

Portal Golf Club

2019 Men's Competitions Committee End of Year Report

Overview

It has been a challenging year for competition numbers with the continuing difficulties of the hotel chain and subsequent lack of investment leading to a sizeable reduction in players (averaging out at around a 30% reduction across the year). However we still had a hardy bunch of regular players who always competed in an excellent spirit, and I felt that competitions generally ran well without too many problems. We had a few challenges but the members are a great bunch and were generally a pleasure to serve, and we did our best to keep as many people happy as we could despite there being a justified and consistent level of dissatisfaction with ownership practices.

The Team

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

Leo Sewell (Chair), Vice-Captain Simon Harper, John Marlor, Arnie Sheppard (Handicaps Secretary), Brian Treadwell (Assistant handicaps), Steve Houlston (greens), Howard Malyon, Duncan Akin, Rob Williams (team matches) and Tony Lowe (communications)

The Committee was also joined by:-

Mr Captain Neil Tidd, Lady Captain Anne Paton, Rhian Jones (Ladies' Competitions Secretary)

Review of the Year

My thanks go to all of the committee team for their fantastic help and support in organising competitions throughout the year. We had a great group of people and I felt we were able to get things done and still have some fun at the same time. In addition 'The Portal Oracle' Jim Wren has always been on hand for advice when needed, and throughout my 18 months leading competitions his experience has always been invaluable and very much appreciated.

We have continued to have regular discussion at monthly meetings about what type of competition members enjoy, and this will continue into 2020 with focus on providing a schedule which has something for everyone based on the survey which was very well run by Rob Williams. Constructive feedback continues to be encouraged.

Our membership demographic has also continued to change, with many of those seeking a more traditional style golf club continuing to move elsewhere. This has been offset by a steady rise in PMG members, with PMG now making up more of the overall total membership at the club than full 7 day members.

Our interclub team had a strong record in their matches, and was run very efficiently by Rob Williams. Putting teams together for matches can be a tricky job with late drop outs and varying availability, however Rob's strong organisational ability meant we put out full teams in every game. Feedback was members who played for the team really enjoyed participating and any members who want to play are actively encouraged to put their names down in 2020.

Steve Houlston was as always a great asset in working between the greenkeeping and staff and competitions committee, and his knowledge and understanding of Portal's golf courses is second to none amongst the membership. Anyone who has played with Steve will know he also acts as an additional part time greenkeeper himself when on the course. However if anyone should need to get into a buggy with Steve for any reason, I would suggest walking unless you like the idea of ending up upside down!

Barry and his staff have worked incredibly hard to present both courses to the highest possible standard with relatively limited resources, and a significant amount of land to cover. The Europro event definitely had a positive effect for the courses, with Barry benefitting from the PGA equipment for a spell and then maintaining the courses at a high level afterwards. The greens remained in very good condition and still are to the date of writing this, which is a real achievement considering the heavy rain and poor weather in recent months. The closure of holes 4-8 on The Premier course throughout November and December however has been unavoidable, and is being done with a long term view to keeping the course in good condition.

Our relationship with the ladies competitions team was excellent, and we also saw the introduction of more mixed competitions which we will continue to run. The reduced numbers of both sections means it makes sense to combine our forces, and the current committee will continue to try to ensure Portal is an inclusive and forward thinking golf club. Our demographic has changed and we need to embrace it.

We also trialled a 'mixed tee' competition for 'Portal Royalty' President Pat Roper's Day which resulted in the highest number of entrants of the year and is definitely a format we will use again in 2020. The new handicapping system will actually make this much easier to administrate when it arrives as players will just have different handicaps depending on which tee they use, so no adjustment will be required.

2020 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 a fantastic job of attending meetings and absorbing as much information as possible on this to pass on to the committee and the members. The role of Handicaps Secretary is one of the most demanding and important at the club, and Arnie does a sterling job of it - as well as being a great host at the end of year handicap review evening!

On the MacDonald side 2019 saw the departure of Nick Shepherd and the arrival of Ross Astley as Director of Golf, whom we will continue to work closely with to ensure the best interests of the members are being served in relation to competitions.

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 Neil who has worked incredibly hard leading the club, and wish our incoming Captains and all Members at Portal Golf Club a great Christmas and a successful golfing year in 2020.

Yours Sincerely

Leo Sewell

Men's Competitions Chair