

**Your MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE for 2010 :**

President:

Robert Holl

Vice President:

Alan Kennedy

Treasurer:

Steve Allars

Captain:

Derrick Ball

Vice Captain:

Peter Ballarine

IP President:

Duncan Ridley

Committee:

Ron Newell

Gary Robins

Greg Lynch

Ian Devenish

Dave Hicks

Ladies President

Jan Bowdler

Ladies Vice-President

Gail Pennington

Ladies Captain

Margaret Isaac

Vets Captain

Peter Flemming

Committee Comments

For those Members that couldn't manage to make our AGM on Monday 21st March, here is a summary of what our treasurer had to say in regard to our results:

- Profit for the year was \$55,000 which was a significant turnaround of \$220,000 from 2009 when the Club lost \$165,000.
 - Need to acknowledge that this profit did include \$34,000 from our raffle activities
 - The overall figures reflected both an increased revenue and controlled expenses
 - The state of the accounts was a reflection of improved administration and accounting and the professional approach and understanding of MYOB
- Our accounts were reconciled and produced internally
- We received positive feedback from our Auditor in regard to the production of the accounts
- Our overdraft improved from \$333,000 in 2009 to \$208,000 and this will remain a focus for 2011.

Income, significant items:

- Income was \$216,000 more than in 2009.
 - Membership fees were up \$76,000 due to fee increases and classification differences
 - Bar and kitchen sales were up \$35,000, house profit was up \$43,000 because of better cost control, purchasing and stock control. Also because of the introduction on non-member bar pricing
 - The raffle income was \$54,000 which was a one off item (after costs net was \$33,000)

Expenses, significant items:

- Expenses were \$39,000 less than 2009.
 - Course maintenance, fertiliser, chemicals & fuel was down \$28,000 and sundry & general expenses were down \$20,000—both due to tighter controls
 - House repairs and maintenance was down \$17,000
 - Hospitality expense was down \$15,000—reduced allocations for President & Captain
 - Computer expenses was down \$12,000—less issues plus new hardware
 - Plant maintenance was down \$12,000—more in house maintenance
 - Consultants & contractors was down \$10,000—internal resources used

Expense increases, significant items:

- Rates were \$15,000 up because rates were underpaid in 2009, plus a penalty
- Safety gear and training was up \$11,000—more focus on training and safety
- Accounting and audit expenses were up by \$7,000— auditor used to be a member but now figures more reflective of market rates
- The financial reports now reflect the Club's true position
- Management, accounting, administration, bar and greens staff all contributed and controlled costs and managed the Club more effectively in 2010.
- Management took significant actions in 2010 and continues to focus on a comprehensive set of actions as set out in the business plan—as highlighted in the February Fore publication.
- A new set of business plan actions, reflecting our focus for 2011 and beyond, will be published in the next few months.
- There are significant challenges in 2011—membership numbers, cost control challenges, maintaining bar results with reduced member numbers, overdraft control.
- The Club will enter into a leasing arrangement for various Toro greens equipment—this is seen as the best method of limiting large one off cash purchases.

President's Ponderings



Dear Members

Well, yet another AGM has come and gone. Turnout was a little disappointing with only about 40 members in attendance, but, ever the optimist, I'm hoping the poor turnout was an indication that, in general, members are satisfied with the current management of the club and its finances.

I'm sure you've all read the Fore and had a look at the club's Financial Statements for 2010 and, like me, were pleased to see the club returned a surplus this year.

Our Treasurer, Steve Allars, had his work cut out to keep budgets on track with lower than expected membership figures but, with some areas' expenses coming in under budget and additional income from events such as the major raffle, he was able to provide us a positive return.

Of Course, Steve's job was made easier due to the fact that we now have a very cohesive administration team who are all working to their strengths. Kim has been a valuable addition to the team and her book-keeping skills have ensured that the club's financial records and reporting are both accurate & current. Cheryl continues to be the 'rock' in the office in so many diverse ways; and of course, Peter and Max continue to passionately work for the betterment of our Club.

I'd like to thank both Steve & the Administration Team for their hard work over the last 12 months.

Also thank you and well done to Jon and his greens staff and Mel and her bar staff for operating within or below budgets; you can put any budget you like in place, but if there is no support from your people, it just won't happen with the same amount of success!

