

PUTTING IT TO YOU

OFFICIAL MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER OF THE RPAGC

ISSUE 2

20th January 2009

Welcome to the second issue of "Putting it to You", the first to be issued for 2009. I have had several queries as to when a new edition would be published, so I thought it timely to get my "a" into "g" and put pen to paper, especially now that the annual "silly season" is over.

Firstly, let me wish everyone of you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2009. May the sun shine on your chosen golfing days and your handicap shrink accordingly.

The club faced the holiday period without a fully employed General Manager this year, but I am sure you would all agree that Sally Greasley and Corrie van Zyl more than adequately stepped into the breach and covered these trying times with great aplomb and efficiency. **Sally and Corrie, all our members wish to express their sincere thanks and gratitude to you for giving so selflessly of your time and for a job so well done. Thank you!**

This issue kicks off with some words from our Captain, Colin Howard.

CAPTAIN'S COMMENTS

Whilst the majority of our members enjoyed their annual break from the realities of life during the holiday period, the club activities increased and this time without the services of a full time General Manager. I should like to endorse the comments above by adding my own and the committee's personal thanks to Sally and Corrie for a job so well done during these trying times.

Our hard-working Committee has decided to extend the period for applications for the vacant post of General Manager and have asked Sally and Corrie to continue to jointly manage the club in the interim period. Several applications have been received and we shall keep members informed as to developments in due course.

The "Season" normally is accompanied by a slow down in public sector bureaucracy and consequently there have been no further developments with respect to the "Land Transfer Issue". This will be followed up early in the New Year.

As previously mentioned, traditionally December and early January are the busiest times at the club with respect to course and facility usage, and 2008 / 09 was no exception. Altogether, 4162 rounds were played, down by just 181 from last year (4.2% down). This could be another symptom of the downturn in the national and international economy. Also, the weather did not always play its part in the process and on occasions, many rounds were lost due to rain. This was exacerbated by "no shows", where booked times were not honoured by members and visitors, slots which could have been re-allocated to alternative players. The club lost several thousands of rand in revenue due to such happenings. So **PLEASE**, if you have booked a time for golf and, for whatever reason you are unable to fill that slot, please phone the club and make them aware of it. This would be both a courtesy to other members / visitors who are looking for a game and also minimise loss of income to the RPAGC.

There were two very successful socials during the holiday season. About 60 people turned up for an excellent Christmas Eve dinner on the 24th December and a further 90 on New Year's Eve for a dinner / dance. It is hoped to hold the same events at the end of 2009.

Most of you will be aware of the vandalism that has been committed on the course with respect to smashed sand boxes and damaged green flagpoles. It is not known at present who is responsible, but a police docket has been opened.

A meeting has been held between myself, Jon Houzet of the Talk of the Town and Terry Harris (the scribe) to consolidate golf reporting in the weekly newspaper. Up to now, reporting has been

haphazard, with articles / results under various headings as “From Ron's Desk”, “The Swing of Things”, KGB, RPAGC Ladies, 1820's etc, as if each section were an independent entity rather than separate activities within one club, the largest sports club in Port Alfred. We think that it is time to consolidate all these reports into one heading under the banner of the Royal Port Alfred Golf Club. Whilst each section will be reported independently, and in the style to which it has become accustomed, they will all be housed in one single section of the newspaper. The cut-off time for each TotT edition will be Monday afternoon.

Sorry to bring this up but there are still outstanding subs owed to the club by a number of members. This is causing a lot of extra work for our admin staff. If you are unsure as to whether you owe the club or not, please make the effort to check at the office ASAP and pay deficits as due. We will have to put a suspension on the NGN card of members still owing, no matter how small the outstanding amount might be.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Herewith a few comments from Sally and Corrie as to how we, the members, can help them do an even better job.

Tee off times: The phone rings incessantly during Wednesday and Saturday competitions with members wishing to check their tee-off times, this whilst other members are checking in and making this process laborious and inefficient. Please chaps, check your tee-off times well before the event to save this hassle.

NGN cards: Please remember to bring your NGN cards with you so that you can check in quickly by swiping and also put your own score in after the match. Also arrive at the club in plenty of time before your tee-off to avoid putting staff (and yourself) under unnecessary pressure.

