



The Russley Chat



Issue No 9—September 2009

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Board Room Chat

Our course is already showing signs of spring growth, having come through the winter in outstanding condition. Thanks to Mike and his team, we will have superb playing conditions for our spring and summer golf.

No 1 Tee and Surrounding Area

The upgrading of the No 1 tee and surrounding area will probably be underway when you receive this newsletter. The project work began during the winter with the tidy up of the hedge and garden area next to the Practice Putting Green. The completed project will include:

- Replacement of the steps
- Improvement to the assembly area and paths
- A new notice board

Golf Learning Centre

Rod, Richie and our Teaching Pros are working on a proposal to develop a golf learning centre at Russley. This facility has the potential to produce significant income for the Club in future years. Russley is uniquely placed to take advantage of this opportunity because we have first class teaching and practice facilities and have a group of teaching professionals. The likely outcome of the learning centre is that we could earn significantly more income from a small number of overseas players coming to New Zealand to develop their golf skills, rather than the higher number of overseas players we have had during the summer in recent years.

Refurbishment of the Interior of the Club House

As we reported at the Special Meeting in June, we are still working towards development of the best option for this project. The plans we reviewed for extensive alterations to the present members' area did not produce a result that justified the expense. We are therefore looking at alternatives that may in stages, over the next few years, allow us to significantly expand our function business and provide a much improved area for members. We will come back to you as soon as we have a proposal.

Geoff Bailey



Editor

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Pro Shop Chat

Next time you are on the putting green warming up before your game, put a tee in the ground 4 foot from the hole and putt until you hole ten putts in a row. If you miss one, start over... be realistic though, putt within yourself. If you complete this drill, increase the level of difficulty by moving the tee back or add some slope in the putt. Alternatively, if you have the time to test your patience, increase the number of putts you need to make to 20 or 30. This drill may seem easy, but you will be amazed how many different emotions will go through your head from the first ball to the tenth. You can learn a lot about your game in a short period and I can guarantee this drill will increase your confidence and take a couple shots off your game. The players who will benefit the most out of this drill are those who do it properly and challenge themselves to complete the task at hand.

Ponder this – here are some stats from Tiger Woods from a recent golf tournament he played in:

- 54 of 54 putts holed from inside 5 feet. (100%)
- 63 of 66: putts holed from inside 10 feet (95.5%)

Have a think about those stats... AMAZING? As you can see that no matter how well you strike the ball, if you're making putts your scores will improve, it's that simple. I often wonder why players stand on the putting green aimlessly attempting to make 20 foot putts. They miss the majority of them and use this as a warm up routine? Try this drill out and you might surprise yourself. Happy Golfing!

Rodney Yee

Greenkeeper's Chat

There seems to be light at the end of the long winter tunnel with only one day's substantial rain fall in the last 6 weeks and a fair few days around the 18 degree mark. After the frost has cleared there is real optimism that we may be in for an early warm spring which will give the grass plant a much needed kick start to recovery from the tired cold hungry look it currently has across the entire golf course.

I had a comment the other week from a member who thought we cut the fairways too short for his liking. He looked a bit puzzled and changed his thinking when I told him we had not cut them for 13 weeks. There are a lot of factors contributing to the way the playing surfaces are here. This includes, but are not limited to, the soil/growing medium, grass species, available nutrient and moisture, thatch, shade/competition from surrounding trees, soil compaction and most importantly here, the amount of foot traffic trampling all over the grass plant and inhibiting it's ability to recover and grow. If you look very closely at our fairways their leaf is 1-2 inches long in some places but has just been flattened by the constant foot traffic in the same direction. The challenge here is getting it to grow high enough to be cut and it is a battle we feel we are starting to win. We just need to keep working hard at it. Finally I would like to thank the Monday gents who have given up their time for the last 5 years to voluntarily do the gardens around the golf course. They have been joined, over the last couple of months, by a section of ladies who lend a helping hand. Over the winter months we have had help from a group of men who have done a fantastic job of cleaning up the tree debris from our tree programme. We very much appreciate the effort you have all put in allowing us to concentrate on other things.

The Course Superintendent



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Ladies' Chat

As we move into Spring, we look forward to a pretty busy schedule. Coming up is the revamped Russley Open on Sunday 20th September. We have moved away from the 36-hole format in an attempt to revive interest in this event, so we hope to see lots of entries from you all. After that the Club Champs start with the qualifying rounds in early October. By holding it later this year we hope to avoid the bad weather we experienced in previous Septembers and also encourage more participation as members return from escaping the winter. A reminder here that the winners of the grades represent Russley in the Rosebowl/Champions Day event which is held a week after the Champs on Friday 30th October, so please ensure you keep that day free. We also have visits from Hororata and Ashburton to look forward to as well as Visitors days.

