across 42 countries in Europe ranges from 3% to 45% of registered golfers. The median score is 26%.<sup>8</sup> A wider study that sampled the general population in Australia, Canada, France, Ireland, South Korea, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the USA, found a female participation rate of 24%.<sup>9</sup> The same study asked female non-golfers and lapsed players between the ages of 18-64 to consider taking up golf over the next two years. The finding was that 29% were 'very interested' or 'interested' which translates to a group of 36.9 million latent female golfers.

A global longitudinal monitor of attitudes to golf found interest in the sport among women increased by 11% in the period 2011-2015 and that interest from men and women was growing fastest in younger age groups; 18-24 (12%) and 25-34 year olds (13%).<sup>10</sup>

Prevailing leadership views in golf recognise the significance of families to the sustainable growth of the sport. One global insight survey, which sampled a gender balanced group of over 6,000 golfers, found that 39% of children who play golf do so primarily with their mothers, while only 18% play primarily with their fathers. Children playing primarily in a family group accounted for 20% of the sample.<sup>11</sup>

This is compelling evidence that suggests attracting more women to play golf is likely to lead to enhanced access to the sport for young people.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF

03

# GOLF is demonstrating care for the environment



The Olympic Golf Course, designed and constructed for golf's return to the Olympic Games in 2016, achieved GEO Certified® status.

For many years golf has proactively invested in sustainable development, environmental stewardship and resource efficiency. Scientific research has been undertaken, best-in-class sustainability programmes have been developed, education is consistently provided, and a growing number of leadership examples are now widely reported and promoted.

Golf is the only sport member of the ISEAL Alliance, the global membership association for credible sustainability standards. Golf's not-for-profit GEO Foundation sits alongside the Marine Stewardship Council, Forest Stewardship Council, Fairtrade International and the Rainforest Alliance as a full member of ISEAL.

The sport's On Course Programme, developed specifically for three key areas of the golf industry: golf facility operations; golf development and renovation; and golf tournaments; is globally accessible, making sustainability easy to implement, track and communicate. It also provides the pathway to GEO Certified® - a rigorous third-party certification.

Golf associations, facilities and tournaments in more than 100 countries are already partnering and using OnCourse®, committing to continuous improvement in fostering nature, conserving resources and supporting communities.

All ten venues that host The Open are GEO Certified®.

The Olympic Golf Course, designed and constructed for golf's return to the Olympic Games in 2016, achieved GEO Certified® Development status in time for the start of medal competition. It stands as testimony to the sport's commitment to sustainability while maintaining the highest playability standards.

The Reserva de Marapendi Golf Course is the first public course in Brazil's second city, Rio de Janeiro, with a population of 6.3 million people. The Olympic golf course is an important legacy of the Games and is managed in partnership with the Brazilian Golf Confederation. The course opened to the public within weeks of the Games' closing ceremony and has subsequently hosted the Brazil Open.