If the AGM and the 2010 financials have highlighted anything, it is that membership numbers continue to be a major concern. The subject was brought up at the AGM and most attendees agreed that we need to address this issue.

In 2011, your Committee is focussed on this issue and we are expecting that with our new advertising projects coming to fruition, you will see a lot of new faces around the Club.

My request to every member is this – if you see someone on the course who you do not know, or do not recognise as a member, please approach them and say hello. Let visitors, potential new members, new members, know that Wanneroo is a friendly club; make them feel welcome and hopefully that will help contribute to more positive ongoing outcomes for our Club.

To all our new members; welcome and I hope you are enjoying the club. To all our loyal members, thank you for your support and keep hitting 'em straight.

Robert Holl
President

Juniors



Hi everyone, well it's been a busy month for junior golf — 2 Opens at Nedlands and Cottesloe.

Unfortunately no joy for the Wanneroo boys but we have a few young golfers coming through that provide us hope for the future.

Graham and Craig Roger, Campbell Parata and Kieran McLaughlin are all doing well—keep up the good work boys!

We don't have too many girls, but Nadia Te Roi and Kirstin Rudgely are doing very nicely at the moment and hopefully when the Junior clinics start up at the end of March we will see many more girls and boys in the junior fields later in the year.

That brings me to Jan Plaisted and her team of ladies who start again on 25th March.....

I would like to say a big thank you for the hard work they put in, their efforts benefit the future of golf and our Club! Once again thank you very much ladies.

George Lawther and I would also like to thank all members, particularly, Gary Robins, Mike Mugg, Joe Dixon, the ladies and the Wednesday afternoon fields for their support in helping George to compete in the Australian Amateur Championships; George was especially appreciative.

The moral of the story for all Juniors is that the Members will always be supportive and help raise money to progress your development.

Equally all juniors can help their own cause by being seen to do the right thing around the course— show good manners, etiquette and respect as you have been showing me and we will move forward with the full backing of the Club.

REMEMBER STAY IN THE PRESENT. THE ONLY SHOT YOU THINK ABOUT IS THE ONE AT HAND! NO JUDGING, NO ANTICIPATING THE RESULT.

COUNT YOUR SCORE AT THE END.

Junior Co-ordinator
John Walker



L-R Standing: Jenny Martin (match), Glenda Grundy (match), Sherryl Howe (vice-captain), Mary Treacy (treasurer), Pam Earl (secretary), Margaret Paton (handicapper)

L-R Seated: Jutta Matthews (house), Margaret Isaac (captain), Janet Bowdler (president) and Gail Pennington (vice-president)

This is a good time to introduce WGC members to the 2011 Ladies' Committee, a group of women dedicated to the interests and golfing well-being of the Wanneroo Ladies and to the club as a whole. Yes, we are prepared to work hard and seriously to be organised and efficient and yes, we are able to enjoy the experience as you can see from the above group photograph.

Steve Kuriata sponsored a team event on Tuesday 22 March and made some pro-shop specials available to us on the day. We are always grateful to Steve for his assistance in procuring and maintaining equipment for us and for his constant support of the ladies' projects. The winning team was Gail Pennington, Joy Wright and Sandra Palmer.

We were very relieved to hear that the families of our Japanese lady members, Hisako Tabuchi, Yoshimi Nishikawa and Junko Nakamura, as well as the families of the Bycroft and Pauley families, were safe after the recent horrifying events in Japan. Eiko Uwabo should be visiting us in April and may be able to tell us of the frightening effects of the earthquake tremors.

Attention all WGC Artists!

This is advance notice of a Wanneroo Members' Art Exhibition to be held at the club at the end of July. Alison Dovey, Julia Goudge, Gail Pennington and Lynda Schofield will be organising the event. To all of those artists amongst you, both men and women, we invite you to get painting, drawing, framing to be ready to submit your works of art for display at the club. Watch this space for more information.

*Jan Bowdler
Ladies President*

BREAKING NEWS

YOUR COMMITTEE HAS AGREED TO PROMOTE NEW MEMBERSHIPS BY OFFERING A ONE OFF PRICE FOR NOMINATION TO OUR CLUB OF \$100

IF EVER YOU HAD A FRIEND, RELATION, OR NEIGHBOUR WHO HAS EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN BEING A MEMBER—THERE WILL NEVER BE A BETTER TIME!!



