
AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Ibom Golf Club

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

www.lemeridienibom.com

Dear Member,

Well as you no doubt are already aware the rainy season has now arrived in all of its might, making golf a tricky proposition if 18 holes are to be achieved without the need for an umbrella at some point.

Our members seem to be adjusting their starting times to try to dodge the worst of the rain, but it is certainly a daily factor that will need to be considered for the next few months. At the moment early morning play seems to be offering the best option as the majority of the rain is arriving either early afternoon or later after dark.

The volume of water that descends onto the course at this time of year presents many challenges for Roger Edwards and his team, not least in trying to maintain the weekly cutting timetable for the fairways, greens, semi rough and rough.

The machinery that they use understandably have their limitations when the ground conditions soften or when they are required to cut recently sodden grass, and this perhaps needs to be remembered by golfers who might see an area of the course appearing to be neglected or ignored. This will rarely if ever be the case, instead it will most likely be the result of an interruption to the cutting schedule that the weather to that point has not allowed them to catch up with immediately.

On the membership recruitment front, I am delighted to say that there still remains a reasonable level of interest from people wishing to join the club, and we continue to progress towards my ambitious target for 2016 membership numbers.

The decision we made in mid-2015 to offer subscriptions to any new members on a pro rata basis for the first time, has certainly given us the ability to recruit throughout the playing season, which in these fiscally challenging times has proved to be invaluable.

Let's hope that we can still continue to grow the membership throughout the second part of the year, as this will set up what should be an exciting finale to 2016.

Roger Yates



Upcoming Events

Clubnite – Friday 5th August 2016

Members Day Competition – 7th August 2016

Sponsors Day Competition – Sunday 21st August

Members' Birthday Kitty – Saturday 27th August

Membership Subscription Update

We continue to attract new members and to re-engage with our past members all of which keeps us moving on toward our 2016 membership target.

Reminders - Those members that chose the split payment method of payment of their subscription for 2016 are respectfully reminded that they willingly entered into a contract with the Captain & the Club to make staged payments, knowing that the penalty for non-payment would automatically result in the forfeit of both membership benefits and all fees paid to that point.

A review of all such contracts are now under way and albeit reluctantly, the agreed penalties will be triggered in all those cases where it is merited.

Those members that have paid their fees in the past 3 months are reminded that the fee due was **NGN95,000** and not the discounted fee of NGN 85,000 that was available for early payment in January & February.

Golf Club News

The Clubnite that is being held each Friday is starting to increase hugely in popularity amongst Ibom members, their families and friends, in particular the après golf which is certainly proving to be better attended than the golfing activities that are laid on for members during the afternoon/evening.

The Clubnite is a very useful opportunity to introduce the club to people that may not be that familiar with the type of membership experience that we offer at Ibom.

A subscription for membership of Ibom GC principally secures golfers access to the golf course for 6 days per week, 52 weeks of the year, but the resort has worked hard to add value to this offering by developing the club membership through competitions, and Inter Club matches whilst working tirelessly to improve the membership experience in the following ways.

Membership of Ibom – some added value;

- Members enjoy a 20% discount in the Pro shop on all non-Hole 19 stock
- Members Menu at Golf – this offers a significant reduction on resort F&B prices
- Members only golf coaching sessions – sponsored by the resort, making these sessions at no cost to the member
- Member's rate special discount within the resort – rooms, etc.
- Members only promotions – Clubnite, Captain's Drive In Kitty, Driving Range Launch
- Membership of the Leisure Club – includes use of the resort's gym & pool area
- Member's rates for all resort promoted golf events – SPG, LM Open

All of the above is helping to make the Ibom Golf Club develop quickly into the preferred leisure option for many of the Uyo based young professionals and their families, who are looking now for a different experience that affords them the opportunity to enjoy time together, whilst playing sport in an area of un-paralleled natural beauty.

As our membership recruitment drive continues, it is the country membership option that is proving to be a popular preference for those people who now reside outside of Uyo but travel back into the state enough times during the year to allow them to enjoy the benefits of club membership. This membership category is under review currently to see if it offers the connection with the club for people that we had hoped for, or whether some fine tuning would benefit it in 2017.

So you can see that our ambitions to grow the membership to a significant level remain as committed as ever, but we know that without a deliverable golf development program within the State, it will remain a sizeable challenge to meet our ambitious targets for the club. It is with this in mind that we have put in place a framework plan for an Ibom Golf Academy Golf Development program and we hope that the interest shown by the captain of the club, **Usenobong Akpabio**, to take it to the State on behalf of both the club and the resort, will lead to its launch in the near future..

