

APRIL NEWSLETTER



Ibom Golf Club

Le Meridien Ibom Hotel & Golf Resort, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

www.lemeridienibom.com

Dear Member,

As the month of April appears over the horizon, I can happily report that the golf course has finally received some much needed rain days and with it comes the prospect of us all enjoying some much improved grass coverage all over the golf course in the weeks ahead.

There is no doubt that nature does seem able to supply us with a well balanced mix of nutrients during these downpours, that is very difficult to replicate through other artificial applications or irrigation by our course team.

The golf management team remain committed to improving the golf course's condition in 2017 starting with hope with some significant improvements to the putting surfaces, on which Ibom once developed a powerful reputation.

I can assure all members and visitors to the resort that we will not waver from this task whatever the challenges, as we believe that a quality golf course underpins everything that we are seeking to achieve in terms of our membership recruitment targets, developing our tournament schedule, and increasing the number of golfers that visit the resort.

As part of this commitment to improving the course, in the last month, with the assistance of Julius Berger (Ng) Ltd we were able to host a visit by Chris Thompson, an agronomist of European Tour qualification, so that he might look at the greens with Roger Edwards of Jardin and develop ideas that might accelerate an improvement in the conditioning. It was certainly a very proactive meeting that produced very helpful and productive ideas on best practice programs that might prove helpful for greens such as Ibom's. I hope it will be possible to bring Chris back to Ibom in the near future because as he said during the meeting "these greens are potentially the best for the locality, but they are also the highest cost option available in terms of ongoing maintenance" - which I took to mean that potentially we should have the best greens in Nigeria, but they do come at a price, and any reduction in our course maintenance funding must sadly have a disproportionate impact on the deliverable quality of our putting surfaces.

Rest assured though we will maintain our vigilance with regard to the presentation values of the course.

Roger Yates

Upcoming Events

Members Day Competitions – every Sunday in the month

Easter Holiday Kitty Program – details to be announced

Subscription 2017 Reminder

I'd like to thank all of those members that have paid their subscription fees for 2017 and enjoyed the discounts that were available to them.

Please be aware that on April 1st I will change the membership status of those members with **outstanding fees** to that of **Suspended Member**.

Judging by the impact of this on the 2016 season, I know now that there will be a situation where these newly suspended members will arrive at Ibom with an expectation of playing golf.

Golf will of course be possible for these golfers but only if they;

1. Pay their outstanding fees for 2017
2. Pay the Green Fee of the day in the Pro Shop
3. They are a resident in the resort

So in order to avoid any future misunderstandings please be aware that ;

- ***I will challenge anyone that I believe has not followed either steps 1,2, or 3***
- ***I will do my utmost to defend the value of the Ibom membership on behalf of those members who have paid their fees for 2017.***
- ***I have already given you three months access to the golf course & privileges of membership without paying, so please don't ask me for a further extension as a refusal often offends***

Members News

It was in the March newsletter that I first outlined 3 ideas for trying to, I thought, improve the competitive schedule at Ibom in 2017, and I must say that thus far I am very disappointed with the lack of feedback from members on what I thought were quite good ideas worthy of their consideration.

It remains our wish to try to provide golf activities that all members would be willing to support, and whilst the golf management team might still develop a number of ideas around this, I know from experience that things will only really start to move forward in a meaningful way if there is a strong level of interaction with the membership.

I must confess to being surprised by this as I have always had a high level of confidence that the desire for a stronger golf membership experience at Ibom was in the heart of most members that I have spoken with. I feel that I should perhaps share with you a piece of knowledge that I have gained in over 40 years of golf, in my experience this desire will never be fully realized if the membership don't start to play their part in the process.

“Any golf club is only as strong as the commitment shown by its members to play their part in its future success”

It is with that in mind that I will once again share with you the following two proposals now.

Proposal 1 - Members Match Play Challenge Ladder

Q) The Match Play Challenge Ladder - What is it?

A) The Ibom GC Match Play Challenge ladder is essentially a ranking system of all the golfers with handicaps in the Club.

The ladder is separate from any other Club Match Play event that may also be introduced during the season, so even if you don't want to commit to other Club Match Play events, you can still participate in the Match Play Ladder.

Q) How does it work?

The ladder lists golf members in handicap order and players move up the ladder by challenging and beating those listed above them. If you successfully challenge another member (i.e., you win your match), then you move up to your opponents' position on the ladder, and your opponent will fall by one place. If you are unsuccessful (you lose), then both players stay in the same places as before.

Q) Who can I challenge?

