

2012

Ballston Spa Country Club
Membership Survey



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Overall Findings

One hundred eighteen members responded to the Ballston Spa Country Club (BSCC) membership survey. Of those, 28 percent (33) play golf once (5%) or twice (23%) a week, 47 percent play three times a week and 25 percent play four or more times a week.

About one in five play most of their rounds on weekdays (20%) and a similar percentage, 21 percent play most of their rounds on weekends. The majority, 59 percent play both on weekdays and on weekends.

Members that play most of their rounds on weekdays play less often than either those that tend to play on weekends or those that play both during the week and on weekends. Among those that play mainly during the week, 56 percent play only one or two rounds a week, 40 percent play three times and only 4 percent play four or more rounds a week. Among weekend golfers, nearly a third (31%) play once or twice a week, 48 percent play three times a week and 22 percent play four or more rounds. Among those that play both during the week and on weekends, only 17 percent play twice a week, 49 percent play three rounds and 34 percent play four or more rounds a week.

Of the 118 respondents, 72 percent play three or more rounds a week.

Overall satisfaction among members with the condition of the golf course is high. Thirty-eight percent are very satisfied and 45 percent indicate being satisfied. While 8 percent say their level of satisfaction is neutral, only 9 percent say they are dissatisfied and none are very dissatisfied. Transforming overall satisfaction into a single score with 4 = very satisfied, 3 = satisfied, etc., we create a potential satisfaction range from 0 to 4. The overall score of a possible 4.0 is 3.12. As such, overall members are quite satisfied with the overall condition of the course. Overall satisfaction is lower among the 33 golfers that play once or twice a week (2.91) than among those that play three or more times a week (85) at 3.2. Satisfaction is lowest among those members that say they play most of their golf only on weekends (2.72) and highest among those that play only on the weekdays (3.52). The majority that plays both on weekdays and weekends fall right on the overall mean at 3.12. Similarly, the 49 percent of all golfers that play three times a week or more and play both on weekdays and weekends are satisfied with the overall condition of the course at the score of 3.12.

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the condition of six course attributes on a six point scale from most to least important. The six attributes were: condition of the greens, fairways, tees, rough, cart paths and bunkers. The following table shows the importance scores overall all and among active golfers (three or more rounds a week) and less active golfers (less than three rounds a week) with a mean score range of 5 (most important) to 0 (least important).

Across all members the six attributes are seen by members in a clear order of importance. Most important is the condition of the greens followed in order by the fairways, tees, bunkers, rough and cart paths. Active golfers see the importance of the condition of the rough while fifth most important still close to how they view the bunkers. Less active golfers tend to see the condition of the bunkers as being almost as important as that of the tees. Still it is clear that the top priority is the condition of the greens followed by that of the fairways.

Importance Score of the Condition of Six Course Attribute Conditions (range 0 to 5)

	All Members	Active Golfers	Less Active Golfers
Greens	4.77	4.77	4.77
Fairways	3.76	3.80	3.63
Tees	2.72	2.82	2.44
Bunkers	2.04	1.88	2.42
Rough	1.73	1.73	1.72
Cart Paths	0.71	0.69	0.76

When members were asked to score the six course attributes in terms of which ones needed the most attention right now with a score of 5 being the most immediate attention and a zero being the least, we see some slight differences from the importance scores. Still, the greens are not only the most important course attribute but of the six, the greens are the attribute that members feel needs the most immediate attention. However, where the greens were ranked as far and away the most important, when looking at the most immediate needs, tees are seen by all members but especially among active golfing members as the second most pressing need only slightly behind the greens.

Most Immediate Area in Need of Attention Scores (range 0 to 5)

	All Members	Active Golfers	Less Active Golfers
Greens	3.63	3.64	3.58
Tees	3.43	3.58	3.06
Bunkers	2.72	2.73	2.68
Fairways	2.47	2.39	2.65
Rough	1.66	1.65	1.68
Cart Paths	1.28	1.19	1.52

Fairways were seen as the second most important area but currently members see fairways as the fourth most in need of attention. Bunkers are seen as slightly more in need of attention right now. The rough and the cart paths are seen as the areas least in need of immediate attention.

Having asked members to comment on the importance of the condition of six course components as well as to grade each as to being in need of attention, members were then asked more specifically to indicate for five of those six as well as for the practice range and the putting greens 1) their satisfaction with its condition and 2) its importance. In this sequence, cart paths were deleted.

Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction as very satisfied (4), satisfied (3), neutral (2), dissatisfied (1) or very dissatisfied (0). Similarly, respondents indicated how important the condition of each component is to them as very important (4), important (3), neutral (2), unimportant (1) or not important at all (0). The following chart shows the collective score of all members, active golfers and less active golfers for both satisfaction and importance of condition for each attribute.

