

LadiesLinks

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England's Karen Stupples

has inspired a generation of girls with her victory in the **2004 Weetabix British Women's Open Championship** – and she's urging them on...

The 31-year-old from Deal in Kent tells ambitious girls coming through the ELGA ranks to follow their dreams, just as she did.

"Don't let anyone tell you that you won't be able to do it or that it's a silly dream to have. If you really want it and stick with it you can definitely make things work. It all depends how motivated and driven you are."

She remembered: "There were people who didn't think I was going to be good enough and they were concerned that I hadn't found myself a 'proper' job."

Karen's answer was to hold on to her self-belief, to work extremely hard, to take her chances and to transform herself from a good amateur into one of the world's leading professionals.

"I've shown it can be done and by someone who wasn't a British or English winner, who didn't come storming through. I was someone who was just a good solid amateur, a good team player, and who now has made it very good for herself. It just shows it can be done."

Karen advises girl golfers to work on every aspect of their game and, like her, to seek out the experts who offer the very best information and help. *"You have to find people to work on your strengths"*.

She reckons, for example, that golf psychology has been the single most important factor in her success. Meanwhile, her physical trainer helped her add 20 yards to her drives, within eight weeks, by using her muscles more efficiently.

Karen, an honorary member at Royal Cinque Ports, is a generous role model – both with her money and with her tips. She made a donation from her Open winnings to help with coaching for the Kent girls and she has hosted a clinic for promising county youngsters.



It takes her right back to where she started playing as an 11-year-old. She remembers scoring 144 for 18 holes when she was 13 and got her first handicap! Before long, though, she was an England international and a Curtis Cup player, paving the way for her professional career on the American LPGA Tour, where she scored her first win last year.

"I have been lucky, I have met the right people along the way," said Karen. *"But it's a lesson in perseverance; if at first you don't succeed keep going – you never know what's going to happen. If you have the ability and the drive, keep going, it will work out for you. That's certainly been my story."*



Take a tip from Karen Stupples!

Take five!

In long game practice Karen works with groups of five balls. With each group she focuses on one aspect of her swing or set up. "If I'm working on something in my swing I hit five balls with my technique in mind. Then if I'm happy with that I'll have five balls thinking about the target. If that's OK I'll have another five balls and really think about getting a result from each one. If I'm not happy with any aspect I go back to it and hit another five balls."



Don't just stand there!

When Karen practices her short game she avoids standing in one spot, repeatedly hitting balls at the flag. "Anyone can get good at one shot but the chances of having to play that shot in a round are pretty slim." Instead she takes one ball, throws it down and plays it as she would in a round, considering the lie, selecting the correct club and executing the shot. Then, she throws down another ball and does it all over again... and again.

"It gives you real-life situations in your practice."

Two English golf clubs with outstanding reputations for encouraging young players have been nominated by ELGA for the Sports Club of the Year Award 2005.

They are **Brackenwood**, a municipal club in **Merseyside** and **John O'Gaunt** in **Bedfordshire**. The winners of the award, to be made by the Foundation for Sports and the Arts and the Central Council of Physical Recreation, will receive £6000.

At **Brackenwood Golf Club**, members have overcome a lack of practice facilities by making links with a local

driving range to give juniors year-round opportunities for coaching and practice. They organise junior social evenings and weekends to complement the youngsters' golf and to help build team spirit. They also arrange an annual trip to France where the juniors play fixtures against local clubs. **Brackenwood** is one of only six municipal clubs nationwide to earn the **Junior GolfMark**, which recognises junior friendly clubs.

John O'Gaunt Golf Club has a thriving junior section, offering extensive coaching and playing opportunities for all age groups. It has a "PeeWee" section for children aged six to ten, which provides a springboard to full junior membership. The **Andy Finnigan Memorial Fund** allows all juniors to receive an extensive schedule of subsidised coaching. The juniors have a large fixture list with events for all abilities and they run their own annual meeting. **John O'Gaunt** was the first club in **Bedfordshire** to win the **Junior GolfMark**.



A new resource pack is being produced to help golf clubs and counties deal with all aspects of child protection.

It is the work of **Children in Golf**, a partnership of golf's major governing bodies in Great Britain and Ireland, which includes **ELGA**.

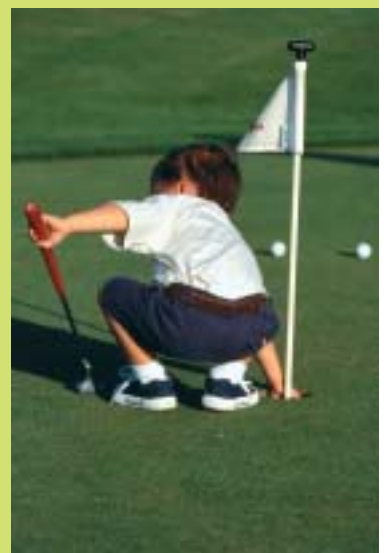
Kirstie Jennings, **ELGA's** national girls' development officer and lead child protection officer, said:

"This pack is desperately needed. Clubs know they have to do something about their child safety obligations but they just don't know where to start".

