

# The Ryder Cup 2014: Golf's Homecoming?, *Scottish Affairs*, No. 43, Spring 2003

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# THE RYDER CUP 2014: GOLF'S HOMECOMING?

## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on Scotland's bid to host what was initially the 2009 Ryder Cup, a process which is set within a wider setting, namely tourism in Scotland. Concentrating on the bid's declared rationale, it considers whether the Ryder Cup, and by extension Scottish golf can be used to promote economic and social objectives such as tourism and social inclusion. The paper finds that while the opportunity to reassert Scotland's position as the 'home of golf' apparently offers potential in terms of promotion imagery, in practice the current structure of Scottish golf is likely to dilute the long terms benefits of the Ryder Cup bid on Scottish tourism. It concludes by calling for a broader strategic approach to be adopted for Scottish golf which would allow the country as a whole to achieve economic and social benefits.

This is golf in Scotland ... not simply a game; it is a way of life ... remaining true to its traditional principles, handed down over the centuries.

(Scottish Tourist Board 2001a, p.27)

## INTRODUCTION

To many, golf is synonymous with Scotland. The first written rules of golf were established by the Gentlemen Golfers at Leith in 1744 (Forsyth 1992). Prior to that the first golf club, the Royal Burgess Golfing Society of Edinburgh was formed in 1735 (Forsyth 1992), while St. Andrews remains home to the Royal and Ancient, guardians of the world-wide game. Scotland's golf infrastructure rests on 534 golf courses, of which 71 are municipal or publicly owned. Scotland has more golf courses per head of population than anywhere else in the world.

The Scottish Parliament is more recent history. Officially opened on 1 July 1999, under the terms of the Scotland Act 1998, it has power to pass legislation on matters which have been devolved to it by the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster. Sport is one such devolved matter, along with education, health, agriculture and justice.

The Ryder Cup, the biennial tournament held between Europe and the United States, was last held in Scotland in 1973. Since then the event has changed substantially in terms of scale, status and economic contribution. On the 31 October 2000 the Scottish Executive formally submitted Scotland's bid to stage the 2009 Ryder Cup. Bids were also submitted by venues in England and Wales. After a prolonged decision making period, it was anticipated that the Ryder Cup Committee, made up of members of the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) and the European Tour, would announce the successful bid in the week of the 2001 Ryder Cup event at the Belfry.

However, the atrocities of September 11 2001 in New York resulted in the 2001 event being postponed until 2002, with future Ryder Cups now to be held in even years in the sporting calendar. On the 27 September 2001 it was announced that the 2010 Ryder Cup event would be hosted by the Celtic Manor course in Wales. This decision was contentious not least because the course selected was at that time still awaiting planning permission in respect of significant alterations thereto. The decision also re-emphasised the apparent importance of individual and corporate economic power in the bidding process. This is evidenced in the venues for the most recent and the next two Ryder Cups to be held in Europe (Valderamma in Spain, The K Club in Dublin and Celtic Manor) all being owned by wealthy businessmen who have made financial contributions to the European Tour and/or the PGA (Huggan 2001).<sup>1</sup> At the same time it was also announced that the 2014 event had been awarded to the PGA Centenary course at Gleneagles in Perthshire. Thus the effort of the Scottish Ryder Cup bid partners had been rewarded, albeit belatedly.

Although formally submitted by the Scottish Executive, the Ryder Cup bid was the product of a collaborative group of public and private organisations - the Scottish Tourist Board (STB, now re-branded as *visitscotland*), Scottish Enterprise (Scotland's economic development agency), sportscotland (the national agency dedicated to promoting sporting opportunities for all Scots at all levels, whatever their interest and ability), the Bank of Scotland, the Scottish Executive itself and the venues interested in staging the event. Hastings International, the Edinburgh based sports marketing firm, was appointed to develop and promote the bid. Detailed bid guidance notes were produced by the PGA and Ryder Cup Ltd. specifying various criteria that must be met by bidders. A key requirement was that the event must form part of a comprehensive tourism, sports development and business investment strategy which demonstrates support from the public and private

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<sup>1</sup> Celtic Manor (Terry Matthews), The K Club (Michael Smurfitt) and Valderamma (Jaime Pitino).

sectors and the community (Scottish Executive Media and Communications Group 2000).

