



IN THE SWING

**Portarlington Golf Club
News & Views**

**Issue 8
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A few more people have been picking up the newsletter and the popularity is growing. If there is any specific topic you would like to see covered please let any of the committee know.

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Open Week

Now that the dust has settled on open week all the facts, figures and feedback has shown that we have had the most successful open week ever. Over 1700 played in all the competitions, the bar and restaurant operated for over 160 hours, a wide range of quality prizes were on offer, excellent sponsorship was received and enjoyment both on and off the course was had by all.

The centrepiece for the week was our wonderful course which was in immaculate conditions and it was a credit to everybody involved in its preparation and maintenance all during the week. Members and visitors alike sang the praises of course and it was truly a pleasure to play on each day for everybody.

In the club house it was all hands on deck with a bar and food service on offer from early morning through to evening closing time on every day. Well done to all the staff who worked during the week.

The golf was (mostly) of the highest quality with some excellent scores during all during the week. The variety of competitions on offer was generally well received and the initial concerns aired of only having the one mens singles proved to be unfounded.

The one sour note from the week was the poor turn out of prize winners for the presentations. So much so that a long standing and valued sponsor publicly expressed his disappointment at the fact that of the four prizes he had on offer only one winner turned up to accept their prize. Some discussion around how this trend can be stopped will be discussed at committee shortly so keep an eye on developments in this area.



Wildlife Update

With the course looking its wonderful best the environment of the course has been enhanced over the past weeks with the appearance of various wildlife around the course.

The ducks have hatched three separate broods and most have survived past the crucial first few weeks. The water hens have hatched on the first and eight lakes with approx 10 young between them. We have a new visitor on the first lake in the shape of little Grebe and they too have hatched. The grebe are approx the same size as the water hen but have reddish plumage on their throat – on the water they can be seen diving for food and staying underwater for over 10 seconds at a time. Finally the swans have also hatched and the family have been seen on the river around the bridge behind the 18th tee.

We have recently invested in young pheasant which are in the pen between the 8th and 14th and hopefully we can encourage some of them to stay around this year.

A pair of red squirrels have been seen along the tree line around the 7th, 8th & 14th and we are hoping that they are a mating pair so we population will grow.

Hares are back following a few years away and have been seen in many spots around the course but predominantly in the high grass behind the 7th & 14th greens.

Finally some Sika deer have been seen recently in areas around the course and predominantly in the areas around the 7th fairway.

18 Must do things in golf

Your golfing career is a true odyssey. A collection of highs and lows that combine to make golf such a fantastic game. Everyone dreams of playing like a god but golf is about so much more than the score on your card. Indeed, the more rich and varied your golfing CV, the more you appreciate what a truly God-given game it is. However, there are some things that every golfer should try, even if it's only once. And, here they are. From the sublime to the ridiculous, taking in the unfortunate and the never-to-be-repeated, these are the 18 things you must do in your golfing career.

1. Break 100

Finally carding a "Mr Whippy" (99) or better for the first time is one of golf's great pleasures. It marks the point at which you pass from being a bit of a hacker to a fully-fledged golfer. A spiritual moment to be savoured and although you'll almost certainly shoot 100 and plenty in your next round, getting it round in double figures rightly gives you a real sense of achievement.



2. Break 90

Breaking 90 isn't as special as breaking a ton, but it's a good indicator that you are making real progress as at around 18 over it means you're only taking a mere one shot per hole more than pros are expected to! The fact you had an eight in there is of no consequence, quite frankly.

3. Break 80

Now we're talking. Going round in single figures is what REAL players do, and you're now one of them. With your 79 or better banked, the post-round chat in the bar will almost certainly involve an awful lot of 'if only a few more putts had dropped'.

4. Drive a ball 300 yards

The joy derived from pegging up a ball and giving your driver an almighty rip is the one thing that unites every golfer. Snooty single-figure golfers might try to make out they love nothing more than getting up and down for par or striking a pure long iron, but they're lying. Like the rest of us they love nothing more than theatrically tearing off the head cover and letting the big dog eat.

