

This year's Airlines Sports Club Association (ASCA) tournament was hosted by IcelandAir and the package comprised of one overnight stay in Reykjavik before being transported two hours via coach and then a 30 minute ferry ride to the unique Vestmannaeyja (Westmann) Islands.

Enroute, we learned that Vestmannaeyja Golf Club is one of the top "Wow Factor" golf courses in the world and on first impression nobody could argue with that statement as the course uniquely sits in the middle of a huge and extinct volcano crater that terminates with wonderful cliffs and sea views. Several tees are either seaside or you tee over the sea to a fairway, notably the 7th green - don't be too long, 8th tee box where you can look for puffins on the cliffs opposite, 15th tee and fairway are cliff hangers, don't hook your ball; 16th tee to fairway covers a minimum carry of 165 yards and is a par 5 with double jeopardy of having out-of-bounds over the 18th fairway; 17th par 3 don't be short off the tee.

The tournament was blessed with good weather; good weather for Iceland that is! All teams arrived for a practice round in wet conditions, but the light rain was expected to finish and the sea mist lifted after 12pm but the wind off the sea meant thermal layers and waterproofs. The practice round commenced with a shot gun start from 1:30pm followed by a lamb dinner at the golf club and then check-in at the Vestmannaeyja Hotel followed by an early night for most.

The format for the ASCA inter-airline golf tournament is a practice day, a pairs day and a singles day. A team consists of 6 players from each airline, each airline can have multiple teams of men and ladies. Stableford scores accumulate from the best 2 of the 3 pairs on day 1 and the best 4 singles of the 6 players on day 2 in both gross (scratch) and net (80% of handicap).

Teams were represented by 9 airlines; there were 14 men's teams and 6 ladies' teams Iceland Air (hosts), Air Atlanta (Icelandic cargo), Emirates Airlines, Finnair, SAS Sweden, British Airways, