



18th hole development project



THE BOARD of directors met on Tuesday 14th July and – after analysing member renewals, the club's current financial position and the projected profit for the coming year – unanimously agreed to proceed with the planned re-development of the 18th hole.

A schematic of the project is on display in the foyer of the clubhouse and details of the changes are as follows:

- A new tee to be constructed on the site of the current left-hand tee but raised by 0.8m and doubled in overall size. This will make the hole about 10 metres shorter, totalling 360m.
- Two bunkers to be built on the right-hand side of the fairway, approximately 220m and 256m from the tee.
- The left-hand pond between the 18th and 13th holes to be extended 15m towards the 18th fairway, approximately 260m from the tee.
- The first 240m of the fairway will be widened.
- The green, green surrounds and the greenside bunker will remain as they are.
- New drainage will be installed to improve that aspect as well as playability of the entire hole.
- New irrigation will be installed to improve watering and playability.

As a result of the changes to the 18th tee, the 3rd tee will then include the existing 18th tee area, effectively lengthening the 3rd hole by 10m.

Project plan

- The 18th hole will be closed from September onwards for construction.
- By mid November construction should be completed (weather permitting).
- By late January 2010 the 18th hole will be re-opened for play (weather permitting).

Club treasurer Ken Window affirmed that "the club has maintained its strong financial position over the past 12 months and has the required funds to proceed as planned with the 18th hole".

President Don Phelan stated that "the 18th hole project will see the entire back nine of the course master plan completed".

General Manager Andrew Kirkman explained that finding a balance between improving the golf course for members whilst also allowing them to enjoy their golf in peace means treading a fine line, and hence it is the club's intention to have a break from course construction next year after the 18th hole is completed.

Spring renovations

SPRING renovations are scheduled for September. These will be "heavy" renovations and will encompass:

- scarifying, hollow tining, fertilising and top dressing all greens and greens surrounds;
- hollow tining and top dressing the third fairway;
- progressively slitting all other fairways;
- hollow tining and top dressing all tees.

Almost invariably when spring renovation time comes around, the playing surfaces are great as the course comes out of winter. This always prompts the question: "Why rip the place up now when it's in such great condition?"

The simple answer is that although the *surfaces* may be OK, renovations are aimed at treating what is going on *below the surface*. What the various treatments outlined above do is very briefly as follows:

...continued page 5



Don Phelan

President's Report

ONCE again I wish to focus on the issue of membership.

As previously stated, membership numbers determine the strength of any club. Like other clubs, we do lose a number of members each year for varying reasons; but suffice to say it is not because those leaving are unhappy with the club in any way.

We have always been able to fill the resulting vacancies with very little effort, and are in the fortunate position of having strong membership in all categories.

Your board is very well aware though that this year has been especially difficult insofar as attracting new members is concerned; the main reason being the current economic situation that in one way or another is affecting nearly all of us.

Reeling 'em in

New members can be attracted through conversations with friends or indeed anyone you think would make a good SGC member; so please take the opportunity to spread the word about membership opportunities when communicating with friends and acquaintances, whether current residents or those with the good sense to be contemplating a move to the Gold Coast.

A recent initiative in promoting membership has been the three "free ladies' clinics" that the club organised in June. We have had 23 friends or partners of current members attend these clinics and share some stories over coffee and champagne afterwards, which has been wonderful! At present most of these ladies are enjoying an eight-week tuition package with our teaching professional David McKean, and I welcome them to our club.

I look forward to being able to do the same with other newcomers introduced by members whenever possible.

Don Phelan



Ken Window

Treasurer's Report

AT THE time of writing this article your finance committee has had the opportunity to review the club's trading affairs for the first 11 months of the financial year up to the end of May.

The result shows a net profit in line with budget but behind the corresponding period last year; this was expected. As all members will be aware, the club lost nearly a quarter of playing days to rain during May and June; and the extreme windstorm on Wednesday 21st May caused extra expenditure of just under \$50,000 to clean up. Most of this may be claimable through insurance. June also will prove to be not a good trading month, again due to the weather.

