

Men's Golf Blog – 22 July 2021

Matches, matches and more matches, and birdies, lots of them (not by me I might add), rollups, Captain's Prizes, eagles, and even a hole in one; it has been a very busy fortnight!

First up we had a thoroughly enjoyable morning's golf on Saturday 10th July with the Annual Ladies vs Men friendly match. I was delighted to partner our Golf Committee Chairman Niels Verbeek in the first match versus Ladies Captain Angela and her partner Kathleen Bacon. I am not sure Niels could have been so delighted for the first few holes where I failed to even reach, let alone hit, a fairway! Luckily, there were enough holes for me to redeem myself and we did eventually win the match. Overall, it was a 4-2 victory for the Men on this occasion and we all gathered for a pleasant lunch on the terrace afterwards. It was a most enjoyable match series to be part of, and I would especially like to thank Bridget Barton from the Ladies Golf Committee for all her efforts in the smooth running of the event.

It is a long time since I've played 36 holes in a day, and I must be slightly fitter than my physique would suggest! That, and a pot of tea over the Ladies vs Men lunch, set me up for a 4BBB match with Brian O'Boyle versus the very talented pairing of Alex Tonge (+0.7) and Brian Crotty (5). As we thought, this was indeed proved to be a great golfing experience and challenge. Would the handicap system really level us up? Would Brian O'B and myself with 15 and 19 shots on Alex, respectively, make a match of it? Actually yes, well nearly, we were just one down after 15 with Alex delivering us a masterclass of stunning accurate iron play in making six birdies, half from near tap-in distance, with three further birdies made by Brian. But I squandered my two shots on 16, then a lost ball on 17 and my visit to the greenside bunker ended our challenge. Well done chaps, a real pleasure to have played in this match with you.

By the way, we have all got out of the habit of raking bunkers over the past year of restrictions, but placing is no longer allowed and the bunkers must be raked, historically not always carried out so well at Roehampton Club ... please rake enthusiastically everybody!

It's probably also a long time since I played 54 holes in two days, but I was back on the tee on Sunday 11th with Ricky Pharo to be challenged by Richard C Williams and new Member Martin Horswood. Once again, a very tough test and the chaps were comfortably three up at the turn with Richard chipping in for birdie on the 6th a notable highlight. Five holes later it was all square after my very own chip-in for a 2 on the 14th, then back to 1



downplaying the 18th where we were fortunate to halve a very competitive and enjoyable match. Many thanks to both players for their great sportsmanship and company.

Meanwhile, a Club Rollup was in progress with 18 players entered and the winner was our Junior Captain Charles Bowen-Rayner with an excellent 40 points that included an eagle 3 on the 15th, just ahead of Wallace Wilson on 39 points, and Earl Knudsen in 3rd on 38 points. Honourable mention also to Jon McLoughlin on his eagle 2 on the 4th! Well done all and note that the next Club Rollup is on Saturday 24th July from 12:00. Sign-up on IntelligentGolf to be entered in the random draw of groups and tee times.

On Saturday last the Captain's Prize was played and thank you very much indeed to everyone who entered. Expertly supported by my wife, Isabelle, I had a great time mixing the Pimms, keeping the Moretti beers chilled, and enjoying the banter with so many of you. I was ever so slightly envious looking out at everyone playing on the immaculately presented course! Peter, Ashley and the guys of the grounds team do such great work for us. Special thanks to Tristan and Louis, who did a fantastic



job in planning and organising this event to the last detail. I'm very grateful to them, our food and beverage staff, the course marshals, Tim and Chris, plus Ricky and the team at the Sports Shop. Congratulations to all prize winners, but especially the first-place pair of Alec and Michael Lever who were also the winners in 2019!

Well, I had to wait an extra day, but on Sunday morning I even attempted a few warm-up shots before the latest Captain and Pro match with Ricky challenged by my predecessor Martin Abbott and fellow Past-Captain Neil Anderson, who stepped in for an injured Keith Atkins. There is something extra special in a challenge from Past-Captains; probably due to their past experience of these matches! After 9 holes the Skippers were 5 under but just 1 up thanks to Ricky's excellence, that included a hole-in-one on the 7th to go 4 under par! (see photo right) I finally made a contribution to the match on the 10th hole, following the longest warm-up in history, with a net birdie to halve the hole but Martin would make net birdies on the next 2 holes to move to 3 up. I holed my bunker shot on 13 for 2 nett 1 to claw a hole back, but Neil finished us off with a nett birdie on 14 and nett eagle on 15. The Past-Captains were 11 under through 15, for a 4&3 win, wow!



Congratulations gentlemen, a thoroughly deserved crushing victory and brilliant morning's golf!



A reminder that signup is open for the **4 Club Stableford** on Saturday 31st July, which is also open to Ladies with full weekend playing rights. It will be interesting to play this event in summer rather than the usual February conditions.

Just a further reminder that it is good practice to make an individual marking on your golf ball to aid identification on the course, and especially in the thicker rough. So hopefully we could have less mix-ups and playing of the wrong ball ... Also, please do not pick up balls on the course that are not yours. There are players at the Club who can hit balls a very long distance and you should not assume a ball is 'lost' if you do not see someone in the immediate vicinity.

And there is still more to report in this mid-summer bumper blog! Yesterday afternoon Jake Watson and I were challenged by the formidable team of David and Dan Birn. Fortunately, they all have better eyesight than yours truly as the distances they can hit the ball is outside

of my vision range! With this being a busy course maintenance week, we played our match twice over the back 9, and for once I started well and we were 2 up after 2. However, the brothers birdied 5 of the next 7 holes, with Jake matching David on the 15th for a half, and I finally holed a putt on 17 for a win, so just 2 down through 9 holes. The 2nd nine was closely fought but Dan delivered 3 birdies versus our two and eased them to a comfortable victory on the 17th.



Great to play with Jake and the boys. I witnessed even more brilliant golf shots and ball striking, thank you all very much. We were all quite pleased to leave the sweltering heat though and sit directly under the air conditioning for some re-hydration afterwards!

Freedom has somewhat returned, people, except if you'd hoped to travel to France, like I had! A trip to Ireland in late August is my last hope ...

If you are travelling abroad, or at home, have a great holiday, and if staying here, well there's always golf to play; enjoy!

Gerry Dennigan, Men's Golf Captain