



PGA OF MALTA

The 23rd instalment of a series that takes a random look at each member PGA in turn.

Growing Golf on an Island Sunspot

For the heroism of its islanders during World War 2, Malta was awarded the VC, as in Victoria

Cross. Sixty years on the initials that a tiny but growing section of its community values, perhaps, almost equally are PGA, as in Professional Golfers' Association.

Not only is the small but inviting Mediterranean sunspot proudly described as *Malta VC*, for its courage in conflict, there is now also a *PGA of Malta*, dedicated to the cause of encouraging its population to embrace golf as an eminently peaceful culture and tourist attraction.

This, in itself, is an admirable leisure-time ambition, but absorbed into the philosophy is what seems to be an over-riding ambition to make the sport popular among juniors, and to introduce their boys and girls to the sport in an informed and thoroughly well organised manner.

And here there seems also to be a degree

of 'heroism' in the upholding and furthering of the those proud initials 'PGA' since Malta's membership is in reality a one-man 'association', namely **Henning Schulze Doering** (right).

As a one golf club island, this is easily explained, but no wonder, some years ago, he asked The R&A and The PGAs of Europe for a spot of help in development terms..

The outcome of this appeal are the roots of what appears to be impressive progress resulting from a series of visits by PGAs of Europe Education Committee member, **Martin Westphal** who initiated the PGAs junior programme and returned to the island again and again to help supervise its growth.

Here is a 'Then' and 'Now' look at The PGA of Malta:

FLASHBACK

Excerpt from *Working Together* newsletter, May 2007

Martin Westphal's Malta Mission

The PGAs of Europe Education Committee member, **Martin Westphal**, has begun a four-visit Golf Development schedule, during 2007, designed to play an important role in the progress of golf on the Mediterranean Island of Malta, where the sport is in its infancy and has very limited resources.

The programme concentrates on introducing golf into the school system and on working with the national squad, thereby providing much-needed guidance and support at both ends of the age and ability levels.



"After my visit to Malta in August last year, the National Team and the Malta Golf Association asked me to continue for season 2007," The PGAs of Europe Golf Development Consultant/coach explained.

"We agreed on four visits this year, where we are trying to improve the playing ability of the national team and to start the Golf Programme for the sport-minded schools.

"The first visit was filled with training sessions, official meetings and discussions, with agreements having been reached... and the time being filled with friendship, success and fun."

Martin's comprehensive Golf Development Report has gone to the R&A and The PGAs of Europe jointly so that continuing aid to Malta's golfing future can be carefully monitored and recorded.

Did You Know..?

- Golf was first played in Malta in 1888
- It remained, until the mid 1970s, simply an elite sport, played almost entirely at the Royal Malta Golf Club by members of the British Forces.
- Since the majority of members did not have a family base on the islands, it was not an ideal environment for the game to foster amongst the younger generation.
- Fortunately, as time passed, the club opened its doors to local people and this led to the first generation of permanent residents encouraging their off-springs to enjoy the game.
- A policy was initiated in the 1990s to allow juniors to play competitive golf.
- The reorganised MGA is totally committed to furthering the development of the island's amateur golf, from grass roots to competitive level, with the aim of making the sport accessible to new generations and a target of furthering a plan to sustain the growth of the game.
- The R&A donated 30 junior golf sets and a number of practice driving range golf balls and the governing body approved the appointment of **Martin Westphal** to identify and implement the requirements for the Association to reach its targets.
- The MGA and the PGA remain focused on taking the game to a younger generation of Maltese children.

TWO YEARS ON

Pro Henning Schulze Doering reports on progress since then:

'PGA now recognised as Malta's official professional body...'

"Martin Westphal's visits have proved to be a real success for the new, and not very experienced, National Team of Malta," Henning writes

"Also, we have an ever growing and promising junior section of more than 75 juniors, of which two outstanding players have

progressed into the National Squad and The Maltese Golf Association (MGA) is officially recognising our PGA as the professional body in Malta

"An extremely successful beginners' scheme, comprising a three-month trial period, with lessons provided and subsidised by the PGA of Malta, has brought more people to the game than Malta's only club can accommodate as members.

"Another advance was the staging of our inaugural International Junior competition in 2008, with visiting competitors from England and Belgium and was won by a Maltese player. The second version of the tournament will be held in October 2009.

SOS for Help with an Education Programme

As The PGAs of Europe's smallest member, and one of the world's smallest PGAs, (as a one-man band it could hardly be any smaller!) a way forward is being planned and implemented by Henning in a manner that sensibly matches resources.

The relevant moves include

- a letter of contract from the government recognising the PGA of Malta as the island's official body.
- A visiting PGA pro scheme for the junior section to help with technical support and provide further motivation. (Any offers from the larger neighbours or The PGA of Europe?)
- Seeking help and advice from The PGAs

of Europe and its members in gaining recognition for the Maltese PGA's education programme.

- Promotion of the International Junior Competition in October 2009
- Seeking for local sponsorship
- Developing the new website: www.pgamalta.com
- Making a more active use of the logo of The PGAs of Europe

PGA of Malta The Facts

	2000	2009
Number of Facilities	1	1
Number of Players	450	630
	(inc 80 juniors)	(100 overseas members)
Number of Professionals	2	1

OFFICIALS

President (and total membership): **Henning Schulze Doering**
Secretary: **Kenneth Cachia**