An increase of 3.2 per cent in members' subscriptions for 2009/10 was recommended by the finance committee to the board; this is in line with the annual CPI and will help offset increases in costs incurred over the past year such as:

- power 17%
- fertilisers 16 to 44%
- cleaning 12%
- general insurance 8%
- waste removal 7%
- state award costs 4.1%

Your committee is aware that increasing members' costs is never a popular decision; however, to maintain the high standards we are accustomed to and continue with the development of our facilities, our operating costs must be covered. On all occasions the club's management has sought and continues to seek reviewed pricing from alternate suppliers to ensure that the costs of operating the club on a day-to-day basis remain as low as possible.

Ken Window

Captain's Call



Jim Townley

Course rating and handicapping

ANYONE who has read the "Letters to the Editor" page of a golf magazine or newspaper in the last couple of years will be aware of considerable dissatisfaction in the Australian golfing community with the present handicapping system, and in particular the basis of it: the CCR, or calculated course rating.

Golf Australia has now announced that it will abandon the present system and adopt the USGA Course Rating and Handicapping Systems, which it believes are world's best practice. (Not everyone agrees, of course. See, for example, page 19 of July 2009 Australian Golf Digest.)

- The **USGA course rating system** uses different criteria to those presently in use in Australia. Hence part of the changeover process will be a re-rating of all courses by a trained rating team from outside the club. Details of the criteria used and their application can be found on the USGA website, or by "googling" *USGA course rating system*. The result of this re-rating will be what is called a "slope" rating, which reflects the degree of difficulty of a course played from its various sets of tees.
- Under the **USGA handicap system** a player will have a "handicap index", the average to one decimal place of the best 10 of the player's last 20 rounds. When playing on his/her own course, a player's handicap index, rounded to the nearest whole number, will be his/her playing handicap.

However, when playing on some other course or from another set of tees whose slope rating – and hence degree of difficulty – is different, the player's handicap index will be used in conjunction with the slope rating of that course to produce a playing handicap for that player on that course. Thus someone whose handicap index for Southport is say 10.2 could receive a handicap of say 12 or 13 at a course whose slope rating (degree of difficulty) is higher. On the other hand, the same player could have a playing handicap of say eight or nine at a course whose slope rating is less than that of Southport. Again, the full details are available at the USGA website or by "googling" *USGA handicap system*.

Golf Australia's time line for this changeover is to train rating teams in the latter half of this year, then progressively re-rate courses over the next two years, beginning with metropolitan courses. We will keep members updated on these changes as they occur.

NB: Slope rating applies to the course as a whole. The club itself will still determine the rating, or index, of individual holes on the course.

Jim Townley



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Club Championship 2009

THE CLUB'S championship results this year are quite remarkable in that Jack Fox, aged 16 and playing off a handicap of two, came home champion by defeating his elder brother, John, aged 19 and also playing off two.

Another junior, Tyson Johnston-Moir, aged 16, was C-grade champion.



From left: captain Jim Townley, 2009 club champion Jack Fox, president Don Phelan and sponsor Bruce Lynton.

CLUB CHAMPION	Jack Fox	(2) 73, 71, 71, 70	285
Runner up	John Fox	(2) 75, 71, 74, 68	288
B Grade Champion	Lee Pearmain	(13) 84, 84, 92, 88	348 (play off)
Runner up	Mark Mortimore	(13) 86, 87, 85, 90	348
C Grade Champion	Tyson Johnston-Moir	(26) 94, 94, 84, 93	365
Runner up	Brian Vincent	(20) 93, 99, 88, 89	369 c/b
A Grade Nett Winner	Doug Henderson	(6) 72, 67, 72, 72	283
Runner up	Paul Willett	(11) 68, 70, 79, 70	287 c/b
B Grade Nett Winner	Ray Turnell	(16) 76, 70, 75, 70	291
Runner up	Michael Valitutti	(17) 78, 69, 75, 71	293
C Grade Nett Winner	Ray Jago	(20) 70, 72, 75, 72	289
Runner up	Mick Flynn	(19) 72, 72, 76, 77	297
Seniors 55-59	Paul Bunyan	(5) 76, 80	156
Runner up	Neil Cameron	(7) 76, 82	158
Seniors 60-64	Eddie Bartels	(10) 79, 85	164
Runner up	Mike Sexton	(13) 84, 84	168
Seniors 65- 69	Les Coleman	(9) 84, 84	168
Runner up	Martin Lowson	(12) 84, 87	171
Seniors 70+	Roy Wright	(7) 80, 81	161 c/b
Runner up	Ray Croxford	(8) 76, 85	161
Juniors Gross	Jack Fox	(2) 71, 70	141
Juniors Nett	Tyson Johnston-Moir	(26) 69, 68	137
Winner			
Chilla Dowling Trophy	Paul Bunyan	(5) 76, 80	156
36-hole matchplay final results			
Stroke	Ricky Esteb def. John Fox		6/4
Handicap	Ray Jago def. Tyson Johnston-Moir		1 up

