

## OB Blog

### Musings of The Struggling Golfer

I shot a 93 at Sentosa Tanjong Course recently.

So what happened here? I was playing between 96 – 106 these last 2 months, and had been veering on being really afraid to step out on the course.

It almost feels like I had totally lost my swing and kinda reminded me of myself 6 years ago when I started learning how to play golf.

My Kakis have heard me “Curse & Swear”, as I hit ball after ball into the trees...into the water...into the army camp. It's really pathetic.

Of course at first, I see pity in their eyes. But that look quickly changed into a glint of triumph, as they realize that they just won another dollar from me.

Yeah, for these last 2 months, I know how an ATM feels every time someone takes money away.

I have probably lost over \$200 on cost of golf balls, even secretly smashed up a few golf clubs. But mostly, I lost a great deal of pride.

I was at the bottom of the pits, lost in the deepest darkness of golf's version of hell and I couldn't see any way out.

So the question remains... what changed?

Well, I have gone for a lesson in golf. Since there is really nothing more to lose – what's another hour and a \$100 bucks? And if the pros say I am the worst excuse of a golfer they have ever seen, then it's “bye bye” golf forever. It's probably happened to many ex-golfers and it might be the same for me too.

The lesson did not take an hour. After watching me for 10 minutes hitting the range balls to ALL parts of the range, I was told to do 2 things. **ONE** – Correct My Grip. **TWO** – Focus On Hitting The Ball. (Not what happens if I hit the ball or my finishing pose looks like!)

I then went on to spend 10 minutes in getting back to gripping the club properly & the next 40 minutes to get my mind properly tuned to hitting balls.

Well, as they say the rest is history – though in this case, it's just been 2 weeks and 2 games since. I played 95 at Changi and then 93 at Sentosa. Other than my grip, the rest was just in changing my mindset.

I am now able to get into focus in 30 seconds, and am more relaxed when hitting the ball. At address, I no longer take 2 minutes hovering over the ball, wiggling my bum and holding my clubs in a death-like grip. I no longer try to whack the ball with all my mighty power, thinking of how far the ball will go, how high it will fly, whether it will slice, hook or just roll on the ground.

I go through a really simple routine now – determine direction, check grip, relax & focus on hitting the ball. 70% of the time, it will get to where you want it to go.

So all other struggling golfers like me out there. Go see your pro this week. Get a few tips and simplify your game. Let's see how it goes.

106...98...93...targeting 90. Wish you all a good game.

## Around the Greens

### Ladies Day Trip

On a lovely sunny day on Wed 30 April 2014, 10 of us Changian ladies went across the Causeway on a day trip to Pulau Springs Golf Club. The trip was organized jointly by both Lady Captains of Changi Ladies Sub-Committee and Pulau Springs.

It had been a long while that the Changian ladies had an outing together and on that day, we were excited like school kids. We all gathered after breakfast, bravely travelled in 3-car convoy to Pulau Springs. On arrival in JB, we were warmly met by Winnie, a member of Pulau Springs, and without hesitation, proudly showed us to the best Ban Mien home-made noodles shop! After a good hearty meal of Ban Mien, we arrived in Pulau Springs at noon for our much awaited golf game. In total, there were 6 flights comprising 24 ladies from both Changi and Pulau Springs teeing off in style onto the glorious green fairways and the game of sixes was in place with us.

We were blessed with good weather but a slight break of Cat-1 in the mid afternoon gave us an opportunity to adjourn onto the Golfer's Terrace for a nice Hi-Tea with delicious Satay (they came in huge sticks!), Mee Goreng and French fries complete with ladies' yakking and catching-up.

Fortunately, good weather prevailed after a short break and we resumed our game. After our game, we went off to a scrumptious dinner of suckling pig, prawns, steam fish, stew pork served with good wine. All these Malaysian-style, good home-cook foods were at only a mere S\$25 per person. Aren't we Singaporeans lucky and spoilt for choices across the Causeway?