5. Play an Open Championship course

Each year the esteemed gents of the R&A take their road show to one of the country's great seaside courses, and the entire golfing population temporarily goes mad for links golf. The most keen end up remortgaging their house to pay for the privilege of a round on an Open course. It's an experience everyone should try once because there's nothing quite like strolling down the 18th of somewhere like Birkdale imagining your name atop the famous yellow scoreboard, the packed stands rising to greet you as you doff your cap... and tap in for an ignominious triple bogey finish.

6. Blow your wages on a new set of golf clubs

Anyone who's ever set foot in a golf shop will testify that golf is an expensive sport, and the worse you're playing the more expensive it gets. Whatever your problem, from wild driving to hapless putting, the surest route to salvation seems through new kit. All you have to do now is explain your new purchase to your other half. Best of luck.

7. Fall in a water hazard

As all golfers know, this game has a habit of kicking you when you're down and never so much as when it comes to water hazards. Not only do they swallow your shots, but they then tempt you to retrieve your ball. You know you should leave well alone, but the lure of a nearly-new ball is too much. What ensues is all too predictable. Remember, guaranteed 100 per cent waterproof shoes only live up to their billing if you don't immerse them fully.

8. Play a whole round with one club

Usually the sort of thing that's undertaken in a beery haze after a liquid lunch, playing an entire 18 holes with a single club is an enlightening experience. Not only will you play quicker as you no longer agonise like a tour player over the merits of a hard 6-iron or an easy five, but you'll also learn the mythical art of shot making as you have to get your one club to do the job of 14. Choose your weapon wisely though. The driver might see you miles up the fairway ahead of your 7-iron-wielding partner, but remember not even Seve could conjure it up and down from a greenside bunker with one.

9. Win a golf trophy

We're not talking about scooping a green jacket or a claret jug here, but rather a tacky plastic golfing figure mounted on an MDF plinth or a flimsy silver-plated cup. It could be the club championship or the society wooden spoon but, whatever your prize, the one thing you can be assured of is the moment you stride triumphantly through the door with the trophy, your other half will vow that thing goes on the mantelpiece over my dead body.



10. Get your other half to caddy for you

Many a golfer's mind has worked thus. Ladies enjoy romantic walks in the countryside, golf involves walking among pretty green stuff. Let's combine the two and everyone will be happy. The reality is, however, nothing like your utopian image as you reveal your hitherto hidden Roy Keane-esque temper and shock her with a torrent of swearing and she gets cold standing in the chill wind as you line up every putt from four sides.

11. Break a golf club

Sometimes this game gets too much for even the most mild mannered of us. It could have been a topped tee shot that fails to inch past the ladies tee, a fluffed chip or, most commonly, the missed tiddler. But there you are your face going puce with rage, steam coming out of your ears and a primeval urge to inflict real harm on something. At this point you have two options. Calm down and get on with repairing your round, or take matters personally and destroy a club. Go on, you know it makes sense.

12. Card a hole in one

Aces come in all shapes and sizes. No one really cares whether yours was a crisply struck 4-iron or a thinned seven, the number that goes down is the same - a glorious 1. It's a majestic moment to be dined out on for ages to come, but just remember there's a bar bill to be picked up.

13. Take a sickie to play golf

Some days are just not meant for sitting behind a desk. These glorious sunny days were created by the good Lord for strolling round a golf course, so when such a day comes up you owe it to yourself to get out there and play. Just remember though, a golfer's suntan (head, neck and forearms) is incriminating evidence so cover up and slap on the sunscreen.

14. Go on a golfing holiday

It could be a weekend or a fortnight, but setting off into the golfing unknown is to be cherished. But, be warned. The build-up is the best bit as your game will have deserted you by the second day, you'll be bored of golf by the fourth, drink far too much of the local brew and vow never to go on another golf trip ever again. Until next time...

15. Drive a par 4

No matter what your handicap, one thing that's guaranteed to get the adrenaline going is teeing it up on a reachable par 4. All that's stood between you and a putt for an eagle is a decent tee shot. And although the end result is usually a lightning fast swing and either a feeble top or a huge slice, now and then you do make the dance floor. Having got it there all you now need to do is coax your ball into the hole for that magical two or a three. Er, no pressure then.

16. Attend a tour event

Great though watching golf on TV is, it can't compare with seeing Tiger and Co in action. If you've ever doubted these guys play a different game to us lot, then you'll become a believer the minute you've seen the first silky smooth swing ease the ball effortlessly down the fairway. The only drawback are the views, but remember you can always retire to the beer tent and watch proceedings from the big screen.