Mag Day (Celebrity Golf Day)

Early Reminder

Set aside Friday 6th May in your Calendar

Its Mag Day—Guaranteed a good time!

Mel's April Special



Try our Wine of the Month a beautiful Sauvignon Blanc from one of our Club Sponsors—Wignalls Wines



\$20.00 (while stocks last)

Greens gossip



Work has commenced on the topping up of greenside bunkers with bunker sand. We are working on the priority bunkers first and will continue with this programme as play commitments allow. It is planned to have all bunkers that require more sand completed by the end of May.

Good luck to all with the golfing season and bring on some rain.

Jon Carter
Course Superintendent.

Ron Newell
Chairman of Greens.

With the start of the golfing season now upon us, we have recently completed our Autumn greens renovation.

This procedure went very well with the use of our newly acquired coring and pick-up machines and greens are now well on their way to recovery. This will be our last major renovation until late in the year, so it was important to give our putting surfaces every opportunity to be in a healthy state prior to the cold months.

Please remember to repair you ball marks over this recovery period in particular, as new growth is particularly susceptible to damage

The long dry summer is persisting well into the year and therefore our irrigation programmes continue to run at close to 100% of available time. We have however, adjusted the run times and frequency of some rough stations and carry-zones from the tee so that we can maintain our annual water usage to within our licensed allocation. At this stage I believe we should run fairly close to this quota though the odd rainy day would be a real benefit.

BUDDY OPPORTUNITY

The Club held a New Members' evening on 16 March 2011 and it was interesting to listen to the range of experiences that these newcomers to Wanneroo had experienced over their short time as members. Things such as how to score competitions correctly were topical. Explanations about how to fix divots and pug marks correctly and how to rake bunkers were appreciated. Normally we do physical demonstrations but the light was too bad on this occasion. Subsequent feedback was that actual demonstrations would be really helpful so we will ensure that this happens for the next meeting of those who join Wanneroo.

There was overwhelming support from New Members in having someone to help/educate/demonstrate the above. Having a "buddy" who would effectively be a type of mentor for a new person to the Club was viewed as something that would be very positively embraced.

With this in mind, we are calling for longer standing members to put up their hands to be a "Buddy" for our New Members. It may simply be a matter of playing one (or more) games with the individual, being prepared to sit down with them or providing a contact phone number for them to call and introducing them to other members. Consequently the New Member would feel more confident and would be better educated about golf at Wanneroo including rules, competitions, course care, our expectations, behaviours and other matters that they are probably a bit vague about. We don't see this as an onerous task but we do see it as an important opportunity for you to help out these New Members, especially if they have joined of their own accord instead of via a current member nominator and seconder. It can be rather daunting joining a club when you do not know anyone and you are not sure of rules and procedures.

Male golfers, if you think you can spare a bit of time during the week please let me know via my home phone number 9447 5805 or via email hix@aapt.net.au. Ladies – although we know that you already have the "buddy" system in operation, Jan Bowdler would love to hear from if you would like to assist. Jan can be contacted on 9447 8336 or via email jjbowdler@gmail.com.

Your assistance in ensuring our New Members get off on the right foot at Wanneroo would be greatly appreciated. Thank you and best regards,
Dave Hicks
Chair – Membership Sub-committee

Sponsors Corner

It is our intention to feature two or three different sponsors of our Club each month, as part of our appreciation for their valuable contributions.

This month we would like to acknowledge and thank Robert Holl Homes for their support over several years Whether it be financial—sponsoring N.T.P.'s or tee boxes or events or 'one off' donations.

Or whether it is providing personal time and commitment or donated building and maintenance or reduced priced building and maintenance.

Robert Holl Homes have been strong supporters of our Club.



We would also like to acknowledge and thank Schweppes for their ongoing support, by way of monthly rebates and 'one off' event day donations. Again a major supporter over an extended time





A lot has been said this year about how great the course is looking and how the greens team is working hard and as a team.....

Thought it appropriate to introduce at least one of these hard working people to the Members

For those that don't know him, this is Peter Ballarine one of our greens team, Men's vice-captain

As you can see he is working so hard, that he is fading away to a shadow.

