

PGA® Profile

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OFFICIAL CAR SUPPLIER TO THE PGA



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FOR THEMSELVES**

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**Damon Hill talks
about his love of
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DAMON MAKES A COME BACK TO GOLF AND PUTS HIS BUSINESS ON COURSE

Not unlike many other youngsters, it was Damon Hill's father who was the most influential catalyst in encouraging him to take up golf.

Perversely, this was in contrast to his motor racing career, which to a great extent evolved despite, rather than because of his father's reputation.

The chance to spend what would turn out to be precious time with his father was another factor that drew Damon into golf and significantly heightened when Graham Hill had to learn to walk again as part of his recuperation after a near fatal crash during the American Grand Prix at Watkins Glen in October 1969.

At the age of 10, Damon liked nothing better than to watch Dad play golf. Caddying for his father soon led to playing, and by the age of 11 years he was having regular lessons and had become a thriving junior member of Porters Park Golf Club near Radlett, Hertfordshire.

Looking back he believes this time was really educational, particularly as his father played all over the world and with so many of the golfing greats.

A passion for golf was hereditary and Damon has subsequently spent endless hours trying to conquer the game. As a racing driver he had plenty of spare time and often used to play two rounds a day and found the practice a welcome relaxation from the fast lane.

During that time many other motor racing drivers were also keen golfers, most notably Nigel Mansell, Alan Prost and Jacques Lafitte. But not many of the top drivers from today's line up play, unlike many of the elite professional footballers where golf is a firm favourite as a second sport.

Fascinated by both the technical and mental side of the game, Damon soon became totally hooked and read every golf book under the sun and watched numerous instructional golf videos.

"I even practised my chipping onto the sofa, but despite having a really good swing, I never got my handicap down below 16, which at times was a real frustration", he admits.

A continual battle for perfection and self inflicted pressures caused Damon to give up the game in recent years, but renewed interest to play for pure fun has won the day, and Damon is once again on the fairways and making a come back.

This has also been fuelled by the development and success of his P1 International Club, which is an exclusive members club providing access to the world's finest supercars.

Limited to just 250 places, P1 enables its members to drive the latest supercars such as the Aston Martin Vanquish, Lamborghini Murcielago and Ferrari 360 Spider, as well as a host of other fine thoroughbreds via a simple points system.

As Damon explained: "The exclusive nature of the club tends to attract successful businessmen and their partners who are also golfers, so we've started to feature a number of golf events in the calendar. This includes a luxury weekend at Turnberry and we're now keen to incorporate tuition with top teaching professionals into the programme.

"Golf days and weekends are a natural extension to our track days and Grand Prix events, and it's a great opportunity for like-minded business people to meet and share their passion for cars and driving both on and off the fairway.

"Since launching P1 three years ago, the social side has really taken off and we now have 140 members who regularly take part in our events programme. Members are free to choose which car they wish to drive, when they use it, and how much of their mileage allowance they use during the booking", he added.

Whilst annual membership fees cost from £10,000 for a 5,000 mileage allowance, and a one off joining fee of £2,500; members avoid the huge costs associated with owning such cars, through depreciation, maintenance, storage and insurance.

Members enjoy on average between 40 and 70 days driving per year from their membership.

Now that P1 is well established and

proving successful, Damon may just consider joining a golf club to fulfil his renewed vigour for the game, and is open to offers from professionals around the Leatherhead area who would be prepared to take him under their wing on the golf lessons front.

In the meantime, he'll be playing as and when and where he can, along with high hopes of perfecting his three iron, which has become his favourite club in the bag.

"Most people get pleasure from hitting huge distances off the tee, but in my mind, there's nothing more satisfying than hitting a long iron into the green, it's got to be the most intoxicating experience of the game.

"The differences between golf and motor racing are incomparable and are completely poles apart. If you don't concentrate when you are driving you crash, and if you don't concentrate when playing golf, the ball just goes nowhere.

"In Formula One there are always lots of things you can blame if you don't win - the car, the tyres, the mechanics etc, but in golf, it's down to you, you can't blame anyone else.

"Jack Nicklaus and Nick Faldo have always been my golfing heroes and I still admire them most of all today. Tiger Woods is another phenomenon and I can really relate to how passionate he is about what he does.

"Seve is another prime example and when I raced for Benson & Hedges I was lucky enough to play with him a few times, so I've been fortunate to have played with some of the golfing greats.

"Adrenalin plays a key role in motor-racing as in any sport, but unlike most other golfers I've never suffered from first tee nerves. I get nervous when there's not a crowd!

"I still live in hope of becoming a great golfer, but will now enjoy the game, whatever the level - and it's not a race against time", he vowed.

Details on becoming a member of P1 can be accessed by visiting www.p1international.com or calling 01372 374 400.