The objectives for hosting the Ryder Cup in Scotland set out at the launch of the bid, were as follows (Scottish Executive Media and Communications Group 2000, p.3):

- re-establishing Scotland firmly and clearly as the Home of Golf;
- maximising the opportunities which staging the Ryder Cup would provide to develop the sport of golf at all levels;
- maximising the potential which the Ryder Cup would offer to develop our golf tourism strategy and increase the number of golf visitors to Scotland.

The objective of this paper is critically to examine these motives. Specifically, it explores the bid's rationale in the context of a sports tourism strategy, focusing on various inter-related economic, cultural and environmental issues. It adopts a case study approach, centering on a process, the Ryder Cup bid, which is set within a wider context and community, namely tourism in Scotland. The process is analysed through consideration of the actions and interactions of the organisations involved in the bid. Publicly available source material and secondary reported information was supplemented by interviews held with several of the key organisations - the STB, sportscotland, the Bank of Scotland, Hastings International and the Sports Policy Unit (civil servant advisers to the Scottish Executive).

## **THE MEGA-EVENT**

The history of sports tourism being used worldwide to stimulate the wider tourism industry is long (Delpy 1998). In Scotland's case there is evidence of a specific relationship between golf and tourism, with golf's popularity being a primary factor in the emergence of the country's tourist industry at

the end of the nineteenth century (Price 1989). A key factor in this relationship was the introduction of the railways which provided convenient links between population centres such as Edinburgh and the North of England and towns like North Berwick (Lowerson 1994). The relationship between golf and tourism was re-emphasised more recently with the launch of **A New Strategy for Golf Tourism** produced by the STB on behalf of the Scottish Golf Tourism Executive (SGTE 2000).<sup>2</sup> The bid to host the Ryder Cup in Scotland in 2009, and the subsequent announcement that Scotland is to be awarded the event in 2014, is a manifestation of the commitment to bring major golf competitions to Scotland set out in the strategy.

The approach taken by the Scottish Executive of attempting to establish Scotland as a force in the major event hosting market - in addition to the Ryder Cup bid, it also supported the joint Scottish and Irish bid to host the 2008 European Football Championships - has been used previously by many cities and regions throughout the world. Such major sports events attracting large numbers of visitors and having national or international significance are described in the literature as either mega-events or hallmark events (Emery 2001; Hall 1992). Some early evidence of the impact of mega-events or hallmark events on cities and regions is summarised by Bale (1989). For example, the 1968 Grenoble Winter Olympics assisted in promoting tourism and winter sports in the Alps; the 1972 Munich Olympics generated sufficient investment to produce a new transportation system for Bavaria; the 1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games generated sufficient publicity to allow the city to attract housing and office development. Arguably, however, the strategic use of mega-events can be traced to the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. Awarded to Los Angeles when the only other city to have applied, Tehran, withdrew its application, the 1984 Games were funded almost exclusively by private capital (Gruneau 1984). The co-called 'Corporate Games' successfully focused attention on the (economic) benefits that such mega-sport events could bring to a city or region, resulting in an

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<sup>2</sup> The SGTE is made up of the STB, the Scottish Golf Union, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Rufflets Country House Hotel in St. Andrews and Perrygolf (golf tours).

upsurge of interest in bidding submissions by cities and regions for the right to host events like the Olympics and the football World Cup.

There are numerous aims espoused in the literature of why cities/regions should seek both to bid for, and indeed host, major sports events: for example, media attention, place competition strategies, place marketing, image promotion, global signification, national and global (re)positioning, urban regeneration, economic development (see, for example, Emery 2001; Hall 1992; Law 1994; Mules and Faulkner 1996; National Heritage Committee 1995; Rowe and McGurk 1999).

Debate about mega-events is now often dominated by economics, with an almost implicit belief that hosting a mega-event will provide a significant boost to regional and national economies (Palmer 2000). This is attributed in part to the influence of the event's cultural brokers, key personnel involved in bidding for or staging a mega-event, whose influence and entrepreneurial discourse focuses on persuading the mass audience that their efforts will lead to wide-ranging and long-lasting public benefit (Palmer 2000).

In the case of the bid to host the Ryder Cup, there is certainly an economic aspect. Estimates suggest that hosting the Ryder Cup could provide £200m worth of benefit to the Scottish economy (McSherry 2001). Interestingly, however, the rhetoric employed by the bid's cultural brokers suggest that the bid is not governed simply by economics. Of the three motives set out by the Scottish Executive, one is concerned, at least in part, with cultural issues ('the Home of Golf'), a second with sports development (to develop golf at all levels), while only the third has an explicit economic focus (promotion of golf tourism). Furthermore, in interviews conducted with bid partners (Scottish Executive, sportscotland and the STB), only the STB ranked economic benefit as the primary rationale for hosting the Ryder Cup in Scotland (interview with STB, 14 March 2001). However, as argued in the following section, the reassertion of Scotland as the home of golf is arguably

much more of a marketing strategy than a cultural one, albeit one which the country might be unable to sustain.

One factor which distinguishes the Ryder Cup from other mega-events is its quasi-rural setting. This can have consequences both in terms of the generation of economic benefits (for example, due to possibility of attendance or capacity constraints) and also the dispersal of those benefits. Nevertheless, a great deal of political and economic capital was invested in the bid, as evidenced both by the list of cultural brokers and by the £24m estimated contribution from the public purse (Dinan 2000; Mair 2000; Williams 2000).

## **MARKETING THE HOME OF GOLF**

Scotland has a world-class status as the 'Home of Golf' offering visitors a rich choice of golf experiences and heritage. Golf tourism is an important growth area worth almost £100m to the Scottish economy. As such it is an important niche market the Scottish Tourist Board is committed to.

(Scottish Tourist Board 2001b)

A fundamental part of the Ryder Cup bidding strategy is about reasserting Scotland's position as the home of golf, in the STB's terms of 're-branding ... Scotland as the home of golf' (interview with STB, 14 March 2001). This view of Scotland as the Home of Golf is founded on interpretations of the historical development of the game in this country. However, while the very origins of golf itself continue to be disputed (Geddes 2001), what is clear is that the game became accessible in Scotland earlier than in other countries and became a part of Scottish culture. The fact that 300 golf courses existed by 1910 resulted in Scotland playing a major role in the development of the game (Price 2000)

According to sportscotland, however, golf in Scotland today needs to justify or earn that accolade, not just rely on history or nostalgia:

When other people speak of the home of golf we want to make sure that it is linked to achievement and innovation, not history (interview with sportscotland, 8 March 2001).

From one perspective this can be considered a cultural rationale. Although golf has become a globalised sport, reinterpreted locally and imbued with local cultures and values, it remains a distinctly Scottish game (Burnett 1995; Lowerson 1994; Price 1989). One interpretation of this is about redefining what it is to be Scottish: the Ryder Cup bid, and by extension Scottish golf, is being used as a statement of identity. Relatedly it offers an opportunity to celebrate Scotland's invaluable contribution to the development of the sport.

However, as the following quote from Scotland's then Enterprise Minister and now First Minister, Henry McLeish, demonstrates, the emphasis placed upon our status as the home of golf in the Ryder Cup bid is about more than identity.

Scotland is renowned across the world as the home of golf. No other nation has that concept that *they can sell* (emphasis added). It seems to me that there has to be a lot more to golf than golfers (Bowditch 1999).

Here the 'home of golf' is being put forward as part of a marketing strategy, something that can distinguish the Scottish golf experience from that offered in other countries - it is 'Scottishness' in the market place (Lowerson 1994). In fact, the 'home of golf' label is only one aspect of Scottishness in the golf market place. As the opening quote to this paper illustrates, what is being promoted by the STB is what might be termed the unique Scottish golfing experience. In other words, that only in Scotland is golf played 'on proper courses, rich in historical association, according to rules suitably agreed and, above all, as a "people's game", democratic in its appeal' (Lowerson 1994, p. 75).

