

History of the Northern Rivers District Golf Association (NRDGA)

Period 1946 – 1975

- The NRDGA was revived in 1946 with the following clubs affiliated - Casino, Coolangatta-Tweed Heads, Coraki, Grafton, Kyogle, Lismore, Lower Clarence-Maclean and Woodenbong.
- Mr. J. W. Mulholland (Grafton) was elected as the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.
- The South Grafton Golf Club had withdrawn from the Association as it was not functioning and the Ballina, Bonalbo, Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah Golf Clubs had not yet affiliated with the NRDGA.
- Mr. J. C. McIntosh (Lismore) was the inaugural NRDGA Club Champion in 1946 (the H. W. Pinkerton Shield).
- NRDGA attended meeting of Suburban & Country Golf Association (forerunner to GolfNSW) in 1947.
- Mullumbimby and Murwillumbah Golf Clubs join the Association in 1948.
- The first Pro-Am conducted within the NRDGA was run by the Grafton Golf Club in 1948.
- First NRDGA Men's Foursomes Championship conducted in 1948 – inaugural winners were C. McKee and L. Dunstan (Lismore).
- The inaugural NRDGA Mixed Foursome Championship was conducted in 1948.
- Mr. C. W. Schaeffer (Grafton) was first identified as the NRDGA President/Chairman in 1949.
- Circuit of Professional tournaments initiated in 1949 with Kyogle, Lismore, Grafton and Coolangatta-Tweed Heads participating.
- First Course Rating Committee formed in 1950.
- A "new" club at Byron Bay was affiliated in 1951.
- Inter-club pennants conducted for the first time in 1954. Participating clubs were Grafton, Casino, Lismore and Kyogle. Conducted as "North and South Zones".
- Mullumbimby Club House burnt down/rebuilt in 1954.
- Woodburn-Evans Head Golf Club affiliated in 1955.
- The first NRDGA Junior Championships were conducted in 1957.
- NRDGA re-constituted in 1960 with 15 affiliated clubs.
- NSW State Squad visited Northern Rivers in 1962.
- Terranora Lakes Country Club granted affiliation in 1964. Membership of affiliated clubs passes 2000. Total clubs affiliated now 15.
- Initial running of an NRDGA "Cadet Coaching Camp" at Casino in 1966.
- R. Morrisset (Coolangatta-Tweed Heads) wins the Country Championship in 1968.
- Grafton Golf Club moves to MNCDGA in 1968.
- Subs increased by \$0.10 in 1970 – specifically to promote Junior Golf
- In March 1971 the "concept" of the Northern Rivers Golf Classic was approved. First conducted in September 1971. Entry fee \$1.00 per event. Purpose of the Classic was to raise funds to send Junior and Open Teams to Country week. Surplus classic funds were then directed to the promotion of Junior Golf. Mr. Robin Young elected as Northern Rivers Classic Coordinator.
- Ocean Shores affiliated as NRDGA Member in 1972.
- A "State Team" from NSWGA participated in the Northern Rivers Golf Classic in 1975.

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Period 1976 - 1987

- Schoolboys Championships held at Woodenbong in 1979. Bus from Ballina at 6.00am with pick up at Lismore and Casino. Bus from Terranora Lakes with pick up at Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah.
- Inaugural inter-district match against Mid North Coast DGA held at Grafton in 1979. (Trophy now known as the Fred Causley Shield).
- Reciprocal Green Fee Rights within NRDGA clubs set at 50 cents in 1979.
- Record field of 622 players participated in NRDGA Championships in 1980.
- First conduct of the Junior Coaching Camp at Lake Ainsworth in 1980.
- Pennant competition in 1981 attracted 66 teams in 9 Divisions.
- Iluka Golf Club affiliated in 1981.
- Players from more than 70 visiting clubs played in the 1981 Classic.
- In 1983, all Pennants matches played on a single day under “Eisenhower Cup” rules (best 6 aggregate scores to count).
- M. Heynatz appointed Classic co-ordinator in 1983.
- NSW State team visited Northern Rivers in 1983 – 4 Members and 4 Associates. Golf clinics at Casino, Woodenbong, and Kyogle and a match against NRDGA at Kyogle.
- In 1984, a decision was adopted to increase affiliation fees to \$2.50 (NSWGA), \$0.50 (NRDGA) and \$0.20 (NRDGA Junior Promotion).
- Twin Towns Services Club (now Club Banora) affiliated in 1984.
- Mrs. Silvia Roberts (Yamba) elected as a member of the NRDGA Junior Golf Promotion Committee in 1984.
- (NRDGA President) E. J. Williams elected as a State Councillor on the NSWGA in 1984.
- Clarence Head Golf Clubhouse officially opened by NSWGA President in 1985.
- NRDGA President officially opened the 18 hole Golf Course at Yamba in 1985.
- In 1985, the NRDGA was the largest Association, outside Metropolitan Sydney, in NSW.
- Chairman of NSWGA Course and Rating Committee invited to visit Northern Rivers to instruct golf clubs on the correct way to determine the D.C.R. and course ratings.
- Mr. S. Gardner appointed as NRDGA Historian to assist in the production of “History of Golf in NSW” publication in 1986.
- In 1986, 82 teams across 11 Divisions competed in the NRDGA Pennant competitions.
- Inaugural donation from NRDGA to support NRVGA Vets Championships.