Well done Peter on another hard day on the course !!

If you read the emails, you will note there is a letter from a Member commenting on the sand buckets that are left in the car-park or thrown in the car park garden, to blow and roll around.

She pointed out, this is not good enough and we agree!

How hard is it to place your sand bucket in the correct facilities provided?

Even if you were to forget to return it to the facilities on the 1st and 10th, you still have the ability to place it on the stand near the car park.

We don't have a person designated or the time to collect random buckets; so can you please help us help you and do the right thing!

Did you know?

Rule 28—

If a player deems his ball unplayable, he must under penalty of one stroke

- play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot where the original ball was last played

Or

- Drop a ball behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind that point the ball may be dropped

Or

- Drop a ball within two club lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole

Explanation of Two Club-Length Option

Q. Larry's ball is under a bush. He decides to declare the ball unplayable and elects option c under Rule 28. Must Larry drop the ball within two club-lengths of where the ball lies, or within two club-lengths of the edge of

the bush?

A. Larry must drop the ball within two club-lengths of where the ball lies, no closer to the hole. Please refer to Rule 28.

Rule 10—

Order of Play if All Balls not on Putting Green

Q. Clyde's ball lies 10 metres from the hole, but in a bunker. Lew's ball lies 15 metres from the hole on the putting green. Who must play first?

A. The ball farther from the hole must be played first, regardless of the location of the ball. Lew must play first from the putting green before Clyde plays from the bunker. (Rules 10-1b and 10-2b)

Continuous Putting

Q. Are you entitled to "finish out" the hole if you have played and only have a tap in left? What is the penalty if you finish out of turn?

A. The answer is provided in Rule 10-1c for match play and Rule 10-2c for stroke play.

There is no penalty in either form of play if a player plays out of turn.

However, when a player has played out of turn in match play, the opponent may immediately recall the stroke played and require the player to play in the correct order.

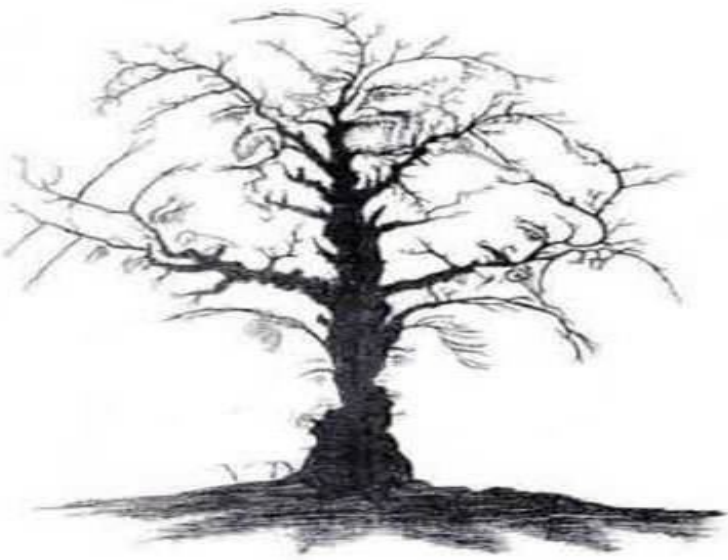
Additionally, in stroke play only, a player who is required to lift a ball under Rule 22, may play first rather than lift. This is the practice often seen used by the professionals which leads to the general misunderstanding that a "continuous putting" rule exists.

Procedure when Playing out of turn in Match Play

Q. Harry's ball lies 120 metres from the hole and his opponent Larry's ball lies 175 metres from the hole. Harry is riding in a cart and arrives at his ball before Larry, who is walking reaches his ball. Harry decides to play first. What is the ruling?

A. As Harry played out of turn, Rule 10-1c applies. Larry has the option of requiring Harry to cancel and replay his stroke in the correct order. If Larry does not recall Harry's stroke, Harry must play his ball as it lies with no penalty.





Keeping your mind sharp

(keeping our ageing Membership mentally active—if possible)

** thought a good place to put this was on the same page as the Vets report ! ***

Can you see the ten faces in the tree?

Vets feedback



IT WAS NOT YOUR CAPTAIN. Really. It wasn't. Not at all. It was the ground staff who changed the week for course maintenance, messing up the Vets' Open Invitation Day (Is that OK, Peter? Is that what you told me to write?)

