



World Deaf Golf Federation

Report

Meeting with the R&A 2009

In July it became clear that World Deaf Golf Federation was welcome to have a meeting with the R&A on October 7, 2009. The R&A is the highest authority of golf in the World except for USA and Mexico, which rules under the USGA.

This was good news for WDFG board, who wanted to follow-up the previous meeting on May 31, 2005.

The delegation from WDFG consisted of the President Arne Lundquist from Sweden, the Treasurer Ole Artmann from Denmark, the Secretary Anders Hillding from Sweden and the Board Member Simeon Hart from England.

The Vice President Don Conway from Ireland should also have participated, but unfortunately he was unable to go to St Andrews due to the high workload at his job.

There was also two sign language interpreters present, Janne and Jean Lundberg from Sweden. Janne and Jean are brothers, and they are fluent in both Swedish sign language and international signs.

The interpreters were very much appreciated for their work, and all of us agreed that it would be great advantage if they could be present at the 2010 WDGC.

Tuesday October 6, 2009

Arne, Anders, Janne and Jean had arrived to Edinburgh the previous day in the evening. After breakfast we went to the airport and rented a car to drive the 50 miles (80 kilometers) to St Andrews. The drive normally takes one hour and a half, but somehow we managed to drive past the highway intersection that leads to the bridge over the Firth of Forth, so it took more than two hours before we reached St Andrews.

We checked in at the Fairmont Hotel, which really is a first class hotel with elegant and spacious rooms. A special thank to Stephen Minto at the Sportworks that managed to book our rooms at a very moderate cost.

At the Fairmont Hotel Arne and Anders went through the schedule together with the Janne and Jean and discussed when the interpreters were needed.

We went to the golf club, which lies very close to the Fairmont Hotel. There is a shuttle bus that provide with transportation between the hotel and the golf club, but if you choose to walk it takes only five minutes.

At the golf club we asked if we could have a look at the Torrance Course where the World Deaf Golf Championships will be played next year. Unfortunately there was a tournament on the Torrance Course this week, so we were not able to inspect the golf course.

Instead we got a chance to play some holes at the Kittocks Course, which is the other 18-hole course at the Fairmont.



In the late afternoon Simeon and Ole joined us. Simeon has driven his car all the way up to Scotland from his home in Liverpool, and he picked Ole up at the Edinburgh Airport before they continued to St Andrews.

We had dinner at the Fairmont Hotel. It must be said that the prices in the restaurant are quite high, but we should remember that this is a five-star hotel. The food in the restaurant at the golf club is somewhat cheaper. There are no other restaurants in the neighborhood, but the hotel has a free shuttle bus to St Andrews that leaves every hour. The drive takes approximately 5-10 minutes.



After the dinner Arne, Anders, Ole and Simeon had a long meeting where we discussed the next days meeting with the R&A. The agenda was brought up and discussed thoroughly, and it was decided who of us that should bring up the different matters at the meeting. It was four tired but happy WDGf board members that broke up from the meeting at 11 pm.

Wednesday October 7, 2009

We had a steady breakfast at 8 am and drove to St Andrews city one hour later. I am sure we all had a childish smile in our face when we saw the 18th hole of the Old Course with the well-known stone building of the R&A headquarters in the background.



Our appointment with Mrs. Alison White, who is a Golf Development Officer at the R&A, was going to be held in her office at 10 am.

Alison greeted us welcome and showed us into a meeting room. We introduced ourselves and Alison remembered Arne and Simeon from the previous meeting in 1995.

The meeting lasted for one hour and a half, and the following subjects were brought up:

Presentation of the WDGf

Arne Lundquist made a short presentation of World Deaf Golf Federation.

The 8th World Deaf Golf Championships 2010 in St Andrews

Arne told the history of the World Deaf Golf Championships.

Alison told that it is possible for R&A to give economical support to cover a part of the green fee costs at the WDGC. R&A could also contribute with a referee to the Championships.

Arne asked if R&A could help WDFG to get more attention in the media.

Alison replied that R&A cannot help with PR, and she recommended that the Scottish Organizing Committee themselves will ask a media person if he or she can promote the World Deaf Golf Championships

Future agreement between R&A and WDFG

Arne explained that WDFG wished to be an affiliated organization to the R&A in the future.

Alison could not promise this; there are many golf organizations in the world that want to affiliate with R&A.

Simeon Hart asked if R&A could support WDFG in the same way as they support golf for blind and persons with physical disabilities.

Alison said that R&A does not make any difference between golfers; all are welcome to apply for support. R&A will deal with all applications four times a year.

Alison continued that R&A could not contribute with money for board meetings, travel expenses and websites. But there is a possibility that they can help to develop golf among the deaf, and they can also help to reduce the green fee costs at golf events arranged by the WDFG. The golf course should be approved by R&A.

How to develop golf in "non golfing" countries

Arne asked Alison if R&A could give economical support to make propaganda for golf in countries where there are no deaf golfers, such as Italy or Spain.

Alison explained that this should be addressed the country's National Golf Association and not the R&A.

How to increase the knowledge about the rules of golf

Anders Hillding told Alison that some deaf golfers' knowledge about golf rules is not good enough because it is difficult to read and interpret the R&A "Rules of Golf". The solution is to make a DVD where the rules are presented visually and on international signs.

Alison thought that the idea was very good and said that R&A could give economical support to such a project.

Other questions

Arne wanted R&A's comments about the age limit for the Men's Senior Tournament, which today is 50 years old.

Alison had no comments; WDFG owns the World Deaf Golf Championships and is free to create its own tournament rules.

Anders asked if WDFG could allow professional deaf golfers to play in the WDGC.