By 9pm, we were happily snuggled in our cars for our way back home sweet home. Luckily for us, our journey was smooth-flowing with no traffic jam. However, those driving into JB were not as fortunate, as we saw a humongous traffic jam on the opposite side of the road along Woodlands leading into the Checkpoints. Understandably, the next day was 1st May public holiday with a long weekend in sight.

Oh, by-the-way, we had a dinner-time announcement of a Hole-in-one achieved by a lady golfer by the name of Linda of Pulau Springs. We were pleased to congratulate and present her with a souvenir. She has graciously invited us back once more to have a game and join her Hole-in-One celebration once the date is fixed.

Our Changian ladies definitely enjoyed the outing together especially with the warm hospitality of Pulau Springs' members and are looking forward to the next trip.

So, calling all Changian ladies, do keep tab of our next date and leave your contact with the Ladies Sub-Committee if you are keen to join in our next trip.

#### Acknowledgement:

Assisted in organizing the trip : Grace Lim and Linda Tai

Volunteered to drive : Kathelene Rappa, Alicia Peh and Christina Tay

Written by : Angeline Low

## Ladies Sub-Committee AGM

An announcement has been made to elect a new Ladies Sub-Committee for the new term of 2014-2016. An election of new office-bearers will be conducted on its 36th Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday 13 July 2014 at 2:00pm in the Creek Room.

Lady members (ordinary or associate) who are keen to hold office for the term, please contact Linda Tai / Hon Secretary of the Ladies Sub-Committee for nomination and submission of forms or for more information. Nomination closes on 6 July 2014.

All lady members are cordially invited to attend the AGM and vote for their new team.

Linda Tai  
Hon Secretary  
Email : Lindachangigc@gmail.com

## JULY 2014

5	Sat	Sponsors' Day	am/pm
6	Sun	SGA League NSRCC vs SEL CC at CGC - Course Closed	am
		SEN GC vs CGC at LNGCC	
		General Play	pm
12	Sat	General Play	am/pm
13	Sun	Ladies Medal	am
		Monthly Medal - Men	am/pm
19	Sat	General Play	am/pm
20	Sun	SGA League General Play	am/pm
		CGC vs JCC at Keppel	
26	Sat	General Play	am/pm
27	Sun	General Play	am/pm
28	Mon	General Play - PH HARI RAYA PUASA	am/pm

The Club office.  
For official business only.

SGM  
SOCIAL GOLFING MEMBER  
Where your golf kakis are.

Social Golfing Memberships (SGM) now available. No monthly subscriptions. Pay only when you play.

Many benefits... USGA handicap index, golfing insurance, club facilities, monthly events...

Call Zack 6 5455 133 for more details.

Planning to hold an event ? Call Zack and let her take over the planning.

Admin / Membership / Accounts Department is closed on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Mon - Sat, Office Operation Hours : 9.30am – 6.30pm

Administration fee for sending 3rd reminder on overdue account is \$40. Please keep your account in credit. Thank you.

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# CHANGI GOLF CLUB NEWSLETTER

The resort-style golf club, since 1971

JUNE 2014

## Editor's Column

June is the month of our annual Changi Open. The event will be held on Saturday 28 June and Sunday 29 June 2014. This year, it will be a Men's Open while the ladies take a well-deserved break. There will be a Sponsors' Day on Saturday 5 July and all Changians including our lady members who wish to play on this day may organise themselves together to form a flight on Sponsors' Day.

A portion of the proceeds collected from these events will be donated to our 4 adopted charities, The Bone Marrow Programme, Rainbow Centre, CARE Singapore and Sree Narayana Mission.

You can do your part by playing in the Changi Open 2014 with your regular kakis and friends or be a sponsor on the Sponsors' Day.

If you are not taking part at all, you may wish to do your bit by volunteering your time and effort as helpers on the course on all or any of these three days of event.

