

## **MUTHAIGA GOLF CLUB**

### **2017 CAPTAINS REPORT**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

I served my captaincy in 2017 against a backdrop of intense electioneering and had the rare honour of being personally subjected to two elections in a month and also witnessing the holding of two presidential elections within two months! However, despite all the politics that engulfed us in 2017, we made significant strides in improving the golfing experience of our members through on-course and off the course events and activities as I have enumerated in this report.

#### **2.0 COURSE DEVELOPMENTS AND USAGE**

Throughout the year, our course remained in excellent condition notwithstanding the high patronage levels averaging 3,500 rounds per month. Course improvement activities focused mainly on implementing recommendations by the European Challenge Tour Green-keeping agronomist as part of measures aimed at maintaining Muthaiga as host for the Barclays Kenya Open in 2018 and beyond. Accordingly, we witnessed an intensification of the hollow tining, verti-cutting and top dressing of the greens with the fairways being scarified for the first time to improve their look and feel. Other improvements include reconstruction of the pro tees on holes number 7 and 18, drainage improvements on hole number 6 fairway and on greens number 6, 7, 12 and 18.

These activities were facilitated by the acquisition of modern course machinery through an on-going investment programme recommended by the European Challenge Tour. Some of the equipment acquired during the year include an ride-on fairway mower and two Toro flex green mowers while an order for a Toro Procore 648 Aerator has been placed. Our course maintenance and improvement activities were ably led by our new Greenkeeper, Mr J.G Iracha whose wealth of experience and passion in green-keeping matters is highly admirable.

#### **3.0 GOLF COMPETITIONS**

In January, 2017, the club hosted the Nairobi District Foursomes tournament in which we featured two teams as the defending champions. While both teams lost narrowly to worthy opponents, they deserve our gratitude and recognition for putting up a strong performance.

March, 2017 marked the return of the Barclays Kenya Open to the “Home of Golf”. The event was preceded by intense preparatory work on and off the course. With record crowds turning out to watch the local and international golfers play for top honours and prize money, the event proved a resounding success from both operational and financial standpoints.

In April, Muthaiga participated in the Tannahill Cup held at Royal Golf Club by fielding two junior teams and a senior team. One of the junior teams successfully defended the title won in 2016 while the senior team won the main event snatching the title from hosts Royal who had been defending champions for the preceding four years. I congratulate the junior and senior Tannahill teams for their well deserved victories.

On league performance, Muthaiga attained position 6 out of the 12 teams forming the Nairobi District League. While this performance fell short of our expectations, I must commend the team spirit and excellent leadership provided by our League Convener Mr Edgar Kalya without which we would not have attained this position. I would also encourage the team to come up with strategies to improve performance during away matches which, at the moment, appears to be our main area of vulnerability.

Allow me also to congratulate Mr Rajesh Bambra, Mr Jay Sadhu and Bishop Allan Wairi for winning the club’s match play, stroke play and Captain’s Prize championships respectively and making it to the club’s honours list for 2017.

#### **4.0 SPONSORSHIPS**

Despite a sluggish economic environment brought about by election jitters, the club recorded a reasonable level and quality of corporate sponsorships. There was a notable increase in the level of public sector corporate sponsors with Kenya Power, Kengen, Communications Authority, Posta, Nairobi Water Company and Kenya Airports Authority sponsoring high profile events. Private sector corporate sponsors included Sedgewick, Maneno World, Mabati Rolling Mills, Kenya Commercial Bank, Xtranet, BRITAM, Crown Paints, Total, Cytonn Investments, PKF and Paradigm Projects. We also hosted several charity events which included Gertrudes Children Hospital, Lion’s First Eye Hospital, JGF, St Andrews, Alliance School and Triad Foundation.

While the economic and political environment impacted adversely on the level of corporate sponsorships, we activated member sponsored events with considerable success in terms of patronage and financial impact. In addition to the many club nights sponsored by members, events such as Americans Golf Day, Kirinyaga Golf Day, Friends of Captain, Friends of League contributed immensely

to the enjoyment of golf by members. I am truly indebted to the many member friends who came up with and supported many of these initiatives which go a long way to reducing the level of dependency on corporate sponsors.

## **5.0 JUNIOR GOLF**

In 2017, the Junior Section remained vibrant has especially during the school holidays when the club normally hosts junior golf clinics.

Courtesy of our partnership with US Kids Golf throughout this year, many juniors have walked through the doors of our club in their quest to learn the game. The club not only had the opportunity to expose the game of golf to these young boys and girls, but in the process also imparted invaluable lifelong and social skills on them such as respect, courtesy and value to follow rules.

Despite the odds of inadequate comfort at the club, our juniors have remained good ambassadors and continue to raise the profile of Muthaiga Golf Club. This fact is well evidenced by the victory the main junior team when it convincingly retained the Junior Tannahill Shield in April while the second squad were runners up in the same competition.

In 2017, some of our Muthaiga juniors were called for national duty where they are did the club and country proud. In this regard, special mention goes to Mutahi Kibugu, Kellie Gachaga and Zubair Khan who were part of Kenya's team to the All Africa Golf Championships held in Zimbabwe in April, 2017. Mutahi was also part of the victorious Kenya team to the East African Challenge held in Dar es Salaam in August, 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Peter Munyi, our Junior Convenor, for his dedication and passion in promoting junior golf at Muthaiga. My appreciation also goes out to Mr Emmanuel Kasio of US Kids Golf and Nelson Mudanyi, our resident golf professional who without their support and partnership, the Junior Section would not be as vibrant as it has become.

Despite these successes, it is important for us to appreciate that maintaining the vibrancy of the junior section calls for continuous investments in appropriate infrastructure both at the range and in the club house. This will help attract the young ones to the game of golf and also make them feel welcome and comfortable while patronizing our facilities.

## **5.0 APPRECIATION**

To conclude, it has been my honour and privilege to have served as Captain of Muthaiga Golf Club, a demanding yet very fulfilling responsibility. My job was

made much easier through the support and guidance I received from our Chairman, Dr Antony Monyo and the entire Board of Directors of Muthaiga Golf Club, our Vice-Captain, Mr Antony Ngera as well as the Golf and Course Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Evans Vitisia. I also acknowledge the tremendous support I received from Management and Staff of the club led by the General Manager and, in particular, the diligence and commitment of our Golf Administration section led by Ms Emily Wamocha. To the Board, our Vice Captain, committee members, Management and Staff of Muthaiga Golf Club, I say a big "Thank You" for your invaluable support and contributions.

My sincere appreciation also goes out to the Ladies section led by Lady Justice Mary Angawa the Lady Captain and her immediate predecessor Ms. Gale Brackenridge for contributing to the warm and cordial relations between the Men and Ladies sections throughout the year.

Finally, I wish to pay a special tribute to all of you members for giving me the opportunity to serve and for the support and encouragement without which my job as Captain would have been a lot harder.

I exit my role knowing well that the club's leadership is in safe hands and take this opportunity to assure my successor of my utmost support as I also wish him a very successful captaincy in the year ahead.

God Bless