

Captain's Report – Annual General Meeting 2016

Today marks the end of an action-packed golfing year for Surrey Ladies.

We have delivered a programme of serious and competitive events combined with more relaxed competitions and have tried to increase enthusiasm and interest in the game for players of all ages and abilities. The youngest participant at a Surrey event this year was 6 years old and the handicap range of competitors was from +4 to 34!

There are 102 affiliated golf clubs in the county and 84 of these have entered one of our events this year – either a 'club' event or their members have played as an individual. Rest assured the 18 missing clubs will be on Sally's hit list for 2017! In total Rosemary and I have started over 800 players in our Championships, Meetings and Finals either from the 1st tee (that was Rosemary) or from some distant 10th tee – that was me!

My first golfing highlight was back in April when Hankley Common hosted our County Championship. 13-year-old Annabell Fuller (Roehampton Club) led the qualifiers and looked unstoppable when she finished her semi-final match against Amber Chana on the 16th green when she was 6 under par. In the other semi-final, Alice Spani-Molella (Royal Mid-Surrey) beat 12-year-old Ellie Lace, her club mate, on the 18th. Alice went on to beat Annabell in the final by holing a 6-foot putt for a birdie 3 on the 19th. Alice's two opponents that day had a combined age of 25 years!

We have a worthy Senior Champion in Felicity Christine (Woking) who, after taking a double bogey on the 1st hole, shot a gross 73 at West Surrey. The runner up was Maggie Lowe (Woking) with a gross 76.

At Club level, the final of the Pearson Trophy Surrey Cup was as exciting as ever and won by the ladies from Leatherhead. Play started at Betchworth Park in June at 8.30am and finished just after 9pm! It was by far the longest and wettest day of the year. Leatherhead went on to win the Inter-County Pearson final at Leatherhead and ensured the trophy remained in Surrey for another year. Many congratulations to Sue Wakerley and her team.

At National level, Elizabeth Prior (Burhill) finished 2nd by a single shot in the English Women's Championship at West Lancs GC. Following this, she was selected to represent England in the European Championships in Iceland, and in the Home Internationals at Conwy GC in Wales. England won both these events and we are very proud of Lizzie's achievements.

In addition, Annabell Fuller was selected to play for England in the Girls' Home Internationals and Martha Lewis (St George's Hill) represented England in the annual Under 16 match against Switzerland.

County Match Week took place at Walton Heath in June with the added pressure of home advantage. We wanted to win so badly after finishing 2nd for 3 years in a row. There were to be team changes throughout the week due to work commitments, but we juggled well, even allowing for the player who disappeared one morning to take her driving test, and we always had just enough players available for each session.

We beat Sussex, Kent and Middlesex, halved with Hampshire and as South Region Champions headed to County Finals at Waterlooville GC in Hampshire. Sadly work, university and school commitments got in the way of fielding the very top team. We beat Norfolk and Staffordshire but lost to Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire, the eventual winners, and

therefore finished the season as the 4th best team in the country. We didn't achieve our aim of becoming national champions but the experience was amazing, the standard of golf incredibly high, and I am very proud of every single member who gave 100% for Surrey that week.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank Walton Heath for hosting County Match Week in June, all our supporters, and the ladies who pulled 108 trollies during the 2 weeks.

Two members of the team, Lauren Horsford and Inci Mehmet have recently won places in the final qualifying stage for the Ladies European Tour and compete in Morocco from 17th December. We all wish them luck in the next stage of their golfing careers.

The 2nd team under the captaincy of Delyth Roberts finished runners-up in the Stovold Trophy for the second year running. They beat Middlesex, halved with Kent but lost to Hampshire. Despite a convincing win in their final match against Sussex, it wasn't quite enough and Sussex retained the trophy.

For the Senior golfers in the county there are opportunities to play in both friendly and more serious matches. In the friendly matches, under the captaincy of Sheila Stirling the teams won 4, halved 1 and only lost 1 match so many congratulations to Sheila.

The Senior League comprising teams from Surrey, Sussex and Kent was boosted this year by the addition of teams from Essex and Middlesex. These matches proved to be fiercely competitive. Captained by Scynthia Larsen we won 3, lost 1 match but only finished 3rd out of the 5 counties. I still do not understand the scoring system!

So apart from the golf what has the Executive Committee done this year? The Association's aims and achievements have been summarised (attached).

I believe we have made progress in many areas, but importantly the image of SLCGA has improved, we have worked hard on our communication skills and social media, and in general have raised the profile of the county. There is increased efficiency in the Sutton Green office following a refurbishment and modernisation programme and an excellent Rules Sub-Committee is in place. We haven't been afraid of change and I am sure you are aware that after an extensive review County Cards will be provided free of charge to all lady members of Surrey clubs in 2017.

All this has only been possible by the hard work of a large active team of volunteers committed to golf in Surrey.

Firstly, thank you to Rosemary, Sally and Amanda. Secondly, thank you to my enthusiastic committee for your significant contribution, support during the good and bad times, your friendship and for the fun we have had together.

It is extremely difficult to keep everybody happy but my Committee and I have done our best to move the county forwards into the 21st century. I have met some wonderful people, made lifelong friends and I thank those responsible for electing me and giving me this wonderful opportunity. It has been a great honour and a privilege to be Captain of the Association and Captain of an amazing 1st team for these 2 years.