

Hesketh and West Lancs Golf Clubs are kindred spirits; both are destination courses in the North West, now being promoted as 'England's Golf Coast'; both offer a high quality links golf experience; both are sought after by groups of golfing visitors touring the top courses in the area; and both are run by progressively-minded managers who know a good management tool when they see it.

# Bookings are much better when they're online

## Hesketh Golf Club: Martyn Senior, Secretary Manager

Martyn helped to develop one of the best offline bookings systems, DJB. As such, Martyn knew all about this kind of application from a club's perspective. Invited to The Open at Hoylake by The Merseyside Partnership, a regional body promoting the North West for golf tourism, Martyn first heard about the BRS Golf internet-enabled booking system via Steve Mainwaring of St. Anne's Old Links GC. The Merseyside Partnership's evaluation of several online tee time booking systems showed BRS was head and shoulders better than anything else available. Martyn then saw it demonstrated at a technology roadshow at Ringway GC, and realised immediately that, as Martyn put it, 'it ticked all the boxes you could wish for.'

## Hesketh Golf Festival Week

Martyn's also responsible for the marketing and management of the club's Festival Week, when different competitions are run all week long for all classes of golfers. Played every year for the last 14 years, the 2007 Festival has only been on the club's website for a couple of weeks. Entrants are requested to book online via the Festival booking page on the club's website, and it's working a treat: "When I came in this morning I could see we've had six more bookings and another £600 of payments received. We've 30 entries so far! The great thing is that it's so easy for those making the entries - they just go to our website, click on the Festival section, register their details, book the times they want, and pay via their credit card. It's totally safe and we get an encrypted e-mail confirming their details and their booking, which of course we can see on the booking sheet. No postage, no bits of paper, it couldn't be easier for them or for us."

"We had GolfSwitch before, and we got 3 bookings in 4 years! The BRS system combines the versatility of a well developed system like DJB with the advantages of being online. For a club like Hesketh that gets a lot of golfers making up party bookings from all around the world and from all sorts of time zones, online booking is ideal. Instead of making a 'phone booking with us, then ringing another local club and finding they need to change the days around, and 'phone again to re-arrange things - now they can do it all online at their convenience and ours, and in their own time."

## The virtues of an online system that works

"This is our third electronic booking system. Barron went bust, DJB was very good as an offline system, but the BRS system is absolutely brilliant. It tracks every booking transaction in every detail. It records any changes, which are inevitable, so that you can see the history of a booking at the click of a mouse. BRS have been very good at listening to experienced users and building in all their experiences and requests. We've got all three modules (the management system for the office, plus the visitors and members modules),



Hesketh GC: book anytime, online.

and are using it for members to enter competitions, for visitors to book tee times and facilities like meeting rooms. We've just had it installed, and we'll get the members up to speed at a pace that suits them, as we don't have casual tee time booking for members yet. But it will deal with those who like to block book themselves and their mates on the previous system; the BRS system allows one person to book themselves and up to three others only!"

"The reports are excellent, and you can choose to itemise them eg. for tee times or room bookings, or combine them so that you can see the bigger picture more easily as to the way the club is being used. That makes it a very powerful tool for a manager. It's easy to set things up in the BRS system, and while there is a learning curve, it's not difficult to get familiar with the way it does things. Their training videos are just fantastic, and so is their telephone training. We're very pleased with BRS; they're very flexible, they listen to what you want, and they're such nice guys to work with. I'm very happy to demonstrate our online booking system to any golf club in the area."

## West Lancs Golf Club: Stewart King, Secretary Manager

Playing off +1 and managing a busy destination club is quite a feat, yet Stewart manages it with style. He too used the DJB booking system, so what persuaded him that going online was a better idea?

"Being online means everything's in real time and precise. We've only been using it a short while, but it's perfectly obvious to us that it is an infinitely better management tool. It's dramatically enhanced the service and experience we can offer visitors, which is a critical aspect of our club's operation, being one of the top golfing destinations in the North West."

## Making Open competition bookings easier for entrants

"We're running 4 Opens - mixed, seniors, four ball, singles - throughout 2007, and we're doing it via the BRS system because it's so much easier for people who want to enter. There are no forms, no phone

calls, or any of the usual hassle of making bookings, either for them or for the club. For example, I can see this morning that for our Seniors Open on the 19th July, there are sixteen bookings between 7.30am and 2.30pm for the 18 hole competition. We've been e-mailed by the system to confirm the bookings and that payment has been received in full. Job done!"

For Stewart, the experience to date with the BRS Golf system suggests that in the near future everyone will automatically book their times online, and that entry forms will be a thing of the past.

## Casual visitor bookings online from Jan 1st 2007

"From Jan 1st, all visitors will be able to book the tee times we allocate for them. That will make life far easier for those coming from the USA or Australia, along with payment via their cards, instead of paying when they get here. That also means we get their money way upfront and in our account. And everyone's got an e-mail to confirm the arrangements. They can also see the catering choices as well, and book whatever they want to eat for breakfast, lunch or dinner! The system gives us just what we want, and all our requests for tweaks or features have been very well handled by the BRS team of developers. Like Open Solutions, they're another technology company that really listens to their customers, which makes a nice change compared to some!"

## Getting the Starter and the Members online by Spring 2007

"We'll put the members onto the system in Spring 2007. We currently run tee time bookings via DJB and the Starter, but the information is not current, so we'll soon be installing a PC for the Starter so that he will have the online version running in his office."

"All the 2007 bookings can already be seen by our members, but with the added convenience of seeing it from their PC at home or in the office. I'm very impressed with BRS; the level of service is brilliant, and I strongly recommend that any golf club considers this system for themselves."