



Senior Golfers Union of South Africa

PO Box 46083, Orange Grove 2119

Report of the Management Committee for the year ended 31st December 2013

In general, 2013 has been a very difficult year.

The economic situation has put pressure on everyone. Our golf clubs are under great strain and we have seen some fall by the wayside and are taken over.

As I write this report there are continuing discussions on the stability of several and the dreaded "levies" word is back in vogue. Our members have all been affected by subscription and playing fee increases as clubs struggle to keep on an even keel. Increasing fuel prices (and tolls for us Gautengers) make golfing costs less and less affordable. The spiral is a vicious one as the ever increasing charges chase more and more golfers into longer work lives and less golf.

These problems are not unique to South Africa and in the USA there are a reported estimated 16500 clubs. However since 2007 these have decreased by an estimated 160-180 annually.

One of the results of the pressure on clubs has been the introduction of loyalty cards and special playing fee structures to incentivise club members to play their golf at their home club, not having to pay high visitors rates. Yet every club is trying to attract corporate and visitor rounds to subsidise member golf and specials are the order of the day. We believe that one way forward for clubs would be for clubs with like subscription and playing fee structures to allow greater flexibility in their playing fee charges to visitors from those clubs, in other words allowing greater local reciprocity to each others members. This works very well in Johannesburg over the Christmas season, is it not now time to make it a more permanent arrangement?

At the closing dinner in Johannesburg Past President Steyn Pienaar made a plea for Seniors to give up some of their comfort zone and get involved in the management of their clubs, giving the clubs the benefit of their experience and business acumen.

Regrettably little of this seems to have happened. More and more "young Turks" rush into club committees, often forgetting the value of the steady regular rounds played by the older members. Courses are set up for young bloods, not creating a pleasant playing environment for the older age groups. Sadly, the effect has been the departure of some of those players for the cheaper pleasures of bowls and TV sport.

To add to all of these woes the diminishing real income of many players creates its own pressures as investment returns become increasingly risky and sound financial practice demands more conservative policies. Seniors is also affected by these problems.

Most provinces have seen new member numbers under pressure and most are under quota at present. One problem being seen is that where Seniors have home clubs there is a tendency towards greater Senior membership from home club members and the creation of "clubs within clubs".

Likewise the loyalty cards often mean that a holder of the card is less and less willing to play away from home, if this is then not the Seniors Society home the problem worsens.

I believe the booking of away games has become increasingly expensive and difficult, this despite the stated desire to attract visitor rounds by clubs.

Where does SGUSA stand against this background?

The membership numbers are marginally down on those of previous years. One ray of sunshine is the steady growth of Northern Gauteng and we look forward to their taking their place in the National Tournament roster in just a few years.

Already they have stepped up to the plate and successfully hosted the Interprovincial caddie tournament twice, with a third coming up in 2014.

SGUSA finances are a strong and sustainable. The Financial Statements for the year are published below and make good reading. The funds under administration are capable of supporting the administration costs of the Union and of carrying any disaster should one befall a National Tournament.

For many years now we have sponsored and administered the annual Interprovincial Caddie Tournament. The main objectives in so doing have been to assist Provincial Golf Unions in their promotion of better conditions for caddies through training and holding provincial leagues. This has not met universal favour and several provinces have not taken much action in this area, both within Seniors and the Provincial Unions themselves.

The Governing Body of SGUSA directed Mancom to secure assistance from SAGA but I am disappointed to say that although we have met with SAGA representatives we have not made much progress. It is a strong possibility that the 2014 Tournament will be the last run under our banners.

The plan is that the funds previously made available to fund this tournament will be made available to those societies who are able to achieve the main objectives through cooperation with their Provincial golf Unions.

Likewise, during the same meeting with SAGA we attempted to eliminate the confusion in names between our Societies and the organisation run under SAGA previously known as "Senior Amateurs". In this we were advised that Senior Amateurs no longer exists and that future events run for older golfers will be billed as SAGA senior events.