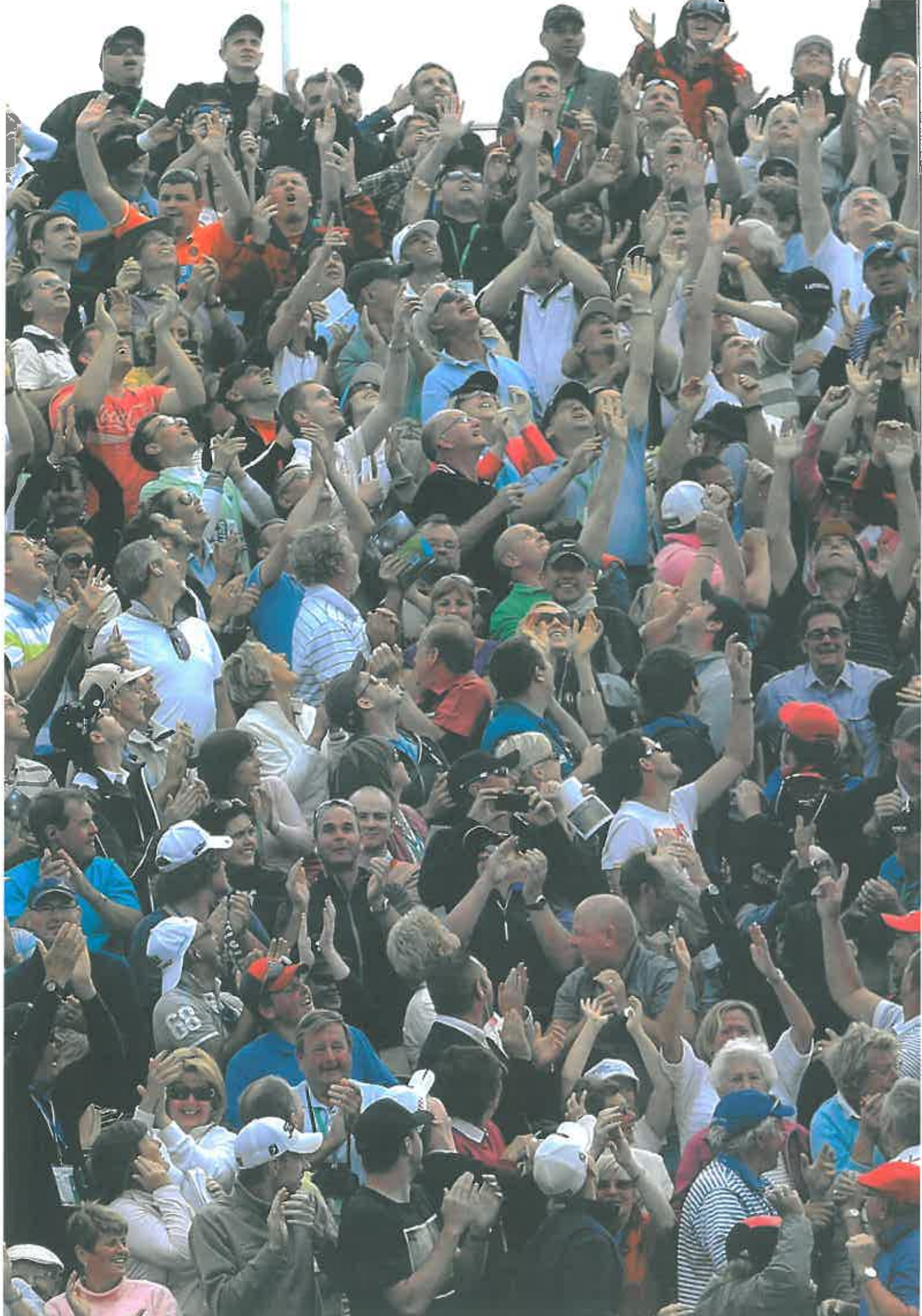
The coastal strip location of the golf course was previously degraded, devoid of vegetation or over-run by non-native species. The wider coastline is characterised by Brazil's unique Restinga forestation and some 33 hectares of moist broadleaf trees are today conservation managed within the golf course boundaries. The course design is naturalised to encourage the gradual re-colonisation of native species and strong habitat connectivity is evidenced across the site.

Rare protected species have quickly returned to the area including Burrowing Owl, Caiman, Capybara, Egret, Lapwing and Sandpiper. Independent verification of nature enhancement at the golf course records a 167% increase in vegetation cover and a net increase in biodiversity from 118 to 263 species now present.

With so much at stake, no sport is more active in working to meet the challenge of climate change.











# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In 2010, the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its first 'Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health', an evidence-based consensus on the recommended duration, intensity and frequency of physical activity for health benefits across the life course. Throughout 2017 the WHO Secretariat developed a Global Action Plan to promote physical activity.

