

FAO: News

Carnoustie Media Release

Carnoustie Golf Memories Inspires Sawgrass to Tee Off Programme in US

A first-ever Golf Memories programme is to run in the USA from this month, inspired by the dedicated work at Carnoustie in helping those living with dementia and memory loss.

'The Pete Dye Chapter' Golf Memories programme is to commence at TPC Sawgrass on Monday 28 January, named in honour of the acclaimed golf architect who is battling Alzheimer's.

The monthly meetings are being organised by Billy Dettlaff, the former national director of golf at Sawgrass, a course designed by Dye and one that hosts The Players Championship annually. The programme will act as an 'official sister' to that at Carnoustie Golf Links (CGL)

Dettlaff was encouraged to host the first such golf programme in the US after first seeing the work at Carnoustie on the Golf Channel at The 147th Open last summer and then through his own visit to the Angus venue back in October.

The Carnoustie Golf Memories Group is one of a number to form at golf facilities in Scotland, others include Noah's Ark in Perth and the British Golf Museum in St Andrews, reconnecting individuals with their passion for golf and sharing memories together to help combat their diagnosis.

The facilities are part of the overall Golf Memories Project, which in turn are part of the wider Sports Heritage Scotland network helping those living with dementia and memory loss.

Dettlaff, a renowned golf author, said: "Ever since viewing the Golf Channel feature during The Open at Carnoustie last summer, I have been working on gaining information on the wonderful work of the Golf Memories programme.

"I have been working with Lorraine Young at Carnoustie, a key volunteer driving the group, and Dr Michael Ego from the University of Connecticut – who both featured in the video footage.

"My visit to the October meeting of Carnoustie Golf Memories Project gave me the confidence we can bring the programme to the US. It was an inspiring visit getting to know the individuals, such as Trevor Williamson, the grandson of Robert Simpson, the famous Carnoustie club-maker and professional."

At Carnoustie, as well as browsing old golf photographs to help stimulate memory, the group has a strong active approach, with participants boosting their physical and mental health in the state-of-the-art indoor simulators in the new golf centre or on 'The Nestie' six-hole junior course.

Dettlaff now hopes similar success can be achieved in the US and is delighted Dye's wife, Alice, gave her blessing to the name of the first group.

Dettlaff, who is working with two retirement and life care facilities in recruiting members for the Sawgrass group as well as volunteers, added: "I reached out to Alice Dye to give the option that

we name our first American programme 'The Pete Dye Chapter' as I felt it was an appropriate honour for Pete, and she quickly agreed.

"I hope we will be able to be successful enough with our programme to act as a catalyst to spread the sports reminiscence therapy and golf memories concept throughout the US.

"Without Lorraine's remarkable support and shared materials, I don't believe our programme would be in a position to begin serving those in the US. Dr Ego's support and recent visit to TPC Sawgrass has also been invaluable."

Pat Sawers, Chairman of CGL, said: "All at Carnoustie Golf Links welcome the development of the inspirational Golf Memories programme and the superb work done by Lorraine and all the volunteers.

"Carnoustie has a long and close history with America and indeed is often referred to as the ancestral home of The PGA of America, with many Carnoustie pioneers establishing golf in the US. We're delighted to strengthen this bond as an 'official sister' with TPC Sawgrass and the launch of 'The Pete Dye Chapter'.

"Dementia is an increasing healthcare challenge in our society and anything that can be done to provide comfort and support for people living with this condition is to be welcomed. At Carnoustie, we have found that Golf Memories has put a smile on the face of all the members as they recall many past golfing glories."

Kevin Barker, Director – Golf Development at The R&A, added: "We're delighted to learn that the work of the Carnoustie Golf Memories group has caught the attention of TPC Sawgrass.

"Having experienced first-hand the work at Carnoustie ahead of The Open last summer, the Golf Memories groups can help stir memories, fulfil lives and also encourage participants back into the sports they love."

Three key PGA individuals are also supporting the project at TPC Sawgrass, namely Derek Sprague, General Manager and Past President of the PGA of America; Matt Borocz, Director of Golf / Assistant General Manager; and Brian Riddle, Head Professional.