"If they do nothing but read this pack and do what it says they will have a really good set of procedures."

The pack identifies good practice, offers advice and includes a series of model forms which clubs can copy, for example medical consent forms.

Topics covered include codes of conduct; guidance for parents; use of photographs and videos; transporting children safely; organising championships and tournament safely; how to respond to concerns about a child's welfare; and what to do about concerns about an adult's behaviour.





ELGA's Order of Merit is to be sponsored for the first time by mail order clothing company, One Up Golf.

The winners of the women's and girls' Order of Merit tables will both receive prizes of vouchers from the company under the three-year agreement.

Sue Binnie, director of One Up Golf, said: "We are delighted to be associated with the English Ladies' Golf Association through our sponsorship. ELGA is doing a wonderful job in encouraging more women to take up the sport and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership."

Proud sponsors of the ELGA Order of Merit

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ELGA's elite squads with their 'New look'

England's top players will be sporting a fresh new look for the 2005 competitive season.

Sponsorship deals mean that the 26 members of ELGA's elite squads will be adding clothes from the Ping Collection to their uniforms, stepping out in shoes from ECCO, carrying Ping bags and topping it all with a Ping cap.

The look has won the vote of approval from the players. Lincolnshire's Emilee Taylor, from the Elite Potential Girls Squad, said: "It's a really fresh image and great for ELGA." The 15-year-old, who plays at Gainsborough, added: "All the girls love it."



Spring Summer 2005

PING COLLECTION



For information on ECCO's 2005 Golf Collection and your local stockists please log onto www.eccogolf.com

SPORT ENGLAND PLEDGE CASH

Plans to make golf one of England's big five sports - alongside football, rugby, cricket and tennis - has received an **£8 million boost**

Sport England has pledged an annual grant of £2 million for the next four years to the England Golf Partnership, which includes ELGA.

The partnership is due to launch a Whole Sport Plan in April, designed to get more people to start, stay and succeed in golf.

Over the next four years it aims to increase the number of people playing golf by 10 per cent and to push up the active members of affiliated clubs by 50,000.

During that time it will invest almost £9 million each year in the development of the game, thanks to the grant and to contributions from within the game.

Norman Fletcher, manager of the England Golf Partnership, said: "This is a welcome fillip for the game and sees the start of a new era for golf in England and the chance to widen participation levels."

He went on: "Our focus will be divided into three categories targeting newcomers, club golfers and elite players through our 'Get into Golf', 'Club England' and 'Team England' programmes.



England Golf Partnership

Sport England also announced an additional award to the partnership of £1.2 million over two years for investment into small capital projects from April 2006.

The partnership is made up of ELGA, the English Golf Union, the Professional Golfers' Association and supported by The Golf Foundation.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

LadiesLinks

Keep in touch! TELL US WHAT YOU THINK...

The ELGA website is the place for all the latest news and facts about English ladies' golf.

Check out what's happening on: www.englishladiesgolf.org

Contact the ELGA office by email: office@englishladiesgolf.org

write to: ELGA, Edgbaston Golf Club, Church Road, Birmingham B15 3TB

telephone: 0121 456 2088

A school in the West Midlands is winning top marks for its success in getting girls into golf...

Windsor High School in Halesowen has provided 12 girl members for a local golf club. It's seen almost 40 girls go through its own golf academy. And it's continually introducing more girls to the game.

It's all part of the school's work to promote golf among boys and girls through its role as a specialist sports college.

Golf is taught at Windsor as part of the PE curriculum, there's an after-school club and then the academy for those who wish to take it even further.

This is a stepping stone to club membership and among the youngsters to make the move are the 12 girls who have joined Hagley Golf and Country Club.

Junior organiser Mike Thorneycroft is planning a coaching and playing programme to build on their enthusiasm and commented: *"Getting an influx of 12 girls was great for us as a club."*

Another couple of girls have joined Halesowen Golf Club.

There's a great incentive for them to gain a handicap. Windsor is planning a golf tour to Baltimore, where it has links with a school, and will be selecting three boys and three girls from the academy – but all must have handicaps.

The school's work – at Windsor and within a wider family of schools - is helping to pilot a national scheme. Stuart Armstrong of the Golf Foundation commented: *"As far as the development of schools' golf is concerned they are probably the country's shining light, they are ahead of the field."* Windsor's initiative is supported by ELGA and the Worcestershire ladies' association.



