2016 Season Opener Newsletter

Pen Pushers of America

Golf Society
www.penpushers.us



Welcome to the Pen Pushers of America's 15th season. We hope everyone has been getting ready for our first outing of the season, the Irish open March 16th at Lansdowne. Your 2016 committee met in January and have finalized the schedule of events for our 2016 season (attached later in this Newsletter). Last year we continued to increase the membership and turnout levels at events. We averaged about 26 players per event and hope to increase that to our target number of 32 players per event for 2016. We are looking forward to having everyone back and hope to continue the trend with adding more members this year. Let's all continue to help by spreading the word and bring guests to outings. Keeping the outings numbers up helps us guarantee good price rates with the courses and lets us schedule shotgun starts. This allows us to play quicker and have less waiting around.

Topics of interest in this Newsletter: (Please read it all)

- 2016 Committee Members and Roles
- 2016 Membership Dues and Event Fees
- USA vs Great Britain Ryder Cup Trip to England
- Speed of Play Rules and Changes
- 2016 Committee Members and Roles
- 2016 Membership Dues and Event Fees
- USA vs Great Britain Ryder Cup Trip to England
- Myrtle Beach Team Challenge Event
- 2016 Event Schedule
- 2015 Season Awards
- Low Gross Lion Man
- Season Opener Event Registration (Irish Open at Lansdowne)
- 2016 Membership Renewals
- 2016 Handicap Adjustment Changes
- Practice Rounds on Event Courses
- Event Pairing Request Guidelines
- Recap of 2015 Event Results
- Other Interesting Historical Stats
- Perpetual Trophy Update
- Photo Gallery

There are two very exciting extra events on the schedule this season.

1) **Ryder Cup Competition** - USA vs. Great Britain (July 15 - 23) in England.
2) **Myrtle Beach Road Trip** – VA and Friends Team Competition (Nov 10 - 14)

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More information regarding these events provided later in this Newsletter. Both of these events will have limited availability so if you are interested, make sure you read the details and confirm your intent ASAP.

The Website is now open for event registration, so if you have not done so already, make sure you sign up ASAP for our first outing which is only a few weeks away. We will expect a good showing so… Go now and register for this great opportunity to play a course that is normally closed to the public.

2016 Committee Members:

Special thanks to John Kravatz for his role as 2015 Captain. Let's all welcome in the 2016 Captain Kenny Engram and our new Vice Captain Bob Caines. Thanks to everyone who helps plan and work at our events. Without these volunteer's hard work and dedication we would not have our Golf Society.



John Sullivan – Chairman
Paul Tierney – Vice Chairman
Kenny Engram – 2016 Captain
Bob Caines - 2016 Vice-Captain
Steve Smingler - Handicap Czar
Brian Hogan– Event Coordinator
Jon Fraim – Event Coordinator
Mike Rubin –Communications

Pen Pushers Golf Society: 2016 List of Events

Event:	Coordinator:	Dates:	Location:
Irish Open	Sullivan/Hogan	March 16th	Lansdowne
Spring Challenge	Rubin	April 13th	Bull Run
British Cup (27 Holes)	Sullivan/Hogan	May 18th	Stoneleigh
Founders Trophy	Caines/Hogan	June 15th	Belmont Country Club
Patriots Memorial (27 Holes)	Sullivan/Hogan	July 13th	Shenandoah Valley
*Ryder Cup Challenge	Sullivan	July 15-24th	Southern England
Summer Championship	Caines	Aug 17th	Loudoun Golf and Country Club
John Denale Memorial	Fraim/Hogan	Sept 14th	Dominion Valley Country Club
Autumn Challenge	Tierney	Oct 12th	Hidden Creek
Turkey Shoot-Out	Tierney/Hogan	Nov 9th	Raspberry Falls
*Myrtle Beach Team Challenge	Jon Fraim	Nov 10 – 14	Myrtle Beach

Speed of Play: (Big focus this year . . . again)





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We don't want to see this anymore!

