



In the 2022 calendar year, I believe that the best way to describe the NATO Golf Club is that we are cruising along. Following the fundamental changes made in the 2020 season, we are now cruising along with a steady pace of events, and an established rhythm to the competition season.

But, there is always room for self-reflection and for improvement. Now might be a good time to think about whether the competition schedule should be adjusted, and if so, how might it be adjusted? For this Captain's Report for 2022, I'll provide a potential change to the NGC competition schedule for consideration.

In addition, I'll highlight some aspects of the NATO Golf Club that I would like to sustain, as well as some aspects that I would like to focus on in the upcoming year.

NGC Competition Schedule:

Generic Competition Schedules (Calendar year on left, NGC season on right):

Calendar Year	Month	Month	Season Year
Celtic Quaich	January	July	Friendly
Valentine Massacre	February	September	Opening Cup
Friendly	March	October	Friendly
President's Cup	March/April	November	Friendly
Captain's Cup	May	December	Christmas Cracker
Club Championship	June	January	Celtic Quaich
Closing Cup	June/July	February	Valentine Massacre
(next season) Friendly	July	March	Friendly
Opening Cup	September	March/April	President's Cup
Friendly	October	May	Captain's Cup
Friendly	November	June	Club Championship
Christmas Cracker	December	June/July	Closing Cup

The NGC switched to a season schedule that straddled a calendar year several years ago to align better with when the majority of people transition to and from NATO assignments. Now that we have several years of this new season approach under our belt, it has become apparent that the number of trophy events relative to friendly get-together events are unbalanced between the two halves of the season, with three months between trophy events in the autumn at the start of the season.

It would be fairly simple to move the Captain's Cup from an annual event in the early May timeframe to November in the competitive schedule, which would bring a better balance in the types of events to both halves of the season.

In considering this aspect of the NGC competition schedule, the Season Points could also be a consideration, with the desire of the NGC members to retain a larger number of trophy events toward the end of the competitive season to allow for more movement in the race for the NATO Cup.

Decision #1: Change the Captain's Cup event to occur in the Autumn to better balance the NGC Season, or leave the schedule as is to retain a more available points for the NATO Cup at the end of the season.

State of the NGC – Aspects to Sustain and Captain's Areas of Focus for 2023:

Aspects to Sustain:

The NGC continues to be a club that is welcoming and friendly to all members, regardless of skill level. The NGC also provides an opportunity to play at many different courses in the areas surrounding Brussels throughout the entire year. Both of these aspects of the NGC are great strengths of the organization.

As the Captain, there are some things that I can do to sustain and encourage these two critical aspects of the NGC.

Welcoming and Friendly:

- Be responsive to all members in all communications
- Establish groupings for events that are fair to all, but also create comfortable conditions for all members (particularly focusing on new members)
- Introduce new members in event communications, and to players at their first event
- Create comfortable norms for NGC playing practices that are not stressful

Variety and Pace of Events:

- Continue to schedule different courses throughout the year, mindful of playing conditions at courses for the best opportunities to play specific courses
- Expand the list of courses that the NGC plays, keeping within a 100 Euros cost of playing and a 1 hour commute from NATO HQs
- Expand the formats for NGC competitions and events to provide experience to NGC members

In addition to these focus areas, we have had a number of new members join the NGC throughout 2022, and each of these members helped to bring in other members that have been very active in the competitions thus far. To me, that is an indicator that the NGC events are enjoyable and provide value for the members.

Areas of Focus:

The main area that I would like to improve for 2023 is to get greater participation for each event. If we are able to get greater participation, it will create an even greater sense of community in the NGC, and it would also create greater competition for the individual

events and the NATO Cup as well. Plus, there are some practical considerations where all members would benefit from greater participation, primarily in terms of reduced group rates at the courses.

Generally speaking, we average about 10 players per event, with more players in the nicer weather, and less players in the winter weather. For many of the courses, 10 (or 12) players are required to be able to provide a discounted group rate. In some cases, a more significant discount is provided if we can field 20 or more players. From a practical perspective, having more players will reduce to cost to our members to play. For the golf fanatics among us, having more players might also bring some great courses below the 100 Euros limit for an NGC event.

A second and related area of focus is to get members to sign up earlier and commit to an NGC event earlier. When planning for an event, we plan for up to 24 players, and tell the course that we will provide updated numbers of players a week in advance, and generally we cut down from six tee-times to three or four tee-times depending on the number of participants. This method of planning is time intensive and leaves a great deal of uncertainty until the last few days prior to an event.

For both of these areas of focus, I would ask the NGC members to consider committing to more events in the future, and consider committing to them earlier. If plans change, we are very easy to work with for refunds!

[Final thoughts on 2022 and moving into 2023:](#)

Unfortunately, 2022 was the first year that the International Golf Club defeated the NATO Golf Club. It was a close match, but ultimately the IGC was victorious. This year, we will take the lead on buying an NGC-IGC Friendship Trophy (splitting the cost with the IGC) and be the first to hoist the new trophy in victory!

There are a number of other golf clubs and associations that have reached out to me, and we will include some other events onto our event list for those that are interested. In addition, I'm still working to bring closer integration between the NATO Golf Club and the SHAPE Golf Association, bringing back some of the past competitions between the two organisations but also going in new directions as a NATO team. More to follow on that.

I'm looking forward to the rest of 2023, and hope to see everyone on the course at some point this year!

Darryl Rupp
Captain
NATO Golf Club