Central to the promotion of the Scottish golfing experience are the country's elite courses. In marketing terms, directly, these are being used to communicate the quality that Scotland can offer. Indirectly, they provide an image from which it is to be inferred that Scotland, as a whole, is a high quality location for tourism. This is an example of effective imaging, where 'the product is simultaneously sold to different customers with different needs and motives for visiting' (Page 1995, p. 216). In this context, Scotland's elite courses can be considered as being an example of sports landscape as both place and wealth (Bale 1994), i.e. the landscape's sense of place contributing to its potential for generating a financial return.

## THE ELITE COURSES

Golf is immensely popular in Scotland and we can boast the best golf courses in the world.

Rhona Brankin, Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport  
(Scottish Executive Media and Communications Group 2000, p.2)

Because of its inherent features, sport imposes itself on and inevitably dominates nature with some sportscapes being products of excessive application of human power over the environment (Bale 1994). A historical aspect of Scottish golf has been that its courses are perceived as being more *natural*, of making more use of the country's natural landscapes, particularly linksland. Many of the country's elite courses - including all the current Open Championship venues<sup>3</sup> - are examples of links courses which depend to a large extent on the natural landscape for their challenge. In addition, it is these natural landscapes which contribute to the Scottish golfing experience. Ecologically, this tradition of fashioning golf courses out of the natural landscape is also less harmful than golf course developments in other parts of the world (for example, the green oasis golf resorts in arid

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<sup>3</sup> There are 8 courses on the Open Championship rota, of which 5 are in Scotland - Carnoustie, Muirfield, the Old Course at St. Andrews, Troon and Turnberry.

areas of the Mediterranean) and contributes to the uniqueness of the Scottish golfing experience (European Golf Association Ecology Unit (EGAEU) 1995). Furthermore, a stated aim of the EGAEU is to see new courses developed in Scotland which are environmentally friendly and balanced and which have less harmful effects on aspects of the ecosystem such as bird and animal life, topography and the hydrosphere (1995). This reliance on the natural landscape contributes to 'the experience of place' (Bale 1994, p. 13). The variety arising from many of Scotland's naturally crafted courses may also be beneficial for tourism with richer sports tourism experiences being offered by activities that essentially depend on the natural landscape for their challenge and enjoyment (Standeven and De Knop 1999).

One option for promoting the Ryder Cup bid and subsequent tourism would be to focus on the landscape of golf in Scotland - golf as a form of sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism. The green issue has been used successfully by other mega-events, most noticeably the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics, which became renowned as the 'Green Games' (Lesjo 2000). This strategy was not used, however, by the Scottish Ryder Cup brokers. From the six Scottish courses initially included in the bid, the successful venue, Gleneagles, is an exclusive parkland based course, rather than a traditional Scottish links based course.

In any event Scottish golf's green credentials and aspirations need to be carefully considered. Some aspects of Scottish golf are under pressure, for example, the availability of tee times at elite courses and the availability of the types of facility required to service the tourist market. One concern is that this pressure may lead to the advent of golfing facilities, common in the Mediterranean and the United States in particular but also found in countries like Ireland and Wales, which are linked to property developments - so-called 'condo canyons' (Bale 1994 p.56). These developments and the environmental issues that they raise can be related to the wider tourism picture. While 'the home of golf' and the 'unique golfing experience' are strong images to use in a marketing and tourism promotion strategy, it is

questionable whether the facilities exist to service such a strategy. Two key issues of which there is little acknowledgement in **A New Strategy for Scottish Golf Tourism** (SGTE 2000) are accessibility and quality of Scottish golf facilities.

## ACCESSIBILITY OF SCOTTISH GOLF FACILITIES

Scotland may be the home of golf but after a weekend away in Perthshire I discovered every cliché about the private course was true. Forget the notion that there's something more democratic about the game in this country - unless you're fat and 40 there will be no welcome in the hillsides.

