
MARCH NEWSLETTER

Ibom Golf Club

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

www.lemeridienibom.com

Dear Member,

The early months of any new golfing season will see golf managers around the globe reviewing their operation to try to identify where improvements can be made and where adjustments in charges are unavoidable.

The annual subscription payments in 2017 have been very reassuring, with some 64 members taking advantage of the early payment incentive we introduced, along with 16 new or returning members adding to that number. It has been very heartening to see so many members embrace this new approach to the payment of their annual fees, and I see it as a sign of their willingness to support our efforts to keeping growing the membership, as we continue to strive to improve the golfing experience for everyone at Ibom.

As you read this, if you are still expecting **to pay your fees at the reduced level**, then I need to remind you that **you will only have until midnight on the 28th February to do so**, as after this time, our computerized membership system will automatically re-evaluate each member's membership status based on fees paid.

From March 1st we will introduce a new menu to De Terrace, and make some small adjustments to the Caddy Fee rates for 2017, both of which we believe are necessary if we are to meet our target of creating a much improved membership experience both on and off the course.

I'm pleased to report that some discussions have been held between the golf club management team, and Jardin - the course maintenance team, to try to produce some noticeable improvements to the golf course in 2017. It is hoped that these discussions will expand in the coming weeks to include representatives of the State government who are understandably very proud of the Ibom golf course, particularly having made such significant investment, into both the construction and upkeep of the course since its inception.

I feel sure that they will want to continue to improve the value of their asset, if it can be clearly demonstrated to them how better to maximize both the benefits it provides and the potential it has to a much larger number of people in the future.

Hopefully as you read this you will get the sense that an improvement to the golf course will be our number 1 priority in 2017, believing as we do, that its condition ultimately underpins everything else that we are looking to achieve with both the golf club membership, and golf related business for the resort.

Roger Yates



Upcoming Events

Nigerian Navy Golf Event – 1st, 2nd, & 3rd March

Members Day Competition – 4th March 2017

Captain's Drive-In Kitty – Saturday 25th March

Sponsors Golf Day – Sunday 26th March

Unity Cup - Interclub 4 team event – April 6th to 8th

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.

To those still looking to pay I must remind them that on the **1st March the discounted rate will disappear**, leaving only the full subscription fee rate available for payment.

It will also be at this point that the membership system will automatically re-evaluate all membership classifications based on the fees paid to each member's account. So in order to avoid any potential future misunderstandings please be aware that in my eyes:-

- *a member of Ibom GC is only somebody who has paid their annual subscription for the calendar year in which they wish to play*
- *anybody else or those who once might have been a fee paying member are considered either - a Suspended or a Past member – and as such has no rights to any of the current benefits of membership.*

Sponsors Day 2017

As players drive away from Ibom with their trophies tucked safely into their luggage at the conclusion of another successful Ibom golf event, it's far too easy to forget the group of people that make these events possible.....our sponsors.



The resort has perhaps been very fortunate, particularly in more recent times, to continue to receive the generous financial support of a small number of companies who we would consider to be long standing **“Friends of the Resort”**.



So as we move full swing into the 2017 golfing year we are introducing our first annual sponsors golf day which we hope will enable us to better recognize their support in a way that might yet encourage other companies to join us in developing the very best golfing event schedule in Nigeria.

We will extend an invitation to them and other companies who have indicated an interest in partnering with us, to join us on March 26th for a round of golf and an après golf lunch.

If you feel this might be something you'd like to involve yourself or your company in, then please email me at roger.yates@lemeridien.com so that we can discuss it further and look how best to involve you or your company.

Membership News

There have been some changes to the Ibom Golf Club membership categories for 2017, with perhaps the most significant being the reduction in the qualifying radius for Country Membership from 500kms to 90kms.

This decision was based largely on the need for a pro-active response from golf management to the many requests coming to us from the Calabar/ Port Harcourt area, by our past or current members, who though wishing to keep their affiliation with the club, were feeling that the travelling involved would restrict their visits to the point where a full membership might cease to become a realistic option for them.

Trying to encourage as many people as possible who have associations with Ibom GC to either re-engage with or retain their interest in the club, remains a huge part of what we anticipate and hope will be a drive towards a stronger level of membership (150+ players) in 2017. To achieve this target we recognize that we will need to retain as many of our 2016 members as possible whilst adding new or returning members wherever possible. We know that this can only be achieved by constantly striving to improve the overall membership experience and making more appealing membership options available to them.

