

Mention tee time booking in a private members' club, and the usual response will be: 'Ah, our members can play at any time they like – we don't need tee time bookings!'



# Old Conna manages course with BRS

**Oh really? The same clubs book tee times for the groups and societies that have booked a day's golf with them. Likewise, Ladies Day usually means the first tee is booked out, even if only half the available times are taken. The club competitions almost always require members to write their names down in tee time slots. When visitors ring up to see if they can play, they will nearly always ask if there's a suitable tee time available.**

A course represents a major revenue stream, so progressive managers want to know the precise usage. In turn, they can give their greenkeepers a clear run that avoids stopping for players, and see which tee times aren't being used in order vary the green fee rates to encourage visitors. So there are plenty of good reasons to think about tee time booking; the trick is to make it really user-friendly for the club's members and managers, and that's where the Tee Time Manager from BRS Golf comes into play.

Tom Sheridan is the General Manager at Old Conna, a beautiful parkland members' golf club 12 miles south of Dublin. Typical of the new breed of club managers, Tom exploits technology to help him manage the course and club. One of the new tools he's invested in is the BRS Golf Tee Time Manager, which replaces the paper-based booking system the club employed previously.

While the members were used to phoning in or coming up to the club and booking tee times, it was highly problematic: names could often be virtually illegible, and although slots were meant to be booked on the basis of one per member, there was no way the club could actually ensure

this was the case and keep the timesheet from becoming congested.

The BRS online booking system was installed in May this year, and initially was used only for members to book competition times. Because a member now logs in with their membership number and can only book one time, double-booking is impossible and the club's administrators can see exactly who is booking a time; the system is fully accountable.

Over 700 members have registered their log-in details to give them exclusive access to the booking system pages. For members who aren't online, there's a computer at the club; showing someone what to do takes 5-10 minutes and as the system prompts the user, it's easy to ensure someone knows how to do a booking.

But what's all this done for the club? Tom Sheridan: 'It's a fantastic tool for tee management. I can see immediately my peak times and my slack times, and adjust our green fee rates to encourage visitors to play in the slack periods. I can maximise the value of the greenkeepers' time and avoid them having to stop for players. If it's really busy I'll book out a block of tee times to let them move around the course uninterrupted – and the Tee Time Manager lets everyone see when that's happening.'

'The best thing for me as the manager is I now have a clear picture of what's happening on the course, day to day, month to month. It's reduced the time spent dealing with bookings, phone-calls, and so on. Unlike the old system, every booking's accountable. And if there are any emergencies out on the course, we've a much better idea of whereabouts they are from their starting time.'

What does it do for the members? 'It gives them much greater control over when they want to play, and because of that the majority are now using the

system every time. We'd often see as many as 20-30 members waiting to play for a casual round on a Friday afternoon. Now they can book a time from the comfort and convenience of their own home or office, and know they won't have to wait. That's a big improvement in membership value.'

## BRS add a new back-up feature to the Tee Time Manager

Working online is usually straightforward, but sometimes the connection can be interrupted or go down at the local exchange. In case it should happen, the BRS team have now added a new back-up feature that will enable golf clubs to carry on as normal.

### The backup facility works as follows:

Every night the BRS Tee Time Manager e-mails every club a back-up of their next 4 (or whatever) weeks' worth of bookings (the number of weeks is configurable for each club, but on a default basis it is one month). The file can contain both names and revenue figures, and can be opened in any web browser. BRS can Zip the file; it is also a configurable feature for each club, and will take up about 80KBs of disk space, i.e. it is very small.

In the event that the club's internet connection should go down, the club can open the document, print it (the format is identical to a timesheet plus revenue) and operate a manual system for the time that the internet is down. Once the internet connection is back up a running they will have only have to transfer new bookings onto the live system.

Brian Smith of BRS Golf: 'Online connection is nearly 100% reliable, but Murphy's law says that when it disconnects, it will be when it's most inconvenient! So we've created a back-up feature and facility for the clubs' booking systems and all their key information to ensure 100% continuity.'

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