The Golf Academy
Rockport School

The first school-based golf academy in Northern Ireland

Unique opportunity combining golf with academic studies

Wonderful location on the County Down coast and surrounded by first-class golf courses

Open to UK and international pupils

Golf Scholarships available

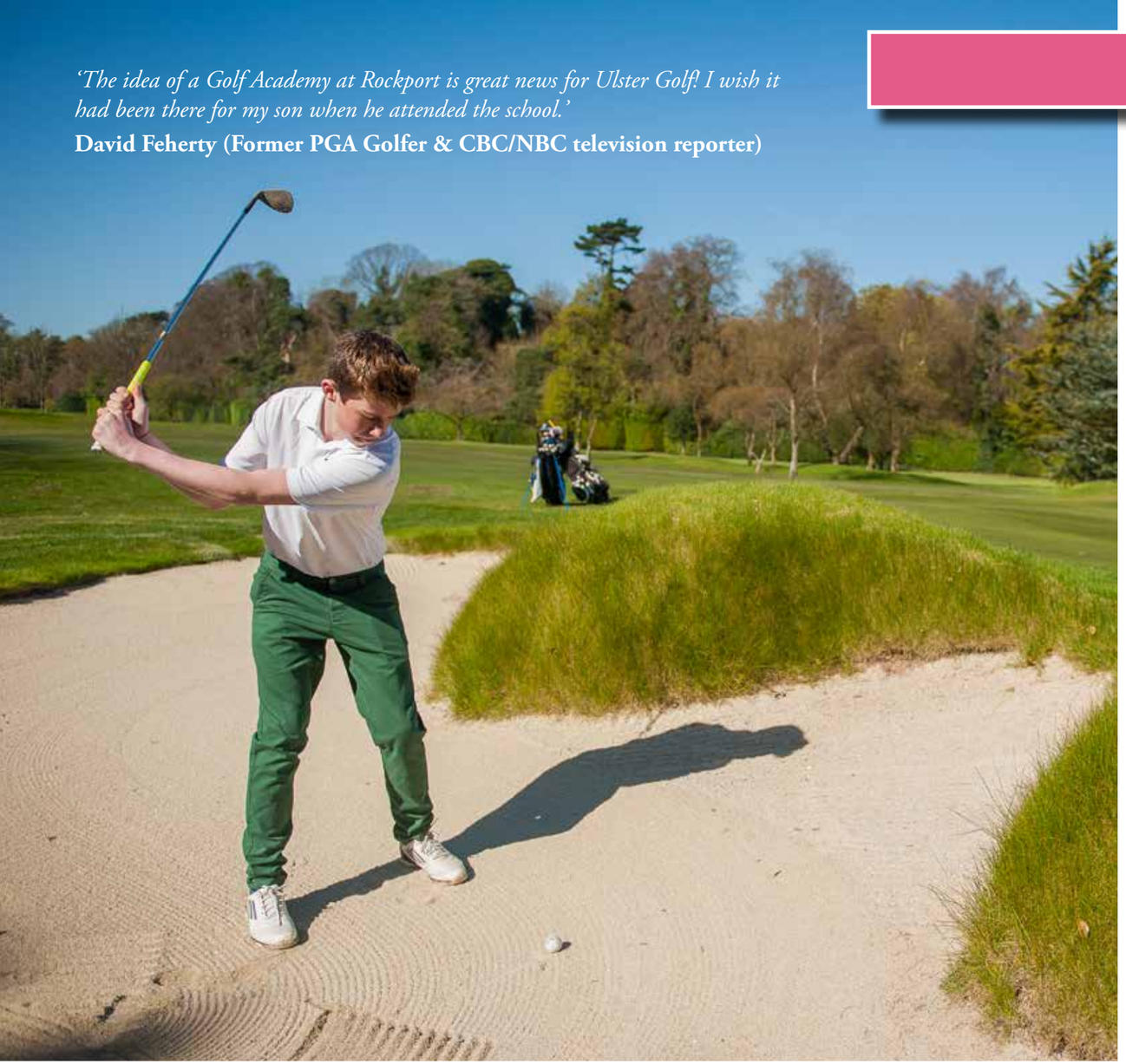
About Rockport School

Rockport is the only school of its kind in Northern Ireland; an independent Preparatory and Senior School for both day and boarding pupils, from ages 3-18. Our small size has always enabled us to be flexible and to put each individual child's needs at the forefront of our educational provision.

The school ethos is to provide equal sporting opportunity to all pupils whilst allowing those enthusiasts to take their sport to as high a level as possible.

'The idea of a Golf Academy at Rockport is great news for Ulster Golf! I wish it had been there for my son when he attended the school.'

David Feherty (Former PGA Golfer & CBC/NBC television reporter)



The Golf Academy

With its beautiful location on the shores of Belfast Lough, a few miles east of Belfast, Rockport is surrounded by some of Northern Ireland's best golf courses, including Royal Belfast, which is adjacent to the school.

Sport is an essential part of the curriculum and co-curriculum at Rockport and an active outdoor programme is combined with academic studies.

As the first school based golf academy in Ireland, the Golf Academy capitalizes on the unique reputation and success of Northern Ireland golf and the individual world success by several well-known players in recent times. Rory McIlroy developed his game at the Holywood Club and maintains close and regular links for practice with both Holywood and Bangor Clubs.