Additionally, all Changians and friends of CGC are welcomed to contribute in kind. Come join in the good work CGC has put in every year and together let's make it better than the previous year's.

## JUNE 2014

Sun	1 Jun	General Play	am/pm
Tue	3 Jun	Course Close (Private Event)	am
Fri	6 Jun	Course Close (Private Event)	pm
Sat	7 Jun	General Play	am/pm
Sun	8 Jun	General Play	am/pm
		SGA League CGC vs TMCC at NSRCC	
Sat	14 Jun	General Play	am/pm
Sun	15 Jun	Ladies Medal	am
		Monthly Medal - Men	am/pm
Sat	21 Jun	General Play	am/pm
Sun	22 Jun	General Play	am/pm
		SGA League RCC vs CGC at SEN GC	
Fri	27 Jun	Course Close	am/pm
Sat	28 Jun	Changi Open 2014	am/pm
Sun	29 Jun	Changi Open 2014	am/pm

## Local Affiliated Clubs

• Chinese Swimming Club • Changi Beach Club • Sembawang Country Club • SAF Yacht Club • Changi Sailing Club

Please check affiliation details with the respective club's reception.

**Don't leave your golf etiquette at home.**

Please repair divots, ballmarks and rake the sand bunker.

**When buggy is issued to you, it should be a clean buggy with no rubbish in it.**

**A Gentle Reminder**  
**NO SMOKING**  
*Except in designated areas. Thank you.*

## **Bits & Pieces from Club Manager's Desk**

Passion-driven, since 1988

### ***Objectivity and Transparency***

At the 43rd AGM questions were raised on falling revenues from greens and jackpot for year ended 2013 and what can be done to improve future incomes. I will attempt to provide an insight to the questions and please note that this is not meant for classroom debate. It's for concerned members to have an idea of the club's operation and constraints faced by staffs and the Management Committee.

Management Committee members are volunteers and must be credited as "amateurs trying to do the various portfolios professionally" for the club. Management Committees in other clubs are also decrying it as a thankless job. Anyway that is another story.

Greens' revenues are dictated by –

1. Nature's elements  
Any outdoor activities are dictated by nature's elements. Inclement weather includes thunderstorm, lightning hazards, haze and flooding. In 2013, 14 club golfing events were cancelled. At times an event, golf or social, has to be cancelled due to insufficient participation.  
The first Monthly Medal event of the new term has to be cancelled due to thundery showers. Therein goes the revenue on participation and buggy fees.
2. Corporate golf events  
Changi, being a 9-hole golf course, is unable to get a share of the lucrative corporate golf events. Golf clubs with two or more 18 holes are preferred.
3. Promotions  
A promotional golf rates are offered from Mondays to Wednesdays and has provided a steady income.
4. Social Golfing Members (SGM)  
Introduced about 10 years ago and limited to a fixed number, SGM has contributed a sizeable income annually, with new members and renewals.
5. Transfer fees  
Depend on demand and supply. Changi's transfer fee is just a fraction of clubs which have a higher membership sales tag.
6. Buggy fees  
Buggy fees are dictated by all of the above.

We play at Changi because it is our club. How many of us would pay and play on a 9-hole course when on a golfing holiday?

Jackpot's revenues are dictated by –

1. Limited machines and strict rules by the Police Licensing Department. The Club's jackpot facility is not a gaming facility but for the enjoyment of club members.
2. No promotional activities like monthly lucky draws, or top winners and no fancy sign boards to attract visitors.
3. High taxation with IRAS conducting spot checks and audits.
4. Monthly profits fluctuate with players' strike claims.
5. Since the opening of high end casinos at MBS and SRW many social clubs and golf clubs' jackpot revenues have nose dived, leading to some closures and staff retrenchment.
6. Our patronage depends largely on a group of loyal social members who are comfortable with the limited machines, small and cramped space and friendliness of the staff.
7. The jackpot revenue is a profit center and given the constraints, whatever profits generated have to be appreciated, not questioned.
8. When the Singapore Civil Service Club opens its jackpot room door we will face competition.

