

Message from Arne Lundquist, the outgoing Director of WDGf
July 18, 2018

To the whole dear WDGf board,

My thoughts go back to England 1995, the historic first World Deaf Golf Championships at Forest of Arden. For us deaf golfers in Sweden it was no question that we should miss the breathtaking first Championship. I never forgot how I struggled to get a sponsor for our trip to England at the British Island.

Finally, I succeed when I contacted SAAB in Trollhättan. A well-known Davis Cup Swedish tennis player Ove Bengtsson received my letter and initiated discussion with me. SAAB offered the Swedish Golf Team a free loan SAAB car, including gasoline for the entire trip to Forest of Arden via Newcastle and York.

At Forest of Arden, we were welcomed by the Organizing Committee through Kevin Whalley. It was a great start of the first WDGC. Sweden was the only country that was non-English speaking. Everybody other used British signs except the United States. But we were not lost, several of us could use both the American one-hand and the British manual fingerspelling. Many participants were also not used to international sign language. When I made a thank-you speech to English Organizing Committee in international sign language, many participants remarked that it was so easy to understand. Then more and more non-English speaking countries began to play in the WDGC, which is a great success for the invaluable human relationships, both on and outside the golf course.

An interesting thing that happened at Forest of Arden was when South Africa's leader Arthur held a strong speech that it was the first time for South Africa to take part in an international competition after liberation from apartheid, which made me teary-eyed. Many countries have fought for the human rights in South Africa. Another important milestone was when an inaugural WDGf Board was created at the 1995 General Meeting after the Interim Board that Tony Klimek started in 1994 at the United States. All this you can read Kevin Whalley's historic golf book which was published in 2016.

Like in many countries, the Swedish Deaf Sport Association would not accept golf as a sport. This was a long battle for me for at least eight years when the sport of golf was finally accepted in Sweden.

In the beginning, many Deaf golfers did not know about CISS (now ICSD) and Deaflympics. At the summer Deaflympics 1997 in Copenhagen, I had on my own initiative arranged by fax with the ICSD President Lovett from Australia. We had a long conversation about golf. He liked the idea, but would not include golf as a Deaflympic sport yet. Since Lovett sent positive signals, I went to London a week later for a meeting with Tony Klimek and Kevin Whalley at Kevin's home. There we created the first WDGf statutes. This was 1997. The rest history, as all deaf golfers know.

When I was elected as WDGf President in 2006 in Edmonton, I understood that we must strive for cooperation with other organizations such as National Sports Federations, National Golf Federations and also with R&A and Deaflympics. That's why with my stubbornness, I made

sure we had a strong Constitution which proves that WDGF is an independent organization, but also always were open for cooperation with all other organizations in the World of Sport.

Let us keep this spirit forever all for the best of the sport of Deaf golf. This has not been easy, but we eventually have succeeded in achieving almost all our goals. I am most proud about several meetings with R&A. After our first meeting at St. Andrews in 2009, R&A has been an important partner and they recognize WDGF as the governing body for Deaf golf. Even the Swedish Golf Federation showed their respect about this achievement. When golf became a Deaflympic sport we started to work tighter with IGF too, which I and Simeon visited in 2016.

Finally, I would like to thank the current Board for all good intentions and humility that benefits the sport of golf. You are admirable. I have had several different commitments throughout my life since I was sixteen years old, but I dare to say that the best Board I have experienced is WDGF.

Both you in the current Board and all the other enthusiastic golfers in the past, I want to say thank you for all the 23 years of working together with you and for the many experiences I have made through you. I know I forever miss you, Simeon, Gavin, Don, Ole, Arista and Anders. I wish you all the luck with the world's most wonderful golf organization for those who like golf. Thank you my dear friends.

I also want to thank everyone who have volunteered for WDGF and they have listened to my goal-oriented ideas how we should work, which at the end will be fruitful for the future of Deaf golf. Fantastic job, everyone.

With warm and joyful greetings,

Arne