House Committee Report



Phil Ratcliff

THE CLUB'S social events have been well patronised over the first half of 2009 and Friday night raffles are beginning to attract more members.

As well as the usual Friday raffles and members' draw your committee has introduced a \$500 voucher towards a new set of Callaway golf clubs. This draw takes place at 5:45pm each Friday. Additionally on the last Friday of each month and after the members' draw, we have been conducting a further raffle for an attractive item of golf hardware. So far two Odyssey putters have been won (only \$5 a ticket!) and at the time of writing Bernadette Lance has promised a very smart Titans golf bag, one of only one hundred being made, and this will provide another great prize.

Unfortunately the sportsmen's dinner has had to be postponed due to very busy schedules of the invited sporting personalities, but we will be re-scheduling this event in 2010.

Great success

Our first trivia night was held on 3rd July and proved to be a great success. From amongst more than 100 attendees, team Alex and Sandy Mojsish were the winners. By popular demand we will repeat this event next year.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

September	Sunday 6	Jazz Arvo
October	Friday 2	1st Nine & Dine of the summer
	Monday 26	Annual General Meeting
November	Sunday 1	Pennant sponsors' golf day
	Tuesday 3	Melbourne Cup Day
	Friday 6	Nine & Dine
	Saturday 28	Captain vs President annual presentation night
December	Friday 4	Nine & Dine
	Sunday 6	Members' children's Christmas party
	Monday 7	Ladies' Christmas party
	Sunday 13	Members' Christmas golf day & party
	Thursday 31	New Year's Eve golf day & party

Mobile bar negotiated

General Manager Andrew Kirkman has successfully negotiated a mobile bar from Fosters brewery at no cost to the club. This bar can be moved to any area of the clubhouse and is worth \$12,000. We are planning an official "christening" at the Jazz Arvo on Sunday 6th September – so mark this date off in your diary.

Special thanks go to all those members who continue to attend the club's functions. Please monitor the website to keep yourself informed on upcoming events. The very popular "Nine & Dine" will be returning to our summer calendar, with the first such event to be enjoyed on Friday 2nd October.

Phil Ratcliff – Chairman

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From the General Manager's Desk

EARLIER this year in February I was fortunate to be awarded a bursary by Golf Management Queensland to attend the American Club Managers' Conference in New Orleans. This was a phenomenal experience that provided a harsh insight into the financial turmoil that many American and European golf clubs are facing at present.



Andrew Kirkman

The biggest lesson learnt was that those clubs, directors and managers that had the foresight to stay abreast of the issues affecting their members, and had the conviction to implement strategies to best prepare their clubs, were the ones who were best managing these challenging times. Those clubs that ignored the data, disregarded member issues and hoped that "doing what they have always done" would work in the future, were the ones that found themselves facing genuine hardship.

Continue to strive

Hence at Southport we continue to strive to maintain the traditions that make our club great whilst also implementing new initiatives to ensure that you, as a member and owner of this club, enjoy the benefits you expect.

Unfortunately the biggest issue in 2009 has been the weather! We were inundated with over 2200mm of rain in the 2008/2009 financial year, making it the wettest in well over a decade. A positive has been the outstanding drainage of the newer holes on the course – particularly the 13th hole, which could have handled motorised buggies only 24 hours after receiving four inches (100mm) of rain on one occasion earlier in the year.

Upgrading systems

Off the course, over the past four months we have successfully completed the upgrade of our membership and point-of-sale systems. Members' patience throughout this process has been appreciated. All members should now have their own club cards, which replace both the old wallet key and Golfink card, and through which your competition vouchers and rundown balls are automatically credited to your trophy account.

Don't forget that all vouchers and balls won prior to 1st November have to be used by 31st December each year.