Regular physical activity is a well established risk factor for the prevention and treatment of the leading noncommunicable diseases (NCD), namely heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancers. It also contributes to the prevention of other important NCD risk factors such as hypertension, overweight and obesity, and is associated with improved mental health, delay in the onset of dementia and improved quality of life and wellbeing.<sup>12</sup>

Globally, 1 in 4 adults is not active enough and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active.

WHO recommends that adults (18-64 years and 65 years and above) should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity, physical activity per week or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity, or a combination of both. For additional health benefits, a doubling of this regime is advised.

Children and adolescents (5-17 years) should do at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. Physical activity above this level will provide additional health benefits.

Transportation activities such as walking and cycling are frequently referenced as good moderate-intensity physical activities and, in sport, golf is the stand-out option for players of all ages. The benefit of physical activity cannot be banked and golf offers the option of playing to a much greater age than other sports.

New models of sports' financing and accountability for outcomes are emerging in WHO Member States. In the United Kingdom, 'Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation' is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes; physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development.

Future UK Government funding decisions are made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.<sup>13</sup>

# +5 years

A Swedish study compares 300,818 golfers with non-golfers and finds a 40% lower mortality rate for golfers, adding 5 years to life expectancy.

# 1 in 4

Globally 1 in 4 adults and more than 80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active.

# 301

Golf and Health research finds 301 studies where regular physical activity has longevity, physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages, genders, geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds.

**The World Health Organisation recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week and children and adolescents 5-17 years at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.**

# 814

US study finds self-efficacy, self-worth and physical activity levels improved after golf intervention for 814 participants with a disability.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF



# GOLF is demonstrating positive outcomes for physical health



Golf has the potential to provide physical activity, and thus health and social benefits, across the age spectrum.

A scoping study of the academic literature on the relationship between golf and health, commissioned by The R&A and the World Golf Foundation, was published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* in 2016.<sup>14</sup>

Some 4,944 records were identified through an initial search and 301 studies met the criteria for inclusion in the scoping review. The review found compelling evidence that regular physical activity has longevity, physical and mental health benefits for people of all ages, genders, geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds and can deliver economic benefits for communities, as well as national and international policymakers. Golf has the potential to provide physical activity, and thus health and social benefits, across the age spectrum.

The best available medical evidence suggests that playing golf may contribute to reduced mortality and increased life expectancy. When a Swedish study compared 300,818 golfers with non-golfers, they found a 40% lower mortality rate.<sup>15</sup>

The authors speculate that this corresponds to a 5-year increase in life expectancy regardless of gender, age or socioeconomic status. The findings demonstrate a clear association, if not a direct causal relationship.

The scoping study also found evidence of beneficial effects for golfers in cardiovascular, respiratory, metabolic and musculoskeletal health. It was also noted that golf spectators walk the field of play which is uncommon at sporting events.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF

# 05

---



## GOLF is demonstrating beneficial effects for mental health

Golf is found to facilitate intergenerational interaction and to create opportunities to rebuild social connections and confidence during and post illness.

There is a growing body of evidence linking playing golf and wellness. Quantitative and qualitative studies have described benefits relating to self and group identity and social connections, many of which have been cultured long term.

Golf is found to facilitate intergenerational interaction and to create opportunities to rebuild social connections and confidence during and post-illness. A study in the United States found self-efficacy, self-worth and physical activity levels improved after golf intervention for 814 participants with a disability.<sup>16</sup> Increasingly, golf is recognised as making an important contribution to helping people cope with wide ranging disability and dysfunction including dementia.

Researchers at the University of Essex in the UK postulated that there are synergistic benefits to taking physical activity while being directly exposed to nature and coined the term 'Green Exercise'.<sup>17</sup>

In a controlled experiment, subjects were exposed to sequences of urban and rural scenes projected on a wall while exercising on a treadmill. A control group saw no projected images and their exercise induced positive effects on blood pressure and two psychological measures: self-esteem and mood. Subjects who took the same exercise and saw pleasant urban and rural scenes registered a significantly greater positive effect on self-esteem than the exercise-only control.

