

The First Tee

Victoria Men's Club Newsletter
Spring 2009



Vic Mens Club Primed for Another Year



I'm not sure if it's just me getting older or do the springs seem further and further off with each passing winter. Even as I write this – under the threat of a heavy snowfall warning – it's great to know that another season of golf at Vic is just around the corner – a long, winding corner – but a corner nonetheless.

I'm really looking forward to this year. It's taken some time, but I think the club is coming around and the work by the executive to make the Men's Club more inclusive is starting to bear fruit.

Take last year for example; 82 of a possible 100 members returned for the 2008 season – that's way up from 2004 when we had a 50 percent turnover from the previous year.

It's great to see more and more guys hanging out on the balcony after a great day of golf to cheer/heckle the guys coming in late and while we are still working out a few wrinkles with the clubhouse staff on hours of operation, the club's participation rate continue to hover between 65-70

percent on Wednesday nights and the number of guys playing our weekend tournaments has doubled.

While I'd love to take credit for the changes – it's been you guys that have made it work – thanks for all the help, suggestions and support over the past years – it's made serving as President a truly enjoyable experience.

Maybe that's why I'm feeling the winters are so long these days – the Club's doing well and I can't wait to get back to Vic and say hello to old friends while welcoming new members to the 2009 season.

Speaking of which, it's been another winter of change at Victoria. After a rush of blood to the head earlier in the year, the City has come to its senses and left the pass system pretty much alone. The only significant change is that seniors now no longer are able to combine discounts into full access passes – a move that won't really affect too many of our members – Bob Marner and Dave McLean notwithstanding.

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The 2009 Executive

President	Derrick Forsythe
Vice President	Charles Slater
Secretary	Marvin Wadsworth
Treasurer	Ken Hansen
Club Captain	Jerry Thibodeau
Wed Nite Chair	Steve Simmons
Wed Nite Chair	Darrell Hannon
Handicap	Stan Mah
A/Handicap	Paul Iglinski
Past President	Arnie Loxam

Contact information

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Mission Statement: Play golf, have fun
Cost: Free to members

Cover Photo: 16th Hole at Vic - image courtesy of Ken Hansen

One

Did you know?

We may actually get to play the back tee on the seventh hole this year... and plans are in the works to sod the cart path on the left side of the sixth green.

Two

The City's new automated booking/tracking system is on the cusp of being fully operational. It will mean a change in the way times are booked – or maybe not – we'll have to see. But during the initial phasing in of the new system please try and take it easy on the guys and gals in the pro shop – Matte's head's about ready to explode absorbing all this new technology.

I'm told there will be construction this year as the City is scheduled to begin work on a new maintenance building/offices for the greens staff. Given the huge improvements last year implemented by Mike Duerr I, for one, am prepared to put up with a little noise and dust if the folks who did such a great job taking care of our course will be better able to look after Vic as a result of these improved facilities.

Oh, and if you happen to bump into Mike or the greens staff this year take a moment to say thanks, or great job – their work makes all our rounds more enjoyable.

Turning back to the Club, we've got a busy year ahead – all the old favourite tournaments are scheduled including the River Valley Challenge to be played at Vic this year. You'll also note that some of our stalwart tournaments have moved off weekends – these include the Tombstone and the President's Choice.

We've done this for a couple reasons – one being pressure from the City to make more prime time spaces available for the general public. The other reason we made the move was that with the increase in fees (which were relatively minor this year – up only one dollar for both weekday and weekend play) it would make these fun tournaments more accessible to more members.

The Mahar is back on a Saturday – we found last year the format didn't lend itself to Wednesday play. Likewise, if the experiment this year doesn't work out – we'll look at re-jigging the lineup for 2010. As always, your feed back will be an important determining factor in how things will look.

We are booked for an away tournament again this year. This year we'll be playing

Broadmoor in June.

Darrell will again be heading up the tournament format and we'll likely be playing a blind nine format - with handicaps in play.

So long as you don't take a 10 on one of the holes selected you might have a shot at winning something - unlike someone, currently sitting on the executive - and typing this article...

Matte's head's about ready to explode absorbing all this new technology

The Interclub is up and running again for 2009 under the guidance of our reigning Club Champion Jerry Thibodeau. Our Kickoff Tournament - our first fun event of the year - will also serve as Round One of the 36-hole qualifying process.

For all you FNGs (Fabulous New Golfers) and returning members, we'll be holding an orientation night at the Victoria Clubhouse on 29 April starting at 1900 hours (I'm in the army - get used to the time thing).

At this meeting we'll explain how the club will run over the summer. Stan Mah and Paul Iglinski will be there to help get new members signed into the RCGA handicap program.

We'll have sign up sheets out for the first Wed night, the Kickoff Tournament, singles and doubles match play, the ringerboard and we'll try and answer any questions you as members might have.

Oh, and we'll also have beer (or soft drinks) and munchies laid on so you don't waste away while we work through the admin before hitting the course for another season - provided, of course, that the ladies have the kitchen open.

Well guys - it's a matter of days now - can't wait to see old friends again and to meet the new guys. Play well this year - I'm making it out of last place in the Club Championship this year...no, really.

