

Captain's Report for AGM on 23rd February 2022

Fellow members,

Firstly, thank you to Nene Park Golf Club for allowing me the privilege of being the Club Captain for the past year. It has been a great honour, and I have really enjoyed doing it.

As we know, 2021 was still quite a difficult year, especially through the first three months when we couldn't play golf at all. When play was allowed, and competitions could begin, the Competition & Handicaps secretaries for all three sections had their work cut out to give us competitions to play in. They did a marvelous job, and we should all be very grateful for their hard work and dedication. We now had Club competitions running, but with hospitality venues remaining closed, we were prevented from playing club matches, which meant the first four of the Mens ones were cancelled. Once we could, the matches we did play were all very enjoyable, and we lost only once. Overall, we won 3, halved 1, and lost 1. It was a similar story for the Seniors and Ladies Sections, but all in all, we managed to maximise the opportunities to get through the year with as many club matches played as possible.

For those unaware of the competitive matches the Mens Section play, we enter teams from each of the former clubs of Thorpe Wood and Orton Meadows. The competitions are The Derek Burridge Trophy (5 pairs of matchplay Greensomes), and the Jock Stewart Memorial Trophy (3 pairs (in handicap brackets) of matchplay foursomes). Unfortunately Orton Meadows were knocked out of both competitions in the first round. One of the difficulties in fielding a team in the Jock Stewart Trophy, is that the competition requires pairs to be in specific handicap bands, and the WHS handicap system means players can easily play themselves in, or out, of one of these bands with one good or bad round. Of course this applies to all clubs, but it certainly keeps the person picking the team on their toes. The Thorpe Wood team had a better run, but were knocked out of the Jock Stewart at the quarter final stage in a tricky match away at Saffron Walden. In the Derek Burridge Trophy we were even closer, but were losing finalists to March GC.

For those members that wish to be considered to represent the club in matches, they should register their interest with any of the committee members. It is not possible for everyone to play of course, and for the competitive matches in particular we would always try to select the strongest team available. This shouldn't deter people from putting themselves forward for selection as anyone willing to do so should be considered for the team. This year we have added to the number of Men's & Senior's matches by entering teams in the CAGU Inter-Club Greensomes Leagues, which along with the knockout competitions will certainly mean we will need to have a larger pool of players to choose from. However, for the Greensomes Leagues we are only entering teams from NPGC only, and not the two former clubs. As well as those already mentioned, we are also entering CAGU Inter-Club Pairs & Singles knockout competitions with two entries in each competition.

Having mentioned the matches, I would like to say how favourably our courses have compared to all the others I have played (certainly in this area). I think the courses have been in the best condition I can remember for a long time. The greens at Thorpe Wood in particular in the late Summer/Autumn were absolutely fabulous, which brings me on to Nene Golf Ltd. I'd like to thank Simon for his management and investment in the course and its infrastructure, all the off course staff for their professionalism, advice & friendliness to both members and visitors, and the green staff which work so hard to maintain the playing conditions, in sometimes, very difficult circumstances. Added together they provide a great golfing experience for us all.

For members that may not know about the workings of the club, all comments or ideas raised by members to anyone on the committee will always be given due consideration at one, or both, of the committee meetings. Any decisions made by the Golf and Management Committees are always made with the best interests of the club, and all members in mind. It is virtually impossible to please everyone, as there will always be differing opinions, therefore, if you find yourself unhappy with the decisions being made, feel free to volunteer to apply for a place on the committee so that you are in a better position to influence them in future!

I have already mentioned that decisions are not taken lightly, but the passion and commitment that all committee members have for the club and its members is really great to witness. I have no doubt that Ben Ferguson will only improve on what are already sound foundations. He will certainly bring more youthful energy than I possess, and with Allan Young as his Vice-Captain, I am positive things will only get better for this great club. Ben is already implementing changes having launched the new Club Website, and is in the process of securing a deal to provide standardized NPGC clothing for the Club. On the subject of Club Captains, with a membership the size of ours, we should have a queue of members wanting to be future Captains (in all sections). So please consider whether you would like to contribute to the club in a more formal manner in the future. I've already proved that you don't necessarily need to be either a good player, or an accomplished public speaker to be Club Captain!

Something that has been a pleasant change for me this year is playing in all of the mixed competitions. I have thoroughly enjoyed all of them, and thank the poor unfortunate ladies that have had to partner me. It would be nice to have more men and women entering these competitions as they make a refreshing change to the norm. It is worth noting for the men, that the ladies hit the ball far straighter than us, and for the ladies, not all men are ultra competitive monsters, some of us just want a fun round too.

On a personal level, I'd like to thank everyone that has helped me throughout my time as Vice-Captain and Captain. I hesitate to name everyone in case I inadvertently miss someone out. Thanks to all the committee members (on both the Management and Golf committees), past and future Captains, the players that have represented the club in matches, those club

stalwarts Colin and Do Bagley, and all the other helpers in the Halfway House. Also thanks to all the other club members for their companionship and feedback (both good & bad) and their contributions to the club. I'd also like to add that with the re-opening of the Halfway House to include the Mens competitions this year we have raised a considerable amount for my charity - National Star. It has also raised similar amounts for both the Senior & Lady Captains charities, so a huge thanks to everyone for your generosity (and once again to Colin, Do and helpers).

In the future I hope to remain an active member of the club in whatever way I can be of benefit, but in the meantime to the future Captains:

Club Captain: Ben Ferguson with his Vice-Captain Allan Young

Lady Captain: Karen Hiles with her Vice-Captain Tae Gooding

Seniors Captain: Brian Robinson with a vacancy for his Vice-Captain

I wish you all the best for your tenures, and I hope you enjoy your Captaincy at least as much as I have.

Nigel Richards

Club Captain 2021-22