# NATO GOLF CLUB cAPTAIN’S Report 2024

2024 proved to be another successful year for the NATO Golf Club. We saw our numbers of members increase and attendance at our monthly events was robust. Both speak well for the viability of our club and the years that are to come. This was my second year serving as your captain, this summer will mark a period of transition for the club as I will depart back to the United States. Best of luck to our new captain, Jon Gunther, as he assumes duties this summer, pending approval at the AGM. The NGC is in good hands.

This report is intended to capture activities from years 2024-2025, highlight areas to sustain, and provide recommendations on how we might improve as a club.

I am pleased to report that participation in our events in 2024 and the first half of 2025 continues to be well represented by members of NGC.

For the season (2024-2025) we completed 8 events, 4 more are planned from April to July 2025.

**NGC Competition Schedule:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **2024-2025 Season** | | |
| **Month** | **Event** | **Location** |
| September | Opening Cup | Golf du Chateau de la Bawette |
| October | Captain’s Cup | Bercuit |
| October | NGC Weekend Getaway | Golf Henri Chapelle |
| November | Friendly | Golf de Rigenee |
| December | Christmas Cracker | Royal Golf Club of Hainaut |
| January | Celtic Quaich | Golf de Pierpoint |
| February | Valentine Massacre | Golf de Falnuee |
| March | Friendly | Winge Golf and Country Club |
| April | President’s Cup | Louvain-la-Neuve |
| May | Friendly | Golf L’Empereur |
| June | Club Championship | Chateau de la Tournete |
| July | Closing Cup | Engheim |

**State of the NGC – Areas to Sustain and improve for 2025:**

***Areas to Sustain:***

Outreach this year was a marked improvement from past years. We leveraged advertising platforms in the NATO Headquarters building through use of the large screen in the Agora as well as the publication of pamphlets distributed in the Staff Center. Both efforts resulted in a marked increase of applications for membership. Current members also went above and beyond in socializing the NATO Golf Club to fellow coworkers at NATO, this effort also contributed to an increase in applications.

Delineation of duties prior to our monthly events promoted better efficiency and coordination prior and during NGC sponsored events. All coordination with local courses, and scheduling remained in the purview of the captain. What helped greatly was the pre-marking of scorecards by our secretary which freed up the captain to coordinate scheduling and groupings with the courses we played this year. I recommend that this practice be maintained for the new captain as he assumes his duties this summer.

We made the conscious choice last year to schedule the majority of our tournaments on Saturdays. In past years many of our events were on Sundays which conflicted with members who wanted to attend religious worship services or had scheduled family events. I also recommend that the initiative to schedule events on Saturdays be maintained.

In my first year as captain, we assigned groupings based on skill levels (handicaps). This year we adjusted our approach in making groupings purely on a random draw. Doing so promoted greater interaction amongst members and re-emphasized the fact that we are playing golf for fun. As with previous initiatives I recommend that this effort with regards to groupings be maintained.

Two of our members took it upon themselves to coordinate events outside of the habitual schedule (NGC weekend getaway, and the SHAPE vs. NATO Alliance Cup). Both events were extremely successful and I recommend that we continue to strive to do both in the 2025-2026 season.

***Areas to Improve:***

We should continue to strive to reduce our collective pace of play. While on average we have done a better job at playing faster there were a few occasions in which we averaged close to a five-hour round. Playing faster is not only a better experience for the collective group but also helps to foster relationships with the courses we play. Many of the courses we are able to play are some of the most sought after in the local Brussels area. By playing faster we do not impact the experience of those club’s members.

As with past reports, events scheduled by the NATO Golf Club on average result in 10 to 12 participants. Most local golf courses offer special reduced rates to the NGC based on an understanding that we will have 20 or more golfers participate. It would be beneficial if more of our members participated in our monthly golf outings.

**Final thoughts:**

It has been my pleasure to serve as your captain for the past two years. Interacting with our members has been one of the highlights of my tour at NATO and I thank all of you to the support you provide to our club. I look forward to the job that Jon will do as he is the right person to lead us in the future.

*//Original Signed//*

Jeffrey Smith

Captain

NATO Golf Club