Thanks largely to the efforts of our past Treasurer, Robin Wrighton we have succeeded in clearing the tax status of most of the provincial societies and to confirm that they are not tax paying entities. Our thanks to Robin!

One area that has received lots of attention over the past years has been the use of forward tees and the conditions for our competitions.

The dictum of SAGA in this regard has made life a lot easier and I can now confirm that Seniors National Tournament competitions will in future be played from a single set of user friendly tees with all participants playing from full handicaps. These tees will be properly rated.

2013 National Tournament.

East London is an exceedingly pleasant venue and many thanks are due to Border for hosting such a friendly and successful 2013 Tournament.

Well prior to the tournament it was recognised that the quality of the West Bank golf course and clubhouse was a concern. A number of visits were made to West Bank and specific proposals made as to course preparation. The staff and management of West bank were extremely helpful and co-operated well. As part of this process a generic document "Course preparation "was prepared and should be of future benefit.

The camaraderie and social interaction remains central to the National Tournament and perhaps more attention should be given to the mid-week social event in order to facilitate these expectations, particularly as it has been decided on a trial basis in Durban to

streamline the event by eliminating the Sunday from the programme.

Entries were limited to 324. This is a very manageable number for a variety of reasons and it is likely that this number will in future remain the limit whatever the demand.

Notwithstanding the course set-up guidelines discussed at length with Border, there were still some glitches with the relative position of tees. This aspect requires more direct intervention from the local team. Kwa-Zulu Natal is using a single set of tees so that this particular problem is obviated.

Planning for the 2015 Bloemfontein tournament has started which Arthur Gilbert and his team are determined to make a success.

As always our thanks are due to Scotty Ashton Scot and his helpers for the Border arrangements and to Ross Grainger and Jetske for their efforts in ensuring a smooth administration

Financial Statements.

During the year we investigated whether it would be possible to enjoy the same quality of audit, yet presenting a much abridged set of accounts.

These accounts are in line with this reporting and, we believe, give members sufficient information to judge the current assets and liabilities of the Union as well as the summarised income and expenditure on a meaningful basis without having to wade through 37 pages of policies and schedules as though SGUSA was a JSE quoted company. We would welcome any comment on the success or otherwise of our efforts.

International Tours.

During February and March 2013 two groups of South African Seniors embarked on very successful tours of Australia hosted by the Senior Golfers' Society of Australia. The programmes prepared by the hosts included golf on some wonderful courses, some of which rated amongst the best in Australia, combined with an interesting and varied programme for the non-golfers and on free days.

The Eastern tour captained by John Brownrigg and consisting of 16 Seniors and their wives visited Hobart (Tasmania), Canberra and Sydney before completing their tour in Brisbane on the Gold Coast on 24 March. In all the touring party played nine games of golf and were very well looked after by their hosts. The quality of the company, food and beverages enjoyed by the tourists was sadly not matched by the quality of their golf and they were soundly beaten in most of the matches with the ladies faring marginally better.

The Southern tour by a group of 14 Seniors and their wives and captained by John Ludwig commenced their tour on 28 February in Melbourne before heading off to Adelaide and the completion of the tour in Perth. The South Africans proved their prowess and grit by triumphing 2-1 in Melbourne, recovering from a 0-1 deficit. The rigours of late nights, high temperatures and good food and drink clearly took their toll and the touring party was thoroughly trounced in Adelaide and Perth.

In all, the tours were great successes and much enjoyed by the participants, largely due to the wonderful hospitality shown by the hosts. Many friendships were renewed and forged and will doubtlessly endure for many years to come.

In July SGUSA was represented by two teams of four at the 2013 King Leopold Challenge in Belgium played at the Royal Antwerp GC and the Wouwse Plantage GC. The teams were captained by Lyle Thöle, with Bobby Johnston as vice captain, and acquitted themselves well,

coming 6th and 7th overall.

