

CLUBS ACT TO EASE ONLINE BOOKING WOES

With the ban on golf travel to Bintan, Batam and Johor due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Singapore golf clubs are facing heavy demand for flights to the point that members are getting frustrated that they cannot play as often as they have been used to.

And the chances of play are mainly dependent on “fastest fingers first” as online booking is about how fast they can log in after the booking time-slots open.

Some members at Orchard Country Club have even complained that within two seconds of the booking opening, they are unable to log in, leaving them with a message that they have been placed on waitlist.

The situation at Orchard CC is getting graver as the three nine-hole courses – Vanda, Dendro and Aranda – will undergo upgrading works, a project deferred from February this year

because of Covid-19, from Tuesday.

The club, in a memo to members, stated: “Further delay is not possible due to contractual obligations. The upgrading is necessary to sustain our golf courses in good, playable condition for the remaining 10 years and for the benefits of our members. It will be carried out in three phases to ensure that members will still have access to 18-hole play.”

MEASURES

In line with this, the club has put in place some measures to alleviate the issue of limited golf slots during the upgrading period.

There will be more days for Night Golfing with the Single Barrel Tee Start. With this, the number of flights available will increase from 56 to 63 per week.

There will be more flights with Single Barrel Tee Start

for 18 holes to generate more tee times and make up for the shortfall. With the current Double Barrel system, the club generates 96 flights for 18 holes. The new Single Barrel system will be able to generate more tee times per day (18-hole – 85 flights; 9-hole – 33 flights).

There will also be nine-hole morning flights in addition to the current evening flights to mitigate the overwhelming demand for tee times. The club added that more details on the booking process will be released soon.

To ease the booking process because of the lesser number of flights with the closure of one course each time, the reserved flights for Club Committees have been reduced by 50 per cent from 144 to 72 per month.

On the Online Booking System, the club said that the previous vendor went

under during Covid-19 and that the club is currently working with new potential vendors to have an online booking system in place by the first quarter of 2021.

Another significant change is that there will be no pre-filing of booking forms before opening time and submitting at 9am sharp on opening. Now you need to log-on to retrieve booking form online at 9am to complete and submit.

For weekends, bookings open everyday from 9am to 12 noon, and for weekends and public holidays bookings open only on Fridays from 12 noon to 2pm.

ONLINE BALLOTING SYSTEMS

Tanah Merah Country Club has also introduced a new online golf balloting system from Nov 17 to provide members with an equal opportunity to secure a tee-

time in an orderly process and further nullify any advantages of fastest fingers first, good internet connection and a type of device used.

Members can join the ballot anytime from 6.30am, which is 30 minutes before the timesheet is open at 7am, seven days prior to the date of play.

There is no time limit in selecting a flight, however, once you have chosen your tee-time you have three minutes to complete your booking.

If members do not complete their booking within the allotted three minutes, their selected tee-time will be released back into the timesheet. And once the timesheet opens, members can typically expect all available flights to be taken up between 15 and 20 minutes.

Sembawang Country Club, one of few clubs that allows guests, has also implemented some changes to further facilitate the booking of flights so that members get top priority in the bookings.

— GODFREY ROBERT