We look at this data in three ways. First, are the condition importance scores consistent with the similar question asked earlier in the survey, 2) what is the rank order of satisfaction among all members and the two subsets of members and 3) what is the relationship between condition importance and satisfaction by component.

Satisfaction with and Importance of Course Components (range 0 to 4)

	Satisfaction with Condition			Condition Importance		
	All Members	Active Golfers	Less Active Golfers	All Members	Active Golfers	Less Active Golfers
Greens	2.63	2.62	2.63	3.88	3.88	3.88
Tees	1.98	1.91	2.18	2.95	3.00	2.82
Bunkers	1.89	1.86	1.97	2.79	2.79	2.79
Fairways	3.23	3.31	3.03	3.34	3.34	3.33
Rough	2.58	2.55	2.67	2.48	2.48	2.48
Range	2.72	2.74	2.67	2.50	2.59	2.27
Putting Green				3.00	3.02	2.94

Earlier in the survey when using a six point scale ranging from most to least important we found that the order of importance of course attributes was: Greens, Fairways, Tees, Bunkers and Rough. In that case the rank order was quite clear. In this question using a five-point scale from very important to not important at all, we find the identical rank order of course attributes: Greens, Fairways, Tees, Bunkers and Rough.

The scores in this sequence of condition importance appear more condensed than in the earlier question but that is in part due to the use of different scales. Still, the rank order of importance is undeniable. Further, in that in this sequence we have attached a qualitative descriptor to the scale, we see that not only are the Greens most important but that the nearly the entire membership considers them to be 'very important.' The Fairways are seen as more than important but not quite very important by the collective membership and the Tees are seen as simply 'important.'

The rank order of satisfaction varies from that of importance or perhaps as a result of attribute importance. Nonetheless, satisfaction is greatest for the Fairways and at 3.23 can be described as greater than satisfied trending towards very satisfied. Greens, the most important course attribute, only scores a 2.63 that shows that as a whole the membership is less than completely satisfied with the condition of the greens but at least considerably more than simply neutral. The Rough, a far less important course component receives a score similar to the Greens in terms of satisfaction. Both the Tees and the Bunkers receive scores that qualitatively are described as 'neutral' or just below neutral.

It may not be fully appropriate to compare the importance and satisfaction score for each attribute but it is certainly worthy of consideration. Given that they are both on five point scales we can look at the two scores and consider the implications. One could say that a satisfaction score that exceeds an importance score would tend to show a pleased membership. In other words if that were the case, the care and condition of an attribute would be measured to be exceeding expectations. If the two scores are equal or similar, at least satisfaction is keeping

pace with importance and if the satisfaction score falls below the condition importance score, that could be a signal to course management that membership is unhappy about that particular course component.

Of the six course components that we have condition and satisfaction scores, only two, the Rough and the Range, have satisfaction scores that exceed condition importance scores. Both have relatively low importance scores to begin with at approximately 2.5 but still member satisfaction exceeds their expectations.

The other four components, Greens, Tees, Bunkers and Fairways all have lower satisfaction scores than importance scores. This indicates that members would be pleased if they saw improvement in those four areas. Fairways may be the one exception in that the satisfaction score at 3.23 is not only the highest but also it most closely approaches the condition importance score.

The three remaining course components – Greens, Tees and Bunkers – all have nearly a one point or in the case of Greens a 1.25 deficit between the condition importance score and the satisfaction score. This finding is thoroughly consistent with the data from the question that probed the areas most in need of immediate attention. In rank order members indicated – Greens, Tees and Bunkers. That is the exact same order of the difference between the condition importance score and the satisfaction score: Greens (1.25), Tees (.97) and Bunkers (.9).

It may be appropriate to share this finding with members and to whatever extent possible target improvements or concerted maintenance efforts to these identified areas of agreed upon need and importance.

While these scores appear to show that members would like to see improvements, when asked to comment on whether the overall condition of the course has improved or declined over the last four year, overwhelmingly members that can comment, say the course has at least improved somewhat over that period. Of those that have played at BSCC long enough, 42 percent say it has improved greatly and 36 percent say it has improved somewhat. Only 17 percent of members with an opinion say the course has declined either somewhat or greatly over the past four years.

The vast majority of members, 88 percent, say that the information about golf course conditions and improvement plans have been helpful.

When, in light of this discussion of importance and satisfaction, members were asked to assess condition and membership rates, nearly one third (32%) of all members and 36 percent of less active members but only 30 percent of active members are in favor of increasing membership dues to improve course conditions. Still, a significant majority, 66 percent, prefer to hold the line on dues or at least hold increases to inflation. The club faces a challenge given this data. Membership would like to see improvements but is hesitant to see a dues increase. Still, targeted and publicized improvements within a reasonable budget appear likely to be supported.