As the man on the sewerage truck said: "(that stuff) happens."

So now, we will have our big day on April 8 with a 7.30am shotgun start. There are still some vacancies, so get your name in. So far, we have 25 visitors from 11 clubs, one from all the way down in Busselton, and it should be a fantastic day. Clive Stevens has done a superb job of bringing together our sponsors and we thank most sincerely Retravision Joondalup, Paul Conti Wines, Development Engineering Consultants, Clarkson Holden and willing members Colin Abbott, Hoppy Anderson, Mick Mugg, Duncan McNab and Clive, himself. Well done all.

Another change of date is our Ladies Day. We entertain our superiors from the ladies section on May 20. Competition is a two-person Ambrose for the Clive Stevens Trophy and tee-off will be 8.00am. See notice board for entry details. Mr Stevens is our Mr Perpetual Motion who builds pathways, donates trophies, gathers prizes . . . and phones the captain asking for an early start next morning, wanting to know why it cannot be granted, until he is told he is calling on Tuesday and not Thursday.

And while we are at it (the notice board), the Pennant season is beginning and dates are on our busy board. Open to all over-55-year-old members.

But wait, there's more . . .

The Pot O'Gold has now started. One dollar from each member on a Friday goes in to the pot (of gold, of course) and half the jackpot will go to the nearest to the pin on a chosen hole and the other half to the club for renovations.

And we would like to thank very sincerely club vice-captain Peter Ballarine for playing in our Opening Day event, the Club Captain's Trophy. Peter stood in for Club Captain, Derrick Ball, who could not make it as he was overseas. Peter, an excellent player, made a generous and entertaining speech, but, somehow, forgot to mention being outdrive by his partners on the fifth. Perhaps it didn't happen.

Captain Peter wants to remind everyone that name tags must be worn or 20 cents goes to the Renovation Fund. It is a fair point, for the Vets are notoriously poor on the memory stakes. Like the two who were arguing about which tee and which group they were in . . . while studying the "Cheat Sheet!"

Only one of them was Irish.

And how about the two Lady winners on March 10? A Vet had decided to donate the prizes for the day (his wife is active in the Ladies Section) and decided on vouchers. After being messed around by several staff members at a large store (no names, but you shoot arrows at it) a fellow shopper pointed out the gift vouchers. Thankful, our man raced over, picked up two, had them validated for the correct amount and presented them to the winning ladies.

Both were surprised to open the envelopes and be greeted with Happy Birthday gift voucher cards. You'll get not a trace(y) of a clue who is the culprit.

Lee Trevino got it right at The Vines a few years ago and perhaps we could adapt his ideas. He said: "The Seniors Tour is great. Courses are shorter, rough is not as severe and there is no cut.

"Next we will have a Super Seniors for over 60s, where the conditions are the same, but you can use a cart . . .

"Then we will introduce the Super, Super Seniors for the over-70s: In that, you play four holes and the one who remembers the score

Vets feedback cont. Good news. Our dapper Dutchman, Bert Neutgens has had his hip operation and it has been very successful. He had an epidural and was awake the whole time, probably talking. Bert left hospital after just two nights. Apparently, this is a record. Of course, it might have been the nursing staff who insisted on getting him out quickly.

Now, without wishing to steal the nanny Government's job, here is a warning:

One vet, who shall be nameless (Clues: Rotund, Scottish accent, ugly swing) decided to cook himself a barbie while his wife was out with work colleagues. He lit the barbie – or didn't, because the regulator and hose went on fire instead. The gas cylinder is behind the barbie, so, with flames about half a metre high, he took cover waiting for the explosion. When that didn't occur, he tried to put out the flames, using his hosepipe, with the nozzle set to spray (dampened them but not much else) and full jet (blew the flames sideways). Still they roared, threatening his pergola and, possibly the house.

So, in a moment of unprecedented bravery for him, he ran to the house, grabbed a massive oven glove and, with the hose spray at jet, pushing the flames away, got to the bottle and turned off the valve. It worked.

So, same member now has a serious warning for fellow vets. DON'T TAKE CHANCES . . .

Get the wife to barbie next time.



