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## WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



# A Big Boost for Golf

**I've mentioned it before but golf's image really does need a bit of a revamp. It does suffer from a stuffy image and the imposing nature of some golf clubs prevent some would-be players from taking the plunge.**

There have been some cries in the wilderness as it were, with the likes of Ant and Dec, DJ Spooky and Chris Evans being so public in their love of the game; while, I suppose, I should pay tribute to Ian Poulter's one man assault on the country's fashion sense – seeing young kids wearing pink checked trousers shows that our Ian does make an impression on them.

However, two things have happened recently which might help to popularise the game to the masses.

One was the IOC committee's decision to recommend golf, along with Rugby Union Sevens, as an Olympic Sport from 2016. It means that, through becoming a part of the Olympic movement, it will open all sorts of doors to the sport. Funding, not previously available to golf, will open up and grass roots golf should receive a genuine boost.

The other thing comes in something I experienced recently in Harrogate when I visited Rudding Park's superb new six hole short course, in the company of Peter McEvoy.

Powerplay gets round one of the biggest handicaps to the game's success – the time it takes to play – and if Peter can finalise contracts with sponsors and television companies it could well become golf's very own version of Twenty20 cricket.

Players compete over nine holes to greens with two flags – one easy and the other tough, with point bonuses available to anyone who is successful in taking on the black-flagged holes. Three Powerplay holes must be taken in the first eight with the option of taking a bonus

Powerplay on the 9th. Obviously holes must be nominated in advance!

With Nett birdies bringing in six points and Nett eagles, eight, scoring can be spectacular and as a player who is behind is forced to go for broke on the final hole dramatic putts whether successful or not will be a regular occurrence.

As a two hour television spectacular, possibly under floodlights, with packed stands around the final green, you can see it catching on with the couch potato public, while, at places like Rudding Park, the six hole version can be completed in a lunch hour or breaking a journey home from work.

Golf does need some innovative thinking to break out of the staid image it presents to the outside world and Peter McEvoy, who recently received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Golf Writers, might have struck on something with Powerplay golf.

It won't ever replace the more traditional 18 hole games we all play and cherish at our clubs but it might become an attractive alternative and, like Twenty20 cricket, give the entire game a real shot in the arm.

Then once golf has become established as an Olympic Sport we might find that the Gold medallist in 2020 or 2024 learned the game by taking on those pesky black flags in Powerplay golf.

Scott MacCallum  
**Editor**