

January 25, 1996

SUBJECT: BOOKING PRIVILEGES FOR MEN'S AND LADIES' CLUBS ON
PARK BOARD GOLF COURSES

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT the number of tee times granted to the Men's Clubs, The Tuesday Ladies' Clubs and The Business Ladies' Clubs be the same for each Club Category as per appendix "A".
2. THAT tee times be granted to the Clubs on a rotation system, during the peak season only (April 1, to September 30), as per appendix "A". No rotation will be required for Clubs playing on Tuesdays.
3. THAT the additional half hour, once per month, granted to the Men's Club be maintained, and that an additional half hour, once per month, for tournaments, be granted to the Tuesday Ladies' Club.
4. THAT the Board approve the formation of a Business Ladies' Club for the Langara Golf Course, so as to match similar arrangements at the McCleery and the Fraserview courses.
5. THAT a fee of \$3.00 per round be levied to the Clubs as compensation for advanced booking privileges to be phased in as follows: \$2.00 for the 1996 season, \$2.50 for the 1997 season, and \$3.00 for the 1998 season.

BACKGROUND

Ladies' and Men's clubs are a traditional feature in most golf courses. The main aims are to promote competition amongst members, tournaments, social events, encourage junior golf and to provide a certified handicap rating.

Following complaints by the general public relating to Club exclusive tee times for play on weekends, the Board received a staff report on October 1988 on the Men's and Ladies' Clubs operating from the Board's golf courses.

In the Lower Mainland the only other municipal course with Men's and Ladies' clubs is Burnaby and they are allocated two hours of tee times on Wednesday and Tuesday mornings respectively.

In November 1988 and Spring of 1989 the Board met with Club representatives to discuss the preferred tee times. No change in policy resulted from these meetings.

A concerned golfer, Mr. Storey, appeared before the Board on April 11, 1994 regarding preferential tee times.

The staff prepared a report on these issues that was presented to the Board on May 30, 1994.

Over 50 letters were received prior to this meeting from Club members requesting that the status quo be maintained.

The Board heard delegations from the Clubs at the May 30, 1994 meeting, and the Chair stated that the Board was attempting to arrive at a consensus to allow Clubs to carry out their activities.

He requested that staff meet with the clubs and with the general public to arrive at a consensus.

A survey of golfers playing at our courses was conducted by a consultant in the Summer of 1994. In summary the survey revealed that:

76% were aware of the existence of the Clubs.

69% were aware that the clubs receive preferred tee times.

61% agreed that preferred tee times be continued.

Of the 29% that disagreed (10% had no opinion). Half of these respondents said that it would be acceptable to reduce the men's prime times from every Saturday to every other Saturday plus a Tuesday from 3.00 to 5.00.

It should be noted that this survey was carried out at different times during the week. Had the questions been asked of weekend golfers who were directly affected by the blocked off times the response would have been more emphatic as to not continuing with the current policy.

Representatives from the clubs met with the Board on February 13, 1995. At this meeting it was approved in principle to allow the formation of a Business Ladies' Club for Langara Golf course since similar clubs have operated for many years at the other Board's courses.

Following this meeting, a letter dated March 8, 1995 was sent to the clubs' Captains and Presidents on behalf of Commissioner Chesman.

The letter proposed the following changes:

Availability of tee times - In order to provide some access to the public the tee times should rotate, between early morning, mid morning and early afternoon. Tee times were also matched between the Clubs, so that mens clubs all have the same number of tee times available. A similar matching of times was also organized for the Ladies' Clubs.

Booking Privileges - A fee of \$5.00 to be charged for each regular round played was requested as compensation for advanced booking privileges.

Additional tee times for tournaments - The letter confirmed that extra tee times granted in the past for the Men's clubs would continue.

Junior Development - The Board would continue to support initiatives to stimulate youth involvement.

The Clubs did not agree with the changes proposed in the letter and requested to meet again with the Board.

At this meeting on April 10, 1995 a consultant made a presentation on behalf of the Clubs.