Letter to the *Sunday Herald*, 10 June 2001, p. 18

Accessibility has always been a perceived feature of Scottish golf, in contrast with the situation in other countries (Forsyth 1992). Historically, this popular participation can be traced to golf being played on common land, particularly seaside links (Lowerson 1994). The mid-eighteenth century, however, saw the formation of clubs and playing societies which have shaped the current structure or 'supply' of Scottish golf (Lowerson 1994). Recent figures show that 74% of Scottish golf clubs are mutually structured private members' clubs (Price 2000). In terms of widening access in the shape of a tourist strategy, therefore, a fundamental problem is that very few of Scotland's courses are actually controlled by the tourist industry (Williamson, cited in Price, 2000).

In economic terms a club can be defined as:

...a voluntary group [of individuals] deriving mutual benefit from sharing one or more of the following: production costs, the members' characteristics ... or a good characterised by excludable benefits (Cornes and Sandler 1996, pp.24-25)

What this definition reiterates is that the primary motivation of a club is to serve its members. From the standpoint of the Ryder Cup bid, this is a problem in regard to some of the country's elite Open Championship venues. Muirfield and Royal Troon, for example, are both members' clubs which provide only limited access to visitors. The Old Course at St. Andrews is

already in a situation where demand exceeds supply. The ownership structure prevalent among Scottish golf courses throws up an immediate and serious difficulty for the successful implementation of any golf-based tourism strategy. In simple terms many clubs have little motivation to court the tourist market. In one sense every tourist playing a round of golf on a membership course is a potential inconvenience to that club's own members.

Many courses do welcome tourists, or at least tolerate visitors as a means of keeping membership subscriptions down. According to Price (2000), visitors provide more than one third of the total income of 43% of members' clubs. But, it is not uncommon for substantial restrictions to be placed upon visitors' access to the course. Even Scotland's Golf Tourism Manager, Susan Grant, notes that the tourism market is still restricted by the limited availability of tee times on the courses people most want to play (Bunkered 2001). Furthermore, in terms of facilities, many clubs are simply ill-equipped to handle large number of tourists (Price 2000).

There are also other issues of accessibility. Despite the widely promulgated opinion that golf in Scotland is democratic, the reality is quite different. In an interview with the STB, the charge that golf in Scotland was elitist was refuted 'because [of the existence] of the municipal courses' (interview, 14 March 2001). While it is true that Scotland does have a substantial number of public (or municipal) courses per head of population compared to other countries, it is also true that some of these are dominated by prestigious clubs. Far from being democratic and egalitarian, demands on playing space within Scottish golf have benefited the affluent and relatively leisured (Lowerson 1994).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In a survey carried out by the Golf Research Group into the average cost of midweek green fees in clubs that are either proprietary or run specifically for commercial gain (i.e. not including members' clubs), Scottish regions occupied the top four places in terms of expense - 1) Fife £35.00, 2) Strathclyde £30.79, 3) Lothian £22.67 and 4) Borders £22.50 (Golf World, Green Fees Survey August 1998). Also available at <http://www.golf->

Many courses have also placed restrictions on women. Historically, women participating in golf have suffered from exclusion in terms of facilities, opportunities, rights and power (Hargreaves 1994). There is some evidence of improvements in this area, partly influenced by the incorporation of the European Convention of Human Rights into Scots Law (Reid 2001). Furthermore, forthcoming amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 will see the Act extended to private clubs, although it should be noted it will still not apply to single-sex clubs. According to the Scottish Golf Union, over half of Scotland's golf clubs already offer equal opportunities, where this is defined as female club members paying the same subscription as male members for equivalent membership and playing privileges (Grey 2001). However, a recent survey of 180 golf clubs in Britain found that a large majority (68%) are having to change their rules to comply with this new legislation (Golf World Survey 2001). Returning to the Ryder Cup bid, it is worth noting that two of the venues originally included in the bid continue to place restrictions on women. Muirfield persists with a male only membership policy. At St. Andrews, although the Links Management Trust does not impose restrictions on women playing its courses, the Royal and Ancient, whose clubhouse overlooks the 18<sup>th</sup> hole of the Old Course, and which is perhaps the most recognisable symbol of Scottish golf, continues to place restrictions on women accessing all areas of the clubhouse.<sup>5</sup>

It is not just gender discrimination, however, that is institutionalised in golf. The **Golf World Survey** (2001) also found evidence of continuing prejudice against people on the grounds of both race and age. In a Scottish context, Lowerson (1994) notes that many golf clubs in Scotland have had a history of excluding Jews and Catholics. He notes the example of the Bonnyton Moor course, which was purchased by the Jewish community in the West of

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[research.com/golfworldpress.htm](http://research.com/golfworldpress.htm)). It is also worth noting that the £100 green fee has now arrived in Scotland.