I believe that this type of initiative would be a wonderful **legacy project** for the State, as it has the potential to benefit the community in so many different ways – business development, empowerment of individuals, improving family relations, assisting greater personal development, bringing a new sport to the people, and creating a new social environment. The potential for such a program to lead in time to an **Inter State event** is considerable once we can introduce the most talented athletes in the State to golf.

The expansion of the game of golf within the State would be a game changer for Ibom GC, as increased numbers of players always leads to standards of play improving, and with the soaring of interest levels in what has long been seen as

an elite sport, we might at last begin to see golf in Nigeria become as it is in many parts of the world, as **a game for everyone**.

Establishment of the Birthday Kitty

The last Saturday in every month has now become known as the Monthly Birthday Kitty. This is a monthly competition for members at which those members who have enjoyed a birthday during the month are able to celebrate once again with their fellow members. The kitty format is ideally suited to this type of golf club activity as it brings together a number of elements that when combined provide a very enjoyable day for everyone involved.

So make sure you reserve the time in your diary to attend the next one.

Gentle reminder to all members

All entries to club competitions require each individual member to enter the Pro Shop in person to register and pay. It is not acceptable or appropriate for either member's caddies or any other representatives to be given the responsibility for a member's entry to a club competition.

Golf Course News

As mentioned earlier the main consideration for Roger Edwards and his team currently is coping with the huge quantities of rain that are deposited on the course throughout a typical rainy season. The biggest victim of the rain will be the course "cutting plan", which is the pre-determined plan for the cutting of the course to ensure that it is presented at its very best throughout the periods of peak activity.

This plan allocates resources throughout the week to make sure that the agreed levels of greens, tees, fairways, semi-rough and rough are maintained at the pre-determined height of cut. The challenge arises when the rain prohibits the use of these resources at the appropriate time, and the cutting plan then has to be re-organized on a priority basis which will leave the course at its most playable level under the circumstances.

Whilst I have talked about the rain as the most significant factor in the interruption of the plan, equally machinery break downs, and labor problems can just as easily derail the best of intentions of Roger and his team. It is perhaps worth considering that the golf course would become completely unplayable in little over a week if the cutting plan was ever halted permanently, such are the local climate and growing conditions.

"On going course maintenance remains a top priority for club management as we seek to deliver a better membership experience to everyone".

Identifying the areas of the course that need attention remains an ongoing process for us, but implementing work programs will always depend on the levels of funding allocated by the State for such things.

In previous emails we have mentioned the need for the bunkers on the course to receive some serious re-instatement work, and to this point we have not been in a financial position to start the work that we know is needed. The level of edging work alone would prove to be both costly and time consuming, but it is fast becoming increasingly essential and necessary if the course is to retain its reputation as **"the best course in Nigeria"**.

The layout we have and the natural terrain the course runs through offers us enormous advantages to the retention of this title, but without the very highest levels of presentation, it will be difficult for us to hold on to this enviable accolade against the claims of IBB, Lakowe Lakes and Smoking Hills.

Titles always need defending, and for Ibom our defense can only start in earnest with the reinstatement of the bunkers, the rebuilding of some tees, and fine tuning our cutting program.

Course improvement program – 5th tee

An area of real concern in recent months for the golf management team has been the areas of the course that are showing the worst wear and tear.

These have now been addressed with the course maintenance team and the first example of a new improvement program that members will notice on the course, is the 5th tee box which now has what appears to be a heavily sanded area at the front of the tee.

This is an experimental growth program that we are trialing to see if the introduction of a harder wearing type of grass will offer a solution for many of the damaged teeing grounds on the course.

The sanded area that you see is in fact a growth bed for this new grass seed and already green shoots can be seen forcing their way through the top dressing/ sand. The area has been roped off and golfers are asked to help to maintain this protected area by not walking across it at any time.

If we get a positive outcome with this program then the plan is to introduce it to other teeing grounds according to the priority list that we have put together.



Rainy Season Course Changes

It is my intention in the coming weeks to move the **Blue** tee positions forward & backward on holes to try to offer a different challenge for our regular golfers from week to week.

The **Black** Tees will always remain in their normal position throughout this experiment and members may of course play from that position at any time, but I will try to use the **Red** course layout, or the **Blue** course layout depending on how wet the course is. The **Red** course at 5714 yards which in wet conditions will prove to be an interesting test for members, and hopefully it might prove to be fun to have a change every so often

Local Rules - Due to the seasonal conditions – lift clean and place will be in play on all closely mown surfaces, and embedded balls through the green may also be lift cleaned and dropped. This will be reviewed constantly and amended where necessary, so please keep looking at the notice board or in the Pro Shop for up to date details.

Buggy use will be reviewed constantly throughout the rainy season and players are asked to respect the decisions made by management to protect the course during periods of heavy rain.