Over the past few years we have been trying to make some adjustments to the way we run our events to improve the speed of play. A round of golf should not take more than 4 ½ hours, and never more than 5 hours. Last year, all of our rounds took more than 5 hours and we need to improve on this.
Our special Pen Pushers rules for Speed of Play are as follows:

1) **3 Minute Max Time for lost ball search (Special Pen Pusher Rule)**
    a. Once you arrive at the location where you believe you hit your ball, you have 3 minutes to find your ball. After 3 minutes, if you have not found your ball, you **MUST** take a 1 stroke penalty drop a ball, in bounds, where you feel the ball went. Even if it went out of bounds, Drop it, in bounds, and continue to play. For Pen Pushers (Special Rule), lost ball and out of bounds penalty are the same, ONE STROKE.
2) **Mandatory "Blob" pick up rule (New Rule - 2016)**
    a. If you have played so many shots on a hole that you cannot score any Stableford points, you are asked to pick up your ball and support the rest of the players in your group while they finish the hole.

There are many ways to improve the speed of play. The single biggest way is to stay aware of this goal and get to your ball and hit it (when safe). "Ready Golf" should be our standard until we learn to play to normally accepted playing times.

2016 Membership Dues and Outing Fees:

You should all know that Pen Pushers of America is a not-for-profit, fully volunteer managed and operated Golf Society. There are no paid employees here. Our goal is to create a golf experience for our members that is fun, challenging, fair, competitive, and rewarding, with members who are fun to play, and all at the best possible cost value to our members. Our events are funded in two ways, 1) membership dues, and 2) event registration fees. In recent years, as a result of members asking to play "nicer courses", we have added a few higher end courses which has challenged our funding budgets. We also try to make the prizes and awards as nice as possible, but it is always a challenge to balance the cost with the value. As a result, we will be increasing the annual dues this year for the first time in Pen Pusher history, but still the best golf value in America. . . .

We will continue this year with our "Fixed Rate", of $80.00 for each event registration fee.
Annual Membership Dues: will also be $80.00 for the season of 9 events.

Ryder Cup Competition: USA vs Great Britain
Team Golf Challenge: JULY



The big news for this season is that in July we will be competing in a Ryder Cup Challenge against the Pen Pushers Golf Society on Britain. We are planning to send a team of 8-12 players for an 8 day trip to Southern England. We will play at least 6 rounds of golf, including a 3 day Ryder Cup format against the Brits. We will also attend one of their monthly events, and play a few other local courses. We will also squeeze in some local sightseeing and culture. I have been in contact with our opponents and they are "keen for the challenge", as we begin to pull together the details. So far we have a few details and dates, and I have done a rough cost estimate for our team members.

Dates: July 15 – 24, Fly Friday night, arrive Saturday morning, settle into hotel, local pubs, and little looking around (maybe play golf). Sunday/Monday: Local Golf, Tuesday: Play in their monthly event (Bramshaw Golf Club – Check it out on line), Wed/Thurs/Friday: Play Ryder Cup Event, Friday night: blow-out awards banquet, Saturday: recover (maybe golf) and fly home.

Location: Southern England, (Hampshire/Dorset counties mostly). We will probably stay near the "New Forest", and the village of Burley. Where I lived for 3 years in the 1990's when I became a member of the Pen Pushers. This is central to where most of the Pen Pushers of Britain live. It's about 2 hours outside of London, in the country, and a beautiful part of the world.



Cost: about $3,200.00 per person, this includes Flights, ground transportation, accommodations, food, and golf fees. We might be able to do it a bit cheaper, but wanted those interested to know that this is a reasonable planning number to work towards.

Those Interested: If you are interested in being on the team and making the trip please contact John Sullivan ASAP, as space will be limited and the planning detail need to be confirmed by the end of March. We can talk more about this after the Irish Open event in March. The other thing for interested parties to keep in mind, on nearly all courses in the UK only handicapped people use a cart. The expectation for the rounds of golf that we play on this trip is that we will be walking the round. It should not be an issue to rent pull carts so we do not have to carry if we do not want to, but be ready "fitness wise" to be able to walk 6 rounds of golf in a week. So, we will all have fitness goals in preparation for this trip.

Myrtle Beach Team Golf Challenge: November

2015 Summary:
The Myrtle Beach golf trip and event is a great time with very good courses to play, warm November weather, a fun group of guys, and an unbelievably good golf value. It is organized by a group of Veterans' who has been going down there for more than 20 years. It is always scheduled around Veterans' Day, which is the first week of November. It is both a team event and an individual event which has 60 plus golfers.
Our Pen Pushers were well represented with 11 golfers participating and all were in the money. (YES there is money to be won!) The four-day trip cost $456.00 and included: 4 nights' accommodations in a nice townhome, 4 rounds of golf, breakfast and lunch each day with 2 beers and the opportunity to participate in all the daily and 4 day event competitions (individual and team). Our top 4 money winners were: Jon Fraim ($283.47), Gary Pulino ($184.30), Ziki Zuck ($138.30) and John Sullivan ($124.13).
We did not quite have enough Pen Pushers there to have a complete team but hope to fill out team for next year.

2016 Plans:
More information regarding the deal for this year will be coming in the next few months, and will be provided by Jon Fraim. PS: Only Fun Loving Members need apply!
Dates: November 10 – 14th (mark your calendars now)

2015 Season Awards:

((To be announced and awarded at the Irish Open))

2015 Tour Champion

The Pen Pushers Tour Champion is our version of the FedEx Cup for our 9 event tour, and is scored with the Grand Prix point system. The top 15 finishers in each of our events receive points, 15 for 1st place, 14 for 2nd, and so on. The member with the most total points for the season is our tour champion. In the event of a tie the committee selects the winner based on a tie breaker process.



Congratulations to our last winner Brian Hogan

Other Annual Awards include:

- "**Big Dog**" Long Drive Hitter
- Birdie Master (most birdies for the season)
- Mean Green Machine
- Putting Master
- Perfect Attendance (made it to all 9 events)
- Most Improved

The Irish Open



Event Registration:

Registration Cut-off: March 12th

Location:	Lansdowne Golf Course, Norman Course
Date:	**March 16th, 2016 (Wednesday)**
Time:	10:00 – 11:00 Registration, Putting Competition, driving range 11:00am Tee off
Prizes, Awards and Meal:	(Directly after the golf – as usual) Champion, Long Drive, Closest to the Pin, Goat-boy, Putting Champion, and Lion Man
Entry Fee:	$80 - Includes Golf, Practice Range, Prizes, Awards, and Food

Use web site if you are a member,
or call John Sullivan at (703) 622-0084

Lansdowne is still a private course. Only "special events" allow non-members to play there. So, this is a rare opportunity to play a course that is not open to the general public. We are urging everyone to bring a guest, who would be a potential member.



Practice Rounds on Event Courses:

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The question has come up regarding playing practice rounds on our event courses a few days before an event to get to know the course better in preparation for the competition. For the public courses that we play, this is considered totally acceptable. However as 6 of our event venues are held at private clubs, it is not acceptable to call those courses and attempt to use the Pen Pusher affiliation to get on those courses. If you wish to get on one of these courses prior to an event, please reach out to our event coordinator for that event to see if getting on for a practice round is possible. In most cases it will not be possible.

In case you were wondering which courses we play are public vs private:

Lansdowne	-Private
Bull Run	-Public
Stoneleigh	-Private
Belmont Country Club	-Private
Shenandoah Valley	-Public
Loudoun Golf and Country Club	-Private
Dominion Valley Country Club	-Private
Hidden Creek	-Private
Raspberry Falls	-Public

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2016 - Membership Renewals

It's that time of the year again! It's important for the funding of the upcoming events to get renewal fees collected ASAP. Thanks for taking care of this straight away!

- **Past Members:** We have activated your account for registration on the website for 2016 events. You can now go to the web site and register for events. Call or e-mail Paul Tierney if you forgot your log on ID and PASSWORD. If you register for the Irish Open you can pay annual dues then. Otherwise, please send an e-mail with your intent to be a member to: penpushers@gmail.com , and mail your check as described below. **For your GUESTS**: e-mail guest information to the same address, and/or call John Sullivan.
- **New Members:** Send your contact information: Name; Postal Address; E-mail; Phone(s); who nominated you, Handicap, etc., with $80 check to the address below.

Annual Membership Dues: $80 (Still the greatest golf value in America!)
Checks should be made out to: Pen Pushers

Mailed to:

Pen Pushers of America: C/O John Sullivan
19836 Frasier Hill Lane
Bluemont, VA 20145-2032

It would be greatly appreciated if you could mail in your dues ASAP or better yet, bring them to the first outing. Thanks!

2016 Handicap Adjustments: - *Steve Smingler Handicap Czar*

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At the beginning of each year, we review the handicaps and the past season's scores of each member for potential handicap adjustments. The minimum handicap is 0 and the maximum is 36. For the beginning of the 2016 season we will adjust a member's raw handicap +1 stroke for each point where the rounded average 2015 scores (3 event minimum) is below 30 points. We will adjust a member's raw handicap -1 stroke for each point where the rounded average 2015 scores (1 event minimum) is above 36 points. Raw handicaps are rounded for use at each event.