The conclusion of the research of particular relevance to golf is that green exercise, physical activity in the natural environment, has important public and environmental health consequences.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF



# GOLF is demonstrating support for evidence-based research



Golfing activity may enhance both the physical and psychological aspects of balance control.

There is a plethora of academic study that suggests that playing golf contributes to muscle strengthening, improved balance and aerobic exercise. Golfing activity may enhance both the physical and psychological aspects of balance control.<sup>18</sup> Some research postulates that the rotation and balance skills required to swing a golf club deliver health benefits that are superior to other sports.

The R&A is sponsoring new commissioned research to identify the 'golf specific effects' that improve strength and balance and which may contribute to fall reduction, a leading cause of disability and health costs in older age and in both sexes.

There are two strands to the research. The first is a longitudinal study of older golfers who undertake a 10-week course of golfing activity seeking to test the feasibility, safety and health benefits of the programme. The second controlled study sets out to compare physical and psychosocial characteristics in male and female golfers.

Research findings are scheduled for peer review publication in 2020 and the research is supervised at the University of Southern California in the US by Dr George Salem, and at the University of Southampton in the UK by Professor Maria Stokes.

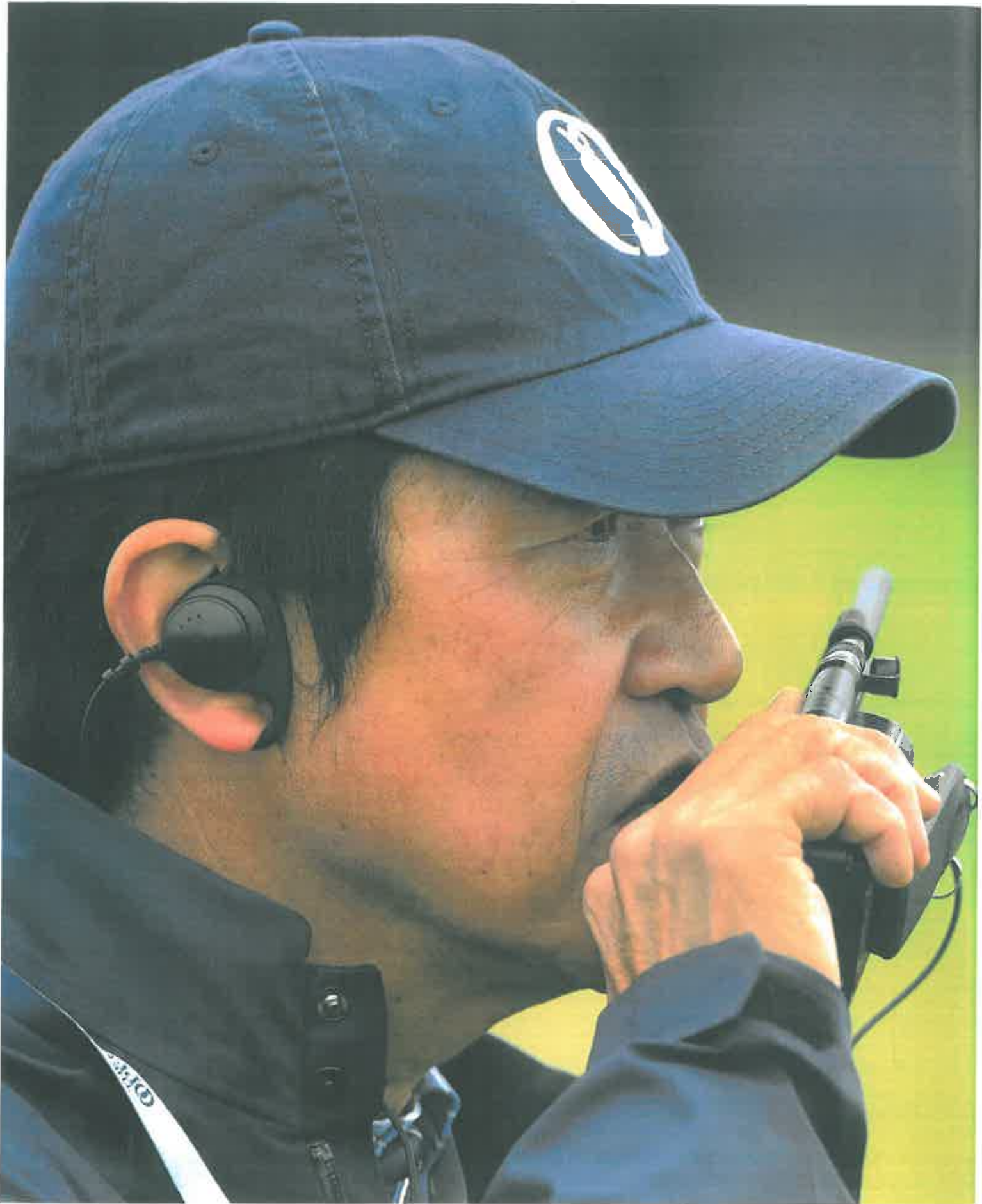
Other candidate areas for research indicated in pilot studies include an examination of the role golf can play in dementia care and a study on combatting the effects of social isolation has been commissioned by The R&A.











# GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SPORT

According to the Olympic Charter, the practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.

Golf re-entered the Summer Games at Rio de Janeiro in 2016. The sport was part of the second and third Olympiads in Paris, France 1900 and in St. Louis, USA 1904 and rededicated itself to Olympism in time to be considered by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for readmission to the family of Summer Olympic Sports in 2009.

The International Golf Federation (IGF) is recognised by the IOC as the body that administers Olympic golf through statutes, practice and activities that conform to the Olympic Charter. The organisation based in Lausanne, Switzerland has 151 Member Federations in 146 countries.

To fulfil its responsibilities, the IGF draws on the resources of The R&A and the United States Golf Association (USGA) and other partners including the PGA Tour, the European Tour, the LPGA, the PGA of America and the Masters Tournament.

Golf is unique in major sport in having two governing authorities working collaboratively to provide leadership around the world. The R&A can trace its leading position in the sport back to 1754 and the USGA, to 1894. Both organisations took early responsibility for shaping The Rules of Golf and have grown to meet the governance and development demands of a global sports industry.

National Federations in 143 countries are affiliated to The R&A. The USGA has the United States and Mexico in its jurisdiction. The governing bodies are committed to growing the sport in every country where golf is played including those where the sport is still in its infancy.

The R&A and the USGA stage four of the Major Championship events in men's and women's golf. The R&A organise The Open and the Women's British Open and the USGA is responsible for the US Open and the US Women's Open; each a global sports event in its own right commanding mass spectator presence and attracting a worldwide following across traditional media and digital platforms.

The sport counts a further five Majors in a calendar year. The ANA Inspiration, the Evian Championship and the LPGA Championship for women and the Masters Tournament and the PGA Championship for men.

24

The Rules of Golf, effective from 1 January 2019, are reduced from 34 to 24 and are designed to be easier to understand and apply.

\$500m

Accessed through National Olympic Committees the Olympic Solidarity fund, for the first time in 2017-2020, exceeds \$500m.

# 60%

In a survey 60% of golfers expressed the view they would enjoy golf more if it took less time and 19% would welcome the opportunity to play 9 holes more often.

# 3

Significant investment in elite amateur golf is evidenced in the creation of three new championships in ten years, the Asia-Pacific Amateur, The Latin America Amateur and the Women's Asia-Pacific Amateur.

