

## Estec Golf Club - Info Note

Dear Golfers

It is troublesome days where we all are severely constrained in our movements, and despite a very good golfing weather in April we cannot go out and enjoy a nice round of golf. We hope you and your family are all healthy, that is after all the highest priority.

The committee felt it important to inform you on the golfing restrictions we are currently experiencing and how we sustain the golf course during this period.

### Access to Estec Golf Course

As most of you already know (from ESA/DG info notes or from Ares), Estec is still in Teleworking mode with very few people on-site, and with all sports facilities closed.

In order to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus infection, ESA started a lock-down process early March, which first banned access for non-essential visitors, and by 25/3 it was extended to a full closure of all sports facilities. It also instructed staff to do teleworking reducing the number of people on-site to the absolute minimum. Also, all non-essential services performed by contracting companies were banned from entering ESTEC. For the golf club this meant that the ESTEC gardening contractor and our Green Keepers no longer could enter the ESTEC site.

The latest information note from ESA's DG (24/4) suggests that a plan is being prepared for a gradual 'back to business' starting from May 11<sup>th</sup>.

The Dutch government have recently issued a plan for a first small step in a gradual reopening of the country. It includes opening of the primary schools and sports facilities for training purposes only for children age up to 18 years, while still respecting the 1.5m social distancing requirements among others. For all others sports facilities remains closed. All events remain closed until September. The reopening state will be reviewed again Mid-May.

For golfing at ESTEC we have to remain patient. It is unlikely that opening of the sports facilities will be part of the back-to-business step-1 at ESTEC. Playing on other golf courses in the Netherlands is also not possible. The situation is regularly up for review at ESA and at the Dutch Government/RIVM. However, it is right now impossible to guess/predict when and to what extent reopening of sports facilities will be allowed even for the casual round of golf.

## Estec Golf Course maintenance

The lock-down of access to ESTEC of our Green-Keeper was quite unfortunate as leaving the golf course without maintenance would incur damage, for instance to the greens that would be costly to repair. In good collaboration with Site Service we got an exemption approved Apr 7<sup>th</sup> that allows our Green-Keeper access to ESTEC one day a week, while observing a strict health and safety protocols in line with the Dutch Government/RIVM recommendations. This was good news as it allows a minimal sustaining maintenance to take place that preserves the investment, we have done in the golf course.



The part of the golf course maintenance (clearing of ditches & ponds, undergrowth, mowing the rough), which are under responsibility of the ESTEC Gardening contractor is currently left unattended. We have just learned that also the ESTEC gardening contractor is now allowed to have one person on-site. However, it is (at the time of writing) unclear whether this person will have time/priority to also do maintenance work at the golf course terrain – in particular the clearing of the ditches is of importance. Right now, it is very dry and therefore it is not a big issue, but eventually it will start raining again then a working draining system becomes essential.



Our Green Keeper have managed to start-up the sprinkler system again. We believe that with the sprinkler system working and the minimal course maintenance, we can sustain the course – maybe not at 'playing condition' but still acceptable considering the situation. The minute we move towards reopening of the golfing facility again we will also be allowed to bring back the course maintenance in full again.

## Competitions

Competitions to be undertaken on external Dutch Golf courses, like the Seasonal, Bedrijf-league are all subject to the Dutch Government restrictions on the use of sports facilities & organization of events, and are until further notice cancelled/postponed. We keep the competition calendar as is and should there be relaxations, we will pick it up again from that point and evaluate if postponed competitions can be re-scheduled.

Unfortunately, across Europe the COVID-19 situation is as bad or even worse as in the Netherlands. Thus, similar precautions are also taken in other countries. The consequence is that already now the ESA-cup (Paris May 22-23/5) Ariane Cup (France Sep 11-12), GEEL Open (July 3-4) are already cancelled. Others may follow.

## Replacement of the Check-inn hut

The replacement of the check-inn hut was planned for April, but due to the lock-down it was necessary to delay it again. The current tentative date is Mid-June, but we are not sure this date can be maintained. The companies involved have shown good understanding and flexibility and hopefully we will manage to finally have this work done in course of the summer.

We hope we hereby have given you some additional information on how the COVID-19 pandemic affect even our golf club activities. All club activities planned are placed on hold until further notice. We will in due time, per event, evaluate if a re-schedule will be possible.

Should you have specific questions following this note, please don't hesitate to drop us an e-mail.

We hope you all may stay healthy – take care.

On behalf of the EGC committee

Kjeld Hjortnaes  
(EGC chairman)