17. Drive a golf buggy in an inappropriate fashion

You do, of course, understand we're not condoning any sort of Banana Splits style rampaging across the fairways. But, there are few better antidotes to a three-putt than creating a dust storm courtesy of a wheel spin, double donut combo. But we never told you that. Right?



18. Buy a golfing gadget

We all know that the best way to get our game back on track is a few hours down the range, but we're an impatient lot, so enter the golfing gadgets promising a simple diagnosis and quick fix. From baseball caps which beep to alert you to the heinous crime of an errant head movement, to weirdy-beardy pendants to keep us calm, there's a myriad of paraphernalia on offer to tempt the troubled golfer. The one thing that you can be sure of is that after the novelty of practising with your new gadget has worn off (approximately two days), they're destined to live out the remainder of their days in the cupboard under the stairs.

SPONSORS

The following are the sponsors for competitions in July and August. As always the continued support of all the sponsors is much appreciated and your support for the sponsors and their business and for you attendance on the presentation day is requested

Arthur Lambe (Captains Prize)

Whelan Electrical

Anne Delaney (Lady Captains Prize)

David Hainsworth

O'Donnell Solicitors

Central Stores Martin

Dermot Murphy

Heinekin Ireland

Sean Eacrett

No.57 Boutique

Mullaney Chemist

Mountmellick Credit Union

Con Farrell

Portarlinton Auto Parts

Tom Hainsworth

Paddy Egan

Hamish Sweetman

Frank Higgins

FBD Plc

Kevin McGurrell

Barrow Lodge

Aidan Colgan (Presidents Prize)

The Wine Cellar

Paul Smallwood

Gandon Inn

Plum Heat

Colgan Stores

Coolrain Sawmills

Michael Luttrell & Son

Course & House Developments

As you will have noticed a fountain has recently been installed on the first lake and it has offered an extra scenic element to the hole. More developments on this front are being planned with considerations being made for a similar fountain on the fairway lake along the 13th and enhancement to the fountain on the first so that it can be seen from the club house.

A lighting feature is being installed at the bottom of the stairs to the balcony to primarily offer more light in the area for safety purposes. Some of the external lights will have sensors installed so that they will come on when required for both security and safety reasons

Quotes are being worked on at present for the painting and repair of the balcony and surrounding areas.

Inside the club house you will have noticed that the deers head has been moved to a more prominent position in the foyer downstairs. Upstairs 4 new pictures of the course have been hung in the hallway outside the Garryhinch room. In the room itself you may have noticed that we have installed a small bar which will be used for small private parties, club teams and, during the winter, as the main bar on quieter days to save on fuel and lighting costs.

We are currently looking at installing a plasma screen in the main bar to offer a better viewing option for key sporting events in the club.

If there is something you would like please let us know

Golf Courses of the world – Pinehurst

Most of us watched the US open and were in awe of the golf being played on such an immense challenge of golf. But what is the full story of this course ? In the latest review of the worlds great courses we turn the focus on Pinehurst Golf club and Spa.

The majestic pines towering over historic Pinehurst rustle and softly whisper the legends of golfers like Jack Nicklaus, Payne Stewart and those who have gone before and experienced one of America's greatest golf courses and premier resorts.

Nestled among the Sandhills of North Carolina, Pinehurst resort invites you to become part of its history and to experience southern hospitality, elegant accommodations, luxury spa facilities, family recreational activities, and of course, any one of their eight pristine world-class golf courses. In addition to offering one of the finest golf experiences in the country, Pinehurst also provides world-class spa and tennis vacations, as well as fun-filled family vacation packages.

The stories of champions and the traditions of championship golf have been created at Pinehurst since 1898. It is the site of more championships than any other golf course in the country.

Pinehurst was established in 1895 by a Bostonian James Walker Tufts and over the years it has developed and now encompasses eight courses named simply Number 1 to Number 8. Pinehurst number 2 is the most famous of them all and was originally founded in 1907 and was designed by Donald Ross. It has 5 different tee placements with the back tees (gold) boasting a distance of 7217 yards.

There are numerous golf packages on offers but to play a single round on any of the courses (excluding No.2) with one nights accommodation (B&B and an evening meal) it will cost you from \$299 to \$780. To upgrade to play No.2 add an additional \$150. Overall not too bad considering you will get the use of a cart, a sleeve of golf balls, use of the practice range and club storage included in this price.