I take this opportunity to thank our staff, all of whom have had a challenging and at times lonely six months as the abnormal weather conditions resulted in the presence of fewer golfers! In particular I congratulate Bernadette Lance, who recently successfully completed her first year as our golf operations manager. Bernie has had plenty of challenges in this position and continues to grow into an outstanding manager and role model as she develops her team in the golf shop. The quality and presentation of apparel, clubs and merchandise in the golf shop are also a great credit to her talents.

Best of luck on the course over the coming months, and I look forward to seeing you when I return from one week's holiday for my honeymoon after Genevieve and I celebrate our wedding on 8th August. My thanks to the many members who have wished us well.

Andrew Kirkman

MAJOR UPCOMING GOLF EVENTS

Sunday 16th August	Gold Coast Open <i>Proudly sponsored by Lexus</i> Handicaps 0-5
Wednesday 19th August	Ladies Foursomes Championships <i>Proudly sponsored by World Carpets</i>
Sunday 13th Sept	Southport Classic Handicaps 4 to 18 – \$1000s of prizes!



Joe Chilcott

New golf shop employee

JOE CHILCOTT, who recently joined the club's golf shop staff, developed an interest in the game when in year seven at school.

He now plays off a handicap of four and represents Northern Rivers in A-grade pennants.

Does he want to be a professional?

"Well no," says Joe, who was Murwillumbah's Wollumbin High School captain in 2005 then progressed to the Southern Cross University at Tweed Heads, where he undertook a degree course in convention and event tourism management over two and a half years.

A six-month internship with the PGA was included in the course, during which Joe worked over 600 hours with programs coordinator Luke Bates and Queensland executive officer Ian Hepburn.

Office work occupied two days a week, but when tournaments were on he worked up to 80 hours a week, firstly with trainee pros then on the circuit with senior pros.

Among later highlights was his work at the Queensland Trainee Championships played at Peregrin Springs on the Sunshine Coast, and he was asked to return to assist in organising this year's event.

Joe also helped out at trainee matches every Monday at courses such as Gold Coast Burleigh, Coolangatta and Helensvale.

Health and fitness is a priority for Joe; his exercise regime includes occasional 10km runs and regular games of tennis – and the Gold Coast beaches are also a favourite haunt.

ATTENTION MEMBERS:

Please

- Remember that there are emergency intercoms on the 3rd, 11th & 18th tees.
- Repair pitch marks – complimentary pitch repairers are available from the golf shop.
- Keep up with the group in front!
- Yell "Fore!" if your ball might hit someone.
- Report any slow play to the golf shop staff at the halfway mark of your round.
- Range balls must NOT be taken home!
- Take a sand bucket and repair your divots.
- Inform the office staff of any ball hit outside the property.
- Keep motorised carts on pathways wherever possible.
- Do not take white club towels from the locker rooms onto the course.



Sandy Mojsish

Associates' News

THE first half of our golfing calendar has been extremely busy, even though there were many postponements because of the weather. So much rain!!

The championships were reduced to 54 holes due to closure of the course, with Courtney Massey being champion for the second year in a row.

Margi Lynton is Bronze 1 champion and Lee Chapman Bronze 2.

Courtney also won the Southport Amateur Open, which thankfully was played in perfect weather with the course in top condition, thanks to Stuart and the boys. Courtney is a member of the Queensland ladies' open team to play in the State series; we wish her all the best for this event.

Michelle Pericic represented Gold Coast district in the Junior Jug played at Goondiwindi, when the team was beaten by just one point.



From left: Junior champion and championship matchplay runner-up India Matthews, president Petah Oberman, sponsor Beric Lynton and Bronze 2 champion Lee Chapman.

A great success

The Ambience Classic was a great success – Ambience is a first-time sponsor and we welcome them! Ambience is managed by Carrie McCarthy, whose father Terry is a member here at Southport.

The ladies' pennants matches commenced on July 27th – good luck to all the girls playing!

