

Men's Golf Captain's Blog – 19th March 2026



And the weather has finally got better! I am sitting at my desk penning this blog with sunshine pouring through the windows and a backdrop of azure blue skies. The golf course and in particular the greens are firming up, David and his brilliant team are able to get some machinery on the course and the fairways, semi-rough and approaches to the greens have already become much better defined. I hope this will be the final blog that I start with a comment about the weather! Spring has arrived and suddenly golf has become a much more pleasant game to play. It's time to join Les West's sartorial elegance in wearing shorts on the course. I will definitely be doing so this afternoon!

Competition results

It has been so good to finally not have any competitive golf rained off, with the weather behaving almost impeccably over the last four weekends which has led to some really good golf being played by a number of players. In particular it was part of a wonderful tribute to the Club's former professional that the sun made an appearance for the **Alan Scott Trophy** on Saturday 21st February. We remembered Alan with a minute's silence before the shotgun start and then before the prize giving. Alan was an extremely talented golfer and a wonderful man. He would have been impressed with not only the weather, but the full field and in particular the scoring from golfers with a range of handicaps.

The trophy was deservedly won by Rob Cutler, who shot a level par gross 71 playing off 7 to record an incredible 43 points. Great golf Rob! Simon Prince was second with 39 points (demonstrating that practice does actually work) and Keith 'Mr Blackpool' Duncan was in third place with 37 points. Cathy Staveley took the prize for the best lady's score. It was also great to see two of our younger members, Ethan Waunford-Brown (who gets more mentions in my blogs than Neil Anderson!) and James Walmsley also in the top five. Well played all! It was a great tribute to Alan.



The following weekend I headed over to Donegal, just to check that rumours of the Guinness tasting a little different were incorrect. I am delighted to report that after an extensive investigation at numerous hostelrys, the Guinness is as good as ever, in Donegal at least. Unfortunately, no golf was played but the sun did shine. It's a beautiful place. Whilst I was away the **Men's Pairs Scramble** competition was held. As you would expect, particularly on a course like ours, when you get two bites at the cherry the scoring is always going to be good and so it was with top of the final leaderboard being:

- 1st Tom Benbow and Pete Crocombe – 62 nett
- 2nd James Chapman and Bertie Clarke - 62 nett (on countback)
- 3rd Alastair Wright and Nigel Wright – 62 nett (on countback)

These 3 pairs were 3 shots ahead of the next placed pairs so well played all of you. Such fine margins with the Scratch Team Co-Captain, Pete, and his partner, Tom showing that they are in fine fettle for the upcoming scratch season shooting a gross 61, which when you play off a combined handicap of -1 results in a nett 62!

The scoring in the **Mixed Individual Stableford** on Sunday 8th March was also very good with the podium prize winners being:

- 1st Sam Lynes – 39 points
- 2nd Ollie Rimmer – 37 points
- 3rd Sandra Drum – 36 points

Congratulations to Sam who has now had a podium finish in the last two Mixed Stableford events. He clearly likes playing with the ladies!

And finally, the **Men's International Team's Competition** was played last Saturday. What a day! We had 6 teams of 10 representing England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Europe and the Rest of the World. Each captain selected 5 pairs to represent their teams in a 4BBB stableford format and then each pair was randomly drawn to play against another pair in a 4BBB matchplay format, with the winner of each match contributing a further 6 points to their team's score (or 3 points each if the match was halved). Confusing? Yes, very at the start but it proved to be an outstanding format with there only being 9 points between all 6 teams.

After the comments in my previous blog about Scotland I am ~~delighted pleased to~~ can report that the Scots were completely intimidated and ensured that England didn't win the wooden spoon. The final team scores were:

- Ireland – 211 points
- ROW – 210 points
- Europe and Wales – 209 points each
- England – 207 points
- Scotland – 202 points



Thanks to the captains (Greg W, Greg W-B, Dave, Russell and Colin) for skippering their teams so well and to Gerry for standing in for Greg to receive the trophy on behalf of the Irish team. I am however looking for the perpetrators (who I suspect may be some of the captains, although I am currently lacking evidence) who defaced the English flag on several occasions around the course. A treasonous offence fellas!



There were also prizes for the best 3 pairs who were:
1st Luke Gorman and Nigel Reynolds (England)– 49 points
2nd Dave Birn and Oli Hunt (Europe) – 45 points
3rd Mark Gradwell and Neil Lawson Smith (ROW) – 44 points

Well played all, particularly Luke and Nigel for posting such an incredible score. I understand that Nigel only dropped a couple of shots playing off 12 and Luke was his usual steady self off 2! Judging by the above results the Cutler / Reynolds pairing is going to be a difficult one to beat this summer!

Winter Foursomes

It's getting towards the business end of this winter's competition with the intimidating pairing of Shaun Feldon and George Palmer having already reached the final. The second semi-final between Chris Lipscombe and Pradip Patel and Nic Fox and Stephen Jones is to be played this Sunday. Good luck to you all.

Upcoming competitions

We have the annual **Arthur Clark Foursomes** this Saturday. It's a foursomes medal, which has to be the toughest format in golf. I would love to record how many times the word 'sorry' is used on Saturday morning! There are still a couple of spaces so please do sign up as a pair or an individual.

There is a **Mixed Individual Stableford** on Saturday 28th March (I suspect Sam Lynes has already signed up!) and then the Syd Scott Mixed Foursomes on Easter Monday, 6th April.

Centenary Ladies' Open Gold Challenge Cup – 11th April

The weekend of the Ladies' Open Gold Challenge Cup is always a special one, but this year's tournament is extra special as we not only celebrate the centenary of the Gold Cup itself but it is the first event of the year that will help to celebrate the Club's 125th anniversary year. To mark the occasion there is a Centenary Gold Cup Pro-Am on Friday 10th April in which teams of Members will be joined by a host of well-known and local female professional golfers, a number of whom are previous winners of the Gold Cup. The Gold Cup itself will take place the following day, Saturday 11th April. A fabulous field of female professionals and leading amateurs have already entered the tournament. Both events will showcase the talents of all of these female golfers (as well as possibly some Members in the Pro-Am event). I encourage you all to come and watch both of the events and help to make them fabulous occasions.

We then have the **Centenary Putter** on Sunday 12th April, playing the course as it was set up for the Gold Cup. Please do sign up in the usual way. It should be a fabulous weekend and a celebration of not only ladies' golf but also the start of our golfing festivities to mark the Club's 125th anniversary.

Captain and Pro matches

We haven't played any more Captain and Pro matches since my last blog but they now come thick and fast with Will and I firstly taking on the Celtic Tigers of Messrs McGovern and Anderson this Friday followed by the physically intimidating lock forward pairing of Messrs Milward and Walker on what I hope will be an extremely Good Friday!

There are still a few available dates for Captain and Pro matches during the year, including Wednesday 15th April, so please sign up on the noticeboard in the changing room.

And finally ...

Good luck to the scratch team who play their first match of the season this Sunday against Surrey Under 18s team. Also watch out for news of the events that will mark the 125 Festival of Golf, which will be circulated soon. There are lots of new exciting events as well as some of the old faithfuls to mark the anniversary.

Well that's enough from me. Spring has sprung and we are now (Wednesday 18th March) basking in spring sunshine with firm fairways and greens beneath our feet. Happy golfing!

Bob Mitchell, Men's Golf Captain