**Following golf's successful reintroduction to the Olympics at Rio 2016 the sport is confirmed in the competition programme for the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024.**

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF

07



# GOLF is demonstrating dedication to Olympic Sport

Golf is highly regarded by the IOC as a unified sport with strong governance and rigorous adherence to the maintenance and practice of clean sport.

Golf was readmitted to the Olympic Games at the 121st IOC Session in Copenhagen in 2009. It was the culmination of a two-year campaign by the sport to demonstrate to the IOC that golf has world-ranked professional athletes ready to compete in medal competition and global reach on television and other platforms.

Leading players were ambassadors for the readmission bid including Padraig Harrington from Ireland, Michelle Wie from the United States, Suzann Pettersen from Norway and the then 16-year old British Amateur Champion, Matteo Manassero from Italy.

Golf was a medal sport at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games in the People's Republic of China 2014 and found medallists from five countries in men's and women's individual stroke play events and a mixed team event. Golf is part of the 32-sport programme for the Buenos Aires Youth Olympic Games in Argentina, 2018.

At the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, some the world's highest ranked golfers representing six different nations won medals in 72-hole individual stroke play events for

men and women. In the men's event the medallists were, Gold - Justin Rose (Great Britain), Silver - Henrik Stenson (Sweden) and Bronze - Matt Kuchar (USA). In the women's event the medalists were, Gold - Inbee Park (Korea), Silver - Lydia Ko (New Zealand) and Bronze - Shanshan Feng (China).

According to the IOC, Olympic Golf reached a total TV audience of 166m people with almost equal viewer hours recorded for women's and men's events; 147m and 149m respectively. On social media a monitor of fan engagement placed golf 7th in a top 20 sport ranking for Rio 2016 with 190,286 fan engagements recorded.<sup>19</sup>

Golf is highly regarded by the IOC as a unified sport with strong governance and rigorous adherence to the maintenance and practice of clean sport. The sport is World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) compliant and has no doping history or culture.

The IOC has confirmed golf in the competition programme of the Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 and the sport is actively pursuing participation in future editions of the Paralympic Games.

The success of the Olympic Games allows the IOC to fund a range of programmes through Olympic Solidarity that assist National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to better prepare their athletes. Olympic Solidarity's budget for 2017-2020 exceeds \$500m for the first time and its athlete centred programmes are accessed by individual sports through their respective NOCs. Assistance is provided first to those NOCs that need it most, a principle that lies at the heart of Olympic Solidarity's mission.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF



# GOLF is demonstrating development in Amateur Sport

Significant investment in elite amateur golf is evidenced in the establishment of three new annual championship events in ten years.

Amateur Status is protected in golf by Rules that separate amateurs and professionals. Through appropriate limits and restrictions, the Rules are intended to encourage amateur golfers to focus on the sport's inherent challenges and not financial gain.

Golf has organised open competition for elite amateurs for more than a century. The Amateur Championship was first played in 1885 with the Women's British Open Amateur Championship contested from 1893. The US Amateur and the US Women's Amateur both date from 1895.

The International Golf Federation has staged biennial World Amateur Team Championships for men since 1958 and for women since 1964. The standard of competition is comparable with world championship events in other sports. The Championships have to-date rotated through three global regions; Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Europe-Africa and have been hosted in 25 countries.

Mirroring the success of the Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR) in professional golf, a common entry criterion was introduced for elite amateur competition in 2007.

The WORLD AMATEUR GOLF RANKING (WAGR) is jointly administered by The R&A and the USGA. The ranking for men includes 2,500 counting events and ranks 6,500 players from 100 countries.

The women's ranking includes 1,400 counting events and ranks 3,300 players from 70 countries. Players who achieved the No 1 position on WAGR and who subsequently reached world No 1 in the professional ranks include Rory McIlroy, Lydia Ko and Jordan Spieth.

Significant investment in elite amateur golf is evidenced in the establishment of three new annual championship events in ten years.