By now you will have played the new 13th hole many times; as

SPRING RENOVATIONS

(continued)

- *Scarifying* removes the thatch that has built up below the surface of the greens. Thatch is the dead and living material that accumulates between the putting surface and the soil. Whilst thatch is not a great problem in fairways and tees, it is in greens.
- *Hollow tining* removes cores or plugs from the ground. The resultant hole is about 5/8th inch in diameter and about five inches deep. These holes allow access below the root zone of the plant to insert the various nutrients that scientific soil testing has indicated are needed for continued healthy plant growth.
- *Slitting* is used to de-compact the fairways. Compaction is the result of foot, golf cart and course machinery traffic. A series of vertically rotating blades slice into the fairway and are then shivered laterally to loosen the compacted sub-surface soil.
- *Top dressing* fills the holes left by the hollow tining and provides a fresh growing medium to support new plant growth.

2009 Championships

Final results 54 hole totals

Club champion	Courtney Massey	222
Runner-up	Maighan Brown	240
Silver nett winner	Janet Omodei	218
Runner-up	Leanne Esteb	226
Bronze 1 gross winner	Margaret Lynton	292
Runner-up	June Walters	296
Nett winner	Joyce Skinner	220
Runner-up	June Walters	227
Bronze 2 gross winner	Leonie Chapman	334
Runner-up	Judy Fitzgerald	339
Nett winner	Maureen Egar	240
Runner-up	Ingrid Hutcheson	242
Silver Salver	Joyce Skinner	147
Mary Scott Trophy	Janet Omodei	145
Junior Championship	India Matthews	149

Matchplay results

Club matchplay champion over 36 holes		
Courtney Massey def. India Matthews		10/9
Bronze 1 Lynne Shepherd def. Heather Lawrence		1 up
Bronze 2 Judy Fitzgerald def. Fay Cummins		4/2
Poinciana Plate		
Silver Nola Nash def. Helen Tribe		2 Up
Bronze 1 May Warland def. Yaeko Bushby		2 Up
Bronze 2 Lex Pietzner def. Betty Cragg		6/5

a result, it has been re-indexed to number 3, resulting in holes 11 and 15 also having new indexing: they are now indexed 5 and 7 respectively.

Let's hope the rain has gone for a while so that we can enjoy some lovely golf days!

Sandy Mojsish
Vice President

"Heavy" renovation

I mentioned that this would be a "heavy" renovation. We must expect the course, and particularly the greens, to take some time to recover fully from this treatment. Just how long cannot be forecast as so many variables, mainly weather related, come into play. However, it will certainly take longer than did recovery from the "light" autumn renovations last February. Fairway slitting in particular is a slow process.

This recovery period is always a frustrating one for members; however, what must be borne in mind is that the wonderful course standard we enjoy for so much of the year is a result of the renovation program our staff implements throughout the year.

Jim Townley – Captain

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OUT & ABOUT

A diversified lifetime

AMONG the many club members who live in the adjacent Bronberg Court complexes, Dorothy Wells makes her way onto the course via nearby locked gates to play in competitions, and her diminutive figure is often seen on other days as she enjoys an afternoon practice.

Born in the village of Huonville in Tasmania on 25 November 1923, the young Dorothy's wide-ranging interests included tennis, hockey, fishing, gardening, opera, politics and art.

There's no doubt though that hockey was her main focus; she began competing at six years of age and went on to become an umpire: at just 11 she was refereeing senior matches and at 25 she qualified as a State A umpire.

"After our wedding in 1946 we moved to Circular Head in Tasmania's remote north-west, where the district population was just 9000 and there were only three hockey teams. My husband, Geoffrey, spread the word about my hockey skills and I soon became involved in the local scene. After successfully applying for affiliation with the Tasmanian Women's Hockey Association and with exceptional backing from local small businesses and schools, we eventually formed 14 teams," says Dorothy, proud that teams from the area won three state titles.

By 1958, after umpiring interstate carnivals in Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane, Dorothy qualified for an All Australian Badge, and later enjoyed the opportunity to build on her umpiring skills at the 1975 international carnival in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Health problem leads to golf

A second bout of TB in 1960 (she first contracted TB as an infant) put a stop to strenuous physical activity, so during her convalescence Dorothy and Geoffrey took to trying out golf on their lawn. In typically independent fashion, they taught themselves from a Ben Hogan book and were soon able to enjoy mixed competitions at the Smithton Golf Club. From 1966, Dorothy represented the club in Division 1 pennant play for 23 years, during which time her team – from an associate membership of just 45 – was runner-up three times in state grand finals, losing to the powerful Royal Hobart team led by former Australian amateur champion, Lindy Goggin.