Our Interclub teams ended up very well. The 36-hole silver was second in their zone, one 18-hole team won their zone but then lost in a very tight match in the semifinal and the other team was 2nd in their zone. It was great to see our 9-hole teams do so well, with one team losing out by 6 stableford points to Kaiapoi in their final matchup. The other team came in a creditable 6th. Well done to all and we look forward to next year. The Interclub season will start early in February and we will need to select teams before Christmas, so please let your captains know if you are keen to play, and look out for the list for entries.

It was great to see two of our Saturday ladies represent Canterbury and do well in their subsequent matches – congratulations to Robyn Cruse and Elisha Crosbie. Also congratulations to Chris Erikson and Susan Cordell for A passes in the recent referees' exams. Wishing you all golf fun!

Tricia Riddolls

Men's Chat

Members may have noticed and appreciated the long-overdue demise of the former bunker on the right of the 16th fairway. It was a stretch of sand stuffed with "loose impediments" (LI's) so it will be a relief to be able to ground the club as well as being permitted to remove the said LI's. Please, though, smooth the sand after you have scuffed it with the rake so thoughtfully provided.

Elsewhere, one or two "iconic" trees have gone, particularly the eucalyptus on the ninth, which vanished almost overnight. This culling is designed to ensure we leave a lasting legacy for the Russley members.

Interclub is now well underway and competition is fierce. Lex Clarke's impeccable planning is paying off in many ways and he has been ably supported by Mark Guy both on and off the course. Our players greatly appreciate support wherever they are playing, which is why details of the up-coming Sunday matches are displayed in prominent places round the club. Also, Peter MacDonald is keeping an excellent, on-going summary of individual and team results under the "Interclub" notice in the tournament office foyer. If you can spare an hour or two and would like to compare our course with others and see how lucky we are, please get out there and wave the flag (so to speak). Steve Garland (Blank) and Frank Young (Simon) are our other two hard-working team managers. We are also grateful to John Dunstan for putting in long hours with the Simon team while Frank has been away.

Finally, I regret to have to report Mistress Slow Play is still disappointingly alive and well, beguiling, seducing and leading us astray. Don't be fooled. Her smile is but skin deep. She is up to no good and once in her power, escape is hard if not impossible. Turn away from her before you are spell-bound. Hit off, move forward, keep up and don't fill in cards on the green. Send Ms Slow Play packing. You can do it. I know you can.

Spring is now at the end of the fairway. Placing will soon be over and the frost-sheet but a miserable memory. Summer is ahead. What a prospect! Let's all enjoy it to the full.

Nick Lindo

Catering Chat

A hint of Spring in the air? It's rather strange how one's eating habits change with the seasons. "It's too hot for that or no it's far too cold for that today" yet I'm positively convinced that whatever the temperature we eat far too much over the winter period...I suppose it enhances the insulation!

Well what an exciting winter we've had, busy as ever with June being an extraordinarily busy month, the recession has not really had any effect on the demand for Russley's facilities and as previously mentioned, more encroachment into the members' lounge. A prime example was last Friday's function MNZIPIM, Ray White and Jacks Friday group. One thing for sure working at Russley GC does not warrant a gym membership. With the summer season on our door step we project a busy season with year end functions, and weddings (not as many as last year in Oct/Nov). However January, February and March are fully booked with weddings!

The delayed Mid Winter Tonk went off with a bang, with Breakfast, a pleasant day's golf followed by the afternoon meal, and most of all the weather finally came to the party. Thanks once again to Messrs Shepherd and Kime. With the Tri Nations Rugby in full swing, what a great win over Australia, a nail biting finish! The next social event we are looking at having is A "Big Screen/Traditional "Braai & Kiwi" on 12th September as the All Blacks take on the powerhouse Springboks! Details of the afternoons/evening will be advertised this coming week via email and with posters in the clubhouse.

The Catering Staff

Perth - Sister Club

In July, Russley was approached by a representative from the Western Australian Golf Club (Inc) in Perth regarding the prospect of forming a sister club arrangement between the two clubs. At the most recent Board meeting the notion was discussed. The Western Australian Golf Club is an outstanding course, with a high ranking amongst Australian courses and is 5 minutes from the Perth CBD. These credentials met our criteria re sister clubs so the proposal was approved and that relationship is presently being established. Those of you who are fortunate to be travelling to Perth in the future will be able to play on the course without paying green fees. If you would like to know more on the course please visit their website, www.wagolfclub.com.au