



The Russley Chat



Issue No 6 - January 2009

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Board Room Chat

The course and playing conditions are excellent and January has been a very busy month.

Vince Duffy

On Thursday 8th January Russley was well represented at the funeral of Vince Duffy at St Teresa's Church, Riccarton. Vince was a man who during his lifetime developed to a high level, a wide range of personal skills and interests, in particular in the areas of business, sport, music and aviation. Russley was very fortunate to have benefited from Vince's business and administration skills during his period as a Board member, and his term as Chairman.

Russley and the Current Economic Climate

Clearly 2009 is going to be financially challenging for everyone, including the Russley Golf Club. However we have had a very good start to our financial year, which commenced on 1 October 2008.

Café Bar & Function Centre - The profitability here has been very good and is significantly ahead of last year.

Pro Shop - The year has started very well and green fee income is significantly ahead of budget.

Sponsorship Income - All sponsorship agreements in place on 1st October 2008 have been either renewed or sponsors have given a firm indication renewal will be confirmed in the January/February period. However sponsorship income will be down on last year with some sponsors reducing their level of funding.

The Design Team are finalising their position as a main sponsor and we are very appreciative of the period during which they have been our major sponsor.

We are very grateful for the loyalty our sponsors have shown to Russley in these tough economic times. The Sponsorship Committee will be seeking a new major sponsor for the club.

Membership

We have continued our membership recruitment campaign and currently the adult membership numbers are in excess of 40 members ahead of the same time last year – this is a very good result. New Zealand Golf will introduce an incentive programme for membership recruitment within the next month.

The revenue earned from the international players currently at Russley will be between \$30,000 and \$40,000 - this figure is well in excess of the budgeted \$10,000. These players have been well organised and supervised by their coordinators.

Obituary - Vince Duffy

Vince Duffy passed away on January 3rd this year at the age of 78 after receiving the cruel advice only a matter of 5-6 weeks prior to Christmas that he had inoperable cancer and his life expectancy was very short. Vince was a stalwart member of Russley, a board member for six years, three of those as a very diligent, effective and conscientious Chairman. In that role he had the honour of hosting members and guests in 2003 at the Clubs 75th Jubilee celebrations. In a moving eulogy at Vince's funeral delivered by our Club Captain, Nick Lindo, Vince was described as a "gentleman of the old school", a fierce upholder of golfing values and standards. All members mourn Vince's passing and express their sincerest sympathy to Janet and her family.

Pro Shop Chat

2008 was an exciting year for the Pro-Shop, with a fair amount of change both in staff and operation and now we have our feet on the ground for the year ahead. The team loves working at Russley and really enjoyed the 2008 year working with all the members. The Pro-Shop team would like to thank you all for your continued support, it is something we are very proud of at Russley and we appreciate the loyalty received from you all.

A large number of our suppliers have been in contact with us notifying us of price increases. With the value of our dollar at present, our suppliers who purchase in our currency are all facing increase costs across the board including freight and distribution costs. Most companies have increased their prices from January 1st and this will flow through the shop. The Pro Shop has focussed on Callaway and TaylorMade clubs but these are expected to increase by up to 30%. Product will be displayed with new retail pricing and a special price that we will carry for as long as we have stock. It may pay to come in sooner and take advantage of the special price while you can! **Ritchie Bath**

Catering Chat

Catering 2009 brings some exciting challenges at Russley Golf Club.

After surviving a busy start to the new fiscal year with a number of great weddings and year end function we "Kicked" the New Year off with three weddings!

February remains popular with Brides, so much so that January has become the next best thing as families and friends tend to travel over this period. As a result January / February of 2010 is almost fully booked.

The conference business continues to grow and our regular client base has grown enormously over the past year, so much so that believe it or not we actually turn business away at times! We do keep the members lounge as sacred ground as possible, however on the odd occasion in 2008 we had no choice and we appreciate the members co-operation in helping us with the over flow from the function business.

On a sad note we say goodbye to Victoria Robertson who leaves Russley to take up a nursing position in Dunedin. Victoria who joined Russley some 5½ years ago fulfilled her duties diligently particularly at our Twilight/Sunday mixed golf days.

We wish Victoria all the best for the future.

The social committee will be meeting soon to plan some exciting events for the year ahead. **The Catering Staff**



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Men's Chat

At the time of writing we are waiting - just a little anxiously - to see whether we get good fields for our two "signature" tournaments, the Open (Sunday, Feb 1st) and the Classic (Sat and Sun, Feb 28th/ March 1st.)

With sponsorship and the "discretionary dollar" both in short supply, these are not easy times in which to run golf competitions. However, we hope those who have supported us in past years - particularly on the course - will do so again and get real pleasure from playing our immaculate fairways and velvet greens. With Emirates' flights to Australia on offer as prizes, plus other irresistible attractions, there is a lot to play for.

Elsewhere, our juniors, to whom I referred in the annual report, have flourished on the public stage. While there have been no actual thrilling victories their standard of play has remained of the highest calibre as the results below confirm. I congratulate them yet again.