Resuming her hockey umpiring activities as soon as she was able, Dorothy went on to spend 16 years as Tasmania's state convenor of umpires; but resigned that post in 1978, objecting to the fact that hockey had become a contact sport with new rules required by an Olympic Games committee focused on entertaining viewers.

World tours

Together with Geoffrey, Dorothy has enjoyed three lengthy overseas trips by air, sea and land after first exploring the Australian coastline. Their extensive travels covered every continent except southern Africa, often taking them way off the beaten track to far-flung ports of call and exotic locations most of us have only read about.



Dorothy Wells

Arts and crafts

Art became a focus for Dorothy in the early 70s when, with the assistance of Geoffrey, a gifted photographer, but without any formal instruction, she took up oil painting. Today the walls of her unit are covered with beautiful works that are testimony to her natural talent.

Also, through her association with a Japanese Rotary exchange student, Dorothy discovered a flair for a leatherwork technique known as Italian quilting and, as her home town of Circular Head's average annual rainfall was 50 inches (that's 1.27 metres!), she spent many happy hours indoors creating stylish garments and accessories – along the way winning Garment of the Year at the Stanley Art Festival. She was thrilled when two of her beautiful quilted leather 5-piece outfits were chosen to be paraded in the 1991 Launceston Rotary fashion show.

More new interests

Never one to spend a single idle moment, in 1990 Dorothy found another interest – this time obtaining a recreational crayfishing licence; then in 2000 and 2002 she circumnavigated Tasmania in her son's motor yacht – the latter voyage marking her as the oldest woman to complete the biennial Cascade Cruise circumnavigation of the island state.

A lifetime love of singing has made Dorothy an enthusiastic member of the Gold Coast Social Singers, who meet in our clubhouse at 7pm each Tuesday. She reasons that if an octogenarian with somewhat dodgy lungs can keep in tune, anyone can – so why not join in, it's fun and great exercise!

Now aged 85 and with a handicap of 25, Dorothy's love of golf and gardening keeps her physically active and that, together with her mental acuity, makes her a great example of the benefits of living life to the full, regardless of age.

Footnote: Dorothy's many golfing achievements include winning the Tasmanian over-60s Masters (at age 71), three aces in Tasmania and one at Helensvale. Her name also appears twice on Southport honour boards, and she represented SGC in the 2007 Fisher Paykel Classic at Royal Queensland.

BEHIND THE SCENES New machinery in the workshop

FOR many years the cutting cylinders from our mowers have been sent out for a twice-yearly grind, or re-sharpen.

Due to the cost involved in cylinder maintenance and sharpening, between these times the units would be sent away generally only to repair damage. Also we would backlap the units using a grinding paste to bring them back to a sharper state, although not as sharp as they should be.

The club has now purchased a set of express dual grinders, thus doing away with need to send our cutting units out for sharpening. This enables us to sharpen our



John Ward (right) and Trevor Honnery, the club's deputy course superintendent, check out installation of the new machinery.

cutting units whenever they go "off cut" or are damaged – which in turn allows us more control over our cylinder maintenance procedures and, of course, the budget that goes with that regimen.

Members may have already noticed some difference in the greens. Stuart, our course superintendent, certainly has – and is pleased with the result.

For my part, I am pleased that my nagging Stuart over the last few years has paid off, and we are now seeing the benefit of having our own in-house sharpening system.

John Ward – Machinery Technician

OUT & ABOUT

MICHAEL JOHNSON, who started playing golf 36 years ago, had thoughts of becoming a professional – and in fact he had an offer from Ian Brosnan, a well-known teaching professional, to go into training at Redcliffe.

“Thankfully my dad was a pretty realistic type, and guided me towards staying on to complete my secondary education at Keebra Park High School.

“Dad pointed out the difficulties of making a living on the pro circuit, and that an injury could easily put paid to a professional golfing career,” said Michael.

While at Keebra Park High Michael captained the school in year 12 and played for the 1st 15 rugby league team in years 10,11 and 12. After finishing secondary school, when an injury precluded further participation in a rugby league career, he went on to play touch football for Queensland and Australia.

Business life and recreation

Michael started his business life as an electrician, but these days he’s a consultant services engineer involved in the construction of major projects such as shopping and convention centres, hospitals and correctional facilities.