In 2009, The R&A and the Masters Tournament, with the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC), launched the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship with players from 41 affiliated National Federations eligible to participate.

In 2015, The R&A, the USGA and the Masters Tournament initiated a new Latin America Amateur Championship designed to stimulate competition across South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Successfully staged for the first time in 2018, the Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific Championship, created by The R&A and the APGC, is designed to be a pathway to the international stage for Asia's elite female amateur golfers. The inaugural event had a field of 83 players with nearly 60% aged 18 years or under.

The investment in amateur golf is set to continue as 2019 witnesses the inaugural staging of the Augusta National Women's Amateur Championship.

Inspiring youth to compete internationally is the goal of The R&A's Junior Open, initiated in 1994 and staged biennially ahead of The Open. The Junior Open attracts 150 competitors under 16 years of age from 80 countries.

Golf is regularly cited as a sport that builds strength of character and promotes good citizenship. It teaches integrity, respect, consideration for others, how to deal with adversity and self-control.

UNIVERSAL TRUTH ON GOLF

09



# GOLF is demonstrating investment for change

The R&A and the USGA have committed significant resources to the quest to introduce a new World Handicap System in 2020.

The Rules of Golf have been in existence in some form since 1744. In recent times they have been revised on a four-yearly cycle but in 2017 a fundamental re-examination of the unified code that governs the sport was announced by The R&A and the USGA.

Started five years earlier, the process developed into the most radical overhaul of the Rules since 1984 and resulted in a set of proposals published online to achieve the widest possible consultation in the sport.

The ultimate aim is a modernisation of the Rules making them easier to understand and apply. Some credence is given to the view that modernising the Rules may lift a barrier to entry for a significant number of prospective golfers. Agreed changes come into effect on January 1, 2019.

In volume terms, a reduction in the number of Rules from 34 to 24 is canvassed. The adoption of 'Ready Golf' in stroke play and a reduction in the time allowed to search for a lost ball, from five minutes to three, address directly the issue of pace of play. A relaxation of Rules and related penalties and a simplified ball drop procedure also feature in the modernisation proposals.

The R&A and the USGA have committed significant resources to the quest to introduce a new World Handicap System to replace the six different handicap systems that currently exist worldwide.

Maintaining a handicap allows golfers of different ages and abilities to play together on relatively equal terms.

The tenets of the new system focus on three main objectives: to encourage as many golfers as possible to obtain and maintain a handicap; to enable golfers of differing abilities, genders and nationalities to transport their handicap to any course globally and compete on a fair basis; and to indicate with sufficient accuracy the score a golfer is reasonably capable of achieving on any course around the world, playing under normal conditions.

The innovation of obtaining and maintaining a handicap through different forms of play is expected to deliver a further boost to the sport and encourage more competitive golf. Currently, 1 in 4 golfers maintain a golf handicap.

2020 is the scheduled launch date for the new World Handicap System.

Accessibility to golf is enhanced for many through the availability of shorter forms of the sport.

Research commissioned by The R&A highlights the challenges many people face finding time to play a full round of 18 holes. In a survey, 60% of golfers expressed the view they would enjoy golf more if it took less time.

The survey also revealed that, among 25-44 year-olds who are unhappy with the pace of play, 21% would like to see the playing time reduced by as much as 90 minutes, while 19% said they would welcome the opportunity to play 9 holes more often. The governing bodies in golf fully endorse 9-hole golf as an alternative playing format.



2017

THE 10TH  
INTERNATIONAL  
GOLF CONFERENCE



club that is  
is.  
ce a  
someone or

WORKING FOR GOLF R&A

# What GOLF needs from Government

Golf is a global sport and its world governing bodies are fully aligned with key public policy goals set by transnational organisations; the United Nations, the World Health Organisation and the International Olympic Committee. Internationally, golf is delivering on its responsibilities in the areas of Economy and Sustainable Development, Health and Wellbeing and Good Governance in Sport.

