

Annual General Meeting 2014
President's Report

Secretariat

New Handicap System

We are happy to report that a new Handicap System is being implemented island wide. Currently there are almost 600 golfers already on the system and it is now being used at Constant Spring. The other clubs have been loaded onto the system and will be operational by mid-month. With this new system, there will be a database of all JGA members and their handicaps in one place.

When a member plays on any course, it will be recorded and if he does not enter a score, then the lowest of his recorded scores will be used. The system is under license from golfsoftware.com and will cost us \$US1,000.00 per year to run. This is projected to cost more, as the 600 slots originally purchased are almost filled. We believe however that this is money well spent as it gives us a chance to address what is probably the most vexing issue in amateur golf. Many thanks to David McNulty and Tommy Smith for their efforts in getting this system established.

TARS (Tournament Administration and Rules Course)

In February of this year, through the kind assistance of the Sports Development Foundation, the R&A and the Jamaica Olympic Association, we were able to send Teddy Richards, Fred Sutherland and Dave McNulty to a TARS course conducted by the R&A in Columbia. David also stayed on after the course at his own expense and attended a Teach the Teachers course, also conducted by the R&A. The teach the Teachers course will allow David to provide further training of instructors who wish to conduct Rules and Etiquette courses.

Following on the TARS course, the three gentlemen will be taking an exam during May and if successful, they will attain a grade 3 certification. We would then be the only Caribbean country with three persons so qualified.

After the exam six level-one Rules courses will be conducted across the island. These courses will be open to both players and caddies and will cover basic rules and etiquette. We will also mandate that all Juniors interested in representing the country must participate in one of these courses.

Membership

Membership for last year was 220. This number is considerably below the actual number of active golfers. If the Association is to effectively represent golf and the wishes of the majority of golfers on the island, we feel that we need to find a way to reach out to all and have them become members, voicing their opinions and providing direction for the Executive. To this end, a Sub-committee headed by Vikram Dhiman and including the President of Constant Spring was formed and asked to provide recommendations on widening the membership.

One avenue being explored is making members of clubs automatic members of the Association. The mechanics of this is being explored and hopefully we will be able to implement in full for 2015.

CGA, R&A, IGF

The governing body to which the JGA reports is the R&A. It is important to note, as it is to this body from which we seek assistance in governance, grant funding and where required, technical assistance.

The JGA continues to be a member of the Caribbean Golf Association and through myself, in the capacity as Treasurer, Jamaica has representation on the executive. The CGA is responsible for running a number of regional amateur tournaments in which Jamaica participates, the primary ones being the CAGC and the CAJGC.

The CGA also runs the Classic, which unlike the other Championships is open to all levels of golfers and attracts participation from all islands in the region. It is very disappointing to note the lack of participation from Jamaica in this event, in particular, as one of the championships within the event is named after our own Jodi Barrow. The Classic takes place this year May 21 – 24 in the Dominican Republic and I encourage those of you who are able to attend to go—it is a great golf experience.

The JGA is also a member of the International Golf Federation (IGF). The IGF is the body recognized by the Olympics and, as such, only those who are members of the IGF will be able to send teams to participate in the Olympics. The qualification requirements for the 2016 Olympics are based on world rankings and as such a country will have to have players participating in either the PGA, Asian, European or similar Tours to qualify. We believe that these requirements are too exclusive and that there should be the opportunity for countries to participate via regional playoffs as is done in the World Cup. Representation will be made to the IGF board for this change to be made for the 2020 Olympics.

The IGF also runs the World Amateur Championships that will be hosted in Japan this year. Jamaica will for the first time, attempt to send a team to that event in September.

Executive Director

Last week after 22 years of service to the Association, Joy Campbell left to pursue her true professional passion as a writer. Joy is already a published author and we would like to thank her for her many years of dedication. We wish her well in her new pursuit and hope she will also go on to have many other novels in print.