Greens and Rough

The practice putting green is seen by members, both active and less active, as an important course component. While very few believe its conditions always match those of the greens on the course, 41 percent say that it mostly does, and an additional 39 percent say that sometimes conditions on the practice green match those on the course.

Very few members say that the greens on the course are 'too fast' (3%). The vast majority (75%) say green speed is good while nearly a quarter (23%) indicate that they are 'too slow.' Similarly, nearly two-thirds of members say the height of the grass in the rough is 'good' while a third say it is 'too high.'

Miscellaneous Satisfaction Questions

Seventy percent of members were satisfied with the overall food and beverage service provided by Panza's. Still, while 43 percent were satisfied with the menu, nearly as many, 39 percent were neutral about the menu and 18 percent were not satisfied. Fifty-nine percent rate the service as either excellent (14%) or very good (45%), 31 percent rated the service as average and only 10 percent indicated either needs improvement (8%) or poor (2%).

Six Miscellaneous Satisfaction Question Scores (range 0 - 4)

	Score	Very Satisfied or Satisfied
Quality of Panza's Food & Beverages	2.63	63% (16%, 47%)
Appearance & Cleanliness Clubhouse	2.86	80% (12%, 68%)
Snack Shack Food & Beverages	2.24	39% (5%, 34%)
Proshop Service	3.47	93% (55%, 38%)
Tee time Lottery	3.03	73% (31%, 42%)
Tournaments: Way conducted	2.74	60% (18%, 42%)

Of six aspects of the club, satisfaction was greatest with the Proshop service with a score of 3.47 out of a possible 4.0 indicating that the vast majority of members are very or somewhat satisfied. In fact, a majority, 55 percent, say they are very satisfied with Proshop service. Satisfaction is high, 3.03 with the manner in which the tee-time lottery is conducted with 73 percent being either satisfied or very satisfied. Satisfaction is moderate when it comes to the appearance and cleanliness of the clubhouse and the manner in which in-house tournaments are conducted. Satisfaction is slightly less for the quality of food at Panza's (2.63) and lowest for the snack shack food and beverages at 2.24.

Miscellaneous Use and Enjoyment

- 37 Percent attend themed dinner events. Of those that attend, 61 percent enjoyed the experience. So, 23 percent attend and enjoy.
- 42 percent use the front deck for dining or drinks in 2011.
- 75 percent use the gazebo for food or drinks in 2011.
- 69 percent use the snack shack near the ninth green in 2011.
- 53 percent would be willing to participate on a volunteer basis on work projects in the clubhouse. 41 percent might be willing.
- 79 percent believe that the club's bylaws should be modernized or otherwise amended in 2012.
- While 39 percent think the pace of play on weekend mornings is just right, 51 percent think it is too slow. Those that play mostly on weekends are more inclined to say the pace is just right. Those that play both weekdays and weekends tend to say the weekend pace is 'slow at times.'
- 64 percent feel that there is the right number of tournaments. 19 percent believe there are too many tournaments and 8 percent say there are too few.

Tournament Favorites

By awarding five points for first choice, four for second and so on, we compute the relative favorites of the membership for tournaments. The membership preferences are:

1. The competitive single-person: total points – 374, 21 percent of all respondents indicate it is their top choice
2. Two-person: total points – 349, 14 percent of all respondents indicate it is their top choice
3. Four person: total points – 315, 11 percent of all respondents indicate it is their top choice
4. Scramble: total points – 261, 14 percent of all respondents indicate it is their top choice
5. Mixed: total points – 252, 23 percent of all respondents indicate it is their top choice
6. 17 percent indicate no favorite

While 48 percent do not participate in 'fun' 9 hole events and 4 percent say they are not interesting and an additional 4 percent don't like having the course tied up, 43 percent say they are fun and there should be more of them.

Allowing Outside Tournaments

Looking over the five questions that deal with outside play collectively. Recoding the way members responded to all five as either being in favor of additional outside play or against outside play, membership falls into three groups:

In favor of just about all efforts to allow outside play = 36%

On the fence, in favor of some not others = 27%

Opposed to almost any outside play additions = 37%

Looking specifically at the five examples:

	Total in Favor	Opposition	On Fence	Supporters
Green Fee on Friday	41%	0	44%	81%
Tournaments on Friday	42%	0	53%	79%
Friday Private	32%	77%	13%	0
Weekend green play	39%	2%	22%	91%
Weekend private	52%	91%	66%	0

Looking this over, it is fair to say that there is more openness to additional outside play on Friday than on the weekends. Still, over a third are open to both.

	In Favor	Opposed
Allow some green fee play on Fridays	41%	59%
Allow occasional tournaments on Fridays	42%	58%
Keep Friday private	32%	68%
Allow some green fee play on weekend afternoons	39%	61%
Keep weekends private	52%	48%