<sup>5</sup> Golf World reported the following example of sexism at Royal Troon, another Open Championship venue, but not one of the clubs bidding to host the Ryder Cup. In March 1995, a lady walks into the clubhouse at all-male Royal Troon and asks whether metal spikes are allowed in the clubhouse. She is told by a member: 'Spikes are, women aren't'. (Golf World Survey 2001)

Scotland as a way of making golf more accessible to its community in the light of anti-Jewish feeling (Lowerson 1994).

## QUALITY OF SCOTTISH GOLF FACILITIES

A **New Strategy for Golf Tourism** is to some extent demand focused - i.e. it is designed substantially to increase the number of visitors, domestic and overseas, playing golf in Scotland (SGTE 2000). The Ryder Cup bid also has a demand focus. For example, Hastings International talk in terms of a 'potentially huge explosion in golf tourism from bringing people over from the States' (interview, 26 February 2001).

However, there is evidence to suggest that such a demand-focused strategy may be flawed or partial. Paradoxically Scotland's pre-eminence in the development of the game arguably has left the country at a disadvantage in terms of developing modern golf tourism, with many of Scotland's courses being unsuited to meeting the perceived needs of today's golf tourists in terms of course length and general facility provision. For example, the *STB* itself has talked of the need for a future audit of availability (of tee-times) which would then inform a strategy to match supply and demand (interview, 14 March 2001). More substantive evidence is provided in Price's report on **The Management and Marketing of Scotland's Golfing Facilities'** (2000). The report provides an objective classification of Scotland's golf courses, with perceived quality being determined by two items: the standard scratch score and the weekday visitor's green fee. However, as Price (2000) notes this rudimentary classification is unable to measure a vital aspect for the future success of golf tourism in Scotland, namely the quality of sports experience offered, as high cost and difficulty may not be synonymous with a positive golf experience for the participant. Nevertheless, his findings make disturbing reading for those arguing for a golf tourism strategy to be based upon a Ryder Cup bid. Notwithstanding the number of facilities in Scotland (485), his report argues that there are very few high quality facilities (2% classed as world class/excellent quality, 8% classed as very

good quality) and that these are already operating at full capacity (Price 2000). Of the 160 further facilities rated as 'good quality', only 125 actively participate in the golf tourism market and a significant proportion of these 'only have spare capacity if the members' clubs which operate them choose to make their facilities available to visitors' (Price 2000, p. 48).

Such findings raise concerns about whether Scottish golf is in a position to deliver the STB's broad strategy. Evidence that the STB is aware of the issues of course quality and accessibility, however, can be seen in its specific strategic objectives which include increasing the number of golfers playing the less well known courses and increasing the number of visitors outside the main season (SGTE 2000). However, notwithstanding these objectives, the use of images such as 'the home of golf' and Scotland's golfing heritage may actually compound the supply side difficulties discussed above, with tourists continuing to be drawn to already over-stretched elite courses. In addition, simply having a tourist dispersal objective does not address concern over the quality of facilities located throughout the country. One economic option which would assist the STB in delivering its strategy would be to invest in the country's wider golf infrastructure, i.e. to invest in the facilities outwith the elite courses.

The need for infrastructure investment is accepted by the STB which talks about 'meeting the demands of what the tour operators and consumers are wanting' (interview, 14 March 2001). The Ryder Cup bid may present opportunities in this regard. In other mega-events, it is common for investment to be made in state-of-the-art sports facilities such as stadiums, although unlike in this case, these stadiums would normally act as venues for the event itself. In this case, however, the single venue event could act as a catalyst for investment in dispersed venues, in accordance with a wider tourism strategy. This approach would also have social benefits to accord with the Scottish Executive's wider objectives, with the single site venue being used to promote wider spread economic benefits throughout the country, particularly in rural areas.