Locker room drinking: If you MUST drink in the locker room, then at least limit your drinking to one or two whilst you are changing into your social attire. Don't spend the rest of the evening in there drinking. One night last week, drinking in the Gent's locker room went on till after 09.00 pm. Come on chaps, this is just not on! We also request you to remove your glassware from the locker room when you've finished and take it back to the bar. It is not the Locker room Attendant's duty to clear up your mess. On the night in question above, no fewer than three laundry baskets of empties were removed from the locker room the following day.

Dress Code: Please don't embarrass staff by having them point out to you that you are not wearing the required dress code. In the near future, steps will be taken to emphasise the club requirements in this respect. The RPAGC is not a holiday resort, but a fully fledged golf club as are the majority of golf clubs in the country. In the meantime, remember:

No collarless “T-shirts” are permitted on site.

Open shoes or sandals are not allowed at any time (men).

No short trousers after 06.00 pm.

Caddies: Steps are being taken to formalise caddy identification. Once these have been accomplished, only those caddies with formal ID will be allowed on to the course.

Morning Control: In order to exercise more control as to who is on the course early in the morning, the gate at the first tee will be locked until 06.45h, the time at which the Pro Shop will open, unless special alternative arrangements have been made.

Junior Golf: This will resume on Friday, 22nd January.

Both Sally and Corrie wish to thank those members who have given them verbal and moral support during the holiday period.

COURSE AND GREEN MATTERS

Cecil Jones-Phillipson reports:

Compliments aplenty on the condition of the course during the holiday period have been forthcoming from Members and Visitors alike and 4 162 rounds were played. The rain we received earlier transformed the course into lushness but the unrelenting easterly winds we are currently receiving have rapidly dried out the course.

Our decision to open the 14th Green was, in retrospect, premature and not a good idea as some areas did not recover completely. The affected areas have been re-sodded and we have had to revert to using the temporary green. We have continued to keep the rough cut as it speeds up play. The easterly winds also help keep it short. Our impala, springbok and blesbok assist in this respect as well!

Officials from Nature Conservation will be visiting us this month to check on our fences and the game to enable us to obtain a Certificate of Adequate Enclosure.

A request to golfers: please pick up your broken tees and drop them in the terracotta pots Graham has placed next to the tee markers and **please guys (and ladies)**, repair your divots on the fairways and the tee boxes. The number of unrepaired divots on our course at present is, most would agree, unacceptable. Everybody, men and women alike, should ensure that they are carrying sand for repair purposes before and during play.

We need a good soak desperately, so please pray for rain.

WILDLIFE MATTERS

Geoff Broom reports:

A herbage evaluation of the fauna on our site has been conducted. The number of animals by species is well within the range of the grazing capacity of the land available, excluding fairways and other mown areas. This exercise has also established the required "take off" of the various species in future.

All animals are in good condition, including the impala calf that had damaged its right front leg and is now making good progress.

Our present stock numbers are as follows:

- Blesbok: 2 cows and 2 calves
- Bushbuck: Unknown, but at least 1 young male, 2 adult females and 2 young females.
- Blue Duiker: Unknown, but both male and females have been seen. Perhaps 3 or 4 pairs.
- Duiker: Unknown, but both males and females have been seen. Perhaps 4 pairs.
- Grysbok: Unknown, but they have been seen. Perhaps 1 or 2 pairs.
- Fallow Deer: Two Stags.
- Impala: Seven adult females and 2 adult males plus 4 calves.
- Springbok: Seven females. Arrangements have been made to bring in an adult male before next rutting season.

LADIES' SECTION NEWS

Dee Jones Phillipson reports:

The ladies did not have formal competitions on Tuesdays during the festive period, but booked a one hour time slot from noon onwards and organised their own 4-balls. Competitions resumed on 6th January, starting with the ever popular Super Spar 4BBB.

At the first Committee meeting on the 12th January, a decision was made to the effect that winners and runners-up who were not present at prize giving would forfeit their prizes to those attending in the proper order of results. This would ensure that sponsors would not be compromised by no-shows at an event that they had supported so generously. The true winners / runners-up would, however, be featured in the press results as usual.

