2017 Season Opener Newsletter

Pen Pushers of America

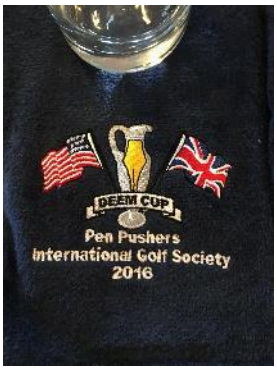
Golf Society
www.penpushers.us



Welcome to the Pen Pushers of America's 16th season. We hope everyone has been getting ready for our first outing of the season, the Irish open March 22nd at Lansdowne. Your 2017 committee met in January and have finalized the schedule of events for our 2017 season (attached later in this Newsletter). Last year we continued to increase the membership and turnout levels at events. We averaged about 28 players per event and hope to increase that to our target number of 32 players per event for 2017. 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)

- 2017 Committee Members
- 2017 Event Schedule
- Speed of Play Rules
- The Deem Cup International Competition
- 2017 Membership Dues and Event Fees
- 2017 Season Awards
- Season Opener Event Registration (Irish Open at Lansdowne)
- 2017 Handicap Adjustment Changes
- Recap of 2016 Event Results
- Other Interesting Historical Stats
- Photo Gallery



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.

2017 Committee Members:

Special thanks to Kenny Engram for his role as 2016 Captain. Let's all welcome in the 2017 Captain Bob Caines and our new Vice Captain Shane Langdon. 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
Bob Caines – 2017 Captain
Shane Langdon - 2017 Vice-Captain
Steve Smingler - Handicap Czar
Brian Hogan– Event Coordinator
Jon Fraim – Event Coordinator
Mike Rubin –Communications



Pen Pushers Golf Society: 2017 List of Events

Event:	Coordinator:	Dates:	Location:
Irish Open	Sullivan/Hogan	March 22nd	Lansdowne
Spring Challenge	Rubin	April 12th	Bull Run
British Cup	Sullivan/Hogan	May 17th	Stoneleigh
Founders Trophy	Hogan	June 8th	Heritage Hunt Country Club
Patriots Memorial (27 Holes)	Sullivan/Hogan	July 19th	Shenandoah Valley
Summer Championship	Caines	Aug 10th	Loudoun Golf and Country Club
John Denale Memorial	Fraim/Hogan	Sept 13th	Dominion Valley Country Club
Autumn Challenge	Hogan/Tierney	Oct 11th	Hidden Creek
Turkey Shoot-Out	Tierney/Hogan	Nov 8th	Raspberry Falls

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





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 as of 2016 season)**
    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.

The Deem Cup International Competition:

USA vs England Team Golf Challenge



Eight of our Pen Pusher members accepted the challenge to travel to Burley, England this past July to compete for the Deem Cup, which is a Ryder Cup type competition between The Pen Pushers of America and The Pen Pushers of England. It is named after Ray Deem, who is the founder of the Pen Pushers in England. We had many goals for the trip; make new friend, see the English countryside, experience some English culture (golf and otherwise), play some great golf courses, have fun, and of course, we wanted to win! On the golf course, the competition was fierce. Our competitors were great golfers and had the home field advantage. The rough was extremely deep and the courses had many hidden obstacles to overcome. We played two 3-day competitions. One against the Burley Team and the other against the English Pen Pusher Team. The Burley Team beat us pretty badly, (I do not recall the actual score), but the Pen Pusher match came down to the final match, on the final day. The teams were all tied up with 15 points each. All the groups were finished except the last group. The 18th hole was an island par 3 and with the gallery all watching (and drinking) from the clubhouse, our boys (Gary and Eric) were behind by one and needed to win the hole to tie the match, and send the total competition into a tiebreaker playoff. As the drama was building, both our players hit the green and had chances for birdie, while their opponents went one in the water and one on the fringe of the green. But alas, we did not sink our birdie putts and the Brits were able to tie the hole and win the match. Final event score was 15 to 17 and the Deem Cup would stay in England, at least until the rematch on USA soil. Probably looking at 2018 for that rematch.

The rules of golf are pretty much the same there as here, but we learned that our English counterparts have a few special golf traditions and we did our best not to look like "Yanks". For example, it is prohibited to wear your golf shoes or a hat inside the golf club facilities. That one took a while to sink in. We did have one incident at our formal UK Pen Pusher dinner. We were all supposed to wear a sport coat and tie after playing in the golf event. One of our teammates forgot to bring his dress pants to the dinner so he had to wear his golf shorts. The "big guy" looked like a school boy with coat and tie and shorts! Oops! No need to mention his name. It made for a great laugh and a truly priceless moment.