With Joy moving on, the Executive has decided to reorganize the Secretariat and is now seeking to employ an Executive Director. It will be a considerable stretch for the JGA to pay a qualified person for the position, but going forward, we believe that we can no longer afford not to have such a person in place to see to the daily

requirements of moving golf forward. Ads have already been placed with an employment web site and will also be circulated to the membership.

Jamaica Athletes Insurance Plans

The GOJ will this year launch a health insurance plan for elite level athletes. This is an initiative that has been agitated for by a number of sport associations and we commend the Government for responding. The Association is reviewing the list of golfers that we think would most benefit from this plan and will be submitting those names for consideration.

It is to be noted that there is a limited amount that will be accommodated initially and the JGA will be required to fund 5% of the premium. Although we do not yet know what that will actually amount to, we believe that it is a contribution that would be well worth making toward the benefit of our players.

Sanctioning of Charity Events

During the course of the 12 months ending March 31, 2014 there were 21 “Charity Tournaments” that we were aware of. Of these 19 were sanctioned and fees earned by the Association totaled \$642,463.35.

There have been a number of persons who question the reasons and benefit of having their event sanctioned. My own perspective is that once a Tournament is opened up to the golf public at large and is charging an entry fee, then we as the National Association need to review that Tournament on behalf of our Members. Part of our charge going forward will be to ensure that the funds raised are used for the advertised purpose and there will be much more vigilance in ensuring prizes offered are within the limits of Amateur Status.

The matter of prizes in these events is also worrisome. The primary reason for limiting the value of prizes is to remove the incentive for persons to act outside of the spirit of amateurism. With big prizes comes the temptation for players to manage their handicaps or to go even further in their pursuit of a lucrative reward.

We have seen a trend with these fund raising events to offer more and more prizes in their attempt to attract golfers. I do not believe the organizers realize this is proving to be a direct attack on the whole spirit of amateurism in our sport. Going forward into next year, the next Executive body will need to address this matter.

Secretariat Location

The Secretariat continues to be housed at rented premises at 5-7 Courtney Walsh Drive. Discussions have been taking place with Constant Spring Golf Club to relocate there. It is my hope that we can reach an agreement in the near future and complete the move as soon as possible.

Tournaments

There were 8 tournaments hosted by the Association. Top performers for 2013 were:

Men – Sean Morris

Men Senior – William ‘Tommy’ Lee

Men Super Senior – Dennis Atkinson

Ladies – Jodi Barrow

Boys 11-13 – Justin Burrowes

Boys 14-15 – Jordan Lowe

Boys 16-17 – Romaine Evans

Girls 11-13 – Kei Harris

Girls 14-15 – Kaitlin Robertson

Girls 16-17 – Sherisee Walker

The most outstanding performances from our juniors this year came from Kei Harris in the girls, who shot 69 at the Sandals Flights Classic in August and Justin Burrowes with 74 and 71 at the Alliance Memorial. Both of these youngsters will this week be participating in our National Junior Trials taking place at Caymanas. We wish them and all the other Junior Trialists well.

The Sea Freight National Amateur Championships were held over three days at Caymanas with Paul Thompson and Michele Gabay emerging as our National men and lady champions. Congratulations to both and special thanks to William Brown for securing the sponsorship of Sea Freight. This year, the Championship will take place over four days and the plan is to have two days played at Caymanas and two at Constant Spring.

The Lime Cup was once again the most popular event of the year, although played in an abbreviated format with six rounds over three days. The Appleton Buccaneers team emerged victorious prevailing over the Advantage Generals. The next edition of the Lime Cup is scheduled to take place in May.

The Inter Club Championship was launched in March and was well supported with over 60 players taking part in the first of the four scheduled events. Special thanks to Tommy Smith for his hard work in getting this Championship off the ground.

CAGC

The CAGC last year was held at the Mahogany Run, St. Thomas in the USVI. Jamaica sent a full team of 14 players, accompanied by a manager and two coaches.