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Period 1988 - 2000

- NRDGA Constitution significantly reviewed in 1993.
- New sponsorship (from Club Keno) leads to the re-establishment of the Men's Four Ball and Mixed Four Ball District events.
- Review of NSWGA Constitution in 1993 resulted in Country "Zone 1" being created from Brisbane Waters, Hunter River, Lower North Coast, Mid North Coast, Newcastle and Northern Rivers DGA's.
- NSWGA President (John Lugsdin) and Executive Director (Bruce Scott) attended NRDGA Executive and Delegate meeting in 1994.
- In 1994, consideration was given to splitting the NRDGA into "Lower and Northern Regions" to overcome travel in the District.
- A motion in 1994 that "Delegate Meetings should be smoke free" failed to get the numbers.
- NSWGA "Country Zones" redrafted in 1994 and Zone Four now contains Mid North Coast, New England, North West, Northern Rivers and Northern Tablelands DGA's.
- It was resolved that the NRDGA computer be updated to a "486 DX" by changing the internals of the 5 year old computer – costing approx. \$1,000
- Relationship with T. B. Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Association ceases fund raising activities in 1994 after 66 years.
- NRDGA affiliation fee in 1995 set at \$2.00.
- In 1995, it was resolved that all NRDGA clubs abide by the NSWGA direction that handicaps be revised "once a month" rather than "daily".
- Peter Knight (NSWGA Coaching Director) attended the district in 1995 to promote "GO-GO GOLF". Over 450 children attended from 15 schools and 4 clubs.
- NSWGA conduct a "Golf Club Secretary Managers" conference in 1995.
- In 1995, 600 players participated in Country Week. "Days of 900 to 1,000 players are gone".
- Regional Championship winning team from NRDGA also win the State Final in 1995
- In 1996, a sub committee was formed to "incorporate" the NRDGA.
- Promotional visit by GOLFNSW to Yamba and Maclean in 1996. Scheduled visit 'every 4 years'.
- "Rules of Golf" accreditation course conducted at Casino in 1996.
- Inaugural NRDGA Junior and Colts Classic (72 holes) held at Murwillumbah in 1996.
- All affiliated clubs in NSW permitted to adjust handicaps daily from July 1996.
- Teven Golf Club affiliated in 1996.
- Formal adoption of "Golf Link" as National Handicapping System and Database. To commence in June 1997 and be fully operational by end 1998.
- Over 500,000 golfers took part in 1996 Holden Scramble.
- Men's Foursomes Championships spread across two courses in 1996 due to field size.
- Course ratings for all NRDGA clubs completed in 1997. NRDGA Course Rating Officer invited to rate Sydney courses in recognition of his efforts.
- Terranora Golf Club affiliated in 1997.

- Application for Incorporation of the NRDGA forwarded to Department of fair Trading in 1998. Application finalised October 1998.
- In 1998, Bill Wotherspoon (Lismore) was congratulated for participation in 48 years consecutive participation in the NRDGA Championships.
- In 1998, following advice from R & A, AGU and NSWGA, it was proposed that Single events not be held in conjunction with Fourball events in the NRDGA.
- Daniel Kafer and his mother, Ann Kafer of Ballina win the NRDGA Mixed Foursomes Championships.
- Charlie Earp (Royal Queensland) attends Junior Golf Coaching Camp at Lake Ainsworth in 1998. Sharp Viewcam video cameras used for the first time to provide “real time” feedback.
- Ninety year anniversary of original formation of NRDGA on 18th April 1909 celebrated with a dinner at the Casino Golf Club. Original Clubs were Ballina, Lismore, Grafton and Casino.
- Record participation in the 1999 NRDGA Pennant competitions with 720 golfers in 90 teams across 12 divisions.
- Bonalbo Golf Club affiliated in 2000.
- NSW Golf Association team of 4 men and 2 women made public relations visit to Coraki and Woodburn-Evans Head in 2000.
- Northern Rivers Classic produces “30 Year Medallions” in 2000 to be provided to all winners. Twelve Kooralbyn Holidays again provided as prizes.