PAIR UP and encourage girls to get into golf and out on to England's courses...



Wiltshire ladies have done exactly that, teaming adults and girls – both beginners and handicap golfers - in a successful greensome competition.

Now other counties and clubs are being urged to follow suit. Sharon Heeley, one of ELGA's regional girls' development officers, says the format is perfect for girls of all abilities.

She added: "The adult partnership and the stableford format is particularly good for beginners, allowing the girls to be

directly involved and to hit a variety of shots around the course."

Sharon played in the Wiltshire event at Tidworth Garrison, which attracted 20 girls, aged from eight to 17, who all received a goody bag. Prizes were awarded in divisions and Sharon helped her partner, Heather Cullen, to win the beginners' award.

Wiltshire junior organiser Di Gritt commented: "The girls ranged from county players with single figure handicaps to youngsters who have only just started playing and were venturing onto the course for the very first time. "

This was the first of a number of Wiltshire events planned this year for existing girl golfers and to encourage new girls to take up the sport.

Further details from Di Gritt on 01672 563553 or email di.gritt@wlcga.com.

the start of a new season...

The 2005 English ladies' championship season starts next month – when players will face a ban on many trampoline-effect drivers.

ELGA is acting in advance of a new rule limiting the "spring-like" effect in drivers and is outlawing the use of non-conforming clubs at its seven championships.

The R&A, the Ladies' Golf Union and the English Golf Union have announced similar conditions for 2005 championships and international matches.

Although these conditions currently apply only to professionals and elite amateurs, all golfers will be affected when the new rule comes into force on 1 January 2008. Details of non-conforming driving clubs are on the R&A website www.randa.org

The first ELGA event to be affected will be the flagship tournament, the **English ladies' close championship from May 17-21.**

Hampshire golfer Kerry Smith (Waterlooville) will defend her title on the classic links of Burnham & Berrow in Somerset. The club, a long-established venue for championship golf, is hosting this tournament for the fifth time, having last staged the event in 1989.

The **English ladies' strokeplay championship** will be played at St Annes Old Links in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, from **July 12-14.** The title was won in 2004 by Kent teenager Sian Reddick (Sene Valley) who is now at university in the USA.

The **English girls' championship** will return to Liphook in

Hampshire for the first time in more than 30 years when it is played from **July 25-30.** Melissa Reid, 17, (Chevin) won this event last year and went on to become the Daily Telegraph girls' champion.

The **Under 15 and Under 13 girls' championships** take place from **August 8-12** and will be hosted by Henbury in Gloucestershire, a club which is well known for initiatives to encourage girls to take up golf. The 2004 U15 champion was Henrietta Brockway (Yeovil) while Kelly Tidy (Manchester) took the U13 title.

The **English ladies' mid-amateur championship** takes the action to Huddersfield in Yorkshire from **August 9-12.** The former Curtis Cup player Fame More (Chesterfield) took the honours in the event in 2004, shortly before turning professional.

Handsworth, just outside Birmingham, will be the setting for the **English seniors' championship from 29 August to 3 September.** Chris Quinn (South Winchester) is the reigning champion.

ELGA's championship season will draw to a close with the **county finals at Brancepeth Castle in Durham, from September 7-9.**



Melissa Reid



Henrietta Brockway



Fame More

Is the Slope System coming?...



A major project is underway to review the ladies' scratch score of every golf course in England – and it could lead to the launch of the Slope system in this country within five years.

Slope – which is already used in the USA – adjusts a golfer's handicap to the course he or she is playing. In simple terms it means that a player will get extra shots on a tough course and a reduced handicap on an easy layout.

It could be introduced here as a result of the current review of ladies' scratch scores which is taking place throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

The four home countries – England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales – are all involved in the project and are using the USGA Course Rating System to arrive at the standard scratch score for each course.

This system also allows for the calculation of a Slope rating to reflect the relative difficulty of the course for a handicap golfer.

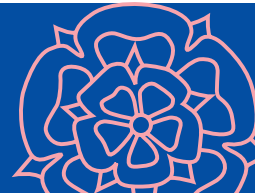
In America, Slope ratings range from 55 to 155, with an average of 113. When golfers play a course with a rating higher than 113, the USGA Course Handicap will be higher than their USGA Handicap Index. When they play a course with a rating lower than 113, the Course Handicap will be lower than their Handicap Index. That goes for their home course, too.

It is expected that the review of English courses will be completed by 2008 and – depending on the outcome of discussions with CONGU – Slope could soon follow.

There are currently 72 ELGA teams at work, rating England's 1793 courses. Work began in earnest in 2003 and just over 500 courses have been assessed so far.