For 2016 we are going to modify monthly adjustment for the winners and non-winners on a graduating scale based on handicap.
Monthly Winners Handicap (HC) will be adjusted based on the players HC for that event as follows:

Beginning HC 0 to 10.4 -2 and -.1 per point over 36
Beginning HC 10.5 to 20.4 -3 and -.2 per point over 36
Beginning HC 20.5 to 30.4 -4 and -.3 for points over 36
Beginning HC 30.5 to 36 -6 and -.4 for points over 36

Non-winners HC will be adjusted by the same tenths of a points system as above based on HC for that event for scores above or below 36. The monthly adjustment will be limited to +/- 5 times the appropriate tenths of a point adjustment. A score of 36 incurs no handicap adjustment unless that player is the event winner. These adjustments are being made because it is much easier for a higher handicapper to shoot 5 to 10 points better than their handicap than it is for a lower handicapper.

The purpose of all of the handicap adjustments is to bring the members handicaps in line with their Stableford scores and create a level playing field where all members **have a chance to win the event.**

Steve Smingler, the Handicap Czar reserves the right to make all handicap rule interpretations and rule changes and arbitrary adjustments are made to the handicaps of those members who whine and moan about the rules or their handicaps.

Requesting to play with a specific Member (or not): (Pairing Requests)

We all have favorite golf buddies that we like to play with. The personalities and relationships with the other players in a foursome can make a big difference regarding how enjoyable a round of golf is, and even effects how well we play. As a golf society, we want to be sensitive to this, but we also want to mix it up some so that our members get to know each other better and broaden our membership friendships. Also, managing too many "pairing requests" gets to be an added hassle for our "volunteer" event coordinators. We generally receive 3 or 4 pairing requests per event and we do our best to accommodate these requests.
Also very interesting, is that fact that we receive some requests from some Members to **"not play with"** certain people. These requests come for several reasons and are disturbing to me as I'd like to think that all of our Members are good guys, fun to play with, have a fairly good knowledge of the game, the rules and proper etiquette (like speed of play, for example, or, how to count). Knowing the rules is a constant learning experience for all of us and whenever in doubt regarding a rule, we should always ask the others in our group for their interpretation to avoid the risk of unknowingly breaking the rules. No one wants to be the one to say "you just broke a rule, and should be penalized", or correct someone's score count more than once in a round. As for the "not fun to play with" reasons, they vary quite a bit. We all know that

Golf can be very frustrating and often requires restraint to not shout F-bombs, or throw clubs, or storm off the green bitching or muttering about what a jack-ass they are (and proving it). And no one wants to play with a person like that. I believe that the way people act on the golf course is an accurate reflection of their true character and ability to self-control. Character traits like honesty, fun loving, courteous and respectful to others, positive attitude, and supportive are the traits that we want to see in our playing partners. So, if you are struggling with these traits, you should give it some thought because our golf society is not necessarily for everyone.
So, my word of advice to all Members is this: If you don't have true good character, you better have good self-control, because if we receive these type of requests we will address the person, and reserve the right to un-invite them if they continue to be a problem.

Pairing Request Guidelines:

1) A Member may request one (only 1) other member to play with as a Pairing Request for an Event.
2) Members will play with their guest (s) at an event
3) Any member may request to "not" play with any other member, but be prepared to give a good reason, and possibly support our confronting that person. And, if we receive too many of these type requests "from" the same person, we may have a different problem, so don't make these requests frivolously.

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New "Low Gross" Monthly Award



Last year we added a new monthly award, the **"LION MAN AWARD"** The Lion Man is the person who scored **The Low Gross Score of the Day**, or the best golfer of the day**.** Like our Goat Boy winners each month, the Lion Man can only be won once per season

Here were the 2015 Lion Man Winners:

LION MEN Winners	Event	Lion Man Winner	Gross Score
	Irish Open	David Paul	78
	Spring Challenge	Brian Hogan	77
	British Cup	Gary Pulino	80
	Founders Trophy	Bent Schnupp	83
 	Patriots Memorial	Chris Eller	81
	Summer Championship	Larry Newell	83
	John Denale Memorial - Captains Day Challenge	Larry Brooks	85
	Autumn Challenge	Craig Collins	81
	Turkey Shoot-Out	HK Jun	80

