

Men's Golf Captain's Blog – April 2026

Every month I sit in my study on the morning of the deadline day for submitting content for the *Recorder* looking for inspiration for my blog. After this last weekend I didn't need much to get me going!

What an amazing weekend of golf at both Roehampton and Augusta. At the Masters so many Europeans threatened. I'm sure that we all felt for Justin Rose as he chunked his chip at the 12th and missed a three-footer at 17 (all of which I do far too often!) which put paid to any chance he had of winning his first green jacket but it was great to see the likes of Hatton, Lowry, Fleetwood, Hovland, Aberg and other Europeans holding their own among a sea of 'stars and stripes'. And of course, Rory gave us another roller coaster of a ride not only over the four days, but during the final round and even the last hole. What a golfer and entertainer! I am just pleased I didn't have a free golf holiday riding on him as I did last year!

The excitement of the Masters was matched by two amazing days at Roehampton Club when the first ever **Centenary Gold Cup Pro-Am** was staged last Friday and then the 100th **Roehampton Club Ladies' Open Gold Challenge Cup** was held on Saturday.

The Pro-Am showcased everything that we are so proud of at the Club – the golf course was looking wonderful and playing so well, the sun shone, breakfast and afternoon tea were excellent and we had 22 lady pros (all of whom were on excellent form on and off the course) teaming up with some of Roehampton Club's finest! It was a tremendous day which started with Trish Johnson and Dame Laura Davies sending a video message (almost) live from Augusta and ended with plenty of prizes being awarded. Congratulations to the winning team of Andreina Townsend, Lydia Roper, Jackie Beedle and Pro, Ellie Givens, and to the winning professional, Gabriella Cowley, who carded a superb 68. I am sure Jo's blog will contain plenty of pictures and details of the prize winners. I will just let you have a picture of my team – 'the Past, the Present and the Future' together with former Ladies' European Tour Pro Sam Head and her caddy/daughter, Amy, enjoying some well-deserved refreshments at the hut on the 7th. What a day!



And then the following day the temperature dropped, the rain swept in, the wind got up and the stimp meter reading increased as 47 of the leading lady pros and local low amateurs battled the course and the weather over 36 holes for the Gold Cup. Given the conditions, the quality of the golf was excellent, and the golfers commended the condition of the course. Congratulations to the winner, Luca Thompson, who shot a commendable 3 over aggregate score of 147. It was also a privilege to be part of the prize giving ceremony particularly as our very own Issy Simpson and Annabelle Fuller took the prizes for the second-best aggregate scores by an amateur and a professional respectively. I was also able to announce that the leading amateur was my former colleague, Chloe Ryan from Sunningdale, who promised me last year that she would play in this year's edition of the Gold Cup and



win it in my year of captaincy. While she couldn't quite get her hands on the cup itself, she was second overall and had an excellent day.

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who played a part in staging two wonderful days of golf and in particular, to Jo, Cathy and Caroline Scallon, Matt, Oli and Simon and of course David and his team of greenkeepers and Nikki and all of her F&B team. Thanks also to the sponsors of both days, Russell Cooke, solicitors. Their support for this event is greatly appreciated by us all. What a fabulous couple of days to commence the festivities to celebrate the Club's 125th anniversary.

And then on Sunday the men played for the **Centenary Putter**, the first Roehampton Club men's 'major' of the year, playing the course as it had been set up for the Gold Cup the previous day. While the conditions were much better than Saturday, it was still very breezy and tough to score well as demonstrated by the winning score of a nett 70. Congratulations to the winner, Joe Walmsley, on a fine round. More of that later.

And to cap it all on Monday night my beloved Leeds United beat Manchester United at Old Trafford for the first time in 45 years! If Carlsberg did four days of sport! Apologies to Justin and any other Red Devils who are reading this (probably not many!) but they were much needed 3 points towards retaining Leeds's Premier League status!

Competition Results

The annual **Arthur Clarke Foursomes** was played on Saturday 21st March in some wonderful weather. With the competition format being the toughest in golf some of the scoring was a little shoddy to say the least with only one pair, Nicolas De Wasseige and Felipe Del Corral, scoring under par with an impressive nett 67. Well played Nic and Felipe. The rest of the podium was made up of:

2nd – Stuart Mills and James Stratton - 71 nett (on countback)

3rd – Rob Cutler and Nigel Reynolds – 71 nett

And congratulation to Rob and Nigel for beating Messrs Walker and Milward in their own private annual competition on the day (which also has its own trophy – so cliquey!), which is more than Will (the pro) and I did a couple of weeks later, more of which later.

The scoring in the **Mixed Individual Stableford** on Saturday 28 March was pretty good with the medal winners being:

1st – Mark Gradwell – 38 points

2nd – Shaun Feldon – 37 points (on countback)

3rd – Keith Duncan – 37 points.