Notable projects he’s managed on the Gold Coast are Jupiter’s Casino, the Convention Centre, the recently completed Robina Town Centre extension and refurbishment, and new stages of Pacific Fair.

Other interests and commitments over recent years have been serving on the club’s committees and his major involvement as captain and then manager of the club’s Division I pennant team.

Beginnings

Michael’s interest in golf started back in 1973 when his family moved out to Blackall where, from the first tee of the town’s golf course, he could hit a ball 320 metres up the fairway – but that was because the ground was virtually a clay pan, or in some cases like a bitumen road.

When his family returned to the Gold Coast in 1976 Michael heard that Ross White, then recently appointed Southport’s secretary/manager, was looking for juniors playing with handicaps around 12 to 14.

Michael rolled up to join in, but was amazed by the Southport’s green, grassy fairways and putting surfaces. In those days, from the first tee even the big hitters couldn’t reach the bunkers on either side of the first fairway.

Now though with modern clubs, balls can be driven upwards of 50 metres



This year’s successful A-grade team again proudly displays its victory pennant. Pictured are (back row from left) Don Phelan (club president), Brett Baker, Ben Noyes, John Fox, Robin Akehurst; (middle row from left) Peter Weston (pennant sponsor), Braiden Marlborough, Nathan Baker, Gary Schofield, Daniel Paton, Michael Johnson (manager), Jim Townley (club captain); and (at front) Brad Dowling.

past the bunkers on the first hole.

Golfing again

Touch football remained a sporting priority though until, in the mid-1980s when he finished playing for Australia, Michael was asked by long-time friend Tony Melia, who was then serving on the SGC committee, to return to golf and rejoin the pennant team.

“As the Burleigh Heads pennant team was on its way to winning 11 flags in a row and our team had lost four consecutive finals against them, Tony suggested we should look at a new approach – in that we had to think about the difference between pennant play and individual golf.

“The problem was a lack of team coordination and bonding. We were just a bunch of knockabout, easygoing mates – nothing wrong with that, but sound management was essential to build a cohesive team spirit and better team morale, achieving not only for self but also for fellow team members and the club.

“The result speaks for itself: having a non-playing manager has certainly brought us more success than in any previous period of the club’s history.”

Stepping down

After playing in two Division I pennant finals and over the past four years managing the winning teams in 2006, 2007 and at Sanctuary Cove this year, Michael is looking to step down from the managerial role.

“Being involved in the club’s pennant teams is demanding and time-consuming for all concerned, including members’ partners; so each year we host dinners for our teams and their partners to thank them for their dedication – and in the partners’ case, patience! – over the 12 to 14 weeks that focus on winning pennant flags, and the enjoyment this brings to us all.

“My priorities now are to spend more time with my wife and family, who have played second fiddle during this journey over the last 20 years; work on lowering my handicap; compete in a few district events; but mainly just relax a little – although a future tilt at the club captaincy could be on the cards.”



Michael Johnson

BACK TO NATURE with Course Horticulturist Aaron Goding

WHILE most vegetation around the course is native, there are also some exotic species; and although, as pointed out before in this column, there’s danger of branches falling from eucalypts, there are more serious concerns about imported palm trees.

There are particular danger areas on the right hand side of the 15th fairway, around the 12th green and the seat at the 7th tee. Just recently I was told of a member who was very fortunate to be narrowly missed by a heavy frond as it hit the ground near the seat on the 7th, and there was a similar incident at the 12th as players left the green.

There are hundreds of palms on our course, mostly exotic Royal and Cocos palms and the native Bangalow palm.

Should we have palms? With due respect my answer is no, but we do – so at least we need to exercise control.



Palms at the 12th green

Indeed every day a reconnoitre is necessary to check for heavy fronds and seed pods that are about to fall, so members should be very careful when in the vicinity of these trees.

Interestingly, the Cocos (coconut) is now classed as a weed and as such new plantings are banned; but really even native palms shouldn’t be mixed with eucalypts.

Use of palms

Palms though it must be said are one of the most well-known and extensively cultivated of all plant families.

Most of the 24 species have been important to humans throughout history, yielding food, oil, fronds and fibre put to multiple uses. Now widely used in landscaping, this popular symbol of tropical resorts is arguably out of place on golf courses.