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2015 Recap of Event Results:

Event	Irish Open	Spring Challenge	British Cup	Founders Trophy	Patriots Memorial	Summer Championship	John Denale Memorial - Captains Day Challenge	Autumn Challenge	Turkey Shoot-Out
Location	Lansdowne	Bull Run	Stoneleigh	Belmont Country Club	Shenandoah Valley	Loudoun Golf and Country Club	Dominion Valley Country Club	Hidden Creek	Raspberry Falls
Date	15-Mar-15	15-Apr-15	20-May-15	17-Jun-15	15-Jul-15	12-Aug-15	23-Sep-15	14-Oct-15	4-Nov-15
Champion	Subash Penmetsa	Brian Hogan	Kenny Engram	Larry Brooks	Kenny Engram	Mike Volpe	Chuck Roney	Pedro Lopez	Chuck Roney
Champion Points	37	43	42	42	46	44	47	44	45
Goat Boy	Johnathan Anderson	Mike Rubin	Jeremy Topper	John Kravatz	Todd Davis	Subash Penmetsa	Manny Rodriguez	HG Michael	Chris Nielsen
Goat Boy Points	12	21	19	23	20	29	20	13	21
Long Drive (BIG DOG)	Shane Langdon	Shane Langdon	Jeremy Topper	Subash Penmetsa	Joe Sullivan	David Egee	Bill Brown	Kenny Engram	Jon Fraim
Closest to the Pin	Gary Pulino	Brian Hogan	Chris Nielsen	Manny Rodriguez	HK Jun	Brian Hogan	Gary Vanderheiden	HG Michael	Subash Penmetsa
Putting Champion	John Kravatz	Pedro Lopez	Steve Smingler	Gary Pulino	Chris Eller	John Sullivan	Bob Caines	Gary Pulino	Gary Pulino
Lion Man	David Paul	Brian Hogan	Gary Pulino	Bent Schnupp	Chris Eller	Larry Newell	Larry Brooks	Craig Collins	HK Jun
Lion Man Raw Score	78	77	80	83	81	83	85	81	80

Other Interesting Historical Stats:

Lowest Goatboy	1	John Denale	2002	Bull Run
Highest Goatboy	29	Dave Watts Bob Caines Subash Penmentsa	2004 2011 2015	Stoneleigh Shenandoah Loudoun
Lowest Champion	16	Jed Fotchman	2002	Bull Run
Highest Champion	50	Todd Davis Dave Watts	2011 2012	Shenandoah Bull Run
Lowest Score	0	Vernon Hardy	2002	Bull Run
Total # Championships	6	Steve Smingler	N/A	N/A
Total # Goatboys	10	Paul Tierney	N/A	N/A
Total # Closest to Pin	7	Steve Pera John Sullivan	N/A	N/A
Total # Long Drives	14	Jon Fraim	N/A	N/A
Total # Putting Championships	7	Gary Pulino	N/A	N/A
Total # Consecutive Events w/o Goatboy	61	Jon Fraim*	and	Still Going
Total # of Lion Men				

Perpetual Trophies:

As of last year, we have a perpetual trophy for each of our 9 events. This year we will add (and back fill with the names of past winners) the Tour Champion Trophy. We will present this trophy to the 2015 Tour Champion at the Irish Open in March.

Here are last year's winners holding all the Perpetual Trophies:



March
Irish Open
Subash Penmetsa



April
Spring Challenge
Brian Hogan



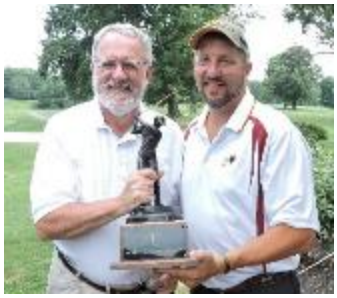
May
British Cup
Kenny Engram



June
Founders Trophy
Larry Brooks



July
Patriots Memorial
Kenny Engram



August
Summer Championship
Mike Volpe



September - Captain's Day Challenge
John Denale Memorial
Chuck Roney



October
Autumn Challenge
Pedro Lopez



November
Turkey Shoot-Out
Chuck Roney

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Photo Gallery:

Irish Open



Spring Challenge



British Cup



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Founders Trophy



Patriots Memorial



Summer Championship



John Denale Memorial - Captains Day Challenge



Autumn Challenge



Turkey Shoot-Out

