

## **AGM 2021 INTER CLUB REPORT**

Wow, well we managed to get there! As we keep saying who would have thought two years ago that our lives would be turned upside down in such a way. We recognise that our Inter Club is a very small element in the grand scheme of things but we also know that to many individual ladies it can be quite a large part of their golfing lives and we know how eager everyone was to get back to some sort of 'norm'.

When we found ourselves in lockdown again at the beginning of the year, we were all wondering if the Inter Club Championship would have to be cancelled again. Naturally we all had positive attitudes and come the end of March with the announcement of some restrictions being lifted our spirits were also lifted. As we know golf was one of the fortunate sports which was allowed to recommence, albeit with restrictions. We were able to start breathing a little easier but there were still tweaks we had to put in place to be able to go ahead. Many clubs were not allowing any visitors, so those clubs who had arranged matches early in the season were going to possibly find it hard to re-schedule. Therefore, we took the decision to extend the season by two weeks giving a little more time to complete. I am pleased to say most of you did get your matches completed by the end of July but we did have some who had to use that extra two weeks. We also had a couple of non-Weekend League matches played on a weekend day. Remember this is always an option for Scratch, A, B and White Rose leagues, always with the agreement of both team Captains. Likewise, the Weekend League teams may play their matches any weekday evening, again with the agreement of both Captains.

Of course, we remember we had other issues associated with Covid 19; early on clubhouses were not allowed to open, we were all advised to travel independently and no congregating. This meant players had to arrive just before their tee time and leave virtually straight after their game had finished. Team Captains had to do things a bit differently by getting in touch with their opposition the day before with team sheets, advising on any special arrangements such as track and trace etc. All this on top of the operation of the new World Handicapping System.

As you will recall, not knowing how the pandemic would pan out, we had taken the decision back in early Autumn 2020 to do a more localised draw wherever possible. This decision was well and truly vindicated with the travel restrictions we were all under early on in the year. We do apologies however for those of you who may have had a little way to travel, unfortunately numbers and geographics don't always allow us to do an ideal draw. One club in the East of the county particularly having to travel significant distances for all their away matches as there were no other teams in the same league locally.

We do thank you all for being understanding of some of the difficulties and making every possible effort to play your matches. Out of the 294 teams over the five leagues, equating to 882 matches, we had slightly under .8% not able to fulfil their commitment. Naturally we don't want any team to default but this was despite the problems and restrictions we all had to cope with. I'm sure at times the captains were dreading the phone call to say someone had been 'pinged'. So, thank you for getting your teams out to play, we know it can't have been easy at times!

We did, however, receive some positive comments about some of the small changes we all had to make. Many clubs expressed that they enjoyed having a more localised draw, however they also felt it would be good to expand the areas a bit. So, for 2022 we took the decision to remove what was the far element of the draw therefore giving teams a bit further to travel without having to go to the other end of the County. Again, what always has to be remembered is that the draws are

dependent on the number of teams entered and where they are geographically. As I have expressed many times it would make our jobs so much easier if we had the exact numbers in say a 30–40 minute radius. But, however we try we cannot change the numbers or geographics.

Whilst we know the social side of the matches is an important aspect it was surprising how many of you said you enjoyed not having to arrive early and could get off again soon after your match had finished, with many welcoming not having a meal following play. Of course, refreshment arrangements are entirely down to the individual club but it is something you may like to look at for the 2022 season and beyond.

Throughout the Inter Club season we were always keeping a close eye on what was happening in connection with Covid and whether or not things would take a turn for the worse and we would not be able to complete the season. But as our year began to draw to a close, we were able to look forward to the September finals.

Of course, this wasn't without its moments. At one point it looked as though the ladies of Wath Golf Club might qualify for both the A and B finals, with the B finals being at Wath it really would have put a spanner in the works as changes would have to be made. The final results were being keenly watched but, although it was sad for Wath it was another sigh of relief for us when, unfortunately for them, they finished outside of the qualifying teams. So, all we can say is thank you Wath!!!

