

# **BOGEY 2 BIRDIE**

## Business Solutions



PIC • COLLAGE

Ryan Cooney: Bogey to Birdie Business Solutions, Founder and Executive Director for Canadian Youth Golf Alliance

Kumsa Baker: Canadian Youth Golf Alliance - Youth Employment Program Coordinator

Date: January 11th, 2022

Infrastructure and Environment Committee  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON  
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To Committee Members:  
Re: IE27.6, Review of City of Toronto Golf Courses

Please consider the following for our group's consideration in the Review of City of Toronto Golf Courses and "Master Plan" for Dentonia Golf Course. Canadian Youth Golf Alliance is a Toronto-based Not for Profit which has been providing recreational and employment programs for youth in Toronto's at-risk communities since 2012, although activity has been delayed recently due to lack of funding.

<https://www.facebook.com/Canadian-Youth-Golf-Alliance-216801105038986/>

As the YR and report indicates, and as the numbers clearly state, golf is in a very significant boom right now with a record number of people heading to golf courses. They are not wrong to point out that it is uncertain if this boom will continue, however, with organizations, community stakeholders, and executing programs and community involvement, we see no reason why this trend shouldn't continue into the foreseeable future. Below is what the NGCOA of Canada had to say, as well as the most influential and respected golf organization.

[https://clubhouse.swingu.com/lifestyle/record-numbers-playing-golf-ra-sports-marketing-surveys-66-6-million-golfers-worldwide/?fbclid=IwAR3ugMd9fmYqtchy\\_9m30IjvANnsGn3KZZ08LWIPegVVMcX\\_ZupOvbC2aoY#.Yby2waZLJGM.facebook](https://clubhouse.swingu.com/lifestyle/record-numbers-playing-golf-ra-sports-marketing-surveys-66-6-million-golfers-worldwide/?fbclid=IwAR3ugMd9fmYqtchy_9m30IjvANnsGn3KZZ08LWIPegVVMcX_ZupOvbC2aoY#.Yby2waZLJGM.facebook)

The National Golf Course Owners Association of Canada's report shows the average rounds up are up 9.1 percent from the 2020 season, and 24.1 percent better than the five-year average in Canada.

Quebec, up 22.9 per cent ahead of 2020 levels of play, led the way, followed by the Prairies at 11.5 per cent, Alberta at 11 per cent, Atlantic Canada (10.9) and B.C. (8.2).

Rounds have grown by 31 per cent over 2019

Year-to-date revenues are showing an increase of 20.2 percent nationally over 2020, led by Atlantic Canada, up by 36.3 per cent, B.C. (28.6), Quebec (26.6) and the Prairies (22.2).

In the proposal for the the five City of Toronto golf courses, our group will highlight the importance of the following two items:

**1 Employment Opportunities:** Working diligently to coordinate training and employment opportunities for Indigenous, Black and Racialized youth, especially those who are living in Toronto's Neighborhood Improvement Areas. We will lean on our experience with golf course owner/operators in hiring Black, Indigneous and Racializaed youth during the summer months. During the first 5 years of the CYGA, the organization had provided summer employment for over 40 at various public and private golf courses across Toronto, without no cost to the city or the city's partners. For some of the youth in the CYGA's employment program, this was a very exciting moment in their lives as it was their first job.

**2 Recreational Programs:** Our group and its partners will place extra focus on engaging Indigenous, Black and racialized youth in City of Toronto Neighborhood Improvement Areas to explore the game of golf and offer recreational golf programs, memberships and equipment at low to no cost for the youth selected for the programs. Once again, we will rely on our experience of having over 140 youth participate in CYGA programs and initiatives to date.

We encourage the City of Toronto to take strong measures in ensuring that it is maximizing these public spaces by creating the opportunities mentioned above, opportunities that we know make a real difference in the lives of those youth. Our group is asking for serious consideration as we believe this is a viable and unique opportunity to expand the CYGA's recreational and employment programs across all City run golf courses.