Congratulations to Mark for a fine score, to Shaun for shooting 2 under to accumulate 37 points and to Keith for his second podium finish in as many months.

And then on Easter Monday we had the even tougher format of the **Syd Scott Mixed Foursomes**. When I was growing up my parents would often team up in Mixed Foursomes competitions and, for some reason (!), my father would regularly refer to it as 'Mixed Gruesomes' after yet another argumentative round! Well, it clearly wasn't gruesome for Tim and Astrid Drayson who expertly navigated their way around the course with a nett 71, just winning the trophy on countback from Nigel Brown and Caroline Leslie. Peter McGovern



and Annette Timms were third with a creditable nett 72. Well played Tim and Astrid particularly as when warming up on the putting green Astrid was regaling me with horror stories of previous Mixed Foursomes outings when their opponents started on the 12th with a double bogey, then had a 10 on the 13th and threatened to walk off the course at 18 as they could barely look at each other in the eye!

And finally, it was the first 'major' of the season last Sunday with 93 men taking on the course for the much-coveted **Centenary Putter**. Joe Walmsley was two shots clear of the field with an excellent nett 70. I think Joe is possibly the youngest winner of the Centenary Putter, but I am sure someone will correct me if I am wrong. At least one of the Walmsleys will be picking up a proper trophy at the annual dinner in November! And if Joe had not come in with such a good score, we could have had another young (at heart) winner in Keith Atkins, who just pipped my vice, Johnny Perkins, and Luke Templer on countback with all three of them returning very good nett 72s. I understand Johnny hit his drive OOB on the 18th – what could have been JP!

Winter Foursomes

I understand that the final between Shaun Feldon and George Palmer and Nic Fox and Stephen Jones is to be played shortly. Good luck to both pairs.

Upcoming Competitions

This weekend I am taking a break. In my absence on Friday, it's the **Pro's Day**, which is always great fun, followed by the **Money Ball Bogey Competition** on Saturday and a **Mixed Individual Stableford** on Sunday. The course will be ready for some maintenance and a rest next week! We then have the annual **Ladies v Men on Bank Holiday Monday**. The men haven't won in decades so please sign up and let's get a strong team out there. And then it's the **Spring Meeting** on the weekend of 16/17 May.

Captain and Pro Matches

As advertised in my March blog Will and I took on the Celtic Tigers of Messrs McGovern and Anderson on Friday 20 March and they were certainly no pussy cats. Will and I raced to 3up after 4 holes but were reeled back as Peter roared back into form with an eagle up 6 when Will and I had both birdied the hole! Over the next 9 holes there was never more than one hole in it and we stood on the 18th tee 1 down. Will secured a par and despite all of us receiving shots the Celts wilted under the pressure and settled for a half.

Two weeks later, on what proved to be not a Good Friday, Will and I were challenged by the physically intimidating pairing of Messrs Milward and Walker (just look at the picture!). Alex and Andrew were on great form and dove-tailed extremely well (apart from their nett birdie and nett eagle at 11 when the birdie sufficed!). We hung on to them for as long as we could, again standing on the 18th tee 1 down. But history does not repeat itself and my unbeaten run of Captain and Pro matches came to an end.

Thanks to both pairs for two cracking matches and fun afternoons of golf and also for their generous donations to my charity, Home-Start Wandsworth. Much appreciated fellas!



On Wednesday afternoon Sol and I will have taken on the canny pair of Richard Lurcott and Colin Hector. There will be lots of shots for the challengers and so we need to be on our game Sol!

There are still a few available dates for Captain and Pro matches during the year, including Thursday 14 and Wednesday 20 May, so please sign up on the noticeboard in the changing room.

Club Matches

We were supposed to be playing the annual match against Richmond GC on Sunday 29 March for the prized possession of The Horn. However, due to some shoddy administration on Richmond's part having not put the match in the club diary, they were unable to raise a team. Having selected a strong 'Men of the Horn' team we did not want to waste the opportunity of some team matchplay so put out the call for a Club team to challenge us. Within 15 minutes of the call a strong team had been assembled under the captaincy of Colin Hector. On a cold Sunday morning two teams battled it out with the Men of the Horn defeating Colin and his 11 Merry Men - 4.5 to 1.5. Thanks to the challengers for answering the call to arms and giving us such a good match. Rob Cutler and I were never up against Colin and Henry Umney but sneaked it down 18!



The scratch team played its first match of the season against the Surrey U18's, narrowly losing 6-4.

And finally

After Wednesday's Captain and Pro match I am taking a two-week break from golf with two successive long weekends in Yorkshire (and Elland Road for Leeds v Wolves!) and then in Tuscany. No golf is planned in either venue, but I will be back refreshed and ready to take on Roegusta with plenty of golf in the diary for May and June.

Bob Mitchell

Men's Golf Captain