Apparently the greensomes event proved to be their undoing. The participants all thoroughly enjoyed the experience, not least as a result of the superb organisation and hospitality accorded them.

Although invited to participate, we were unable to send representative teams to the International Meeting in Deauville during July or to the World Senior Golf International Team Tournament in New Mexico, USA, during August 2013.

The Senior Golfers' Society of the United Kingdom has accepted an invitation for 16 Seniors and their wives to tour South Africa from the 23rd February until the 13th March 2015. The tour is scheduled to commence in Cape Town with the tourists visiting George and Durban before travelling to Johannesburg. Discussions are underway with the host Societies regarding finalisation of the itinerary.

General.

During the year we have been lucky to have received Presidential visits from Jimmy Stott on two occasions and have benefitted from his participation. I would like to thank the members of Mancom for their efforts and the considerable time they put into ensuring the affairs of the Union are sound and continuing to support SGUSA.

Our secretary, Jetske Kingma, has again supported SGUSA efficiently and has made our Mancom lives much easier. Her administrative capabilities are equalled only by her ability to know and greet all members of our National family! To her, and on your behalf also, my special thanks!

John Hare

Chairman

Management Committee

Senior Golfers Union of South Africa

**AGENDA ITEM 3
Obituaries – 2013**

Border

**Mel Light
Ron Phillips
Des Weir
Harold Whitfield**

Eastern Province

**Carl de Wit
Johan le Roux
Jules Opperman**

Free State

**Piet Malherbe
Peter van Viegen**

Gauteng

**Mike Huddy
Jack Kearney
David Laing**

KwaZulu-Natal

**Cecil Lord
John Batho
Gordon Clow
Wally Ferguson
Ian Maxwell
Barry McGarr
Willie Mukheiber**

Northern Cape

Southern Cape

**Jack Barkhuizen
John Huddy**

Western Province

**Dennis Briggs
John Commins
Colin Eglin
Clive Scott
Norman Walton**

AGENDA ITEM 8.2

PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION BY THE GAUTENG COMMITTEE

A proposed stance by Seniors on the use of forward tees in Pinehurst competitions was tabled at the Gauteng Committee and accepted. It was also decided to table the suggestion at a meeting of Mancom for consideration and if approved to be forwarded to the various Societies for consideration.

"It is recommended that the Senior Society of Gauteng adopt the following rule which would apply to all Pinehurst competitions conducted under its auspices:

A golfer electing to play off a particular set of tees at the start of a competition taking place over more than one round, may not alter his election for the duration of the competition without the consent of the Committee of the Senior Golfers' Society of Gauteng.

In addition golfers participating in Pinehurst competitions conducted under the auspices of the Society are strongly encouraged, in keeping with the spirit both of the game of golf and that of Seniors, to play off the tee markers normally used by that golfer."

AGENDA ITEM 8.3

PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION BY THE GAUTENG COMMITTEE

COURSE STANDARDS AT NATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

The Governing Body discuss and give direction for the future of National Tournament's at venues with golf courses that are not up to Tournament standards.

AGENDA ITEM 8.4

PROPOSED FOR DISCUSSION BY THE GAUTENG COMMITTEE

REALLOCATION OF CADDIE TOURNAMENT FUNDS

Should the Annual Caddie Tournament be cancelled, Mancom be authorised to make the funds allocated to the Tournament available to regional caddie leagues that require assistance.

Mancom supports this proposal with the proviso that these funds only be allocated to regional associations where the provincial society is involved and gives assistance.

AGENDA ITEM 8.5
Re – appointment of the Management Committee

The Constitution of SGUSA provides that the Management Committee shall be appointed by the Governing Body on the recommendation made by the Committee of the Senior Golfers Society of Gauteng.

The Gauteng Society has recommended that the present Management Committee be re-elected *en bloc*.

The Governing Body is asked to confirm this appointment.