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HEAD PROFESSIONAL PROFILE: ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB EAST SUSSEX, UK

THE HEAD PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITY AT ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB

Reporting to the General Manager, the Head Professional will lead the Club's transition to an in-house golf operation, overseeing, retail, golf operations and coaching. They will ensure smooth day-to-day operations across both courses, maintain a welcoming, member-focused professional shop, and deliver engaging coaching that encourages participation at all levels. Approachable, supportive, and commercially aware, the Head Professional will lead and develop the golf team while working closely with the General Manager to create a warm, professional, and seamless golf experience that reflects the Club's commitment to its members.

ABOUT ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB

Founded in 1888, Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club is a traditional members' golf club set in the heart of the Ashdown Forest. One of the things that golf lovers most appreciate about playing here is that so little has changed over the club's 130 year history. Heather, humps, hollows, pools and streams remain nature's defence against shooting a low score. The stunning heathland layout of the Old Course is currently rated (2025) in the Golf World Top 100 Golf Courses in *GB&I*.

Royal Ashdown Forest offers not one but two superb golf courses that are both entirely natural. No earth has been moved, no ponds dug nor streams diverted. The courses have been fashioned around the contours of the land with the Old Course providing spectacular views over four counties and the West snaking its way through the mature, broadleaf woodland of the Ashdown Forest.

W.R. Lee designed the original layout of the Old Course. Harry Hunter made changes in 1892 before he and Jack Rowe (Ashdown Professional for 55 years from 1892 to 1947) made further alterations in 1897. The last significant changes were made in 1922, again by Jack Rowe. The Club gained the Royal title in 1893 following a review of Queen Victoria's troops, who were stationed on Ashdown Forest, by her cousin, Prince George, Duke of Cambridge and Commander in Chief of the British Army. The Club is one of the oldest and most distinctive in the UK. It has a rich history, and the likes of Abe Mitchell, Alf Padgham, AA Milne, Bernard Darwin, HRH Duke of Windsor, Harold Macmillan and Bobby Locke have all graced their fairways.

ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB BY THE NUMBERS

- Joining Fees: Twice the subscription
- Annual Subs: £2680
- Number of Members: 569
- Annual Membership Revenue: £1.4 Million
- Reports to the General Manager
- Director Reports: Assistant Professionals & Golf Operations Staff
- Approximately 25,000 rounds of golf annually on 36 holes
- Club Software: Intelligentgolf

ROYAL ASHDOWN FOREST GOLF CLUB WEBSITE: www.royalashdown.co.uk

HEAD PROFESSIONAL POSITION OVERVIEW

The Head Professional will lead and manage all day-to-day golf operations, retail, and coaching across the Club, ensuring the highest professional standards. Responsible for delivering an exceptional golf experience, they will oversee smooth daily operations, profitable retail performance, and high-quality coaching programmes.

While the General Manager retains overall commercial accountability for golf, the Head Professional is directly accountable for the operational delivery of golf services, the performance of the professional shop, and the execution of coaching and player development initiatives.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Stock purchasing, control, merchandising, EPOS management, custom fitting services, club repairs, and monitoring retail KPIs.
- Maintaining profitable stock levels, forward ordering, and promoting strong product knowledge and a positive sales culture within the team.
- Managing the retail budget, monitoring stock and cash flow, providing operational and financial reports, and identifying opportunities to improve revenue and margins.
- Management of tee sheets, daily play operations, competitions, tournaments, and society/group golf events.
- Ensuring smooth coordination of golf activity with other departments and maintaining high standards across the practice range, buggy fleet, and facilities.
- Delivering high-quality individual and group coaching, structured programmes, the Club Golf Academy, and junior/beginner participation initiatives.
- Supporting membership engagement through coaching events, demo days, custom fitting, and player development sessions.
- Directly managing assistant professionals and shop/operations staff, preparing rotas, delivering training, and conducting performance reviews.
- Building and maintaining a professional, service-driven culture, ensuring exceptional member service, visibility on the shop floor and across facilities, and alignment with service expectations.
- Ensuring safe working practices, compliance with Club policies and SOPs, and reporting maintenance or safety concerns.
- Reporting directly to the General Manager, delivering operational excellence, and collaborating on membership engagement, commercial initiatives, budget planning, and overall golf operation standards.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Proven experience managing golf operations and retail within a premium private club or resort setting, with a strong track record of retail profitability and stock management.
- PGA qualified with a passion for coaching golfers of all levels, and experience delivering structured coaching programmes.
- Strong knowledge of competition management, the Rules of Golf, and high golf IQ with a deep understanding of the game, operations, and current industry trends.
- Demonstrated ability to lead, develop, and inspire teams, with excellent leadership, emotional intelligence, and stakeholder management skills.
- Operational leadership with strong commercial awareness, organisational discipline, and attention to detail.
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, with a confident, visible presence and a service-oriented mindset.
- Professional presentation, conduct, and the ability to maintain the highest standards of member experience.
- Experienced in using golf club management systems and modern retail/POS software.
- Flexible, proactive, and collaborative approach to working as part of a senior leadership team.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

The successful candidate must have their PGA qualification with Advanced or a higher status being desirable and still be an active golfer. It is preferred that the ideal candidate is currently undertaking continued professional development

SALARY AND BENEFITS

A competitive salary and attractive benefits package.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY

Please upload your CV and cover letter, in that order, using the link below. You should have your documents fully prepared to be attached when prompted for them during the online application process. Please be sure your image is not present on your CV or cover letter; that should be used on your LinkedIn Profile.

Prepare a thoughtful cover letter addressed to **Neil Darnell, General Manager of Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club**, and clearly articulate your alignment with this role and why you want to be considered for this position at this stage of your career, and why RAFGC and the East Sussex area will be beneficial to you, your family, your career, and the Club if selected.

You must apply for this role as soon as possible but no later than Tuesday 24th March 2026 Candidate selections will occur in late March with the first Interviews expected on Thursday 9th April 2026 and the second interviews a short time later.

IMPORTANT: Save your CV and cover letter in the following manner:

“Last Name, First Name - CV” &

“Last Name, First Name - Cover Letter - RAFGC”

(These documents should be in Word or PDF format)

Note: Once you complete the application process for this search, you are not able to go back in and add additional documents.

[Click here](#) to upload your CV and cover letter.

If you have any questions, please email Zak Kuebler: zak@kkandw.com

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