



# Joining Questions & 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.

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### **Richmond Park Golf Club – who are we?**

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 an independent 'private golf club' that plays on the adjoining Duke's and Prince's public golf courses at Richmond Park. 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 England Golf and Surrey Golf, 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 recently the Club has grown to about 250 members of whom 200 are men and 50 are women. The profile of the membership is too varied to describe but suffice it to say that we have a full mixture of golfers from many different walks of life, and a good representation of members from overseas. We like to think that in simple terms the Club is group of public golf course players who

have arranged amongst themselves to play golf in an organised manner and in accordance with the recognised rules of golf.

At present, the Club is welcoming new members - both men and women – with the aim of continuing the recent positive membership trend and to grow to over 300 members.

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

Sundays and Wednesdays are the Club's main competition days and the vast majority of the events are handicap qualifying. The Club also hosts Friday morning competitions where the scores are not specifically added to the handicap record, but under the new World Handicapping System (WHS) rules it is possible for players to opt for their Friday rounds to be added to their handicap records. All Club members can play on all three days.

Glendale Golf is the manager and administrator of the public golf facility at the Park. For the foreseeable future there is a general requirement that games shall be no larger than 3-balls and the Club has an arrangement with Glendale Golf for a fixed allocation

of tee times each week on the three competition days. The Club's internal on-line booking system confirms the number of players for each competition and the allocation from Glendale Golf is adjusted according to the number of games that are required.

Sundays are traditionally the Club's busiest day. The start time for our first game is typically close to 8:15am. In both the summer and winter seasons we find that we normally field in the order of 25 games.

For our Wednesday fixtures we have two pre-booked blocks of tee times arranged with Glendale Golf. The 'early block', which comprises 6 games, tees off around 7.20am in the summer (and slightly later in the winter season), and the 'main block', which generally comprises 15 games, is from 9:30am until around 11.00am.

The Friday competitions are played in a relaxed atmosphere, with a start time close to 10:00am.

One of the major attributes of the Club is the manner by which our booking sheet system encourages players to mix. 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. For members who want to play in the Club's competitions, every effort is made to enable them to do so, even if this means playing at times outside of the Club's allocated tee blocks.

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

The answer is a simple yes. The Club has a major competition event every Sunday and Wednesday throughout the year. 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.

The Friday competitions are more of a sociable nature where the competitors challenge typically for a day prize or an accumulator prize.

We are fortunate at Richmond Park to have the two courses: the Duke's and the Prince's. Our play alternates between the two courses on a week by week basis.

For all our Sunday and Wednesday events the Club charges a £2 competition entry fee. The entry fees are accumulated through the year and the pot is used to purchase a variety of prizes for the year's winners. In addition, we hold an optional competition sweep of £2 per person for all the men's and the joint competitions.

Since the 2018 handicapping changes it has been necessary for the Club to introduce competition handicap limits. At present, the limits are 32 for the men and 38 for the women. For members with handicaps above these numbers the entry to the competition of the day is optional, but for all other players the Club rule is that competition entry is compulsory unless players are involved in knockout matches or some such similar event.

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

Once a month from the Spring through to the Autumn we have 6 internal men's and women's 'friendly' mixed events that are played on Saturdays. In addition, the Club has a few home and away Saturday 'friendly' matches where we battle for the retention of the inter-club 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 Golf.

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

Yes - the Club has a strong women's section that has its own fixture list and it is involved in its own array of 'friendly' events and NAPGC events. In addition, the women's section organises its own Spring and Autumn 'women's weekend away' where some of the Club's men also participate.

### **Do we have a junior section?**

Sadly, the answer is no. The rules set by England Golf on safeguarding and compliance prohibit the Club in its present configuration from hosting a junior section.

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

We have two arrangements in operation: the 'standard Club membership' and '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 additionally there is 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. Members who leave and subsequently rejoin are not 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.

So, in a nutshell, a full golf club membership and an official internationally recognised handicap for no more than £100 – something of a bargain!!