In addition, we support the City review in exploring alternative uses and maximizing of public benefits of these spaces including the expansion of non-golf uses like ice skating and urban agriculture initiatives, especially during off peak season where a wide range of activities can be explored with the local community (see Golf Sudbury example below).

At the CYGA, we look forward to engaging with City of Toronto Parks and Recreation while continuing to work with community groups, golf industry professionals, organizations and business leaders from Toronto to expand our programs and services across the City of Toronto.

In 2022, we seek to leverage partnerships with industry associations such as Golf Canada through their First Tee Program, and include Golf Ontario as we deliver programs such as the Golf in Schools Program. The CYGA has always sought out PGA of Canada professionals to coach the organization's youth, and we plan to do the same as we look forward to the future.

During the CYGA's inception, in addition to the relationships it has created with the organizations mentioned above, it has also worked with many city stakeholders. These include officers of the Toronto Police Services 55 Division, 11 Division, and 23 Division. Councilors Doug Holiday (then the Deputy Mayor), Councilor Paula Fletcher (The CYGA had grown to 40 youth at the Eastview Neighborhood Community Centre), and Mayor Rob Ford - who was a great supporter of the organization from its inception. The CYGA has also delivered programs to youth from Eastern Commerce Collegiate and Westview Centennial Secondary School in the Jane and Finch area.

In order to solve the problems of funding the CYGA's programs, Mr. Cooney created a for profit social enterprise (Under Par Finance) which in its first year of existence, created a formal partnership with the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA). That business has rebranded recently, and is now doing business under the name of Bogey 2 Birdie Business Solutions. However, it is important to note that the vision of becoming a profitable social enterprise remains.

Also important to note is the partnership with the PGA of Canada will include a recent mandate the organization sent its membership. In the report it released 88 recommendations to address the issues of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the golf industry.

<https://www.pgaofcanada.com/media/pga-of-canada-releases-extensive-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-task-force-report-including-88-recommendations-for-the-association-22138>

## **Background**

### **Ryan Cooney**

In addition to the aforementioned experience gained with the CYGA and the creation of Under Par Finance then Bogey 2 Birdie, Ryan Cooney has spent 12 years as a PGA of Canada professional, and during his tenure, he worked at two of Ontario's best golf facilities. In Ottawa, he worked at the Kevin Haime Golf Centre, which is one of Canada's premier practice facilities, and Kevin Haime is one of Canada's leaders in the golf industry. In Sudbury, he was Timberwolf Golf Club's practice facility's manager, as well as a golf instructor. He also spent 5 years working in a pro-shop at the Lively Golf Club, and in his early days, he owned and managed a winter golf school and practice facility for three winters.

Mr. Cooney has also created connections into the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association, who are focused on ensuring golf courses are being environmentally responsible and are operating with the highest standards possible.

Recently, the owner of Golf Sudbury (who also owns Timberwolf Golf Club) has incorporated a few very unique and accessible recreational facilities that the community in Sudbury is very excited about. One is a short putting course (which is not mini putt - it is a putting course on much longer than average putting greens). He has also created ice skating paths, cross country/snowshoe walking trails, and will be installing a large off leash dog park on his driving range. Having worked with Sam Yawney (the owner of Golf Sudbury), and from being his close friend for 30 years and business colleague for over 15 years, we can assure you that those are exactly the sort of ideas our group will create for Toronto's communities.

### **Kumsa Baker**

Kumsa Baker's current employment is an extension of the work he did as a youth with the CYGA. More specifically, he works closely with a volunteer team that ensures financial responsibility, accountability, and management of a not for profit organization. He is a community leader who has been deeply entrenched in various community, labour and equity campaigns with the Toronto Community Benefits Network, and as a volunteer with community based programs/initiatives in Toronto. He is grateful this rewarding work began with the CYGA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ryan Cooney

Kumsa Baker