

~Ibaraki Golf Tourism Study Teams(IGTST) Report VO.2~

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The second study meeting invited Ms. Sachiko Hataya, Director of International tourism division, Ibaraki Prefectural Government. She reported on the results of the golf promotion in Melbourne and explained the prefecture's efforts.

Afterwards, a roundtable discussion was held in response to a request we received in a questionnaire after the first study meeting.

▼ Greetings from Ibaraki Prefectural Councilor Heese Jon



▼ Greetings from the promoter, Mr. Okano



▼ Lecture by Ms. Hataya

▼ Many questions and comments were raised during the Q&A and roundtable discussion following the lecture.



▼ After the study meeting, there was a lot of interaction among the participants.▼Promotion by Ibaraki Pref (advertisement in a Australian golf magazine)



◆◇Comments received during the Q&A and roundtable discussion◇◆

Q. What is the percentage of female golfers among golf tour visitors to Japan and what kind of approaches are available to female visitors?

A. It is true that most of the golf tour visitors to Japan are male. It is necessary to offer sightseeing in Ibaraki Prefecture for women, because there is a pattern that families visit Japan but only men play golf.

Q. What is the best season to visit Ibaraki Prefecture for golf tour guests?

A. Rather than trying to attract golfers during the season when golf is not available in their countries (for example, winter in Korea), it is important to look at when we want them to come to our country. We should consider tourism in addition to golf,

such as the cherry blossom season in spring and the colorful autumn leaves season in fall.

Q. I would like to know the difference between Japanese and Australian golf courses.

A. Australia has many golf courses that take advantage of the natural terrain, and many of them are inexpensive except for those that are called prestigious. Rather than differences in golf courses, differences in playing styles are more pronounced. While in Japan lunch is served between the first and second halves of a round, in Australia it is common to play through and then have a meal. During daylight saving time, golfers sometimes play after work. Basically, there is no caddie.

Q. What are the challenges in promoting golf tourism in Ibaraki Prefecture?

A. (Angel Production, Inc. Mr. Mizukami)

It is rare that visitors to Japan choose to deviate from the golden route of Tokyo–Kyoto–Osaka–Hiroshima–Fukuoka and extend their visit to Ibaraki Prefecture. The first issue is that Ibaraki Prefecture is not yet well known among visitors to Japan. The second is that we have to compete with Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, which are major tourism countries. We need to make people more aware that Japan is clean, safe, and has attractive contents such as Japanese food and high quality services.

Q. (Steak Dining HOSHIZAKI Mr.Ishitsuka)

In restaurants, I feel uneasy about the lack of English-speaking staff. I think Ibaraki Prefecture is still not accustomed to foreign tourists.

A. Currently, the only way is to offer tours with interpreters, but it may be possible for restaurants to hire part-time staff who are studying the language.

Q. What are your impressions of actually hosting golf tour guests visiting Japan?

A. (PGM Ishioka manager Mr.Arita)

We believe that we need to be flexible rather than impose Japanese style, starting with explaining to customers who have never used a remote-controlled operation electromagnetic induction cart, and responding to their requests to have a meal and relax even after playing. As for caddies and reception staff, they were able to communicate with players using the interpretation function on their smartphones. It may be possible for restaurants to respond without interpreters by using the translation function of smartphones as well.

(Nikko Hotels Tsukuba Mr.Hayashi)

Although the guests who came to Japan this time did not make any unreasonable requests, we have had to deal with irregularities from wealthy overseas guests before. If we are to attract wealthy guests, we need to be flexible in proposing alternatives according to the situation, rather than just responding as a formality.

★ **Whether it is a golf course or a hotel, we need to present "this is the Japanese style," and then be flexible and accommodating to the needs of our guests. We feel that it would be very meaningful to share the challenges and innovations that we have experienced in actually accepting guests.**

◆◆The following is a partial list of the survey results◆◆

- It was more than I expected.
- It was a good meeting with a lot of substance and discussion from a business perspective.
- I learned a lot about golf tourism initiatives for Australia, including golf media and the implementation of the "Ibaraki Golf Day".in addition to the wealthy, I would like to see measures to gradually increase the number of women and young people in

the future.

- I learned a lot of things I didn't know about Ibaraki Prefecture's efforts to promote inbound travel to Australia and how to take travel holidays in Australia.

- I was able to understand the efforts of Ibaraki Prefecture because they were explained in an easy-to-understand manner. However, it was disappointing that there were so few golf course staff members in attendance, even though this is an effort to boost Ibaraki Prefecture through golf tourism.

→We will continue to hold study meetings with content that will attract the participation of more golf course staff members, and we will call for their participation



◆◆Report on Media Coverage◆◆

IGTST's activities have been featured in various media.

▼ Monthly Golf Management December issue

▼Ibaraki (newspaper) November 22, 2023



訪日ゴルフ客を歓迎

▼Yomiuri (newspaper) December 18, 2023