Emails

I have noticed over the years whilst playing at Wanneroo and other courses that very few golfers actually know and apply the rule regarding a free drop. Maybe some illustrated examples could be included in the Fore magazine along with the 'Did you know section'. I consistently see members (not in my playing group) just picking up their ball and dropping within two club lengths of the immovable obstacle and or GUR etc without bothering to find out where their nearest point of relief is. I can only assume that they are ignorant of the correct method or just lazy, either way it is a breach of the rules.

Just a suggestion.

Thanks for the feedback, we have included Rule 28 in the 'did you know' article and we will try and work on some pictorial demonstration in future issues.

Firstly congratulations on the feb issue of "Fore" very informative.

Perhaps all members should be reminded that when they have finished with their sand bucket to replace it in the correct spot.

These buckets are to be found rolling around in the car-park, left under the seats thrown in the verges, not good enough.

Yes we agree, thank you for bringing the issue to our attention.

I would like to submit a few suggestion for names of holes

4th - Pit Stop 1 (reference to toilet stop)

13th - Pit Stop 2

10th - Devil's Elbow (rather than the 12th as suggested)

11th - Going On

17th - Within Sight

16th - Out of Sight.

An interesting exercise and some good names have already been submitted.

Thank You

Thanks for your feedback

emails to : wgclubadmin@iinet.net.au

or [give Cheryl a call in the office 9405 3677](tel:94053677)



[VIEWPOINT] STRAIGHT SHOOTING

Jack Newton

Clubs need a change for the better



If kids don't feel comfortable at golf clubs, they'll eventually leave the sport.

Most golf clubs give the feeling of stuffiness. Many aren't welcoming and have a stigma attached to them. Walk into just about any club in the country and there are signs near the front door saying what you can't do. When my new club at Cessnock is re-opened, I'm hoping to put up a sign that says: "Come and have as much fun as you like."

It's time to turn on the 'fun-meter'. Times change and practises need to be updated because we're not living in the 1950s, '60s or the '70s. We've got to review some of the long-standing conventions within club golf. Some of the beliefs need tweaking to accommodate modern attitudes and lifestyles.

A fresh start can only occur with change at the top. However, a lot of club boards and committees are resistant to change and suffer from nostalgia. And unfortunately, golf clubs (and football clubs) are run by egos and politics.

Why is it that when people get elected onto boards they suddenly become experts in subjects they're not even remotely qualified? It happens all too often at golf clubs. Often a club president or captain will attempt to leave his footprint on the golf course. (No doubt you've seen overzealous tree planting or the addition of superfluous bunkers and mounding.)

In many cases the board believes it can get a better result by doing something in-house. Re-building a green is a good example. The justification is that it will be cheaper than consulting a qualified course architect. But the average person has no idea about

constructing a bunker and shaping it seamlessly with the green. And what if you need to go back and re-surface the green four times? By using your own labour the overall course maintenance may suffer because the superintendents are concentrating on a particular project.

From my experience with the PGA Tour of Australasia, the best form of board structure comprises no more than seven people. Of those seven, there should be two or three external board members from outside the organisation. I think the club professional should fill a position at board level within a golf club. There wouldn't be as many nut-case suggestions that arise from board meetings if somebody with the expertise of the golf professional was present.

I would also like to see a situation where at least one board member was in his/her 20s and another in their 30s. Then you would get some representation from the younger age groups with new ideas, thoughts and concepts. There are not enough young people sitting on boards to help make decisions. Many of the ones that do get elected are then driven off by old bludgers who spend two-and-sixpence at the club.

A flourishing junior program

It's staggering that some clubs lament a decline in membership levels. Yet 25 per cent of high school students in Years 8 to 11 are considered overweight or obese. So golf clubs have a wonderful opportunity

To ask Jack a question, e-mail us at golfidig@newsmagazines.com.au

ROBERT MCKELL

to approach educational authorities and convince them kids would benefit from playing a non-contact sport such as golf, at least as an optional sport.

There are a number of ways that clubs can start to foster junior golf. For starters, adopt a nearby school. I think clubs should consider a strategy whereby a minimum 10 per cent of the overall membership is comprised of juniors. So with a club of 500 members, there would be at least 50 juniors. Plus, there should be another 25-30 cadets of primary-school age on the waiting list. This means you've got young people joining the club on a regular basis. There should be tee-times made available for cadets and juniors after the members' competition on Saturdays.