The Golf Academy offers an outstanding opportunity for aspiring young champions as well as those wanting a quality academic education with flexibility to pursue their individual talent. Golf has never been more popular and as a business, social and life skill, learning the basics or developing a more serious approach enables Rockport pupils to establish golf as part of their future.

The programme extends beyond simply playing: modules on golf etiquette, rules, course management, green-keeping, caddying and physical health and fitness are an integral part of it.

The Golf Academy Programme

Rockport's commitment to nurturing individual pupil's talents embraces a flexible approach to the golf programme. Players will have the ability to play tournaments as appropriate, with staff monitoring and arranging academic work to fit around awkward schedules.
The school day allows for practice and playing opportunities every afternoon from 3.00 p.m.
The Golf Academy partners with several outstanding clubs on the school's doorstep and pupils benefit from the expertise of the Professionals at ***Bangor, Holywood*** and ***Blackwood*** Golf Clubs. A special partnership has also been in existence for many years with the ***Royal Belfast*** Golf Club and 'home' fixtures are played there.

Beginners

At the ***Beginners*** level, the Golf Academy programme offers an introductory coaching module, timetabled for 6-8 weeks, to all pupils using the excellent indoor and outdoor facilities at Blackwood Golf Centre. Pupils as young as 5 years old are included. The programme is a combination of fun activity with golf basics covering set up and shape, swing, driving, chipping and putting. For those more advanced, more course play is included and fine tuning the essential skills. All pupils are assessed.

The Beginners programme ensures that all Rockport children have the opportunity to experience the game of golf and allows coaches to identify our Development & Elite squads.

Development Squad

Pupils with an aptitude to progress further will be eligible for inclusion in the ***Development Squad,*** where Stephen Crooks, one of Northern Ireland's Under 18 coaches, has designed and manages the Golf Academy coaching programme at Holywood Golf Club. The programme is timetabled throughout the year for 1–2 sessions per week and includes in depth tuition and practice, covering:

- **Putting and green reading**
- **Chipping, pitching and wedges with distance control, trajectory, spin, length of swing, weight distribution**
- **Bunker play**
- **Short and long iron play**
- **Driving**
- **On course, mental work, routines, etiquette, rules, games, etc.**

The Development squad is restricted in numbers and focuses on improving the skills of pupils with potential. Progress will be closely monitored and documented.

Elite Squad

The ***Elite squad*** members are under the guidance of Stephen Gordon at Bangor Golf Club, for up to three sessions per week and, as required, time to meet the demands of tournament schedules. At this level, players will be working on course management and the mental/psychological approach to the game. A broader view of golf and the wider industry will be covered throughout the year, enhancing their experience and knowledge of the game in general.

The emphasis for this squad will be focussing on the task of winning. By this stage they will have their own coaches and these sessions will be designed to fine-tune their game.

This squad is open to Fifth and Sixth Form students (or younger pupils who show particular talent).

Elite squad members will be able to opt for Golf as their major sport every term.

There will be an expectation on fitness standards and, at all times, commitment to normal academic studies will be required.

Golf Scholarships

To encourage opportunities for talented young golfers wishing to join the programme, Rockport School is offering bursary and scholarship support for pupils at GCSE and A-Level. Applicants will be chosen on the basis of golf ability and potential as well as academic standard. Assessment will be determined in conjunction with the golf professionals.

Awards are available to Northern Ireland, UK mainland and international pupils at varying degrees to cover the golf tuition as a minimum and also bursary support for academic tuition.

An annual Golf Talent Identification Day will be held for the identification of potential golf scholars.

Our Partner Clubs

Royal Belfast Golf Club

Located adjacent to Rockport on the shores of Belfast Lough, R.B.G.C . was founded in 1881 and is the oldest golf club in Ireland. The School enjoys an historic and close association with Royal Belfast.

Bangor Golf Club

Bangor is situated on the outskirts of the town overlooking Belfast Lough and the Antrim Hills. The course reflects the character of the county with its undulating parkland course. Stephen Gordon uses the V1 golf video analysis system, the no.1 swing analysis system in golf, allowing him to analyse the player's golf swing and compare it to the best golfers in the world.

Holywood Golf Club

Set high in the Holywood Hills of County Down, and just a few minutes from Rockport, the club enjoys breathtaking views of Belfast Lough and the Antrim Coast. Holywood is an 18 hole undulating parkland course and is well known as the home club of world golf star, Rory McIlory. Professional, Stephen Crooks, manages a high quality coaching programme.

Blackwood Golf Club

Blackwood Golf Centre is regarded as one of the finest golf centres in Northern Ireland. It is ideally located a short distance from Rockport and its purpose-built coaching facilities are unmatched with Par 71 and Par 3 courses, a floodlit covered driving range, outdoor practice areas and putting green and new indoor coaching facilities. Debbie Hanna and her coaching team manage the Rockport Beginners programme.

A special link has been established with the ***Ulster University Jordanstown*** PE Department, where its specialist provision for golf, enables our elite players to benefit from the fitness, biomechanics and dietary education and monitoring for professional golfers.

Blackwood Golf Club

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Bangor Golf Club

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