David McKean

TEACHING PRO'S CORNER

Swinging Impact

SEVERAL members have improved their swing through coaching using the tennis racquet technique described in my previous column; amongst them associate Anne Binks rates a special mention. Anne won the ladies' single matchplay knockout then reduced her handicap by four after a brilliant round at the Gold Coast Burleigh course as one of the team representing our club in the Sir Bruce Small Trophy.



Another beneficial technique, this time to build strong muscles, was introduced to me when I was a trainee by a golfer who suggested that belting into an old motor bike tyre with a club would strengthen the arms.

It sounded rather strange, but in following that advice I not only built up strength but also realised I was finding the correct impact position in my swing.

These days the tyre has been replaced by what's known as an impact bag.

On impact, most of your weight should be on the target side of the swing (i.e. left side for right handers, right for left handers), and by hitting into the bag with the club you can get the feeling of where the impact should occur, then build on your back swing to always align with that point. You'll find too that this helps to determine your correct set-up position; and that, combined with the right weight distribution and back swing, will ensure the ideal impact to make the ball rise and keep it on a straight line.

David McKean – Teaching Professional

It's the Fashion

*When Bernie staged a fashion show, she planned the program well.
She selected gear that we would wear, and stuff that she could sell.
She had trouble getting models, 'til she was heard to mention
That some male clothing would be shown – now, that got their attention.
But what really spurred them on was when they all learned
There's just one change room at the club – that's when interest turned!
The girls were busy checking out all virile husky males
That Bernadette could choose to boost the prospect of more sales.
The thought of frisking round about in skimpy underwear
In the presence of some macho men was all that they could bear.
But when the big day came along, it wasn't quite like that
The first male model to arrive was middle-aged and fat.
He lecherously eyed the ladies off, his heart was filled with hope
And any bare flesh within reach received a furtive grope!
And then another gent arrived, displaying all his charms,
Certain that he'd soon end up with a cute chick in his arms.
Now, we'll never know just what went on behind that boardroom door
But the girls all stopped parading while the crowd called out for more.
And when at last they re-appeared, complete with smirks and grins
The excuses for their absence seemed somewhat weak and thin.
So if you want to cash in on this risqué modelling boom
Just check first to make quite sure there's only one change room!*

– Joyce Skinner

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Winter Wear & Compaction

MAINTAINING the high standard of Southport's playing surfaces is a seasonal juggling act.

On average, some 55,000 rounds are played annually on our 47 hectares, so the level of compaction is high.

The many motorised golf buggies that are channelled into and out of areas that are undersized to cope compound the compaction problem.



Stuart Moore

Summer growth rates combined with cultural practices such as fairway slicing and hollow tying though allow ground staff to combat compaction quite successfully.

However, as autumn takes over and the cooler weather closes in, growth rates decrease considerably, limiting compaction treatments through the colder months to minor ones only. Unseasonal rainfall through winter can cause additional wear and compaction due to low evaporation rates caused by extended shade coverage during the day, resulting in turf grass taking longer to dry out.

Compaction is the obvious cause of fairways becoming harder or, to use a golfing term, offering a 'tighter lie' from which to hit.



Aggressive summer growth requires more mowing than winter growth.

Cutting heights

Indeed, many members ask why we have lowered the cutting height along the fairways during the colder months. The answer is as simple as summer versus winter.

Summertime of course brings about aggressive growth to all surfaces; whereas in winter, growth rates slow almost to a halt and turf grass becomes semi-dormant, losing much of its colour.

So it's not that we have lowered mower heights, it's just that the grass has simply lost vigour and thickness. It's understandable that players may think fairway mowing heights have been altered, but in fact they have not! Due to this reduction in growth, throughout winter the fairways may be cut only on a Friday to simply clean up divots and debris in preparation for the weekend and ensuing week.

Combating compaction

Considerable work is undertaken towards achieving the best balance of time for play and maintenance.

Cart paths are strategically placed to minimise compaction and wear whilst improving drainage, but at the same time not detracting from the inherent course design. Moreover additional contouring of fairways and drainage in high traffic areas of play lessen the effects of wear and compaction.

Finally, improvements in machinery technology will minimise compaction problems in the future and, most importantly, reduce disturbance to players.

Stuart Moore – Course Superintendent