Preparations for the Ladies Open Day on 1st March are progressing well.

1820'S NEWS

The 1820s have kicked off competitions for 2009 after their holiday sojourn. They are now in their 41st year of activity and all males are welcome to join them on both a Monday and Thursday morning. A draw takes place at 08.30h in the bar area. The format is always an Alliance 4-ball Medal with one to count over 13 holes. Last year the 1820s averaged 37 players per competition. The youngest regular has yet to turn 60 years, whilst the oldest, Charlie Tullis, is still pulling his own cart around the course at 87 years young. The average age is 72 years.

The 1820s run the annual Mad Hatter Festival, the RPAGC's busiest week of the year. Preparations for the 2009 Festival are well under way. A committee under the able chairmanship of Cecil Jones Phillipson will ensure another successful event, especially as once again Dennis McElwee will manage the proceedings.

KGB NEWS

The KGB have enjoyed an exceptional 2008 in which its 18 hole alliance format has proved very popular as evidenced by its growth. The number of golf rounds increased from 2511 in 2007 to 3173 in 2008, a growth of 26%. Ninety-eight competitions were played altogether, with no break during the festive season. A number of very successful socials and dinners were held during the year, culminating in the annual Christmas lunch and prize giving which was held at the club. Bella, Gilly and staff once again did us proud with their outstanding fare.

Lou Mavric was the most loyal member (89 rounds) whilst Andy Mynhardt had the highest win ratio (29%). Colin Coetzee (33%) was awarded the rather dubious prize for the highest "Hamer & Sukkel" ratio, and Gordon Campbell took the "Order of Merit" honours.

The KGB welcome all members and visitors with a legitimate handicap and a reasonable quality of play (no beginners, please). They play on Tuesday and Friday mornings with a draw being made at 07.30 am.

LEAGUE FIXTURES AND RESULTS

The first league fixtures of the year took place on Sunday, 18th January at the RPAGC. The results were:

"A" Team: Lost to Uitenhage 10 – 8
(1st league). Beat Walmer 17 – 1

"B" Team: Beat Uitenhage 18 – 0
(3rd league). Beat Northwood 18 – 0

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Please diarise Sunday 15th February for a great golfing day, the Centenary Cup, in celebration of our Centenary. The competition, a mixed Better Ball Stableford, will be held in the morning, kicking off around 07.30 or 08.30 depending upon the number of entrants we have. The golf will be followed by an optional lunch to be arranged by our excellent catering ladies.

Preparations for the Ladies Open Championship to be held on 1st March are proceeding to schedule. We are anticipating a very good turnout from ladies from all over the Eastern Cape.

GENERAL MATTERS

The club would like to welcome our annual influx of “Swallows” from Europe and also those from inland South Africa. We wish you all a happy stay whilst sojourning in our part of the world and hope you play great golf.

I wish to thank the many members who have commented so favourably on the first issue of “Putting it to You”. Also thanks to all of you who have sent in suggestions as to layout, comparing it to similar Newsletters issued by other golf clubs in the region. Many have also offered their help in formatting the Newsletter into a more sophisticated presentation.

My foremost objective is to act as a news conduit between the club and you, the reader. Over time, by taking advantage of offers to improve my computer skills, it is hoped to “brighten up” the newsletter with photographs, add more colour etc. However, the objective will always be to communicate “club” news rather than “general golf” news so prevalent in some of the issues I have seen from other clubs.

Did you know that we, the Royal Port Alfred Golf Club, has its own website? Its excellently maintained by ex club captain Steve Gardner. Try it at www.rpagc.co.za

Finally, a little bit of humour to lighten up your day. Did you know there are ten reasons why golf is better than sex?

1. A below par performance is still considered good.
2. You can stop in the middle and have a toasted egg and bacon sandwich.
3. Its much easier to find the sweet spot.
4. Foursomes are encouraged.
5. You can still make money doing it as a senior.
6. Three times a day is possible.
7. Your partner doesn't hire a lawyer if you play with someone else.
8. In Port Alfred, you can do it almost every day.
9. You don't have to cuddle your partner when you've finished.
- 10. And the most important reason of all, when your equipment gets old, you can replace it.**

Good golfing, everyone!

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