This investment could take place within a strategy of locating golf tourism within the outdoor recreation framework that already exists within Scotland. The golf tourism strategy objectives of increasing both 'the number of golfers playing the less well-known courses around the country' and 'the number of golfing visitors outside the main season' (SGTE 2000, p.11) fits well with outdoor recreation framework, which is rurally based and focused on extending the traditional tourism season (Higgins 2000). In other words, the marketing of golf would focus not just on history, heritage and elite courses, but rather would also highlight what Scotland can offer golf tourists in terms of landscape and ecological factors. Promoting Scottish golf in this way would also avoid the honey pot phenomenon currently apparent in Scottish golf where economic benefits are concentrated upon over-capacity elite courses.<sup>6</sup> In this way, outdoor recreation in Scotland could provide a model on which to develop sustainable golf tourism, with the Ryder Cup as a catalyst. However, although this would benefit the tourism infrastructure of Scottish golf, it would not in itself remedy issues of provision, in that the majority of beneficiaries in terms of courses would still remain outwith the direct control of the tourist industry (Price 2000).

## **SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

We shall extend our existing commitment to golf and to widening opportunities and introduce every child in Scotland - boys and girls - to the game of golf by the age of nine. That is our '2000 and Nine' Ryder Cup pledge

(Scottish Executive Media and Communications Group 2000, p.2)

As mentioned previously, a key distinction between the Ryder Cup and other mega-events, is its quasi-rural location. One consequence is that the event

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<sup>6</sup> Further evidence that the STB has recognised the need to disperse golf tourists around the country is provided in its recent golf tourism advert which carried the strapline 'Surprise yourself. Play a round in the rest of Scotland' and carried pictures and comment on 18 courses spread throughout Scotland (*Bunkered*, 2001, 29, 200-201).

cannot be so easily linked to urban regeneration and infrastructure benefits of the kind usually invoked to justify public funding on behalf of mega-event host cities. However, as part of a golf tourism strategy, opportunities exist to encourage a more inclusive approach to income distribution, specifically in rural areas. Central to this is the promotion of the golf in Scotland as being a unique experience, whether played on elite Championship courses or, for example, in spectacular courses in dramatic coastal or highland settings.

Unlike bids for World Cups and Olympic Games, the Ryder Cup bid has as a major focus, spending on community services rather than on public subsidies for elite facilities. The '2000 and Nine' pledge set out above is claimed as an example of the collective community benefits that will accrue from Scotland hosting the event. According to sportscotland 'the legacy should not be to golf ... [it] should be to Scotland' (interview 8 March 2001).

The pledge is concerned in part with ensuring greater opportunity for participation in sport for Scottish children across the social spectrum. However, it also has a political dimension, with the universal access to golf specifically in inner city and other deprived areas, being part of a sporting element within the Scottish Executive's Social Inclusion Partnerships (SIPs), designed to appeal to the Ryder Cup bid judges (interview with sportscotland, 8 March 2001).

This pledge's commitment to introduce all Scottish children to golf by the age of nine produces interesting issues arising from the ideological claims made for sport (Long and Sanderson 2001). In their study of the role of sport in regenerating deprived urban areas, Coalter, Allison and Taylor (2000) note that while there is widespread understanding of the theoretical contribution sport can make to a range of social issues, there is evidence of a lack of monitoring or evaluation of the outcomes of sports-based projects in practice. A key finding in the context of measuring outcomes is the need to distinguish the necessary conditions (participation in sport) from the

sufficient conditions (the conditions under which all necessary outcomes are achieved) (Coalter et al. 2000). This research clearly has implications for the Ryder Cup pledge in the context of both participation in golf and the nature and quality of that sporting experience.