F&B revenues are dictated by –

1. Monthly rental from outsourcing plus fixed chit-signing rebates to the club.
2. Members' dining at the club.
3. Creativity of the F&B operator.
4. When the Singapore Civil Service Club opens its many F&B outlets, dining in Changi Village will be a totally different experience.

Club facilities revenues are dictated by –

1. Limited function facilities. Only one small function room and an outdoor terrace ground. Unable to cater to big functions due to space and car park constraints.
2. Unable to command premium rates.
3. No dedicated staff to reach out to the prospects.
4. Any income is decent income.

Today the club is blessed with a decent egg nest. The sizes of the eggs and quantity have to be rationalized with the species of birds. Hence Changi, condemned to a 9-hole golf course has managed to keep the annual figures in the black while ensuring happiness for its members, guests and staffs. Staffs are an important component of the club because

that's where they provide you with a more than decent home away from home.

The government also contributed to the club's bottom-line with its Wage Credit payouts.

And not forgetting the handful of members who not only put in their time and efforts for the club but also bagful of money when called upon. I dare say that part of the club's profits came from these generous and gracious gentlemen, who prefer anonymity.

Many items, in use within the club were donated by members and friends, which in a way contributed to cost savings for the club.

### ***The nursery rhyme –***

Some members are curious of the construction activities within the course.

Let me walk you through.

In 2010 we were exploring ways to reduce cost of sand and grass, the two commodities highly dependent on the limited suppliers and market demand and supply conditions.

We require sand for our sand bunkers and top dressing of the greens. We require grass for regular repairs of our greens. Even the fairways' cow grass has to be imported from Johor by enterprising suppliers.

Enter H&H Resources Pte Ltd (H&HR) - a well-known name in the golf course industry with extensive experience in golf course construction in Singapore. H&HR has collaborated with club on small course projects. H&HR took over the club projects from MS Construction, owned by our ex-member Mr. Michael Siah (aka Mike Stone to the older members).

In our exploratory chats we charted out land wasted within our perimeter for utilization. H&HR was sounded out and with their expressed interest the ball was set to roll. At that time the incumbent MC was nearing the end term and the matter was rolled over for the new Captain and team to look into the feasibility of a working arrangement with H&HR. Changi, being a resource poor club was always short of this and that. H&HR understood club's requirements and financial constraints and agreed to a working arrangement in 2013. H&HR has similar working arrangements with other golf clubs in Singapore, with differing set of terms.

Some projects are done for reasons that are not necessarily about course renovations but utilization. Here is what had been done:

1. A small parcel of the football field land, nearer to Farnborough Road, and overgrown with weeds is within our course boundary. Up to then, nobody has

given any thought to clear up the area and give it a new lease of life. What if we ... it was cleared up and now we have an organised sand holding area.

2. The more than 40 years' dilapidated storage shed besides the 7th/16th fairway can never be restored to its original condition even when bathed in tubs filled with WD 40. What if we... it was dismantled and a new similar shed with a concrete floor was erected. The red earth ground, always muddy after rain, was resurfaced. The area is now sectioned and neat.
3. The nursery besides the 7th/16th pond was a waste land with thick undergrowth. This was Mindef's land. Old timers will remember that there was a partially hidden underground concrete bunker, left over from WWII, but has since been demolished and covered up. It could be for this reason that the land was delineated out of the golf course. What if we... we seek advice and received permission for temporary occupation to use it as a grass nursery; with no permanent structures and to vacate the land upon notice from Mindef.
4. Our course maintenance machines had to traverse across the fairways across the 8th/17th fairway leading to the storage shed. What if we... the construction of new access bitumen track.

