



## Joining Question & Answers

**New members are welcome - both men and ladies.**

If you are interested in becoming a member spare a few minutes to read the following and you will be pleasantly surprised to discover how easy it is.

### **What can you say about the Richmond Park Golf Club?**

We are a friendly club that has been enjoyed by its many current and former members since it was established in 1924. The Club is a 'private golf club' that plays on a 'public golf course', and for those not used to this type of arrangement it is correct to say that there are hundreds of similar golf clubs operating in this way up and down the country.

The Club is affiliated to the appropriate national and regional bodies, thereby ensuring that the handicaps of members are recognised officially both in the UK and internationally.

The Club's membership varies from year to year but currently the Club has about 130 members of whom 90 are men and 40 are ladies. The profile of the membership is too varied to describe, but suffice it to say that we have a full mixture of characters from a large number of different walks of life, and a good representation of members from overseas. We like to think that in purely simple terms the Club is group of public golf course players that have arranged amongst themselves to play golf in an organised manner and in accordance with the recognised rules of golf. At present, the Club has the capacity to take on new members - both men and ladies - and to grow to over 200 members.

### **When do we play?**

Sunday mornings and Wednesday mornings. All Club members can play on both days!

Glendale Golf is the manager and administrator of the two adjoining public golf courses at the Park. The Club has an arrangement with Glendale Golf for a reserved tee allocation for our Sunday and Wednesday fixtures. Our tee allocation is booked weekly and the number of games booked is based upon our anticipated number of players.

Sundays are the Club's busiest day. The start time for our first game is typically close to 8:40am. In the summer season we find that we normally field in the order of 14 to 16 games, and in the winter season this drops to around 10 to 12 games.

The normal Sunday routine is for a group of men to play in an initial block, this is followed by the ladies playing in their own group, and we then have the residue of the men making up the final games. On selected days through the year we do mix up the men and the ladies and this helps all the members to co-mingle.

With the full support of Glendale Golf, the Club has, from March 2015, extended its activities to introduce a full Wednesday fixture programme. The start time for our midweek Wednesday events is 10:30am. The game numbers for the Wednesday fixtures are

low and we do have mixed games as this helps to simplify our internal game booking process.

One of the major attributes of the Club is the manner by which everyone congregates on Sunday and Wednesday mornings and, for a new joiner, it takes just a couple of weeks to get to know the regular players and to be able to meet up and play with familiar faces. We have not had a capacity problem for many years but the policy remains that if necessary the size of the Club's membership will be restricted in order that those who typically want to play on a Sunday or Wednesday morning can do so with relative ease.

### **Do we have regular competitions?**

We are fortunate at Richmond Park in that there are the two courses: the Duke's and the Prince's. Every Sunday and Wednesday is competition day and our play alternates between the two courses on a week by week basis.

In the summer season we play for the main Club trophies, and through the winter we have competitions that are more suited to the mixed weather conditions. For our annual Sunday programme we have in the order of 46 Sundays with a pre-set event, and for the remaining days the Competition Secretary will arrange a one-off event that could be something out of the ordinary such as an 'irons only' or pairs competition.

For the Club's Wednesday schedule we have less pre-set permanent events and the Competition Secretary has more scope to promote pairs and mixed events.

For the main competition days each player is obliged to pay a £2 competition entry fee. The entry fees are accumulated through the year and the pot is used to purchase the keepsake prizes for the winners. In addition, on most days we hold an optional competition sweep of £2 per person. It is a Club rule that all players must enter the competition of the day unless of course players are involved in knockout matches or some such similar event.

The vast majority of the Sunday events and a good number of our Wednesday events are what are termed 'handicap qualifiers' and this ensures that members' handicaps are adjusted on a regular basis and indeed far more so than occurs at most other clubs.

### **Apart from Sundays and Wednesdays, when else do we play?**

From Spring through to the Autumn we have 4 internal men's and ladies mixed events that are played on Saturdays, and a further notorious match where the men take on the ladies. We also have a few home and away Saturday 'friendly' matches where we battle for the retention of the friendly trophies. For the more enthusiastic golfaholics the Club regularly enters NAPGC national knockout events that often involve travelling to other venues similar to Richmond Park. Also, depending upon player availability the Club enters teams for the county competitions promoted by Surrey County Golf.

### **Do we have a section for the lady members?**

Yes - the Club has a strong ladies section that has its own fixture list and is equally involved in its own array of 'friendly' events and the NAPGC events. In addition, the ladies section organises its own Spring and Autumn 'ladies weekend away' where the more well behaved men are invited to participate.

### **So what does it all cost?**

We have two arrangements in operation; the 'Standard Club membership' and the 'Glendale Golf's Loyaltee card referral'. The membership charge is the same for both but the method of payment is different. The details are as follows:

The Club has a one-off joining fee of £50 and there is of course an annual subscription charge. At present, the Club's full annual subscription fee is £50 (although the full fee is not payable if you join part-way through the year - see below). Members who leave and subsequently rejoin will not be asked to pay another joining fee.

The Club's subscription year starts on 1st February. New members who join the Club after 30th April are charged their subscription at the following reduced rates: May and June £40, July and August £30, September and October £20, November and December £10. There is no subscription charge for a new member who joins the Club during a January.

A new Club member who joins us on a 'Standard Club membership' basis will be expected to pay the Club according the situation outlined above.