The teams and their places were as follows:

Manager – Brian Roper, Coaches – Spencer Edwards and Ewan Peebles

Hoerman Cup – 5th

Chris Clarke
Jonathan Newnham
Ian Facey
William Knibbs
Paul Thompson

Ramon Baez – 5th

Sean Morris (Team Captain) and Lindy Bartley

Francis Steel Perkins Cup – 3rd

Radcliff Knibbs & Greg Chong

Higgs & Higgs – 6th

Dennis Atkinson & Phillip Wilson

George Teale – 8th

Jodi Barrow
Michelle Gabay
Sherice Walker

Arthur Ziadie Cup – 5th

CAJGC

The CAJGC was hosted in the Cayman Islands. Jamaica sent a team of 9 players, a coach and manager.

The team and their places were as follows:

Coach Jason Lopez, Manager - Sebert Walker

11-13 boys – 4th Justin Burrowes, 6th – Sebert Walker

11-13 girls – 2nd Kei Harris, 7th – Tiana Cruz

14-15 boys -9th Romaine Evans / 16th Jordan Lowe

14-15 girls – 7th Kaitlin Robertson

16-17 boys – 10th Zandre Roye

16-17 girls – 6th Sherisse Walker

Hank James Trophy – 5th

Public Relations

Improved communications with members will be a priority for the next year. Already we have restarted the monthly publication of our Sweet Spot newsletter and work will continue on improving the Association's Web Site.

We recognize also that we need to be more active with mass media and ensure that our success stories are publicized. We will seek to actively track the progress of our players who are overseas, but also ask your help in getting the news back to us.

Junior Golf

Our SNAG program continued last year with assistance coming from the R&A and the American Chamber of Commerce. The program was conducted at Jesse Ripoll with 20 students taking part. At St. Aloysius and St. Anne's, a total of 50 students participated in the sessions. The program is expected to continue in the Summer term starting at Alpha and Tradegar Park Primary.

Here at Constant Spring we commend the Club and Jason Lopez for the outstanding work they are doing with their Junior Program. Special recognition should also be given to Sandals and the Sandals Foundation for their work in the Ocho Rios area and to Cinnamon Hill for their program in Montego Bay. Combined, these programs have over 100 juniors enrolled.

Jamaica Open

Due to a lack of sponsorship, the 2013 Jamaica Open did not take place. Efforts and discussions are taking place in an attempt to stage the Open this year.

A successfully run and properly sponsored Open is a critical component to the funding and publicizing of Jamaica's golf. In the Rose Hall corridor, we undoubtedly have a cluster of courses that can compare with any other golf tourism destination. The Open is one medium through which we hope to broadcast that fact to the world.

Sponsorship and Fund raising

Fund raising has improved considerably under the Chairmanship of Dave Lyn. Last year there was a fund raising cook out and a raffle, proceeds of which helped considerably to offset costs for participation in the regional events.

This year our fund raising target is set at US\$50,000. Already we have had one cook out and plan to have at least one more for the year, accompanied by a raffle and golf tournament.

Corporate sponsorship for the Association has been weak and is an area where the new Executive will have to improve.

Ladies Golf

Ladies golf finally seems to be getting a push, thanks to the effort of a few ladies here at Constant Spring. Last year, it was unfortunate that Jamaica was not able to field a team to the Classic to participate in the Jodi Barrow Trophy or defend the Dessie Henry. Hopefully with the increased participation that is taking place with the ladies, we will in future be able to actively participate in this regional tournament.

Closing Remarks

I would like to thank all the members of my executive who contributed so freely of their time and efforts. You have all sacrificed much in trying to grow this sport that we love. I wish to also single out Grant Pisko, a Canuck who has been very helpful to me in particular. Grant will be returning to Canada shortly and we wish him well. He has been a great friend of golf.

For myself it has been 6 years that I have acted in this capacity. It has been an honor to have been allowed to do so. If elected for another term I look forward to the chance of continuing to serve, this however will be my last as I believe that it is time for new ideas and energy to be brought to the position.