We stayed at the "very English" Burley Manor as our home base for our team. The village of Burley seemed untouched by time. The wild ponies roamed free and offered us many awesome photo opportunities. We also had opportunities to travel the countryside some. We visited historical churches, Stonehenge and many local pubs. The sightseeing and cultural exchanges were just as entertaining as the golf. We even had the privilege of spending an afternoon on a private yacht hosted by English Pen Pusher Stuart Tizzard. We left England having made new friends, closer friendships with our teammates, and with a better appreciation for the English lifestyle and golf traditions. A great trip for all, and we look forward to the next Deem Cup event on our home turf in 2018.

2017 Myrtle Beach Golf Trip: November

For the past few years we have joined a larger group event held in Myrtle Beach. It is organized by USA Veterans Administration employees and retirees. The event is always scheduled around the national holiday (Veteran's Day). The event format includes both individual and team categories and is a great golf value with accommodations, golf, breakfast, lunch and beer deals. This year Veteran's Day is on Saturday, November 11th, so the 4 day event will be happening around that weekend and is likely to be the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th. Event details and dates will be confirmed as we get into the season and we will provide those details when they are available. Typically the deposit and registration cut-off dates are in early September. More details to follow by early summer.

2016 Season Awards:

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

2016 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.



2015 Tour Champion Winner Gary Pulino

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

Upcoming Events and Activities:

The Irish Open



Location:	Lansdowne Golf Course, Norman Course
Date:	**March 22nd , 2017 (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
Event Registration:	Use web site if you are a member, or call John Sullivan at (703) 622-0084
Registration Cut-off: March 17th	Lansdowne is still a private course. Only "special events" allow non-members to play there. So, this is a rare



2017 Membership Dues and Outing Fees: (Donations Accepted)

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. If anyone wants to donate items to help improve our prize giving for events, we are open to that help. In 2016, Chuck Roney donated a nice bottle of wine for the winner of each event (9 bottles), Thanks very much Chuck! (Contact John Sullivan if you want to help in this area)
((PS: (Subash) No handicap adjustment will be awarded based on donation levels☺))

Having said all of this, we still feel that we have created 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.

2017 - 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 2017 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/John Sullivan

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!

2017 Handicap Adjustments: - *Steve Smingler Handicap Czar*

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 2017 season we will adjust a member's raw handicap +1 stroke for each point where the rounded average 2016 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 2016 scores (1 event minimum) is above 36 points. Raw handicaps are rounded for use at each event.

For 2017 we are going to modify monthly adjustment for the winners and non-winners on a graduating scale based on handicap (this is the same method used in 2016). We are also changing the adjustment from being based on 36 points to using the average score for that event minus the high and low scores (Avg. Score). The Average Score is a better indication of the course difficulty and weather conditions. 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 Avg. Score
Beginning HC 10.5 to 20.4 -3 and -.2 per point over Avg. Score
Beginning HC 20.5 to 30.4 -4 and -.3 for points over Avg. Score
Beginning HC 30.5 to 36 -6 and -.4 for points over Avg. Score

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 Avg. Score. The monthly adjustment will be limited to +/- 5 times the appropriate tenths of a point adjustment. A score of Avg. score less high and low score incurs no handicap adjustment unless that player is the event winner. These adjustments are 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.

Lion Man Rule Change



During our 2015 season, 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**.** In the past, we elected to only allow the Lion Man to win once per season. This year we are removing this restriction to allow the Lion Man to win as many events as he can!

Here were the 2016 Lion Man Winners:

LION MEN Winners	Event	Lion Man Winner	Gross Score
	Irish Open	Craig Collins	77
	Spring Challenge	Brian Hogan	78
	British Cup	Shane Langdon	79
	Founders Trophy	Jon Fraim	82
	Patriots Memorial	Gary Pulino	68
	Summer Championship	Kibok Lee	81
	John Denale Memorial - Captains Day Challenge	Larry Newell	84
	Autumn Challenge	Steve Smingler	85
	Turkey Shoot-Out	Subash Penmetsa	90

New Venue for Founders Trophy - Heritage Hunt Country Club





Our Founders Trophy event moves its new venue this year; Heritage Hunt Country Club.

Heritage Hunt covers over 750 acres of beautiful, natural landscaping. The Arthur Hills designed, 18-hole championship golf course has two clubhouses for our Pen Pusher Venue. It is located in Gainesville, directly adjacent to the 450-acre Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest, the historical Manassas National Battlefield Park.