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Period 2001 - 2010

- Country Championships re-introduced into NSWGA program in 2001.
- NRDGA affiliation fees fall 10% in 2001. NSWGA report membership drop of 4.4% across NSW.
- In 2001, it was noted that the Slope Handicap System will be introduced within the next 2 years. USA and NZ have already adopted.
- In 2001, 86 teams competing across 12 divisions participated in the NRDGA Pennants competitions.
- An "Elite Squad" of junior golfers was formed with each player receiving funding from NRDGA and NSWGA to support coaching from a PGA of their choice.
- NSWGA Regional Championships conducted at Coolangatta-Tweed Heads in 2002.
- NRDGA advised of "Child Protection Act" in 2002 and required to comply.
- Rules seminar conducted in 2002 with 44 attendees from 10 NRDGA clubs.
- New criteria for Course Rating issued by NSWGA in 2002. Concern that low markers are not performing to expectations. All NRDGA courses to be re-rated.
- In 2003, Max Heynatz stands down after 21 years as the Northern Rivers Golf Classic Coordinator.
- It was recorded in 2003 that the NRDGA was the only Association in NSW that conducts a Pennant series that accommodates ALL golfers irrespective of handicap.
- Maclean Golf Club officially open 18 hole layout in 2003.
- Lismore Golf Club celebrate 100 years operation in 2003.
- In 2003 there were 32 Veteran "Week of Golf" events in NSW.
- Nathan Baker (Coolangatta-Tweed Heads). NSW Country Open and Junior Champion in 2003 including Course Record 64 at Bathurst.
- NRDGA establish first web site in 2003.
- Casino players win District section of Hahn Men's 4BBB and go on to win the NSW state final.
- Murwillumbah Golf Club assisted by \$5,000 grant from NSWGA after storm damage in 2004.
- NRDGA Affiliation fees in 2004 were \$5.08 for adult members and \$4.04 for Junior members.
- At the 2004 Junior Golf Coaching Camp at Lake Ainsworth, all 4 local PGA members assisting with coaching had previously attended the Coaching Camp as juniors.
- In 2004, there were 500+ golf clubs using Golf Link around Australia.
- A meeting was held in 2004 to discuss the future amalgamation of NSWGA and NSW Womens Golf.
- NRDGA Rating Committee requested to address "2 Tee ratings" (Blue and White) issue in 2004.
- Distribution of Konica Minolta Country Coaching Program (jointly funded by NSWGA and NRDGA) was discussed re over budget allocation in 2004.
- Chinderah welcomed as an affiliated member of NRDGA in 2004.
- The Northern Rivers Golf Classic trophy presentations were re-organised to distinguish between Host club players and visitors in 2005.