Alison said again that it is the WDFG that decides if the Championships should be open for professional golfers or not. But she emphasized that if the WDGC is open for amateurs only, no golfer that have won prize money in cash are allowed to play.

Ole Artmann gave Alison an issue of Annual Accounts 2008 for information.

Alison thanked for an interesting meeting and wished World Deaf Golf Federation good luck with the World Deaf Golf Championships and the work to develop the golf among the deaf.



Ole Artmann, Alison White, Anders Hilding, Arne Lundquist, Simeon Hart

After the meeting WDGf delegation went to the Fairmont and had a lunch in the clubhouse. We all agreed that the meeting with R&A had gone very well.

Then it was time to play golf at the Kittocks Course. The weather was beautiful with blue sky and almost no wind. The golf course was in a good condition with smooth fairways and fast greens. It is a typical links course, but some of the holes had steep hills that took the breath out of us, and the rough was quite heavy; if your drive ends up in the rough you'd better play a provisional ball! But Simeon told us that the Torrance Course is more flat and has less dense rough.



After a dinner at the Fairmont Hotel we had a meeting with David Wilson and Scott Ritchie from the 2010 Wdgc organizing committee. At the meeting we brought up some questions that had arisen after Don's and Simeon's inspection of the 2010 Wdgc site 13-14 September.

Thursday October 8, 2009

After the breakfast Simeon guided us around the Fairmont Hotel and showed us the rooms where the Wdgc General Meeting and the Opening Ceremony will be held. We were all very satisfied with what we saw.

Then we had a Wdgc meeting where we brought up all the matters that have arisen since our last meeting in Perth 2008.

Meeting with the R&A on October 7th, 2009

- The WDGf should apply for money from the R&A to cover the green fee costs at the 2010 World Deaf Golf Championships.
- An invitation to attend the opening- and closing ceremonies at the 2010 WDGC should be sent to the R&A
- In the future WDGf should apply for money from the R&A for a project to visually explain the rules of golf on a DVD.

Business Plan.

It was agreed that a discussion should be started in early 2010 to get more ideas how WDGf should develop in the future.

Meeting with the 2010 WDGC Organising Committee

The planning of the Championships is well under the way, the Torrance Course is very good! The accommodation is provided by the five stars Fairmont Hotel and the three stars New Hall Hotel. From the beginning the hotel costs was very high, but Don and Simeon managed to reduce the room rates considerably at their inspection on 13-14 September. Good work!

Meeting with the 2012 WDGC host in Japan

Arne Lundquist has been invited by the 2012 World Deaf Golf Championship host to play in a golf event for disabled people 2-3 November at the Tsu Country Club in Mie, Japan. Arne will go through a checklist together with the 2012 WDGC Organising Committee

Amateur status

The amateur status was discussed. The World Deaf Golf Championships is open for amateur golfers only as Alison pointed out at the R&A meeting.

Life Members

The meeting discussed a change to "Honorary Member" and a future change of the rules for Honorary Members.

Number of players in the WDGC.

A proposal for a change of the maximum number of players in the Men's, the Ladies and Men's Senior Tournament was discussed.

Handicap limits in the WDGC

The meeting suggested a proposal to reduce the handicap limit in the future WDGC to improve the quality of the Championships.

Golf in Deaflympics

The IOC is soon going to vote if golf should be accepted as a sport into the Olympic Games again. If this is going to happen, the meeting suggested a proposal that WDGf should apply to become a Deaflympic sport.

Agreement with the WDGC host

A memorandum of understanding must be created which states the rights and obligations for both the WDGf and the WDGC host.

European Deaf Golf Federation

Some countries in Europe are under the way to create a European Deaf Golf Federation. Its first official meeting will probably be during the 2010 WDGC in St Andrews. It was agreed that WDGf should fully support the creation of the new Federation and that EDGF must be affiliated to the WDGf.

After the meeting everybody went to the Fairmont Golf Club where the Director of Golf Mr Gary Slatter and the green keeper Mr Neil Ballingall waited for us.

Gary greeted us welcome to the Fairmont and was very interested to hear about the World Deaf Golf Championships next year. He apologized that we could not play on the Torrance Course due to the tournament that was played on the course.

- He told us that the Torrance Course was in very good condition, the greens measured 9.5 on the stimpmeter.
- The golf course is relative flat, so there is no need for motorized buggies for players in the Senior Tournament.
- All the golf bags could be stored in the garage at the bottom level of the clubhouse.



Arne Lundquist, Gary Slatter, Neil Ballingall

We thanked Gary that he had time to meet us and said good-bye. Simeon then drove us to the Duke's Course where the BBQ party will be held during the WDGC. It was beautifully located with a great view over the landscape.

Next stop was the famous The Jigger Inn pub, which is located adjacent to the 17th hole on the St Andrews Old Course. There we had an expensive hamburger with chips before we took farewell of Ole and Simeon, who had to leave for their journey back to their homes in Copenhagen and Liverpool.

The rest of us went to have a look at the Hall of Champions where the 2010 WDGC Closing Ceremony should take place. It was really an impressive place!

In the evening Arne and Anders summed up the three days in St Andrews and discussed how the WDGf board should continue their work until the WDGf General Meeting 2010.

Summary

We had three busy days in St Andrews. The meeting with the R&A was very promising, now we know that it is possible for WDGf to get economical support in the future.

The Torrance Course at the Fairmont is a very good choice for the 8th World Deaf Golf Championships, and we feel that the planning of the WDGC is due on course.

This was the first time ever almost all of the WDGf board members had a meeting in between the World Deaf Golf Championships. We realized that all subjects couldn't be solved through emails only; the best way is to meet once a year.

Anders Hillding
WDGf Secretary