To learn more about Heritage Hunt Country Club, you can visit their website at: http://www.heritagehunt.net

2016 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	16-Mar-16	13-Apr-16	18-May-16	15-Jun-16	13-Jul-16	17-Aug-16	14-Sep-16	12-Oct-16	09-Nov-16
Champion	Manny Rodriguez	Subash Penmetsa	Shane Langdon	Jon Fraim	Gary Pulino	John Sullivan	Bob Caines	Pedro Lopez	Norm Aroesty
Champion Points	41	43	44	40	48	43	40	47	42
Goat Boy	Mike Rubin	Manny Rodriguez	Bill Brown	Rick Crowe	Kibok Lee	Brian Hogan	Craig Collins	Subash Penmetsa	Mike Volpe
Goat Boy Points	17	23	17	22	28	24	20	21	19
Long Drive (BIG DOG)	Craig Collins	Jon Fraim	Jon Fraim	Shane Langdon	Gary Pulino	Jeff Smith	Kibok Lee	Brian Hogan	Jon Fraim
Closest to the Pin	Gary Vanderheiden	Clifton Edwards	Mike Volpe	Larry Newell	Bob Caines	John Sullivan	Kenny Mitchell	Shane Langdon	Shane Langdon
Putting Champion	Larry Brooks	Steve Smingler	John Sullivan	John Kravatz	Steve Smingler	John Sullivan	Bob Caines	John Sullivan	Gary Pulino
Lion Man	Craig Collins	Brian Hogan	Shane Langdon	Jon Fraim	Gary Pulino	Kibok Lee	Larry Newell	Steve Smingler	Subash Penmetsa
Lion Man Raw Score	77	78	79	82	68	81	84	85	90

Other Interesting Historical Stats:

	Score / #	Name	Year	Course
Lowest Goatboy	1	John Denale	2002	Bull Run
Highest Goatboy	29	Dave Watts	2004	Stoneleigh
		Bob Caines	2011	Shenandoah
		Subash Penmetsa	2015	Loudoun
Lowest Champion	16	Jed Fotchman	2002	Bull Run
Highest Champion	50	Todd Davis	2011	Shenandoah
		Dave Watts	2012	Bull Run
Lowest Score	0	Vernon Hardy	2002	Bull Run
Total # Championships	6	Steve Smingler		
		Subash Penmetsa		
		John Sullivan		
Total # Goatboys	10	Paul Tierney		
Total # Closest to Pin	8			
		John Sullivan		
Total # Long Drives	18	Jon Fraim		
Total # Putting Championships	8	Steve Smingler		
		Gary Pulino		
Total # Lion Men	2	Craig Collins		
		Larry Newell		
		Brian Hogan		
		Gary Pulino		

Perpetual Trophies:



We have a perpetual trophy for each of our 9 events. Last year we added the Tour Champion Award. Each season the winner of the event gets to take home and proudly display the month's award until the next season. Each trophy lists the names of all previous winners. For those years where we did not have a perpetual trophy we have gone back and put that winner's name on it. As is our custom, we announce the previous winners of the specific event which has become the Pen Pushers tradition. Congratulations to all those Pen Pushers winners!

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



March
Irish Open
Manny Rodriguez



April
Spring Challenge
Subash Penmetsa



May
British Cup
Shane Langdon



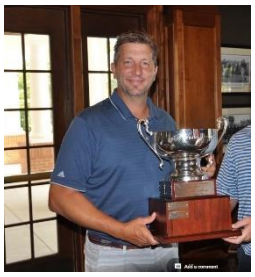
June
Founders Trophy
Jon Fraim



July
Patriots Memorial
Gary Pulino



August
Summer
Championship
John Sullivan

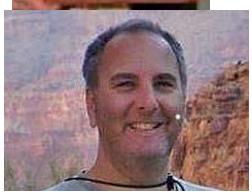


September - Captain's Day
Challenge John Denale
Memorial
Bob Caines



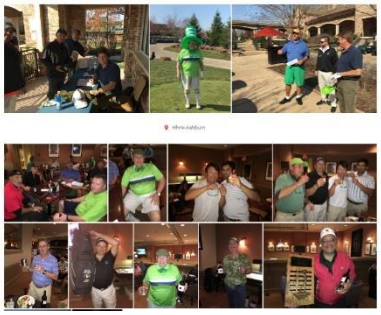
October
Autumn Challenge
Pedro Lopez





November
Turkey Shoot-Out
Norm Aroesty

Photo Gallery: (Click on picture)

Irish Open 	**Spring Challenge** 	**British Cup** 
Founders Trophy 	**Patriots Memorial** 	**Summer Championship** 
John Denale Memorial 	**Autumn Challenge** (From 2015) 	**Turkey Shoot-Out (From 2015)** 