



THE PGA OF FRANCE

The 12th in our series that takes a random look at member PGAs in turn.

France emerges from 'critical situation' to work together on future policies

'First-ever' Entente with Federation is Agreed

Among the most encouraging signs for the future of golf witnessed during the 18-year life of The PGAs of Europe has been the growing understanding forged between the amateur Federations and the PGAs around our membership.

Country after country has discovered, sometimes after difficult rounds of meetings and informal talks, that amateur and professional bodies can, and MUST, work together for the total well being of the sport.

Now, from the PGA of France, comes the following encouraging message on an issue that is so crucial to the administration of golf for the 21st century:

"We have emerged from a critical situation faced by many PGAs around the world, that of having to deal with the diverse needs of its members i.e. those who provide a range of services at clubs and driving ranges and others who concentrate on tournament play.

"A new committee, comprising individuals with business experience, plans to see the Association grow with these two distinct bodies combined under the same umbrella.

"This year the PGA of France has brought back many of its former members into the Association which now registers a total of 1200. The committee has concentrated its efforts on reorganising several important areas." These include:

- Jointly, **and for the first time ever**, reaching a protocol agreement with the Federation. This enables the position of the pro in the club to be more secure and less under the sort of threat by employers that has resulted previously from the abuse of the country's union rules.

- Reaching a firm agreement with the Federation on the protection of teaching professionals in golf clubs where amateur

volunteers have been encouraged to help in education programmes.

- Arranging with the famous business school, PARIS DAUPHINE, to offer additional training to those pros willing to become more business or management oriented thereby providing them with the equivalent of a degree from this very selective school. (Currently in France, say the PGA, it is rare to see a pro involved in the management side of the golf course or even the pro shop.)

- Growing the PGA role and image in order to be 'more recognised, appreciated and respected.'

Other signs of the upsurge of activity in this nation of such proud sporting achievements, and boundless potential, is the creation of Paris-based exhibition that, next year, will be under the banner of the PGA France Golf Show which has healthy signs of all-round expansion.

Proud Pioneers and Founder Members

As one of the 1989 pioneers, and founder members of The PGAs of Europe, the news that the PGA of France is being rejuvenated and refreshed with a strategy for future growth will be welcomed throughout the membership.

The recent history, **Coming of Age**, illustrates that France has played a significant role in our organisation's first 18 years of development and, as one of the larger, stronger members, can continue now with that role.

In almost every facet of The PGAs of Europe's development, France has figured prominently. This began with the work of Jean-Etienne Lafitte, in his attendance at the exploratory meeting at Wentworth in 1989 and the official launch the following year.

Jean was the first chairman of the original Training Standards Committee that was later, and correctly, re-named, the Education Committee. This led to the third of the series of Teaching & Coaching Conferences being staged at Nimes in 1994 and the Education Committee being closely involved in the successful enlargement of the Golf Development Programme that sends consultant/tutors to regions of the world that need support, financed by The R&A.

On the tournament side, too, France has played its part, with the trio of Jacques Thalamy, Anthony Manasson, and Jerome Cantagrel winning the Glenmuir-supported International Team Championship at the Marbella Club Resort, Spain, in 2005.



At the elite end of the operation, the French influence can be found with Jean Van de Velde and Thomas Levet having represented Europe in the Ryder Cup and others players currently on the European Tour, including Rafael Jacquelin, Gregory Bourdy (left), Gregory Havret, Christian Cevaer, Jean-Baptiste Gonnet, Jean-Francois Lucquin, Sebastien Delagrangre, Francois Delamontagne and rising star Michael Lorenzo Vera who earned runners-up place in China recently.

All the signs are good among the ladies, too including major winner Patricia Meunier Lebouc and Gwladys Nocera (top three in European ranking) along with Karine Icher and Sophie Giquel, currently on the US LPGA tour.

This supply of new, young players to the touring schedules is a positive sign of just how much France is growing as a golfing nation... blessed as it is with inimitable regions of natural beauty and an escalating number of delightful golf courses including Terre Blanche (left), the Four Seasons destination in Provence, with its two Dave Thomas-designed layouts, Academy used by Rafael Jacquelin, and 5-star hotel.

PGA of France The Facts

	2000	2008
Number of facilities	511	560
Number of Players	291,754	378, 275
Number of Professionals	742	1,200
Golf schools	261,	Employing up to 5 pros

OFFICIALS

President: **Eric Douenelle**

Director: **Yves Bechu**

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SHORT PUTTS

- France's long-term strategy also includes the need for a national academy, located outside of Paris. Unfortunately the first moves in this regard were nullified by circumstances outside of the PGA's control but new opportunities are being sought.

- DARTFISH and GOLF TIMING are two 'Partner Products' that members are encouraged to use. Online Video (www.dartfish.com) and Golf Lessons Booking (www.golftiming.com)

- SERVICES to members are being improved also by the launching an online "boutique" with privileged access for members' golf students and many new branded products under development.

- LOOKING FOR A CHAMPION! : PGA AND FFG's AGF ALLIANZ TOUR: To increase competition experience for its young local players, a new tour has been launched. Six tournaments, (some on the Challenge Tour schedule), offer international exposure to the young new growing elite. Email: golfpro@ffgolf.org. Web: www.agfallianzgolftour.com