

GOLF TOURISM ON THE RISE IN WALES



The Twenty Ten Course at The Celtic Manor Resort (Getty Images)

The 2010 Ryder Cup has sparked an explosion of interest in golf in Wales, and tourism in general has also benefitted from the staging of golf's greatest team event.

According to Visit Wales golf tourism made £37.4million in 2009, an increase of 18% on the previous year, and in the Tented Village at The Celtic Manor Resort this week there is an area dedicated to promoting tourism in the principality.

Displaying a large photo of 'the Point', a dramatic peninsular at Neyn and District Golf Club on the North Wales coast where the Irish Sea flanks both sides of the fairway, the tourism stand is aiming to convince visitors to The Ryder Cup that Wales is in the same league as Scotland and Ireland as a golfing destination.

Wales can argue that it offers its visitors better value for money than other countries in the UK and Ireland, with the average green fee at £31.11 per person.

Since The Celtic Manor Resort won the right to host the event in 2001, golfing visitors have increased year on year, and tourists from the United States made up 6.9% of the total in 2009, compared with 1.8% the previous year.

Welsh golf clubs have also felt the benefit of Wales hosting The 2010 Ryder Cup, and there are now more and better quality pay and play courses throughout the country, making the sport more accessible to the population. Funding has come from The Ryder Cup Legacy Fund and there are now more children than ever being introduced to the sport in both schools and clubs.

Carole Startin, of Golf North Wales, said: "A few clubs in North Wales may have gone under if it wasn't for the legacy fund. Sir Terry Matthews promised to solve the desperately short number of pay and play courses in Wales, and it is definitely helping."