

## **Joanne Free - Golf Scholarship**

I've been playing golf since I was 9 years old, the main reason I started playing golf was because my brother had just started playing and we had always been competitive with each other and still are, so naturally I wanted to be better than him.

When I was in primary 5 I completed a first Clubgolf session at Windygoul Primary School from that I went on to do further Clubgolf camps delivered at stage 1 level. As I progressed through the first 3 stages of Clubgolf in about 2 years by attending the Clubgolf camps delivered during the Easter and the summer, competing in flag competitions organised by Clubgolf at local golf courses in East Lothian and receiving additional coaching from my golf club PGA professional.

As I progressed through to stage 3 I became a junior member of East Lothian Ladies Golf Association. This membership allowed me to play in more competitions which were held throughout the whole year, attend training days hosted at different golf clubs in East Lothian by PGA Professionals and selected to participate in team events both at junior and ladies level. At this stage I started entering myself into national events as I had an official handicap which was low enough to event national competitions and wanted to start competing against other girl golfers from around Scotland to help develop my game.

When I was 15 I attended a Scottish Golf Academy regional performance assessment day at the Braids golf centre which I progressed onto the final selection process of the Scottish Golf Academy at St Andrews. I became a member of the Scottish Golf Academy and started to go through the Player Performance Pathway which has 3 tiers to progress through.

Additionally, I was selected to be a part of the former SLGA (Scottish Ladies Golf Association) girls' performance squad this included receiving coaching from the girls' national coach at performance squad training days and attending training weekends. After a year of being in the performance squad I was dropped by the former SLGA but as I will still a part of the Scottish Golf Academy. During that year I still continued to compete in all the national events and after becoming a semi-finalist in the Scottish Girls Championship, I was selected to compete for Scotland in the 2014 Girls Home Internationals.

Throughout the next 2 years I represented Scotland internationally at two European Girls Team Championships in 2015 and 2016 as well as the Girls Home Internationals during those two years, meaning as a junior I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to represent my country five times. From representing Scotland recruits from American university's started scouting and recruiting me to become a student athlete at their golf program.

In November 2016, I went on a weekend visit to the University of Minnesota to see the campus, golf facilities, meet the golf coaches and team members. Following my visit I signed for the University of Minnesota for four years on a full scholarship and will start in August 2017. During my freshman year I will be undecided but after that I will major in sports management, whilst I'm studying at the university I will be a member of the women's golf team which competing in different states in the NCAA division 1.