The 2009 Tournament Schedule

New challenges and old favourites

Event	Date	Time	Notes
Rd 1 Interclub Qualifier	Wed May 6	2:30-5:00 pm	Weather permitting - alt date 13 May
Kickoff Tournament	Sat May 9	8:30 am	All members invited (also rd 2 IQ)
Mixed Two Ball	Sun Jun 5	8:30 am	With Vic Business Ladies
Away Tournament	Sun 14 Jun	TBC	Broadmoor Golf Club
Jim Mahar	Sat 20 Jun	8:30 am	
Tombstone	Wed 8 Jul	2:30-5:00 pm	
River Valley Challenge	Sun, Jul 19	8:30 am	Dinner to follow played at Vic
Johnny Aitken	Wed, Jul 22	2:30-5:00 pm	
President's Choice	Wed, Aug 12	2:30-5:00 pm	Modified Stableford Scoring
Rd 1 Club Championship	Sat, Aug 22	8:30 am	
Rd 2 Club Championship	Sun, Aug 23	8:30 am	Dinner to follow
Champion's Cup	Sun, Sep 6	8:30 am	Dinner to follow -steak and beans
Club Final	Sun, Sep 21	10:00 am	Dinner to Follow

Supporting our Pro Shop

Suggestions for spending your winnings this year

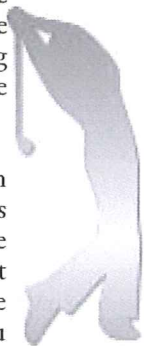
It's a recurring problem for many (not me) members at Victoria - how do you get rid of all that prize money you're going to win this season.

The Pro Shop at the course is small and while there is a pretty good choice of clothing, the set up doesn't really let Kevin carry as much inventory as he might like in order to better serve members and the great unwashed (read non-club customers).

So, what is a guy to do? There are a couple of options.

The first of these is to have a look at the gear over at Riverside. Kenny, the Pro over there, has a larger space and carries a lot of clubs including some demos so you can try before you buy.

The two courses do have an agreement to allow members to use the gift certificates we hand out to buy equipment at Riverside. You just have to make sure you talk to Kevin before you go over to have a look - there is some coord that needs to be done between shops. Taking a minute to let Matte or Kevin know what you're up to will make the whole process run a lot more smoothly.



The second, and less well understood option, is to ask Kevin or Matte to bring in a specific item. The Kassam brothers are pros at this picking up a couple of those cool three-wheeled sun mountain-esque carts for the start of the season.

Kevin will work to match prices as close as possible with the larger outlets. All you need is a little patience and organization.

For those new members, you should also know the pro shop has preferential club pricing on most of the items in the shop - with the exception of golf balls - membership does have its benefits.

Finally the guys can do some minor repairs to your clubs should you need new grips and they do take on the challenge of helping you improve your swing.

So this year when you're pondering what to do with all your winnings, remember the old adage of patronizing your pro.

Did you know?

The Tombstone and the President's Choice tournaments are moving to Wed nights this year to allow more members to play these popular formats

Three

Did you know?

The Away Tournament will be played at Broadmoor this year in June - sign up early

Re-establishing Your Handicap

Soon we will be out again challenging, and being challenged by, the golf gods. And we will also be out there challenging each other, the Club Champion and the Most Honest Golfer, on the level playing field provided by the RCGA Handicap System. The question is "How do we make that system work fairly for everyone?" The system only works effectively if we all enter scores under the same criteria.

Which of the following reasons justifies not entering a score?

- ♦ I played the round with my wife.
- ♦ I played the round with my dog.
- ♦ I played only 9 holes.
- ♦ I just got fired and ended up playing the worst round of my life.
- ♦ The round was at Rundle, a par-3 course.
- ♦ Four holes were on temporary greens.
- ♦ A thunderstorm moved in and we quit after 14 holes.
- ♦ The round was match play and I picked up several conceded putts.
- ♦ I got really lucky with the putter and scored way below my handicap.
- ♦ I had 6 beers and was pretty buzzed by the 18th hole.
- ♦ I played with rented clubs.
- ♦ I played Pebble Beach and hit 10 balls into the ocean.
- ♦ It was just a friendly round and we took gimmies.
- ♦ I was on vacation in the US and the carts all had GPS.
- ♦ The wind and rain were unreal and I couldn't get a decent grip on the clubs.

If you chose the Rundle par-3 reason (an 18-hole course rated under 3000 yards) and rejected all the other reasons, you are on track to getting an accurate handicap. If you fail to enter a score for any of the other reasons, you are liable to become a certified sandbagger, or just as bad, a reverse sandbagger.

The RCGA handicap system requires that you enter all your "acceptable" rounds of golf. This includes 9-hole rounds; they do not have to be consecutive. It also includes incomplete rounds, provided you have played at least 13 of 18, or 7 of 9 holes.

Any holes not played, which includes holes with temp greens or temp tees that significantly shorten the hole, you enter a score of par plus the handicap strokes you have for that hole. For example, when #14 (Handicap 10) was on temp tees last year, you would score 4 (par) if your course handicap was less than 10, score 5 (par + 1) if your handicap was 10 to 27, or score 6 (par + 2) if your handicap was 28 or higher. It would not matter what score you actually got when you played the hole.

If you don't putt out, as with conceded putts in match play, you would enter your "most likely score." Not putting out, taking lots of gimmies in casual play, can lead to reverse sandbagging, unrealistically low handicaps and inflated egos.

On the other hand, failure to understand or apply Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) is a common source of inflated handicaps. If your course handicap is between 1 and 18, the maximum score that you enter on a hole for handicap purposes is 2 over par. Players with a course handicap of 19 to 32 will enter a maximum hole score of 3 over par.

And when tournament time comes along, don't forget to enter your score as a tournament score. Your tournament scores are handled differently by the handicap system. They stick around for 12 months, not just for the last 20 rounds played, when your handicap is calculated.

So let's all get a good start on the year and get our handicaps in synch with the RCGA system guidelines. If you have any questions on handicapping, contact Stan Mah ftms@sas.ab.ca or Paul Iglinski iglski@ece.ualberta.ca.