Wath certainly did play its part in the finals though when the club welcomed us all to the B team league finals. With so many of its ladies turning out to help we had a great day and all congratulated Cleckheaton when they beat leading qualifier Hickleton in the final.

In the A league Cottingham Parks were the leading qualifiers but unfortunately were not able to take up their place. Whitby Golf Club were the team in fifth spot therefore qualifying for the semi-finals.

Whitby had a busy time of it as they had also qualified for the B team finals the following day. They had already decided not to risk getting up at the crack of dawn and travelling the 100 miles to Wath on the morning of the B finals so extended their hotel booking so that they were able to compete in both A and B. Thank you, ladies of Whitby.

The A league final at Wortley was quite a battle with President Ann's team beating its opponents in the morning and my home club of Selby also getting through to the final, we had a bit of rivalry going on. Our congratulations eventually went to Leeds who beat Selby, becoming the A league champions –but there are no hard feelings, Ann!!!!

The Inter Club team then had a welcome weekend off before starting again on the Monday at Dore and Totley with the White Rose League finals. This was the first time the White Rose had held its own finals and with everyone hoping to take away the Sheila Wilde salver another good day was had by all. Woodhall Hills was the leading qualifier winning all six matches and they also took the winner's trophy when they beat close neighbours Queensbury in the final.

Wednesday of that week was the Scratch League finals at Hessle Golf Club, where, once again, we received a very warm welcome. Ganton Golf Club also came into the finals with 6 wins and 12 points under their belt taking the leading qualifier trophy and being strong favourites. We were treated to some excellent golf with Ganton showing their strength in depth and coming out on top against Hallamshire in the final. Despite Ganton having been the leading qualifier on a number of occasions I believe it was the first time they had won the winner's trophy since 2013.

What usually seems to be the last, but by no means least, of our finals was the Weekend League. This year Cottingham Parks GC was the host. Again, we had a qualifying team, Rudding Park, who was not able to take part so its place was taken by Crow Nest Park. Bracken Ghyll was the leading qualifier and took the winner's trophy by overcoming Skidby Lakes in a very tightly contested final with the final game going down the 19<sup>th</sup>.

This concluded the 2021 Inter Club finals. After all that had happened over the previous 18 months, we did breathe a sigh of relief when we left Cottingham Parks on the Sunday evening. Although I do have to say driving over to the venues, generally very early in the morning, was always a delight. We were very fortunate with the weather yet again this year and some of the sunrises I witnessed were breath-taking. This along with the buzz and excitement at the venues and being able to meet so many of you, becoming a person not just a name or an email address, makes everything so worthwhile.

Our thanks as always go to all our host clubs who make us feel so welcome. Also, many thanks to President Ann and Captain Maggie who tirelessly gave their support to all the finals. Well done to all the teams who reached the finals, you all help to make our finals days something special.

As you can see by the trophy table, we will be re-presenting the trophies so that we can all celebrate the success of the winners.

Linda and I also took part in the two delegates meetings which were held via zoom during the year. It was great getting some questions and feedback on Inter Club. I would like to remind you that the Delegates meetings really are the forum for putting your questions forward and we always welcome your views. Obviously, we know, as the saying goes, we can please some of the people some of the time but not all of the people all of the time, but if we don't know what you are thinking we struggle to please any of the people any of the time. So please, please have your say at the meetings or, if you don't want to voice your opinions in front of others, send an email or letter. I can assure you every suggestion/view is taken seriously and discussed thoroughly. But, without your input it makes the decision making that much harder.

We would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding in what has been for so many such a difficult episode in all our lives.

This is my last AGM report as I am standing down as Inter Club Match Secretary but Linda Bemrose, my assistant and from today my successor, will be taking on the mantle. With the 2020 Inter Club season having to be cancelled and issues around Covid being the prominent feature this year Linda has certainly had a baptism of fire. However, I know Linda and her new assistant will embrace Inter Club and take it forwards. I'm sure you will all give Linda the support and understanding and friendship you have shown me over the past 7 years.

It just remains for me to wish you all well in the future, stay healthy and happy and enjoy your golf in 2022.

Marlene Dixon  
Inter Club Match Secretary  
November 2021