



## As a rule - we discuss what's new in 2019

*"How dreadful ... to be caught up in a game and have no idea of the rules."*

So said the American writer, Caroline Stevermer. She may not have had golf in mind at the time but nothing could be more pertinent to the position many golfers are in at this time.

For two weeks now golfers, professional and amateur alike, have been coming to terms with the new rules that came into force on January 1 2019.

As players, it is our duty to understand and play to these new rules. In these pages we will, over the coming weeks, strive to provide information and guidance to help you understand these new rules so you can enjoy your game without incurring the wrath of your playing partners and/or risking disqualification.

English Golf has published a set of very useful documents that explain the new rules and the rationale behind their introduction.

These are available on-line at:

[www.englishgolf.org/handicaps-rules/become-a-rules-guru](http://www.englishgolf.org/handicaps-rules/become-a-rules-guru)

In TTNB Issue 066 dated October 29 2018, we summarised the rule changes

and this may also prove to be a useful reference point.

In this issue we only have space to mention a few of the more important changes but in later issues we will be covering specific changes in more detail:

### Today's selection:

\* You can now putt with the flagstick left in as the ball can hit the flagstick without penalty. This will prove a real time saver.

\* The search time for a lost ball is reduced from five minutes to three.

\* Dropping must now be from knee height. This is to increase the chance of a ball staying in a dropping area but it seems strange. If you forget and use the old method you can take another drop without penalty but playing on without re-dropping carries a one shot penalty.

\* If a player's ball accidentally hits himself or his equipment then there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies. Note: the emphasis should be on 'accidentally'.

\* There is no penalty for making a double hit and it counts as one shot.

\* Loose impediments such as stones, twigs, leaves and fir cones can be removed without penalty from bunkers and penalty areas.

\* You are now allowed to repair damage (eg spike marks, embedded stones etc) on the green whether or not your ball lies on the green.

### Stroke and distance - watch this space

There is one new rule that is worthy of further explanation. When they were announced it was suggested that the stroke and distance penalty for a lost ball or a ball out of bounds was to be replaced by allowing the player to drop a ball on the edge of the fairway at the point of entry, at the cost of a two-stroke penalty. The idea was that it would save players making the long walk back to play a second ball.

At this point CONGU intervened ruling that this would not apply to any qualifying or handicap-based competitions and it was amended to become a local rule. It is now up to individual clubs to decide if the amendment would apply in non-qualifying comps and social golf.

We'll keep you posted!



## TTNB Caption Competition

*Join in the inaugural TTNB caption competition by adding a caption to this intriguing picture.*

*We have one entry so far. Lin Kay, who also took the photograph, suggests: "South America next stop!"*

*Please send your entry to: [dgw.ware@gmail.com](mailto:dgw.ware@gmail.com).*

See Page 2 for the latest results and this year's charity choice

**Many thanks to the Hopwood Ash Financial Planning Consultancy for printing this bulletin**

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To request a copy email: [maryharwood695@btinternet.com](mailto:maryharwood695@btinternet.com)

## High scoring start to New Year competitions

### Tim and Ray off to a flyer

The New Year competitions got under way in style on Sunday January 6 when Tim Howes and Ray Pithers won a high-scoring better-ball pairs stableford competition with 47 points. Dan Bowsher and Chris Prior were one shot behind in second place while Mark Charlton and Charles Dixon with 45 points took third spot resolving a three-way tie with Jason Kendal and Gary Robinson and Mark Ridgill and Chris Ramsey on count-back.

### Wins for Tina and Gale but Jane leads the way

Meanwhile, Tina Mulford won Round 7 of the ladies' winter league with 31

points while Jane Brackenbury with 28 beat Gale McAuley on count-back to take second spot.

Gale won Round 8 on January 12 with 32 points, Sian Soanes was second with 30 and Jane Brackenbury third on 26.

With eight of the 13 weeks played (the best five scores count) Jane Brackenbury is leading the way on 149 followed by Gale McAuley 148, Sian Soanes 146, Tina Mulford 136 and Mary Harwood on 132.

### Gale takes Tuesday Trophy

In-form Gale McAuley also won the ladies' winter trophy stableford on Tuesday 8 with 31 points. Georgie

Seaman was second on 29 and there was a three-way tie for third place on 25 points with Aileen Summers taking the spoils from Mary Harwood and Carol Sparvell on count-back.

### Welcome winter warmer for Jason and Alan

Jason Read and Alan Capps won Round 3 of the men's winter league scoring 46 points in the three clubs and a putter betterball stableford competition played on Sunday.

Mark Ramos and Degga Smith took second place having won a three-way tie on 43 points with Carl McCartney and John Baron and John Bale and Terry Richards on count-back.

## 2019 captain Nigel Day

### Macmillan Cancer Support is chosen charity

The 2019 men's captain, Nigel Day, will be no stranger to most of you. Having joined in 1994, Nigel celebrates his 25th year as a member of WBGC with his captaincy. He has served as competition secretary for many years and took over as captain in the middle of last year when Mick Gregorace left the club.

Macmillan Cancer Support provides a wide range of support to people with cancer and their families. Nigel chose Macmillan because of the great help the organisation gave to his mother and father when she died from cancer in 2003 at the age of 59.

As already mentioned in these pages the ladies have not appointed a captain for 2019. However, there is a great deal of experience and energy in the section and you can be certain that everything will go off smoothly.

We wish Nigel, his colleagues on the general committee and all those involved in the ladies' section a successful and enjoyable year of golf.



2019 captain Nigel

## Midge Coutts-Laing

It is with great regret that we announce that Midge Coutts-Laing, a much respected and highly regarded past member of West Berks had a heart attack while playing at Calcot Park over the weekend before last and died later at the Royal Berks hospital.

Midge was a fine golfer and was lady champion at West Berks in 2009 and 2012 and lady senior champion in 2010. She also won the mixed foursomes with Lin Kay in 2010 and the Chappel Cup with Kevin Wilkins in 2012.

Her regular playing partner at West Berks was Sarah Biles with whom she won the winter league in 2012. Midge will be fondly remembered at West Berks.

## Fink is back

TTNB wishes to assure readers that Fink Wright, the celebrated sports psychologist, is back from his extended holiday in his home near Augusta. He is already hard at work wading through correspondence from West Berks members anxious to optimise their game. His first letters of 2019 will appear in our next issue.