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Neil Matthews, Performance Coach of the Welsh Mens' and Boys' National Golf Squads

User Story

Huxley Golf all-weather surfaces selected for Five Regional Centres of Excellence in Wales

The latest Regional Centre of Excellence established by the Golf Union of Wales (GUW) using Huxley Golf premier all-weather surfaces has opened for play at The Celtic Manor Resort, venue for the 2010 Ryder Cup.

Commissioned by Golf Development Wales (GDW) in the wake of the successful Team Wales bid to host the 2010 Ryder Cup, the GUW's Regional Centres of Excellence are currently being set up in five important locations across Wales with funding provided by the private sector and the Lottery Fund for Sport in Wales.

In addition to The Celtic Manor Resort, the golf courses selected by Golf Development Wales to host the Centres of Excellence are Clays, near Wrexham; Llangefnï on Anglesey; The Vale, near Cardiff; and Machynys Peninsula, near Llanelli. All five centres are using Huxley Golf state of the art, low maintenance all-weather surfaces within their short game practice areas.

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Arnold Palmer watches over a member of the Welsh Elite Squad during the opening ceremony of the Huxley Golf all-weather short game area at the Celtic Manor Resort.



Hannah James, Director of Golf Development for Golf Development Wales, explained that the organisation had been formed initially with two principal strategic aims. The first was to increase the number of young people, especially girls, playing the game in Wales and the second was to facilitate an improvement in the standard of players at the elite end of the game.

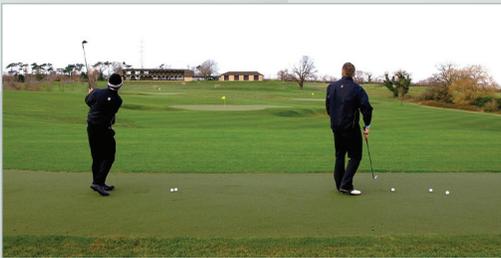
"The establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence was seen as a very good way of achieving the second objective," said Hannah. "Every golf facility in Wales was invited to bid to host a centre and the applications received were whittled down to a short list, spread geographically evenly across the country."

A key element of the final five chosen centres was that all had to provide golfers with a uniform standard of practice and teaching, with each centre having a driving range, short game practice area, chipping area, putting green and lecture room.

When considering the creation of the five short game practice areas, it became clear to GDW that using 100 per cent natural turf for all of the tees and greens

Squads, said: "It's a wonderful facility. The Huxley all-weather surfaces are very realistic, great to play off and remain consistent irrespective of the weather or level of use. I'm using them primarily for short game coaching of the Welsh Elite and Development squads as well as individual squad members and am delighted that comparable first-class coaching facilities will be available in due course throughout Wales. The result can only benefit the long-term development and success of Welsh golf."

Hannah James added that the centres would prove invaluable also in attracting more golfers to take up the game. "For example, an all-year-round programme of mass participation events and coaching for beginners has been developed at the new Centre of Excellence at Clays where a recent women's open day attracted almost 100 beginners," she said. "Although it was held on a day when the weather was poor, the event was able to go ahead due to the combination of indoor putting studio, driving facility and Huxley short game practice area, all of which have synthetic all-weather surfaces. I am delighted to say it was a huge success."



Illustrations:

left & right - Elite players try out the new Huxley Golf all-weather short game practice area at The Celtic Manor Resort.

middle - (left to right) Paul Chester, Sales Manager, Huxley Golf; Nigel Edwards, Golf Union of Wales' Director of Player Development and Coaching; Hannah James, Director of Golf Development for Golf Development Wales.

was likely to create problems in trying to maintain and present a consistent standard due to the high number of shots being played within a concentrated area. The decision was taken to utilise synthetic turf for the greens and a combination of natural and synthetic turf surfaces for the practice tees within all of the short game areas.

Having compared and tested various synthetic surfaces and spoken with PGA professionals and other experienced users, GDW selected Huxley Golf's latest state-of-the-art all-weather nylon surfaces as the recommended product for the short game practice areas at all five Regional Centres of Excellence in Wales.

Commenting on the centre completed recently at The Celtic Manor Resort, Neil Matthews, Performance Coach of the Welsh Mens' and Boys' National Golf

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The Dean, New Alresford, Hampshire SO24 9BL, United Kingdom
Tel: + 44 (0)1962 733222 Fax: + 44 (0)1962 734702
email: sales@huxleygolf.co.uk

www.huxleygolf.com

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