Within this global context, National Federations in golf exist to promote the development of the sport and work constructively with policymakers in their own countries. The Truth About Golf is that it can help with the delivery of a wide range of integrated social, economic and environmental benefits.

## 01

GOLF is demonstrating its economic value to society

Understanding how golf contributes to national economic and sustainability goals, golf and government working together will optimise outcomes.

## 02

GOLF is demonstrating its commitment to diversity and access

Creating opportunities for women to work in and play golf, golf and government working together will attract more women and families into sport.

## 03

GOLF is demonstrating care for the environment

Understanding golf's unique relationship with nature, golf and government working together will protect the environment and combat climate change.

## 04

GOLF is demonstrating positive outcomes for physical health

Realising the proven health benefits of playing golf, golf and government working together will grow a sport that keeps players healthy across the life course.

## 05

GOLF is demonstrating beneficial effects for mental health

Exploring the role golf can play in improving mental health, golf and government working together will enhance outcomes in areas such as dementia care and combatting social isolation.

## 06

GOLF is demonstrating support for evidence-based research

Expanding the evidence base, golf and government working together will strengthen golf's position as a leading sport for physical activity, health and wellbeing.

## 07

GOLF is demonstrating dedication to Olympic Sport

Ensuring that representative athletes have the opportunity to participate in Olympic competition, golf and government working together will deliver peak medal performance.

## 08

GOLF is demonstrating development in Amateur Sport

Ensuring that representative athletes have the opportunity to participate in international competition, golf and government working together will deliver peak peer group performance in prestige events.

## 09

GOLF is demonstrating investment for change

Developing the playing infrastructure, golf and government working together will build access to golf through shorter forms of the sport.



#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Sports Marketing Surveys Inc, 2017
- <sup>2</sup> Golf Around The World 2017, The R&A
- <sup>3</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations, 2015
- <sup>4</sup> Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals, UNOSDP
- <sup>5</sup> A Satellite Account for Golf, Sport Industry Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University, 2016
- <sup>6</sup> The 2016 Golf Economy Report, World Golf Foundation, WE ARE GOLF, TEconomy Partners
- <sup>7</sup> Women in Golf Charter, The R&A, 2018
- <sup>8</sup> Global Participation Report for Europe 2017, KPMG
- <sup>9</sup> Unlocking Golf's True Potential, 2016, Syngenta
- <sup>10</sup> Mindshare, 'Mindreader' 2011 - 2015
- <sup>11</sup> Unlocking Golf's True Potential, 2016, Syngenta
- <sup>12</sup> WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020
- <sup>13</sup> HM Government, Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation, 2015
- <sup>14</sup> Murray AD, et al. British Journal of Sports Medicine 2016
- <sup>15</sup> Golf a Game of Life and Death-Reduced Mortality in Swedish Golf Players, Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports, 2009
- <sup>16</sup> Kim K, et al Increasing Self-Efficacy of Individuals with a Disability Through a Theory-Based Curriculum Applied to Playing Golf, International Journal of Disability Human Development, 2011
- <sup>17</sup> Pretty, J et al The Mental and Physical Outcomes of Green Exercise, International Journal of Environmental Health Research, 2005
- <sup>18</sup> Tsang WWN et al, Golfers Have Better Balance Control and Confidence than Healthy Controls, European Journal of Applied Physiology, 2011
- <sup>19</sup> Golf and the Olympics, FUSE, Sports and Market Intelligence, 2016

THE TRUTH ABOUT GOLF  
is compiled by The R&A and  
the International Golf Federation

The R&A  
St Andrews, Fife  
Scotland  
KY16 9JD

[www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org)

The International Golf Federation  
Maison du Sport International  
Av de Rhodanie 54  
1007 LAUSANNE  
Switzerland

[www.igfgolf.org](http://www.igfgolf.org)

Copyright © (2018) R&A Championships Limited and R&A Rules Limited.  
All rights reserved.