News from autoscore: cards - most are filled in conscientiously ie, with the circles filled in (diagonally, please, not horizontally and not in red ink; the computer asked me, particularly, to mention that to you.) However, there are still people "out there" who seem to think the red circles are purely decorative and have no relevance to them. Please, please fill them in as requested - one entry only per line. We have many hundreds of these to process over the course of a week. It is unfair on us to have to mark your card which you should have done well before it reached the computer! We are lucky to have autoscore; let's make the most of it (And please, also, remember to sign the card, both player and marker.)

We are also fortunate to have electronic tee booking. Now the hour of 0700hrs has been established as the time for first entries for the week there should be no more bleary-eyed members on the course who either stayed up till midnight to sign in or got up during the wee small hours to do the same thing.

It is another facility that puts us ahead of the rest. In 2009, may all your putts be short ones. **Nick Lindo**

Details of Junior Golf performances over January

NZ Under 23 Individual Championship held at Hastings GC, Russley represented by Keelan Kilpatrick, Jordan Pentecost, Drew Atkins, Rodney Yee. Keelan Kilpatrick performed very well with rounds of 72, 76, 75, 72, to end in 20th position.

NZ Mens Under 23 Teams Championship held at Taupo GC. The five man Canterbury Team had four Russley members, who were Rodney Yee, Jordan Pentecost, Owen Burgess, and Keelan Kilpatrick. The Canterbury Team ended up in tenth position. On an individual basis Owen Burgess performed very well to be the leading Canterbury player with rounds of 73, 74, 74, 71.

North Island Under 19 Championship held at St Andrews GC, Hamilton. Russley represented by Owen Burgess, Keelan Kilpatrick, Michael McAuley, Regan Kilpatrick. Owen Burgess performed very well to finish in 24th equal position.

It is great to see Russley Juniors taking the opportunity to play in competitive competitions in the North Island, both as individuals or representing Canterbury.

Ladies' Chat

Welcome to the new golf season, I hope you all have an enjoyable and productive golf year. We have done our best to continue with an interesting and varied programme which has a few changes from last year, so be sure to look at your golf calendars carefully. We have a very busy start to the season - after our Opening Days we are straight into Interclub the following week, for both mid week and weekend players and also for the first time we have two teams entered in the

Ladies' Chat (continued)

9-Hole interclub. This competition is going to be run on stableford points, rather than match play, and will comprise teams of 4, women, men or mixed. The week after (Monday 16th February) we are holding the Russley Challenge Tournament. This is basically the old Bronze Tournament but extended out to a course handicap of 18 to enable more players to enter, as our entries have been falling over recent years. The list will go up in the Foyer soon, so be sure to get your entry in and encourage friends from other clubs to enter too.

A major change to our back nine scores will come about at the end of the month. From 31st January we will be playing no18 as a par 5. It will retain the same tee position and become stroke hole 13, no 13 will become stroke hole 4 and no 11 will change to stroke hole 9. These changes have been made based on the average strokes we take on these holes. We will continue to monitor the scores to ensure we have the correct stroke rating.

The Committee and I look forward to seeing you all on Opening Day and invite you to come and talk to us about any problems or ideas you may have. We are here to help you make your golf more enjoyable. **Tricia Riddolls**

Greenkeeper's Chat

As anticipated, it's been a busy few months for the green keeping team since the last 'chat'. The weather imposes a demanding schedule on us, going from a cold wet winter to some of the hottest days on record. You may have noticed the course starting to dry up in places, the challenge for us is achieving a balance between green, healthy grass and the avoidance of wet and muddy areas on the playing surfaces. The good news is that the effects of our seasonal coring programme have been positive; when comparing the quality of the playing surface during the summer season to this period 5 years ago, we have made significant improvements.

You will have noticed the volume of golf being played over the past few months, which creates wear and tear on our tees and fairways. I really appreciate those of you who take the time to sand divots and repair pitch marks. These actions go a long way to ensuring the golf course is maintained in a good playing condition for all members.

Similarly, to maintain the high quality of the playing surfaces, we will be coring the greens on the second week of March and fairways the last week in March and the first week in April. We appreciate that this essential activity does interrupt your enjoyment of the course, however our team has become extremely skilled in undertaking this job and we aim to create as little disruption to our golfers as possible.

Feedback is something we are always happy to receive, whether it is good or bad! A number of you have raised concerns regarding the sand in the bunkers. We realise that this is a problem area, in particular, the sand levels in some of the bunkers (e.g. holes 3, 6, 7 & 9) and the hard compact sand in others. The key reason for the compacting sand is the need to rely heavily on our sprinkler system. The amount of water being pumped onto the course due to the dry weather causes the sand to compact in the bunkers. We do rake the bunkers 3 to 4 times per week; however, our staff resources have to be prioritised in other areas, resulting in less than optimal bunker conditions from time to time.

Finally, as a team we continue to develop new skills, and we are all extremely proud of the course presentation. Noel Hill will be starting his apprenticeship soon. In addition, our best wishes and thoughts are with Kevin (our resident tree feller), who will be having his hip replaced tomorrow. **John Jones**