

BTRGS 2009 Winter Meeting Report

Date: 14 January 2009
Venue: Ipswich Golf Club, Purdis.
Format: Stableford - Aggregate Team Scoring

This event was advertised in early December, and a reminder issued immediately after New Year. A number of enthusiasts very quickly sent in money to Jon to secure their place. The reminder coincided with a particularly long very cold and frosty spell – which was not the best conditions for enthusing golfers.

Leading up to the event there were a couple of drop outs, and 2 guests were offered, and accepted, to bring up the numbers to 11 players.

Ideally I wanted teams of 3 with the best 2 scores on each hole, counting. This format is forgiving of the odd early season disaster hole. This was used at last year's event, but adjustments had to be made to enable a 2 man team score to be deduced – which was not totally satisfactory. So this year, with entry numbers again not a multiple of 3, I decided to have full aggregate score, which was then divided by team size to give the average score for the team.

The cold spell continued right up to the 13th, although the forecast was much better for the 14th - so we were hopeful the event would go ahead.

On the day, despite the forecast being promising, there was a very heavy frost first thing. The early arrivers found both the main course and the 9-hole course closed. The pro was confident that the 10.00 inspection would be positive. (As Chris Amos had noted, Ipswich have a “weather line” on 01473 728941 – so use of this could have enabled some to sleep in a bit longer! Note for next year). So we dispersed to re-convene around 10.00.

The inspection was positive and both courses opened. So a few played some holes on the 9 hole course. Then, after the regular Ipswich Seniors had teed off, at about 11.00 off we went. By now it was still quite frosty in patches, although the sun was out, and the weather was overall really excellent for a winter's day of golf. The greens were quite mixed: in places, icy, slushy, wet and dry. However as the condition of each green was visible, the conditions were fair - unlike where similar looking greens have variable speeds. The pace was relaxed, rather than frustrating, as we were playing a 2-ball followed by 3 3-balls, behind a couple of 4-balls. Stephen S was in the last group closely monitoring Jonathon's use of his new GPS device. We all took great interest in this, and Jonathon was inundated with questions. Apparently he has discovered a number of blue marker posts on various courses are significantly inaccurate. Steve S will report back at the next committee meeting so we can discuss whether they will be formally ratified for BTRGS events.

After our round we had a quick drink followed by a very welcome and good high tea of ham, egg & chips. The mystery of who ordered an omelette was never resolved, but Chris gamely offered to have this instead of the standard double fried eggs. We noted that only one player took a shower before tea, and the consensus was that he was trying to save on his home energy bills.

The modest £1 a head prize fund enabled the winning team, Jon, Steve H & Trevor to each receive a bottle of Italian red wine – courtesy of an attractive 3 for £10 Sainsbury offer. Your wines are £4.99 quality, guys. With slight embarrassment, Steve H noted that it was great to win a prize despite playing really badly. There was an additional prize of a whole pack of Toblerone – for the highest individual score, outside the winning team. This was won by Paul Burke (33 points), who was clearly impressed with Jonathon's PDS device, and confided that he was thinking of buying one to speed up his play!

Overall the day was good fun, and enjoyed by all, despite fairly modest scoring. With just 11 players, the atmosphere was pleasantly intimate, so this size event is certainly viable.

Stephen S mooted a good 3 ball format: best 1 score for the first 6 holes, best 2 for next 6, and aggregate scoring of all 3 for the last 6. This gives people time to get their game going in such an early season event - so something to consider for next year.

Neil Ellice, the Secretary/Manager, the lady Steward and the behind the counter food staff were all extremely welcoming and professional – so the Ipswich Golf Club experience was good. I sent an e-mail to Neill to thank the club for enabling us to have a good day.

The cost was £31 per head, £30 for golf & high tea + £1 for prize fund. There was no subsidy, and a profit of £0.92 was made, from my slight under-spending the prize fund. No Ipswich members attended.

Thanks to Stephen Stokes for being vice-captain on the day, and fine tuning the tee-off order, and to Chris Amor for bringing along a guest.

Results:

Richard Wyndham (16) & Andre Roden (12): 24 points average;

Chris Amor (15), Steve Willingham (23) and Carl Stagg (17): 25.33 points;

Stephen Stokes (16), Jonathon Brown (18) & Paul Burke (18): 27.6 points;

Jon Hopkins (11), Steve Hughes (20) & Trevor Buck (15): 31 points.

Finance:

The 2 guests, Steve Willingham and Andre Roden, paid cash on the day, direct to Jon.

All others had pre-paid by cheque or transfer. Jon paid the Pro, directly, £330.

Richard spent £11.08 on prizes, and will give receipts to Jon at the next committee meeting.