- In 2005, member clubs requested that a NRDGA wide policy be established for green fees for NRDGA club members visiting other clubs to play either social or competition rounds.
- Club Banora Golf Club to be known as Twin Towns Services Golf Club from 2005.
- In 2005, a workshop was held at Yamba Golf Club to educate all present on the risks and implications of an accidental chemical spill.
- In 2005, affiliation fees to AGU were \$5.50 (up 11%), NSWGA \$15.18 (up 8.4%), AGU/NSWGA Juniors \$10.34 (up 9.3%), NRDGA Members \$5.32 (up 4.7%) and NRDGA Juniors \$2.64 (down 35%).
- Reported in 2005 – “Amalgamation of the AGU and WGA is going ahead”.
- The Northern Rivers Golf Classic was reduced to 8 days in 2006. Although still generating a surplus which helps subsidise Junior Golf, the participation numbers in the Classic continue to decline.
- In June 2006, 64% of NSWGA affiliated Golf Clubs were online with GolfLink.
- The inaugural Joe O’Bryan Memorial NRDGA Junior Pennant competition was conducted in 2006 as part of the Casino Junior Open Day.
- Amalgamation of NSWGA and Womens Golf NSW proceeding in 2007.
- Final NRDGA Coaching Camp conducted at Lake Ainsworth. History of this camp goes back over 30 years.
- In October 2007, the Chairman of NSWGA Handicapping and Course Rating Committee conducted a 3 day seminar including a training exercise at Byron Bay Golf Club. All NRDGA Golf Clubs to be rated in 2008.
- In 2008, it was agreed that the NRDGA look favourably on requests for financial help from member clubs severely affected by State declared natural disasters such as floods and droughts.
- Flood Relief Funds provided by NSWGA distributed to Kyogle, Murwillumbah, Coraki and Mullumbimby Golf Clubs.
- Amalgamation of NSWGA and Womens Golf NSW still proceeding in October 2008.
- Decision by GA to adopt the SLOPE rating system is announced in March 2009. Metropolitan Courses to be rated by end 2010, all GA affiliated courses by end 2011.
- In mid 2009, invitations sought from NRDGA member clubs for volunteers for Course Rating Committee – prepared to make a long term commitment – (10 yrs. plus).
- In 2009, the permanent roster of Clubs hosting the NRDGA Championships and Director’s Day was discontinued. In its place, clubs are invited to express interest and then convince delegates that they could increase numbers participating in these events. Permanent roster for Men’s and Mixed Foursomes competitions being held at 9 hole clubs to be retained.
- Personal Liability Insurance Cover was included in GA affiliation fee in 2010.
- Further training seminars held in 2010 to assist in the implementation of the SLOPE rating system.
- GolfNSW formed as the governing body of all amateur golf in NSW on 1 July 2010.
- The 2010 Northern Rivers Classic is run for the last time on its’ 40th anniversary. In 1971, the event started as a 4 day event for men. At its’ peak, this event was played at almost every NRDGA club across 13 days with separate events on different courses for men and women. It became the largest golf tournament in Australia – in terms of rounds played.

- In 2010, Yamba, Maclean, Coolangatta-Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah were hosting “Veterans’ Week of Golf” events.
- Limited support in 2010 for the proposal to move Pennant competitions to August.
- Regional Championships conducted at Lismore Golf Club in 2010.

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Period 2011 - current

- 12 of the 18 NRDGA courses have been (SLOPE) rated by April 2011.
- In 2011, a total of \$8,600 was allocated to purchase 21 golf kits for local schools and 5 golf kits for “non PGA supported” clubs.
- In 2011, a Junior Order of Merit competition was started with funding support of \$2,500.
- Lawyers associated with GolfNSW recommended that “Gender based membership” be discontinued by all golf clubs.
- Pottsville becomes 19th club affiliated with NRDGA in 2012.
- The inaugural NRDGA Seniors OOM event was conducted in 2012 and will become a regular NRDGA event.
- NRDGA contributes sponsorship in 2012 to the conduct of the National Left Handers’ Championships to be conducted at Ballina, Casino, Byron Bay and Ocean Shores.
- In 2012, a decision was made to “update” the NRDGA web-site to reflect the continuing high access numbers.
- NRDGA affiliation fees retained at \$5.00 for members and \$4.00 for juniors in 2012.
- A sub-committee was formed to prepare a draft new Constitution for submission to member clubs in 2013.
- A search for a new name (Golf Northern Rivers) and new logo was commenced in 2013.
- In 2013, Woodburn-Evans Head received a grant of \$5,000 from NSW Golf Foundation to assist in their recovery from severe storm damage.
- New funding model for Junior Golf introduced in 2013 that redirected substantial funds away from support of NRDGA players participating in the JNJG International at Maitland/Kurri Kurri and into support for participation in the State Age Championships and an NCAS/NRDGA/JNJG/WGNR Junior Development squad.
- Golf in Schools program further supported in 2013 by commitment from JNJG to provide busses to transport students from schools to their local golf club.
- The GolfLink managed “handicap anchor” will be increased from 4 to 5 shots in 2013.
- In 2013, it was recorded that “Rules Accreditation” is now available online.
- The Northern Star was keen to publish “Golf Related Articles” in 2013.
- New NRDGA webpage was receiving a substantial number of “hits” in 2013.
- Decision to retain existing name and logo confirmed in 2013.
- “Regional Championships no longer serve any useful function” recorded as an Executive decision in 2013.
- In 2013, the Pennant competition was re-structured to be run as handicap match play (with SLOPE adjustment) for all Divisions except Division 1.
- In 2013, it was decided that separate competitions for Colts were to be withdrawn from all future NRDGA events.
- In January 2014, a new Constitution was adopted for NRDGA Inc.
- In 2014, the full implications of the move to Slope System were explained to delegates prior to the permanent adoption of this process on 23rd January, 2014.