



How Coronavirus affects golf at WBGC

NO DOUBT all members of WBGC are aware of how Coronavirus and the sweeping legislation introduced by HM Government over the past week has dramatically affected our lives. Regrettably, golf is no exception and for golf to survive the legislation we have to change the way we play.

The good news is that, at the moment, golf courses remain open and members can still enjoy the exercise, relaxation, fun and social benefits that the game brings.

However, in order that this situation continues our course operators, our general committee and our members will have to make radical changes to our conduct and the way we do business.

All those who have signed-up to receive emails from the club will have seen Friday afternoon's communications from Bournebridge GC and the general committee.

The following is a summary of those emails and includes an update that follows the government announcements made late on Friday afternoon regarding further closures.

Course, clubhouse and facilities

Although the situation is fluid and the government's daily briefings may result in immediate changes, the position at this time is as follows:

- The Course is fully open.
- Ball washers and the shoe cleaner are out of action.
- Bunker rakes have been removed. Green staff will rake bunkers in the morning and members should smooth the surface of the sand, as best they can, with their feet and club after taking their shot.
- Although the statement from Bournebridge issued on Friday indicated that the food and beverage service would continue, subsequent legislation now makes this impossible. Limited access will be given to the clubhouse and although a take-away service will be offered when staffing makes it possible the bar is closed.
- The Touchscreen is not in use.
- Hand sanitisers are available at the kitchen, bar and Pro-Shop.

Golfing, social events and comps

The Coronavirus is causing massive disruption to so many people's lives that, in comparison, golf may appear somewhat trivial.

However, golf offers health and social benefits while playing an important part in many peoples lives. For the club to operate within government guidelines designed to limit the spread of the virus, drastic changes to regular routines are essential.

While recognising that competitive golf is the main driver and is at the heart of all golf clubs, running competitive golf under the prevailing circumstances presents unacceptably high risks.

The general committee has considered the risks under three categories:

1. *Team events and competitions involving large numbers.*
2. *Medals and stableford qualifying competitions.*
3. *Knock-out board competitions involving both individuals and pairs.*

The decision has been made that all golf falling into **Category 1** will be suspended immediately.

The same applies in the immediate term for golf in **Category 2**. Apart from the associated health risks, because rakes will be removed from bunkers the general committee has decided to declare all bunkers GUR and hence no qualifying competitions will take place.

However, it is hoped that the appropriate logistics can be arranged to protect both competitors and organisers so that non-qualifying competitions can be arranged. We can assure you that the committee is considering this as a matter of urgency.

It was decided that golf in **Category 3** presents far less risk to both players and those involved with organising the competitions and it is hoped that it will be possible for these competitions to continue. The competition sub-committee is in the process of reviewing what changes might be made to ensure participants are exposed to the least risk. No competitions under these categories should be played until further details are published.

Essential changes of behaviour

At the moment this leaves members with casual golf either in pairs, small groups or roll-ups. As we all know, much fun can be had with this type of golf but to play it safely all participants will have to adapt their customary behaviour on the following lines:

- Keep the recommended two metres distance from playing partners.
- Do not congregate in groups before the round and don't use 'balls in the hat' to decide order of play.
- All buggies to be single occupancy.
- Leave flag sticks in the hole at all times.
- Do not shake hands.
- Do not pick up your playing partners ball.
- Keep use of Pro-Shop at a minimum.
- Mark your own card and verify scores verbally.

A message from your chairman

The above represents a big change in the way we play our golf and the lack of regular competitive golf will hit hard with many members. However, the decisions and recommendations outlined are essential if we are to play any golf at all.

In addition, we ask members not to attend the club if they, or someone they live or are in contact with, are showing any symptoms of Coronavirus.

This is a fast moving situation and WBGC is working closely with Bournebridge so that we are in a position to react quickly to any advice and information issued by the government.

These are times of great concern for us all but being the strong and friendly club we are, I have no doubt that by being considerate, following the advice given and applying common sense, we will get through this together.

Your committee is doing its best to keep golf going at WBGC within the limits of government guidelines and I hope you will bear with and support us in these difficult times.

Stay safe and best wishes.

Kevin Hopwood
Chairman

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

If you have any items or ideas for TTNB or you would like to receive a copy please email Dave Ware at: dgw.ware@gmail.com