



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY LADIES GOLF ASSOCIATION

COUNTY CAPTAIN'S REPORT

Before I start my report, I must inform you that during this year we have, sadly, lost two of our senior ladies.

- Noreen Williams, a member of Gerrards Cross, was County Secretary for 12 years from 1982 to 1994 and then President in 1996 to 1999. She passed away after a battle against cancer at the end of April.
- Jen Marshall, a member of Denham, was County Champion in 1972, County Captain in 1977 to 1979 and subsequently our President in 2007 to 2009. She passed away quite suddenly in August.

Both ladies contributed an enormous amount to the County, and they will be missed at a personal level for their friendship and sense of fun. Covid 19 restrictions prevented us from attending their funerals, but we have made in memoriam donations to the families' choices of charity.

I started my report last year by saying that my first year as your County Captain had been an interesting experience to say the least, and I can easily repeat that for my second year, but for entirely different reasons.

We started 2020 off with a full calendar of events. We held the first Delegates meeting at Beaconsfield on 27th February, when we discussed ways that golf clubs could increase their female membership, reviewed Safe Golf support materials, and did the Bucks Shield draw.

Tony and I held two first team training events with high hopes of our chances of repeating our previous success at County Match Week. The annual match between the first team and a juniors team was won by the first team, on this occasion they were all juniors!

And we held the County Lunch at Gerrards Cross on Wednesday 3rd March. It was well supported, raised funds for County Match Week and for my two charities, with the speaker this year being Katie Eyton from Thames Valley Air Ambulance. I'd like to thank all the clubs who donated four ball vouchers and raffle prizes; it is really appreciated! and my thanks as always to our principal organiser, Helen Mines.

Then....Covid 19 forced a National lockdown; and we started by cancelling all our events until the end of June, plus the summer knockouts including the Bucks Shield and the June Delegates meeting.

The Executive started to use Zoom for our meetings; initially we used the "free version" that lasts 40 minutes, but recently we invested in the professional version that allows greater numbers to attend and does not limit time on a specific occasion. We held a Zoom meeting with Delegates in September and decided to invest further in the Zoom webinar facility for this AGM. This expenditure is not excessive and easily compensated by the reduction in travel costs.

I said last year that I was impressed by the amount of "behind the scenes" work that Executive Committee members undertake and, whilst our competition programme was decimated this year, other aspects of our work could and did continue. Hopefully you will already have read the information reports from individual Committee members lodged on the website, but I would like to summarise what has been achieved this year:

- the World Handicapping System preparations by clubs have been supported throughout the year by Christine, who also gave valuable advice to ladies at Magnolia Park, which closed at the end of July, on how to retain their handicap whilst they transferred to other clubs
- a level 1 rules school was held in March in conjunction with BB&O, with 6 Bucks ladies subsequently passing the exam
- a Delegates induction pack has been completed and hopefully will be a good introduction to the role for new Delegates
- our own County SafeGolf procedures have been completed all bar one aspect (our Welfare officer needs to have completed a short course that has not been run this year) - Janet has led on this development
- an Information pack was sent out to Vice-Captains in April, in lieu of our annual get together, contributed to by all the Executive and co-ordinated by Maura.
- County Competition rules have been updated to reflect the new WHS
- Covid 19 playing rules were developed and issued to underpin the Winter Leagues and knockout competitions
- Some junior competitions and intermediate training sessions have been held once Covid restrictions were lifted, thanks to Tony, Janet and Delyth
- The Junior and Senior championships were held in August - congratulations to Roisin Scanlon, Denise Goodacre and Nerys McGuinness.
- England Golf updates provided by our Voting member, Susanna, have been issued at regular intervals, including promoting the opportunity for clubs to apply for R&A Covid 19 support funds, with one of our clubs being successful in their application
- I have sent out regular Newsletters to all Opted-in members and placed the Newsletter on the website to maintain communications with you all.

Although the Regional County Match Weeks were all cancelled for 2020, England Golf proposed to have a National County Team event in September at Spalding in lieu of National Finals Week. We indicated an interest in participating if the event went ahead, but England Golf finally abandoned the idea in August when it became clear that maintaining even limited Covid -19 restrictions for a large team event would not be practical.

Nevertheless, England Golf and the R&A restarted some of their elite individual competitions at the end of July and we had some excellent results. These are reported more fully in Tony Bowers report, but our congratulations go to Thalia Kirby of Stoke Park and Megan Dennis of Woburn who blitzed their way through the stroke play rounds of the English Women's amateur golf championship (coming 1st and 6th respectively), with Thalia only losing in the semi-finals of the match play to the eventual winner. Thalia and Rosie Bee Kim also made it through to the match play of the R&A Women's amateur championship, when Thalia made it to the last 8.

The English Senior Women's amateur championships were rescheduled to Frilford Heath in the hottest of August weather; well done to Andrea Sims of Burnham Beeches for coming 2nd in the handicap section.

Our juniors also performed well in national and open competitions, with Roisin Scanlon, coming 12th in the English girls amateur strokeplay championship. This competition was abandoned due to dreadful weather, which was hard luck on our other three juniors who had made the cut but had no chance to shine.

We now have 15 girls with current handicaps between scratch and 7; the youngest is only 11 years old and only 2 of them will be leaving the junior section at the end of the year. And we have more practising hard in the wings! The Junior Section provides girls of all standards with the opportunity to meet up with other girls and practise golf. It helps to sustain their interest in the sport, and I would encourage anyone who is introducing a young girl to golf to make sure they are known to our County Junior organiser.

Thank you all for your support over the last two years for my two charities. Over the two-year period, we have managed to raise £5200 for Workaid and Thames Valley Air Ambulance. This will be split equally between them. I had hoped to have handed over two cheques (and have slides to show you to prove it) but at the last minute, Covid-19 intervened, and we had to cancel the cheque presentations. However, we will organise them as soon as we can, and I will post photographs on the website.

I would like to finish my report with some heartfelt thank you:

- to all the clubs that give us the use of their courses and their facilities whether for Executive or Delegates meetings, training sessions, an individual match or a large competition, and to the Ladies' Captains who turn out and support our events

- to Tony who is a fantastic County coach, equally happy coaching the younger intermediate golfers, the (generally) older delegates, and the main County teams, and for his personal support during County and National Finals week in particular

- to all the parents, friends and members who provide transport, caddy for daughters or friends, attend prize-givings and generally support our members

- to you the BCLGA members who take part in our competitions and support our teams: (they really appreciate the good luck cards).

- to the ladies that provide the Executive with additional help in a number of support roles, in particular Jackie Maher, Glenise Marfell, Delyth Barnett, Cecilia Williams, Anne Terry, Nerys McGuinness and Helen Mines. Thank you for your time and contribution. We could not function successfully without this extra practical support.

My final thank you has to go to the Executive Committee members.

I was fortunate to have inherited a hardworking Executive with a breadth of talent and experience. It would be invidious of me to single out individuals as they have all worked together so well as a team, as well as being very dependable in their specific roles. However, I can safely say that I have made some long-term friendships from Executive members past and present, and I would like to give them all my thanks for their support over the last two years.

Gail Sharp

BCLGA County Captain 2018 – 2020

28th October 2020