Staying in the resort you will have the choice of three 4 diamond quality hotels, villas and condos with the cost determined by the package you choose. There is a full range of spa treatments available on site where you could really pamper yourself – basically everything the discerning golfer could wish for.

Have a look at the Pinehurst Championship package .. caddie wearing your name, announced on first tee at No.2, unlimited golf on any course (No.2 when available), video of your round, two nights accommodation and airport transfers all for \$2005 !!!

Check it out on www.pinehurst.com

Comment Cards - We have been placed comment cards in the restaurant and bar areas so that we can receive ongoing feedback on both operations.

Things have been running generally well but there have been some mistakes made which have been rectified. We need to continue improvements to offer a quality service to members and guest alike.

Feedback of members and guests will assist in this aim – let us know what you think by completing a card.

Where possible specific examples of what is good or bad will help greatly



A view of the 8th hole with the lake with some of the mallard on the course in the foreground.

Rules Corner

Answers at the bottom of page 6

1. A and B are partners in a foursome match. A was practising putting on the 11th green after B drove off from the 12th tee. Was A playing practice strokes during the playing of a hole?
2. In matchplay a player mistakenly believing he has won a hole, picks up his ball-marker, what is the ruling?

Communication Update

We have recently set up software which will enable us to send text messages to club members with competition updates, results and general club news. We are now in the process of updating the system with all the known members mobile numbers – if we don't have your number please let us know.

We are also going through the long process of setting up the email distribution lists to allow us another viable option for communication with our members. If you have an email address which we don't have please let us know.

Email your details to portarlingtongc@eircom.net quoting your membership number (on the back of your card) where possible.

Damage to 18th Green

As most of you will notice there has been some damage to the 18th green. This was caused by fluid leaking from one of the greens mowers a little over a week ago. Some diligent work by the greens staff with the application of sand and water and pole forking seems to have prevented any long term damage. Monitoring and treatment is continuing and the outlook is good. Congratulations to Paul Sheeran and his staff for the speedy action to prevent any lasting impact

Club Teams

Despite some heroic performances over the past weeks the majority of our teams will have to wait another year for glory. Recent matches have seen deciding matches taken to the 19th, 20th and 21st holes only to end up on the wrong side of the result.

The Tutenham (old Bloomfield) cup is due to be played in the coming weeks and the team is being assembled for this.

The one success story of the year so far has been the Michael Moore Cup team who are through to the quarter final after victories over Portumna, The Heath and Edenderry. Keep an eye on the notice boards over the coming weeks for details of further matches as the support of you, the members, would be appreciated by the team and management.

Administration updates

Over the first half of the year there have been a few behind the scenes updates and improvements aimed at providing better quality information to members and committee, and in general establishing a firm base to build the club as a business moving forward.

Following on from a request at last years AGM a significant piece of work has been underway in the area of staff and salary management. All regular staff working in the club are now formally on the books with related PAYE and PRSI payments associated to this formal arrangement. There have been some situations where casual labour has been required but this has been kept to a minimum. In all areas of operation in the club we have 22 people on the payroll. Which these numbers the appointment of a club manager is being seriously considered at present.

A new accounting system has been put in place which is being constantly "tweaked" to provide the information required. On a monthly basis we are now able to provide a Profit and Loss sheet and a balance sheet in line with what is received at the AGM. The set up of the system allows us to provide additional focus with production of accounts specifically for Course, Bar, Restaurant, Golf, Mens club, Ladies club and Admin. Annual budgets have been agreed at the start of the year and they are monitored against current spend and YTD spend last year. Much gratitude to Colm Burke and all his work in this area.

Over the past number of months we have been monitoring the membership figures in the club and limiting the take on of new members accordingly. This year we made a cut off at the end of May and have slightly over 50 members in all categories that had not paid and were subsequently suspended from the club. The places made available have allowed us to put figures and targets on our take on of new members.

If you would like more information please speak to the Hon. Treasurer or any member of the council.

Rules Corner Answers

1. Yes, A and B lose the 12th hole for a breach of rule 7-2
2. The player incurs a one stroke penalty under Rule 20-1 and must replace his ball