



01 May 2020

## **Golf's governing bodies welcome Government announcement on the reopening of golf courses**

Golf's national governing bodies – Golf Ireland, the Irish Ladies Golf Union and the Golfing Union of Ireland – have warmly welcomed the Taoiseach's confirmation that golf courses can reopen for play on a restricted basis in the first phase of the Government's roadmap for the easing of Covid-19 restrictions later this month.

Since the restrictions were introduced in March, the governing bodies have been engaging intensively with the Irish Government and its agencies on a range of issues including the financial impact of the crisis on golf clubs, the importance of allowing essential maintenance of courses over the past five weeks, and the potential for the safe resumption of golf.

To that end, golf's governing bodies have prepared a comprehensive draft protocol on the safe resumption of play on which we have been engaging with the Government over recent weeks. We now intend to finalise this protocol in the coming week, in consultation with the Government, and issue clear advice to our member clubs well in advance of the reopening of courses on 18 May. That advice will emphasise the absolute necessity of golf clubs adhering to the terms of the protocol for safe play.

In the initial stage, play will be for members only and competitions will not be permitted. We would ask clubs to refrain from opening timesheets for booking until the protocol is published, as it will contain vital information on group sizes and timesheet intervals.

The governing bodies will also continue to work closely with the Government in the coming weeks and months to seek support for golf clubs that have been severely impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions.

As today's announcement only relates to golf clubs in the Republic of Ireland, the governing bodies will continue to work with the U.K. authorities and the Northern Ireland Executive to seek the safe resumption of golf for our clubs in Northern Ireland.

Mark Kennelly, CEO of Golf Ireland said:

“The golf community in Ireland welcomes the Taoiseach's confirmation that our clubs can reopen on a restricted basis in the first phase of the Government's plan to ease the Covid-19 restrictions. This means that golf will be one of the first sports to resume and will give golf club members the opportunity to return to play on a limited but safe basis.

“Golf offers the potential to play a significant role in the recovery from this crisis in public health terms. Our sport provides a valuable outlet for healthy outdoor activity which can be enjoyed with the appropriate safety measures in place”.

“We hope that, later in the year, golf can also make a valuable contribution to economic recovery, particularly in the domestic tourism sector.”

“On behalf of the national governing bodies, I want thank the golfers of Ireland for putting the health of their communities and fellow members first during this crisis and to urge them to continue to strictly adhere to the protocols for safe golf which will be finalised shortly and to continue to follow the public health advice of the Government and health authorities.”

“We wish to acknowledge the tremendous efforts being made by frontline workers across Ireland whose commitment and dedication to caring for those inflicted with COVID-19 has led us to a point where we can begin to consider a return to activities such as golf.”