Firstly, the Ryder Cup pledge would seem to imply that participation in golf, unlike most other forms of participation in sport, would not be a matter of choice. Keller, Lamprocht and Stamm (1998) suggest that sport has differential impacts, i.e. some people have a greater propensity to accept the values and attitudes inherent in sport than others. What might be expected in this case, therefore, is that any suggestion that sporting participation has been forced may well cause greater divergence in its impacts, i.e. increasing the risk that the desired or expected outcomes (in terms of community values or benefits for Scotland) will not in fact be achieved.

Secondly, the nature and quality of the sporting experience will influence the nature and extent of any outcomes. Golf in Scotland is not a homogenous product or experience. Those charged with overseeing the pledge, principally sportscotland, will require to act on an awareness of the ways in which different children's experiences of golf will vary dependent on the nature and quality of their experience. In simple terms, children in Ayrshire, East Lothian or Fife are likely to have quite different golfing experiences than those in inner city Glasgow. Within Fife alone, children in the rural North East part of the county around St. Andrews, are likely to have quite different experiences than those in the more industrial West Fife. Furthermore, the delivery of the pledge requires to be based on the needs of the participants, to ensure that they are provided with a pathway between a positive golf experience and, importantly, future participation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Junior Golf Development Programme has been charged with delivering the Ryder Cup Bid's golf development commitments. It has a remit both to introduce children to golf and to link schools, clubs and communities to ensure that there is an appropriate outlet for

In many ways the pledge is highly commendable. But it is important to relate it both to facility provision and to wider social inclusion issues. In terms of provision, a fundamental problem is imbalance between population centres and the location of golf courses. While rural Scotland is extremely well served by golf course provision, there remains a requirement for new provision in central urban Scotland. **Sport 21: Nothing Left To Chance**, the then Scottish Sport Council's strategy for sport identified the need for a further 47 municipal or pay-as-you-play courses primarily to be concentrated in urban areas (The Scottish Sports Council 1998). As well as geographical restrictions, provision is also limited by the types of facility. As was discussed above, 74% of golf courses in Scotland are mutually owned members' clubs. Post 2009 or 2014, how many children will be able to continue to participate in golf?

While commercial and housing-based developments make sense in terms of the high spending tourist market, they are unlikely to contribute materially to widening access. Children's continued participation requires affordable and convenient access and thus the pledge and related strategy require to be implemented in conjunction with social inclusion policies. While it is perhaps true to say that other countries have more barriers to break down in terms of access and elitism (interview with Hastings International, 26 February 2001), nevertheless, children in Scotland need to be able to find a course which is both near to them and on which they will be permitted access, while also being able to afford the green fees and equipment costs.

## CONCLUSION

Two of the Ryder Cup bid's motives are to re-establish Scotland as the home of golf and to develop Scotland's potential as a golf tourism venue. What is clear from this paper, however, is that while the opportunity to reassert Scotland's position as the 'home of golf' is a valuable promotional tool, in

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those children who wish to continue in the game.  
(<http://www.rydercupscotland2009.com/development.htm>)

itself history does not provide a legacy in infrastructure terms suitable for a contemporary tourism industry. In particular the current ownership structure of Scottish golf and consequent issues of accessibility, are likely to restrict any long term tourist-related benefits that might be expected to flow from hosting the 2014 Ryder Cup.

A further question arising out of the Ryder Cup bid is whether it is an appropriate vehicle for promoting both golf tourism and social inclusion. While one purpose is focused on encouraging high spending tourists to come to Scotland, the other is concerned with making golf in Scotland more inclusive, in particular encouraging more young people of all social backgrounds to play the game. While these purposes are not necessarily conflicting, nevertheless it is clear that what is required to achieve the latter objective is investment in affordable, pay-as-you-play facilities close to centres of population, facilities which are unlikely to meet the needs of the tourist market.

What the Ryder Cup offers is an opportunity to adopt a broader strategic approach for Scottish golf. One option is to locate golf tourism within the wider outdoor recreation framework. Rather than focusing solely on history and the elite courses, this strategy would also highlight the wider Scottish golfing experience in terms of landscape and ecological factors. If this approach is adopted, the Ryder Cup could act as a focus for distributing economic and social benefits throughout Scotland and for promoting sustainable golf tourism.

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