Jack Newton Junior Golf is more deeply embedded in the school system. More than 25,000 children across primary and secondary schools have been introduced to golf. The point is that we get them into golf but the system breaks down if there isn't a junior committee at the golf club to help them make an easy transition into the membership.

This is where the golf professional needs to play a significant role. It should be in the pro's contract to foster junior golf. But the starting point is a junior committee with people who aren't afraid to put in time and effort. In particular the girls need to be kept together in a group. A lot of girls are lost to golf because older women at the club bully them.

So golf has to be made more pleasant. On that subject, a lot of senior members can't comprehend how a kid as young as 10 can play off a 5-handicap. When they realise they can, there is a jealousy factor. Then there are the complaints that juniors don't pay as much as adults. Many don't like to see kids hacking up the course when juniors pay a fraction of the annual subscription fee. But while some older members perceive juniors as a hazard, in many cases the kids (and their parents) spend more money at the club through equipment, snack foods and sundry items.

Some of the wealthiest clubs in Australia don't do a thing for juniors, despite having vacant fairways on most afternoons. I would argue it's a thrill to see juniors rise through the ranks. Young people engender flair and flamboyance and a good junior program can replenish membership levels. Successful young golfers generate pride and good feelings within the membership.

Archaic dress regulations

Some people will say the traditions of the game warrant proper dress. But many of the customs we copied were English traditions. Wearing long socks is totally inconsistent with the Australian climate.

If women can wear T-shirts, I think men should be able to wear shirts without a collar. If Tiger Woods can wear a 'mock top' at Augusta National, why do we insist upon collared shirts in Australia? What about this notion it's unacceptable to wear a pair of short socks with a brand name? Because it's not sold in the pro shop or doesn't sport the club logo, they won't let you on the golf course. I've heard a story about a chap who wore grey 'anklets' during a round (with the club captain) and received a terse letter a few days later.

'The rules and etiquette of the game are what people must adhere to, not what type of shirt or socks they wear.'

I had a similar incident on a Wednesday afternoon at Newcastle Golf Club. It was 42 degrees outside and I opted to wear a really nice pair of buckle-up sandals for the post-round drinks. Naturally, I didn't put on a pair of socks because my feet were boiling (and for fear of looking like a silly old Pom). A couple of days later the secretary manager phoned to say he had received three letters of complaint about me wearing sandals in the clubhouse.

I believe the editor of this magazine once lobbed at a private club in Sydney wearing 'cargo shorts' on a stinking hot summer's day and was told he wouldn't be playing golf in those shorts. What's the problem if you've got a couple of pockets on the front of the shorts? Absolutely ridiculous. Who brought in that rule? Now it's common practice that cargo shorts are unacceptable. The final straw is some ridiculously attired old man telling you to tuck your shirt in when it is quite acceptable these days to wear the shirt out with a jacket.

The sticklers who police that sort of stuff are driving people away from the game. The rules and etiquette of the game are what people must adhere to, not what type of shirt or socks they wear. I'm not advocating singlets, Speedos and football socks. But the last thing we need is semi-public clubs behaving as if they're the Royal & Ancient at St Andrews.

To help relax and standardise the dress code, I wouldn't mind if Golf Australia published a set of guidelines for golf clubs. But only if the amateur body was prepared to listen to various industry bodies. (I say prepared to listen because of the mess created by the adoption of the American handicapping system, which surely needs reviewing.) Guidelines would have to include people involved with junior golf and social players in that awkward age bracket of 25 to 40.

The latter is the type of golfer who is opting out of club membership, which becomes a luxury item for somebody with young children and a large mortgage. Boards are quick to increase the annual subscription fees. But what do you see for your money? Has there been an improvement in facilities to make the club more user-friendly? So is it any wonder younger people choose not to join a club and would rather pay-for-play and have a day out once a month on a top course.

The best aspect about golf in Australia is we have a good system where new golfers can learn to play on municipal/council courses, before advancing to semi-public courses and private clubs. There is no reason we can't drag some kids away from their computers to have a walk in the fresh air. And there is no reason why we can't attract and keep younger members in their 20s and 30s. But golf clubs need to be more inclusive and embrace the 21st century. ☺