Since this presentation, staff have met on two occasions with Club representatives to try to resolve the outstanding issues.

The first meeting took place on October 12, 1995.

After the discussion at the meeting and further review, staff agreed to the following:

That Tee off times be maintained at the previous level. (5 tee times/week for the Business Ladies, 13 tee times/week for Tuesday Ladies, and 2x13 tee times/week for Men's Clubs).

That afternoon times be eliminated since they would be unacceptable to the clubs' membership (as per request from the Men's Club).

That times on Tuesdays remain at a standard time each week as these times are not considered as "prime" as weekend times and rotating them would confuse their members (as per request from the Tuesday Ladies's Club).

Additional tee times for tournament play also to be maintained at previous level including half hour per month for Tuesday's Ladies.

Staff requested that clubs submit current information on Junior Development.

Reduced the advanced booking fee to \$4.00 per round levied only April to September.

Letters were received from the Clubs and the responses tabulated:

Marginal acceptance of the rotations, or accepted as long as there was no booking fee.

The proposed booking fee was either not accepted (ex. Langara Men's club) or accepted if it were levied at \$2. per round or \$25. per player per annum. Some clubs still needed to ratify this fee with their members at a general meeting. One of the Ladies' Club (McCleery Ladies) indicated it would accept a higher fee if the

Board would guarantee no other fee increases.

The staff sent another letter to the Clubs inviting them to a further meeting and proposed the following:

Confirming that the booking fee would be levied between April 1, and September 30 only (high season).

Proposed that advanced booking fee would be set at \$3.00 per round.

Tee times rotation only required during the high season.

Tuesday Ladies Club would not be required to rotate.

The second meeting took place on January 18, 1996 between staff and representatives of all the Clubs.

The clubs responded to our offer in the following manner:

Accept rotations as proposed.

Accept additional tournament tee times of one half hour per month as per previous agreements.

If a levy was to be applied the clubs would prefer a fee per tee time allocated, and payable by the clubs in advance.

Clubs did not agree with the fee levied at the equivalent of \$3.00 per round. No indication was given to the staff at this meeting what level of fee the clubs would be prepared to pay.

DISCUSSION

From time to time members of the public have expressed dissatisfaction with the granting to other golfers the opportunity of being able to book tee times in advance both in writing and in telephone conversations with staff.

In addition, the golf professionals have stated that when they have accepted bookings for weekends there have been many times when golfers have expressed anger at not being able to access prime time early in the morning.

The survey that was carried out in the Summer 1994 revealed that 29% of golfers disagree with the granting of tee times in advance. Half of these 29% respondents indicated that some rotation of allocated tee times would be of benefit to other golfers.

Staff have proposed a rotation of weekend times that have been approved in principal by the clubs (appendix "A").

On the matter of a settlement for the privilege of being able to book a block of tee times in advance, no agreement has been reached with the clubs.

The clubs either believe that no fee should be applied or a nominal fee that the staff feel is too small a levy to be meaningful. The clubs have advised staff that they have during the years established a very good clientele base that has benefitted attendance at the courses. Clubs also care for course standards as they can claim some "ownership".

There have been signs that the demand for tee times might have peaked, attendance has levelled and in off-peak times shows signs of a minor drop. This is partly due to a significant increase in the opening of new courses and driving ranges in the Lower Mainland.

There have been, however, requests from other groups to establish different Clubs should the Board relax its public availability policies.

To lessen the impact of initiating a reservation fee, it would be reasonable to phase it over three years, starting at \$2.00 per round for the 1996 season, \$2.50 for 1997, and \$3.00 for 1998.

JUSTIFICATION

A rotation of tee times during the peak season will enable more members of the general public to gain access to prime times at the Board's golf courses. The Clubs would still have available preferred times to maintain their activities.

An additional charge of \$3.00 per round during the peak season for advanced bookings is deemed by the staff as a fair compensation for this privilege.

Prepared by:

Administrative & Revenue Services
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, B.C.
JV:bcs