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Winter Conditions

We would like to make you aware of some of the arrangements put in place for play on the courses during the winter 2016/17.

Preferred lies from 1 November

Preferred lies will be in operation from Tuesday 1st November 2016 until Sunday 30th April 2017 on all courses, although while play is from mats they are only relevant when players are putting or playing similar shots, as below, from around greens.

Mats in operation from 1 November

Fairway mats will be in operation on the Old, New, Jubilee, Eden and Strathtyrum Courses from Tuesday 1st November 2016 until Friday 24th February 2017. Mats will continue to be used on the Old Course until Friday 31st March 2017.

The Castle Course closes after play on Sunday 6th November 2016 and when it re-opens on Wednesday 1st March 2017 will remain on mats until Friday 31st March 2017.

Mats will not be in use on the Balgove Course over this period.

We would be grateful if all mats could be returned to the Starter following play. Only mats provided by St Andrews Links (or similar) may be used.

Trolleys on the Old Course

The limitation on the use of trolleys will correspond with the use of mats on the Old Course and so trolleys will not be permitted on the Old Course from Tuesday 1st November 2016 to Friday 31st March 2017 inclusive. There is no restriction on the use of trolleys on any other course over the winter period.

Old Course closures in November and February/March

The Old Course will be closed for winter maintenance on the following dates:

Monday 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th November and Monday 5th December 2016.
Monday 27th February and Monday 6th, 13th and 20th March 2017.

Additional Local Rule

Any bunker being repaired will be marked with a white line or rope and deemed to be Ground Under Repair "through the green." Play is prohibited from these bunkers and if a golfer's ball lies within this marked area, or if the area interferes with the player's stance or area of intended swing, the player must take relief under Rule 25-1b(i).



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Winter course conditions - course closures for frost

The Course Manager, or his agreed deputy, is responsible for determining whether a course is playable because of frost or not. Every effort will be made to open the course(s) as soon as possible and each course will be treated on an individual basis. The Course Managers shall keep the Reception teams in the clubhouses informed of the current conditions on a regular basis.

Damage caused by play during frosty conditions falls into two main categories:

- a) White frost - when frozen, plant tissues are easily bruised by players' feet. Following a thaw, it is often possible to see brown footprints for several weeks, particularly around the hole positions, where the grass has been significantly damaged. The greater the amount of play in white frost, then obviously the greater extent of the damage. Affected areas remain thin for long periods, including well into late spring until growth becomes stronger. This affects the trueness of the putting surface but more importantly allows poorer, weaker grasses to invade the sward and make the greens more susceptible to disease.
- b) Long term damage is caused when play takes place after a sudden thaw. In these conditions the top 13mm to 20mm or so becomes soft, while the underlying soil remains frozen. Root damage occurs from the shearing actions as players' feet move the soft, unfrozen surface across the frozen sub-surface. This disrupts putting surfaces and causes damage that may not recover until well into the middle of summer.

At St Andrews Links (del – Trust) our frost policy is to close the courses when conditions are as described in a) and b) above. We will open the courses when the ground is frozen solid but the grass plant itself is not frozen, but as in b), we will close as the frost starts to thaw. As stated earlier, each course is treated individually according to the conditions on that course.

Old Course Start-times in Low Season

During the Low Season (between November and March) there are frequently days when there are several spaces on the Old Course. In February 2012, the Links Management Committee introduced a new booking process which would assist a golfer in securing one of these unallocated times after the 48 hour ballot had been drawn.

This booking system will be re-introduced for the period of play from 1st November 2016 to 31st March 2017 and is as follows:-

Once the Ballot has been published and prior to the day of play, a golfer may phone our Clubhouse Reception on 01334 466666 and reserve a fully available start-time, ie a start-time with no golfers attached to it. These start-times will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

The Old Course Starter will still allocate any empty start-times in person on the day.

A notice will be added to the Ballot webpage to this effect and we hope that this will once again ease the process of securing an available start-time.