

## **“BACK ON THE TEE...” ...PRETTY MUCH EVERYONE AT STRABANE GC!**

In the week where live competitive golf from the PGA Tour finally returned to our screens from Fort Worth, Texas, the eagerly awaited return to local competitions was also kickstarted at Strabane Golf Club.

With a very successful reintroduction phase over recent weeks, safe, responsible and socially distant golf has been excellently implemented by our membership. The next natural step, which received approval from the NI Executive on June 4<sup>th</sup>, was the restart of qualifying competitions with 133 members jumping at the chance to get a card back in their hand.

And it proved worth every minute of the wait for young Dylan McDermott who shot the lights out on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> in the first qualifier of the season. Dylan posted a sparkling +5 gross round in near perfect conditions off an 18 handicap for a massive 49pts.

The unlucky runner up in this case was Lewis Jones (10) who carded a personal best +1 gross for an impressive 45pts, a total which would normally be enough to take the spoils on any other day.

Sean Dudgeon (19) signalled his intent to continue the form he showed when winning the Thursday Club Golfer of the Year title over the closed season with a fine 44pts, whilst Conor Byrne (2) continues his development after a fine round of -1 to take the gross.

The following Thursday, with a similar entry of almost 140 players in much more blustery conditions, the top two places were reversed with Lewis this time pipping Dylan on countback thanks to a level par back nine, after both players continued their form as they returned 40pts...and seen another few strokes slashed from their handicaps!

John Maxwell (8) rounded out the top three a point behind on 39pts whilst Enda Kennedy (1) shot level par to take the gross.

The first Saturday qualifier of the year attracted even more entrants with almost 200 cards taken out and again high scoring shone through. Kieran McAleer (21) topped the pile on this occasion with 44pts after countback from Pat O'Neill (27) on the same total.

Jason Gourley (10) completed the podium places with an impressive 43pts, whilst Conor Byrne's +1 round was good enough to take a second gross prize in the space

of a week. Conor Carlin (23) and Brian Ferguson (20) closed out the prizewinners by scooping the respective nines.

Members should note on the subject of returning scores that all cards taken out in competition play must be returned. Handicap adjustments of 0.1 increases will no longer be awarded for No Returns and persistent NRs could result in suspension of handicap, continually reviewed by the committee. Although NRs are already strongly discouraged this takes on an added level of significance this season as we move towards the introduction of the World Handicap System in November this year.

Upcoming gents golf sees the qualifiers continue to come thick and fast, scheduled for Monday, Thursday and Saturday for the foreseeable, with a fixture list still being finalised for upcoming sponsored competitions.

These are still subject to restrictions under the Return to Golf Protocol and as such will not be taking place before June 29<sup>th</sup> at the earliest, but members will be kept well informed on any such updates. New competition sponsors are also welcome and anyone who may be interested in doing so should contact the club for further information.

One other fixture of note is pencilled in for this coming Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June, where a Team Classic has been arranged. This will be open to both ladies and gents members with teams of any combination permitted. Entry fee is £12 per team, with two scores to count at each hole, and this will also serve as the final week of the 2020 SuperValu Springers League which fell foul of the Covid-19 forced closure earlier in the year. Tee-times are available as usual through the club's online BRS booking system.

This coming Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June will see a slight but very important amendment being made to the booking process going forward after a number of issues relating to online bookings have been reported by members and taken on board. Following consultation with the software developers, it was identified that server issues have arisen on their end relating to the high volume of site traffic when the booking system goes live on Friday evenings. As a result, they have requested that we push this time back, so the booking system will now go live at 6.11pm rather than the usual 6.00pm, a measure which resolve the majority of problems.

As we continue on the road back towards the new normal, members of Strabane GC should take pride in the way they have conducted themselves in embracing the new guidelines outlined in the Protocol. As we enjoy our return to competitive golf, we should not get complacent and continue to implement best practice in minimising the risk of spreading the virus in order to ensure that the journey is allowed to continue.