For the second arrangement we are very pleased that the Club has reached an agreement with

Glendale Golf whereby purchasers of either 5-day or 7-day Glendale Loyaltee cards will have their Club membership charges paid directly by Glendale to the Club. Glendale's Loyaltee card scheme operates on a calendar year basis and members who join the Club through this arrangement have a 12 months' Club membership from the time of entry.

Unless a Club member holds an annual 5-day or 7-day Glendale Loyaltee card (which qualifies them for 'unlimited golf'), it follows that each time a member plays with the Club, a green fee is payable at the going rate to Glendale Golf. The full rate for weekend play is presently £28 per round. The full green fee rate for play in our Wednesday fixtures is £23 (Seniors £15). Members who are involved in the friendly and other inter-club matches may be required to pay a small charge but there is no need to dwell on this at the moment.

So that's it, a full golf club membership and an official internationally recognised handicap for £100 - something of a bargain!!

## **So, what's the procedure to become a member?**

In the golfing world all amateur club players must have a handicap.

- If you presently hold a valid club handicap, the handicap rules require a straight transfer from one club to another therefore reassessment does not apply. Prospective members with a valid handicap are invited to play with us on a guest basis for one week and if there is the desire to join the Club, it follows that there will be an immediate fast-track entry.
- Alternatively, if you do not have a handicap we have the ability to award you a handicap that is based on your playing performance. Under the present handicapping rules the maximum handicap allowance for men is 28 and the maximum handicap allowance for the ladies is 36.

To gain a handicap it is necessary to undergo a handicap qualification process, the rules of which are governed by the Council of National Golf Unions [CONGU]. The main requirements are as follows:

- The rules require that a prospective member plays three full rounds of medal/strokeplay golf. It is a requirement of CONGU that the cards are 'marked' by a Club member and that the rounds are played on the courses at Richmond Park. A simple

assessment is then applied to the three results to determine the playing handicap.

- The three rounds of golf played through the handicap qualification period need not necessarily be played on consecutive weekends. We do, however, require that the three qualification cards are completed within a period of six months. Also, in order to help with an understanding of the Club's procedures we make every effort for prospective members to play with members of the Club's main committee during this period.
- One important point to consider is that we do have a qualification level for Club membership. We require that at least one of the three qualifying cards must be to a handicap of no worse than 28 for men and 36 for ladies. In rough terms this means a gross score for the men no worse than 99 playing on the Duke's course [or 95 on the Prince's course] and for the ladies a gross score of no worse than 107 on the Duke's course [or 104 on the Prince's course]. This point is particularly important and if you are not sure if you can manage the required standard please play at least one full round of golf at the Park and gauge your own performance. For those prospective members who approach us but are unable to achieve this standard we normally suggest a period of golf lessons and practice before a fresh attempt at membership.
- The handicap qualification rounds give prospective members an ideal opportunity to see how we operate and to see if our playing timetable is suitable.
- Please note that we do not take the Club entry fee or the annual subscription charge until the appropriate qualifying rounds have been played and a prospective member's handicap has been decided.

## **And what happens once you've joined us?**

As mentioned above, the Club plays on Sunday and Wednesday mornings at the Park. Our first game each Sunday is scheduled to tee off at 8:40am, however it is not unusual for this to move either way since we are dependent on the efficiency of the earlier golfers to ensure that the tee is available to us. Our Wednesday games are scheduled to start at 10:30am but again there may be circumstances for the first give to play earlier or later.

For our Sunday games, in the summer period we typically run with 7 men's games, followed by 4 or 5 ladies games, and then the remainder of the men's section. Some members like to play early and some like to play in the later games; there is no favouritism and the tee slots are available on a first come first served basis. In the winter period we typically run with 4 men's games in front of the ladies' section.

We operate our own forward bookings system that enables Club members to start placing their own game requests over the internet up to three weeks in advance of the actual day of play. This routine and the use of email where relevant ensure that everyone who wants to play will definitely get to play, although it stands to reason that those notifying late will tend to play at the back of the pack. On the day of play we ask members to abide by the designated check-in time which is set 30 minutes before the projected tee off time.

Our normal play day routine is for members to arrive in good time, pay their competition entry fee and enter the sweep, then have a quick check of their handicaps, and pay their green fees in their 4-ball groupings. At the conclusion of the round and after the scorecards are signed the scores must be recorded in handicapping system via a screen located at the Park. After entry all the scorecards are to be deposited in the Club's scorecard box.

Through the following few days it is normal for both the competition results and the handicap revisions to be posted to the relevant sections of the Club's main website and also to the web-based handicapping system. This might create the impression that Sundays and Wednesdays are relatively uncomplicated and flexible and this would be a correct interpretation of our arrangements.

Handicap certificates are of course available to all Club members and can be downloaded by members directly from our handicapping system whenever required.

## What should you do now?

The new member contacts are Peter Harrington and Alison Chadwick. If you wish to discuss joining the Club please call Peter on 020 8998 9350 or email either:

Peter - [secretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk](mailto:secretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk) or

Alison - [ladysecretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk](mailto:ladysecretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk)

## One final reflection

Without fail - everyone who has joined the Richmond Park Golf Club has seen an improvement in his or her playing standard. The longer you delay joining the Club the more you will come to regret it!