Club stands to benefit from the working arrangement –

1. H&HR will cultivate and maintain all entire grass nurseries.
2. H&HR will maintain the sand holding area.
3. Club will have specific grass and quality sand at discounted rates, as and when required and do not have to stock up. Club can free up cash for other uses.
4. H&HR will undertake, at H&HR's expenses to
  - 4.1 Engage a qualified land surveyor to confirm the golf course boundary.
  - 4.2 Dismantle the dilapidated storage shed and rebuild a new shed.
  - 4.3 Construct new access bitumen track leading to the storage shed ground.
  - 4.4 Construct and maintain a proper grass nursery.
  - 4.5 Construct a sand holding area.
  - 4.6 Engage their workers for all the above jobs.
  - 4.7 Grant the use of heavy machinery for club's course maintenance and minor projects without rental fee, except to reimburse the licensed machine operator's daily wages.

Under the working arrangement there are restrictions and conditions for H&HR to adhere to.

One underlining condition is, once a vacate order is served H&HR has to move out immediately without questions. H&HR will not hold club liable for any claim arising out of mischief, theft and loss of use of its equipment, machines, grass and sand stocks and concessions.

H&HR shall be responsible for its workers liabilities and workmen compensation.

Typical question has been raised - "If the land was leased out, club would have an income." Agreed, but the land lease agreement with SLA does not permit club to play the landlord's role. Assuming club can lease out the land, the tenant would ask for more concessions and not be restricted with conditions. From a business point of view, the small nursery and holding area are not profitable to manage.

We have all witnessed the transformation of waste land for maximum utilization. Every inch of land must be put to good use, especially in land scarce Changi, all done for the good of the club by a dedicated team in connivance with the Greens Subcommittee.

Today, Changi as well as other golf clubs are facing a labor crunch. Outsourcing the full maintenance of the golf course will increase the monthly operation cost and ultimately members have to bear an increased subscription. Club's ground maintenance staffs are aging and are not physically fit to do the work they have been doing for the past years. Mechanization helps and machines cost lots of money. Management Committees everywhere are not fully supportive of spending on fleets of machines. If horses were used the animals would be worked till they dropped.

I would like to assure members that taking care of your properties is priority, be it the golf course or the club house. It is understandable for concerned members to raise questions and for management to explain and ease doubts.

### ***Option, option and more options***

At the same AGM, the chairman mentioned that with the land lease renewal there are several options for consideration.

Option 1 – Members top up the new land lease fee which could amount to several thousand dollars per member to secure the tenancy till 2040.

Option 2 – Get into a partnership with a private investor to build a medium-size hotel at the club house site and let the investor pay for the new land lease fee.

Option 3 – Accept 500 members into Changi from a soon-to-defunct golf club. There will be entry fees and monthly subscriptions to benefit from this exercise.

Deep considerations –

Option 1 involving current set of members and we continue to take charge of our destiny.

Option 2 means giving up our privacy and exclusiveness as a member's club. The investor has to recoup his investments in the shortest possible time and he will place his business interest above that of the club's.

Option 3 will see an overcrowding in the clubhouse, car park and golf course and the introduction of time sheet. With no prospect of additional land and facilities this scenario would present a nightmarish experience for all members and may create an exodus of quality members resulting in a dip on the membership price. The "imported" new members and differing culture may form enclaves and change the demographic landscape.

Pending the announcement of the new land lease fee, the MC has to inform the general membership of the proposals and options. Perhaps, organize a members' forum to narrow down the options and obtain a working consensus.

Before I hand the tools to the new Editorial & Publicity team I would like to thank Changians for their support in reading my monthly column and I appreciate their feedback. Please render your support to the new team.

On a final note there is no magic wand to wave - only opportunities, common sense, gut feel, members' understanding and support.

I will always remember 1 June. This date is especially reserved for my good friend of 30 years Mr. Ong Choon Thiam known affectionately as Sotong. Since he sold his membership some 3 years ago the small group of us has lost contact with him. He is 88 years old this 1 June 2014. Sotong, wherever you are "Happy and Blessed Birthday."

