

RULES SCHOOLS FOR INDIA

Following the success of Rules schools in Vietnam, Cambodia and China, the Royal & Ancient, the governing body of the world amateur game (except in the U.S. and Mexico), plans to bring the program to India (in partnership with the Indian Golf Union). This will happen as early as the second half of 2011, followed by more Rules schools in January and February next year.

The R&A sees much potential for development in Indian golf, and expects the game to grow in a big way in the next few years.

Among those conducting the Rules schools in Vietnam were Alan Holmes, chairman, Rules of Golf Committee; Kevin Barker, assistant director, Rules; and Dominic Wall, director-Asia Pacific. R&A officials would be visiting India to extend the program.

The idea behind the 'schools' is to create awareness about the game. And with the development of Indian golf continuing apace, there has been an increase in the number of home-grown referees (thanks to India hosting more international events).

The program is one of

the highlights of the new three-tiered Rules Education Program launched by the world body this year, and has been taken to Asia for the first time.

In the first leg, the Rules school was held in Vietnam (at Twin Doves Club, Saigon), Cambodia and China. The schools have been extremely well received, with almost 50 attendees each in the three countries. Said Holmes, "We have been delighted with the turnout for each of the Rules schools so far. To have about 50 people at different levels in Vietnam, Cambodia and in China has been very pleasing indeed. We hope to have bigger numbers in India.

"This is our first 'Tournament Administrators and Referees' course in Asia under our new structure, and the caliber of the attendees is extremely high," Holmes added. "A number of students are working to enhance their qualifications for the golf industry and that is something that we are very happy to support."

Meanwhile, the IGU has entered into an agreement with the R&A for certification of Rules officials in India.

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GREEN GOLF BALLS?

Dixon Golf (www.dixon-golf.com), a golf ball and golf accessories manufacturer operating out of the U.S., has appointed Fore Ventures, a Pune-based firm, as their exclusive distributors in India.

Dixon's golf balls are, according to the company, manufactured from renewable polymers and retailed in

discounts), which are then recycled into other products.

Besides golf balls, the company also manufactures bags, caps and other accessories made from recycled polymers and plastic (among other materials).

Considering the number of golf balls lost every day, the idea of recycling has a lot of merit, except that a lot of



recycled packaging. The two-piece balls do not use synthetics or any heavy-metal pollutants in their manufacturing process, and are available in three choices — Fire (Dixon Golf's premium ball, targeted at low handicappers and pros), Earth (for golfers who want a combination of distance and bite), and Wind (meant for maximum distance). The balls are not biodegradable but the company has a program through which golfers can return scuffed and damaged balls (against future

golfers might not actually take the trouble of returning the balls. Also, golfers are not likely to compromise on performance: Dixon Golf says that their balls have the same levels of durability, speed and spin as any in the market. No reason to not pick up a sleeve and give it a shot.

Dixon balls are available in pro shops in Kolkata, Pune, Mumbai and Bangalore. Retailing in Delhi is expected to begin by the end of the year. (*Wind ₹225, Earth ₹325, Fire ₹760*)

BIGGER BOUNTY AT INDIAN OPEN

The Indian Open's growing stature on the Asian Tour was further vindicated when tour officials revealed a bump-up in prize money to \$1.5 million (a 20 percent increase on 2010 and '09), making the 2011 edition the richest full-field event in the continent. The announcement followed the signing of a three-year deal between the Asian Tour and the

Indian promoters, Nimbus Sport.

"With an increased prize fund up for grabs this year, it promises to be an exciting week of golf," enthused Kyi Hla Han, executive chairman of the Asian Tour. "We will work closely with Nimbus Sport in putting together a grand event, and building up to the (event's) golden jubilee in 2013," Han added.

Yannick Colaco, CEO, Nimbus Sport, who was instrumental in the IGU-Nimbus tie-up earlier this year, spoke of the sports management group's plans. "The 2011 Indian Open will be a showcase for professional golf in Asia and will appropriately set the platform in leading us into the 'golden year' in 2013," said Colaco.

Interestingly, Hero Honda, title sponsors of the Open for the last

six years, have yet to renew their contract, which expired in 2010. A statement is, however, expected this month. There is also a chance that the Delhi Golf Club may miss its date with the tournament in the likelihood that it's transferred to a new venue. The Karnataka Golf Association GC in Bangalore (remodeled by Swan Golf Designs of the UK), is rumoured to be amongst the frontrunners. ♣