One of the best ways to do this has to be by providing increased opportunities for members to meet other members in the clubhouse or out on the golf course, and it is with that in mind that we are looking to launch one or two new competitive formats in 2017 to help to stimulate this vital interaction.

New Ideas for competitive play 2017

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 March 1st there will be an entry list kept in the Pro Shop 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?

Proposal 3 – The Unity Cup – an Inter State 4 Club Team Invitational Tournament

It is hoped that we will be able to add an exciting new event to the 2017 Golf Schedule with the launch of an inter-state club team match play event that will be played at Le Meridien Ibom Hotel & Golf Resort over a 4 day period in early 2017.

Proposed Format

- Each invited club will compete against each other on an inter-club basis once – there will be 24 players per side competing on a match play basis in pairs (4 Ball Better Ball – off handicap)
- The winners of each individual game in the match will score 2 points for their team – 1 point for a half game
- The club team with the most points will be declared the winner of that inter-club match
- The club team that wins the most inter-club matches will be declared the winner of the tournament
- In the event of a tie between clubs – the club with the most individual points scored in the tournament throughout all three inter-club matches will be declared the winner.

- In the event of a tie on points scored the clubs will nominate two players to play on behalf of their team in a sudden death play-off.



Inter Club Teams – Ibom GC v NUGA

Is the time now right to try to introduce Unity (Cup) to Ibom?

Handicap Review 2016

A year end handicap review has now been carried out and in many cases handicaps have been altered to hopefully better reflect each player's average performance. The new Handicap List will come into effect from March 1st and will be displayed on the notice board at the clubhouse for your inspection, but in future it will also be possible to email it to members at the end of each month.

Please Note. Only those members in full registration (fees paid for 2017) will hold a valid handicap at Ibom, unfortunately those players out of registration will have to have their handicap lapsed until their membership status is re-instated.

It is worth noting that the list we have issued has been compiled from Ibom GC's existing Handicap Master Software which was previously managed by pro Victor Assam, so if you find that you are not included and feel that you should have been, please don't hesitate to contact me at roger.yates@lemeridien.com so that this can be reviewed and where necessary rectified as soon as possible.

A New Menu launches at De Terrace – commences on March 1st 2017

One of the huge benefits of being associated with a 5 star leisure resort is the unlimited options that it allows the golf management team to explore in order to improve the culinary experience for our members and guests.

It was during such a gastronomic appraisal that the golf and resort management team both felt that it was now necessary to make some modifications to both menu items and tariff, in order to better balance the dining requirements of our golfers with the economic changes in the country which has recently seen our food costs rise so dramatically.

It has always been the resort management's wish and to some extent, policy, to try to maintain a much lower tariff at the golf clubhouse than in any of the other resort dining venues.

I do believe that this new menu has managed to retain these principles, whilst still managing to reflect the more challenging fiscal environment that sadly prevails within the country at present.

I'm confident that our members and guests will soon grow to appreciate and understand the need for these changes, along with the careful thought that led to us having to make them, particularly as we had managed to retain a largely unchanged menu tariff for a number of years.

I believe that we manage at Le Meridien Ibom Hotel & Golf Resort to offer unparalleled levels of hospitality and service to our members and guests when compared with other golf clubs, but to maintain this we need to continue to manage things as responsibly as possible at all times.

Changes to Caddy Program & Fees from March 1st

During our operational review we felt that it was important to improve the Caddy Program through a number of new initiatives that would encourage greater commitment and improvement from our caddies.

One of the areas that we are currently looking at is how best to incorporate a pathway to golf for the caddies which would reward both their playing ability and their improved performance when assisting golfers out on the course. It has already been agreed that there will be a monthly competition for caddies which will be managed through the Handicap Master software to regulate their handicaps better, and to provide for the possibility of a **Caddie of the Year** competition which might be based on the year's best 8 scores from each caddy, or even a Caddy Order of Merit.



It is through simple ideas such as these that the incentive for golfing improvements can be created, but to produce a similar improvement whilst they work out on the course is certainly more of a challenge but I feel that a good starting point is to review the caddy fee tariff on a regular basis, and then making appropriate adjustments or not as circumstances dictate.



Caddy Fees for 2017

❖ 9 hole rate	NGN 1,500
❖ 18 hole rate	NGN 2,500
❖ Range work – warm up pre round	NGN 250
❖ Range work – up to 45 minutes	NGN 500
❖ Range work – over 45 minutes	NGN 1000