Of these, the scratch score has remained the same at 45 per cent of courses. It has been increased by one stroke at 36 per cent; by two strokes at nine per cent; and by three strokes at one per cent. Nine per cent of courses have had their scratch score reduced by one stroke and two courses have been reduced by two strokes.

Your Questions Answered



Q. What is the purpose of the CONGU® Unified Handicapping System?

A. The intent of the CONGU® Unified Handicapping System is to enable golfers of differing abilities - ladies and men - to compete on a fair and equitable basis.

This is done by:

- Course Rating golf courses to establish the Standard Scratch Score (SSS) based on length and playing difficulty. The SSS is the cornerstone of the handicapping system.
- Initially allotting a handicap based on a player's best score of a specified number.
- Adjusting Handicaps on completion of a Qualifying Competition in relation to players' Nett Differentials with respect to Handicap Category.
- Taking account of course and weather conditions through the calculation of the Competition Scratch Score (CSS).
- Applying adjustments to Handicaps related to tees used, and respective SSS and the Course Par to enable ladies and men to compete on an equitable basis.

Provided all parties – players and Handicap Committees – fulfil their obligations to the System a high degree of uniformity in handicapping can be achieved.

Q. As a player what are my responsibilities to the CONGU® Handicapping System?

A. To comply with the requirements of the CONGU® Handicapping System a player has the following obligations:

- If you are a Member of more than one golf club you must select one as your 'home' club and notify that club and the others of your decision. The 'home' club will administer your handicap. You must play from that handicap at all of the other clubs of which you are a Member and notify them of any alterations to your Playing Handicap made by your Home Club.
- Before competing in a qualifying competition you should ensure that your entry has been recorded in the competition entry list, manually or by computer if appropriate.
- You should ensure that all scorecards in Qualifying Competitions whether or not complete with a score for every hole, are returned to the organising committee and computer entries made if required.
- If you play in a qualifying competition away from your Home Club you are required to report to your Home Club, as soon as practicable, all scores recorded including 'No Returns' together

with competition date, venue and Competition Scratch Score. You should be aware that failure to report 'away' scores when so required by the System is likely to lead to suspension of handicap.

- If you return a Qualifying Score(s) below your Playing Handicap at your Home Club or away and you are unable to
 - ascertain whether or not your Playing Handicap has been reduced as a result of the score(s) or
 - report away score(s) to your Home Clubyou must, before playing in another competition at your Home Club or away, for that competition make such reduction to your Playing Handicap as appropriate under the System by applying the Competition Scratch Score, if known, otherwise the Standard Scratch Score, to calculate your Nett Differential and handicap reduction.

If you do not know your Exact Handicap, such reduction should be made from your Playing Handicap less 0.5 (e.g. if your Playing Handicap is 16 then the reduction should be made from 15.5)
See Clause 16.11

Q. Are there any circumstances under which our club can run stroke play competitions where Handicaps can be reduced but not increased? Examples would be a Five-Club competition and Winter Medals

A. NO.

A club committee has the authority to deprive certain competitions of their status as Qualifying Competitions provided they do so before play commences. When a competition is declared Non-Qualifying handicaps can neither be reduced nor increased. Competitors should be aware of this before play commences.

There are only two situations when handicaps can be reduced but not increased. These are:

- A competition where application of the CSS calculation determines that the competition is Reduction Only (R/O)
- When a competition has been abandoned for any valid reason, reductions of handicap are made on the basis that the CSS is equal to the SSS.

It should be noted that a Five-Club competition is Non-Qualifying for handicap purposes as it does not satisfy the intent of the Rules of Golf which allows a player to have a maximum of 14 clubs (See Rule 4-4).

Do you know the rulings?...



1. A and B are playing a match. B's ball lies on the putting green, not far from the hole. A's ball is also on the putting green and being in a hurry to complete the hole putts before B marks her ball. A's ball strikes B's ball.

What is the ruling?

- A). A receives a one stroke penalty and B must replace her ball.
- B). A receives a two stroke penalty and the balls must be played as they lie.
- C). There is no penalty and B must replace her ball.

2. In taking relief from an immovable obstruction in the rough the player finds her nearest point of relief and drops the ball within one club length, which happens to be on the fairway.

What is the ruling?

- A). The player receives a 1 stroke penalty.
- B). The player receives no penalty but must re-drop the ball so that it drops in the rough.
- C). The player receives no penalty and plays the ball from the fairway.

3. In stroke play a player holds an umbrella over herself while tapping in a short putt.

What is the ruling?

- A). The player receives a 2 stroke penalty.
- B). There is no penalty.
- C). The player is disqualified.

1. ANSWER 'C'. Rule 19-5. Decision 24-2b/8
2. ANSWER 'C'. Rule 24-2. Decision 24-2b/8
3. ANSWER 'B'. Rule 14-2. Decision 14-2/2