

Portal Golf Club

2018 Men's Competitions Committee End of Year Report

As Portal Golf Club has continued to change and develop through 2018, the competitions committee has endeavoured to serve the members to the best of our ability. Being new to organising competitions myself in 2018, I have really come to understand and appreciate just how much work goes into keeping competitions running. This is all thanks to a group of hardy volunteers who willingly give their time up (largely during the evening and at weekends) to make it all happen.

The following served on the Competitions Committee during the year: -

Rob Cobain (Chair), Vice-Captain Neil Tidd, Simon Harper, Leo Sewell, Jim Wren, John Marlor, Arnie Sheppard (Handicaps Secretary), Brian Treadwell (Assistant handicaps), Steve Houlston (greens), Keith Howell (team matches) and Tony Lowe (communications)

The Committee was also joined by: -

Mr Captain Andy Ogden, Lady Captain Pat Lavender, Sharon Tidd (Ladies' Competitions Secretary) and Mr IPC Daryl Edwards

Thank you to all of them for their help and support in organising competitions during the year. My particular thanks go to Jim Wren for his invaluable assistance during the year. Having only started to organise competitions this year then moving quickly on to competitions chair on an interim basis, I couldn't have kept things going (relatively) smoothly without Jim's vast knowledge of competition processes and procedures to fall back on and I'm sure it will stand me in good stead in the coming year.

During 2018 the Competitions Committee has run a wide range of competitions on both the Premier and Championship courses, as well as Singles (on both courses), Pairs and Seniors' knockout competitions and Winter Leagues (including the 'Order of Merit' Singles Winter League on the Championship).

There has been regular discussion at monthly meetings about what type of competition the membership enjoys, and this will continue into 2019 with focus on providing a schedule which has something for everyone. Constructive feedback continues to be encouraged as understanding the needs and wants of members is crucial. However please remember that we can't please everyone all of the time!

We have done some tinkering with competitions, examples being renaming and opening up of the 36 hole 'scratch' competition to all handicaps, and offering a nett prize to go with the scratch trophy to give everyone something to play for. This was very well supported and had excellent feedback, with a range of abilities enjoying the opportunity to compete across both of our courses across a single day.

Our membership demographic has changed somewhat since 2017, with many of those seeking a more traditional style golf club making moves elsewhere. This has been offset by a rise in PMG members who have generally been active in competitions, ultimately resulting in both increased membership and increased competition participation numbers, which is a real positive for the club.

The downside of this was a reduction in the number of couples and mixed pairs, which meant that the mixed competitions were not well supported and at times had to be cancelled. The committee will continue to consider these changes as we work on the competitions in the coming year, but we hope to see an improvement in take-up.

Participation in competitions has been up during 7 of the last 11 months, with poor weather accounting for the lower months early in the year. During this time the average number of entries has been 41 which is an increase of 8% on last year, an

increase which shows no sign of abating during the winter season. To that end the committee is currently seeking additional tee times for singles winter league competitions as these have been regularly booked out in quick time.

Our interclub team had a strong record, winning the majority of their matches against other local clubs. Thanks to Keith Howell for his efforts in arranging the matches this year. Rob Williams is joining the team next year to pick up the baton of arranging team matches in 2019, and aims to find a couple of further ties at attractive courses in addition to matches against our usual local rivals. All members are welcome to take part in matches and new additions to the team in 2018 really enjoyed the experience.

Following Justin's move from the Premier course to Hill Valley, Barry and his staff have worked hard to present both courses to the highest possible standard with relatively limited resources to stretch across the two courses, and a significant amount of land to cover. Our thanks go to his Team for all their hard work, as well as to Steve Houlston for his sterling work as Greens Coordinator. Steve knows every hole, green, bush and twig around the course (as he has picked most of them up!) and has worked hard helping Barry with the course, from shaping of holes and choosing areas of rough to cut back, through to the positions of red staked areas to be added in 2019.

On the MacDonald side 2018 saw the departure of Glenn Turner and the arrival of Nick Shepherd as Director of Golf, whom we will continue to work closely with to ensure the best interests of the members at Portal are being served.

2019 will see significant changes to the rules of golf which have also been a regular topic of discussion at monthly meetings. Handicaps Chair Arnie Sheppard has done an excellent job of attending meetings and absorbing as much information as possible on this to pass on to the committee and the members.

All members are highly encouraged to pay attention to the emails being sent out on the new rule changes and also to do some reading up on the information available on the internet as these rules will be in place from January 2019.

We look forward to the coming year and I can assure all members that we will continue to work hard to ensure competitions are enjoyable and efficiently run.

Finally, I would like to thank this year's Captain Andy Ogden for all his hard work leading the club, and wish our incoming Captains and all Members at Portal Golf Club a successful golfing year in 2019.

Yours Sincerely
Leo Sewell

Interim Men's Competitions Chair