Players already on the Match Play ladder can only challenge others who are up to 10 places above them, and therefore can be challenged by players up to 10 places below them. All matches are to be played off handicap with 75% of the difference between each player's handicaps being used.

Q) What happens then?

After playing a ladder match, simply visit the Pro Shop or email roger.yates@lemeridienibom.com to register the result. The ladder will be updated weekly and the up to date ladder posted to the noticeboard at the clubhouse.

So shall we let the search for the best match player at Ibom GC begin by introducing this event?

Proposal 2 – Supplementary Scores

Golf greatest asset and its biggest liability is surely the effective handicapping of its players. If this is done correctly then it ensures closely competitive and enjoyable games as every player has a similar opportunity to compete, but if not, it is by far the quickest way to spoil matches and lose friends.

In order to improve the administration of handicaps at Ibom we will be requiring that all scorecards in kitty's, medals etc. are returned for handicap purposes, and in addition from April 1st there will be an entry list kept in the ProShop for members who might wish to register that they will be returning the card from their round that day to us for assessment.

It is hoped that this new addition will allow for members to seek adjustments to their handicap in a more managed fashion than perhaps might have been the case previously.

Is this a good addition?

If you have suggestions or thoughts on either or both of the above proposals please let me know by email: roger.yates@lemeridien.com

Updated Ibom GC News

In the last newsletter I announced the introduction of both a new menu at De Terrace and a proposed increase in the caddy fees for 2017 from March 1st 2017.

Whilst appreciating that the reappraisal of the pricing of the menu in particular was likely to cause some initial concern to members, I have been generally pleased with the level of understanding that has been shown by most members to the inevitability of this increase, which it should be understood has been brought about solely by the increased food costs experienced by all of the residents of Nigeria currently. The Captain quite eloquently expressed the concerns of some of the membership to me regarding certain menu items, and as a result of his direct intervention there has been a small downward re-adjustment made to the price of these dishes.

It was during these same discussions that the proposed increase in caddy fees was also discussed, and whilst I remain of the opinion that this suggested increase was both fair and reasonable, I do concede the captain's point that all caddies are not at the same level of experience and therefore should not receive the same level of payment.

It has therefore been agreed that as a direct result of our discussion, the golf management team will look at how we might go about improving the training/supervision of our caddies so that a re-classification of the caddies in terms of their expertise, experience etc. will be possible when we again review our rates in July. The idea being that we would at this point increase the rates but for only our best trained and most qualified caddies.

Whilst the caddy fee rate structure and the F&B tariff remain entirely a decision for the resort GM & the Golf Manager to make, I think that my meeting with the Captain is a perfect example of how improving interaction with the membership will generally produce better results that we can all support more comfortably.

I'd like to thank the Captain for his input in these two areas and particularly for his understanding of the improved and binding decisions that resulted from the meeting.

Food & beverage consumption – items brought on to the property

I thought that it would be useful if I took this opportunity to clarify for everyone that uses the golf clubhouse, the Starwood Hotels policy regarding the consumption of any food & beverage items that were not purchased at the resort or prepared by our F&B team.

I think that this really is a very simple policy for all golfers to appreciate and understand – **there are no circumstance which allows for food or beverages purchased or created outside of the property to be brought on to the property for consumption here.**

I mention this as sadly it has been noted by the golf and resort management that increasingly over recent few weeks the frequency of some members disregarding or ignoring this rule is increasing. I'd like to believe that perhaps this is only due to an individual member's ignorance of the policy's existence – whether this be with the consumption of herbal drinks, or other food items or drinks - or perhaps there is even a mistaken belief that somehow their Ibom GC membership status in fact excludes them from portions or all of this policy – **I wish to make it very clear that it does not and to that point I have now been now tasked by the resort's senior management to police such abuses of the resort's policy in the strongest terms possible.**

Please understand - This policy is a key Food & Beverage - Health & Safety policy and one that we all take very seriously at the resort, so I ask for your support and understanding in this matter from this point forward.

Golf Rule of the Month

There is rarely a weekend that goes by without me being asked to give a ruling on a members dispute arising from the game they have just completed. The rules can be tricky to understand for some people, particularly if their understanding stems from a "Charles told me" method of learning, rather than them taking the time to study or even glance at the Rules of Golf book or online information.

Personally I like as a way of learning the many videos on YouTube that demonstrate on course situations and then show you how to take appropriate relief etc. from them. These images will sit in your mind for years and they become an easy referral service anytime you get into difficulty.

Here is an Ibom relevant rule that many still seem to get wrong – watch, learn, remember and apply.

How to drop off a cart path – USGA version



Click here for the link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOZGEKOEIq4>