A new Club member who joins us on a 'standard Club membership' basis will be expected to pay the Club according to the fee charges that are outlined above.

The 'referral' arrangement applies to new members who are referred to us by Glendale Golf. We are very pleased that the Club has reached an agreement with Glendale Golf whereby those who are referred to us and have purchased either a 5-day or a 7-day annual Glendale Loyaltee Club card (but not a monthly Glendale Loyaltee card) have a contribution towards their Club membership charges paid directly by Glendale Golf to RPGC, and no extra individual payment is required. Glendale Golf's annual Loyaltee Club card scheme operates on a 12-month basis and members who join RPGC through this arrangement have a Club membership that coincides with the duration of their Loyaltee cards.

For all the Club's 'standard members' who have paid their Club fees and have also purchased an annual Glendale Loyaltee Club card, the Club receives the same

contribution from Glendale Golf and these receipts are paid over to the individual members.

Unless a Club member holds either an 'annual' or a 'monthly' 5-day or 7-day Glendale Loyaltee card (which qualifies them for 'unlimited golf' during the term of the card), it follows that each time a member plays with the Club, a green fee is payable to Glendale Golf at the going rate. The full rate for weekend play in 2020 was £40 per round but Club members were entitled to a concessionary rate of £38.00 per round. For midweek play on Wednesdays and Fridays the standard green fee in 2020 was £28.50. Glendale Golf may increase their green fees during 2021.

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

In the golfing world all amateur club players must have a handicap. On 2nd November 2020 WHS was adopted in the UK and all country-wide handicaps are now controlled and administered by England Golf.

The basic rules are:

- If you presently hold a valid WHS handicap you will join the Club's handicap list with your existing handicap. Prospective members with a valid handicap are invited to play an 'introductory' round with the Club on a guest basis and if there is the desire to join the Club it follows that there will be an immediate fast-track entry.
- If you do not have a handicap we have the ability to award you a handicap that is based on your playing performance. The handicapping rules allow handicaps for men and women up to handicaps of 54.

To gain a handicap it is necessary to undergo a handicap qualification process where the main features are as follows:

- The rules require that a prospective member plays 54 holes of medal/stroke play golf in rounds of 18 holes or 9 holes. The prospective member must be 'marked' by the holder of a live handicap and we encourage the rounds to be played at Richmond Park.
- The rounds of golf played through the handicap qualification period

need not necessarily be played on consecutive weeks. We do, however, require that the handicap qualifying rounds are completed within a period of six months. Also, to help with an understanding of the Club's procedures we try to arrange for prospective members to play with one of the Club's committee members when at Richmond Park.

- One important point to consider is that we do have a qualification level for Club membership. For the Club to award a handicap of 54 or better we will be looking for prospective members to be able to achieve a score of no more than 120 on either course during the handicap qualification process. This point is particularly important and if you are not sure whether 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 recommend a period of golf lessons and practice before returning for a fresh attempt at a starting handicap.

The handicap qualification rounds give prospective members an ideal opportunity to see how we operate and to see if our playing timetable is suitable before joining. 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 the prospective member's handicap has been determined.

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

As mentioned, the Club plays on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at the Park and our normal start times are mentioned above. After joining you will have access to our internal on-line

booking system. 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. For all our event days 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 ensures that everyone who wants to play will be able to play. On the day of play we ask members to arrive at the Park at least 30 minutes before their designated tee times.

Our normal competition day routine is for members to arrive in good time and check in with Glendale Golf. At the conclusion of the round and after the scores have been agreed by the all the players in a game, the scores must be recorded in Club's handicapping system either via the entry screen located inside the clubhouse or by mobile phone. Once all the competition scores have been entered the competition results are then published and the new individual handicap indices set by England Golf are available for viewing.

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.

### **What should you do now?**

The new member contacts for men and women respectively are Peter Harrington and Caroline Stilwell. If you wish to discuss joining the Club please email:-

Peter -  
*secretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk*

Caroline -  
*womenssecretary@richmondparkgolfclub.org.uk*

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## **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!