

## Mike Whan

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When Mike Whan took on the role of Commissioner for the LPGA, the woman's game was failing. Poor TV audiences meant dwindling sponsors and an uncertain future lay ahead for the woman's professional game.

10 years later Whan has revitalised the tour, taking it from 24 tournament events to 34, and almost doubling the total playing purse to over \$76 million.

It is no wonder then, why there has been a massive outpouring of well wishes and sadness as Whan announced on Wednesday that he would be stepping down from the role. The esteem he is held in speaks highly of the unprecedented strides he has made in the woman's game.

The former marketing executive at Proctor & Gamble, TaylorMade and Wilson, took on the role in 2010 and has been a revelation in significantly increasing TV exposure and has made massive inroads into securing lucrative sponsorship and advertising deals that have breathed life back into a Tour that had lost momentum.

It is well documented that Whan had the total respect and support from all players on tour due to his open communication policy, and overall passion for the game. He has also been public in saying the LPGA will be run by woman now and into the future. It will be very interesting to see the progression of the Tour now in his absence.

During his tenure, one of his most impressive masterstrokes has been the incredible work carried out with Junior Girls Golf, and in particular the LPGA-USGA Girls Golf Program. It is reported that numbers associated with the girl's programme have now reached almost 90,000. This was down as low as 5000 ten years ago. It is no secret that that next generation of athletes is critical to the growth of any sport, so this increase in numbers is monumental for the woman's game looking into the future.

There are firm rumours that he may be the next CEO of the USGA.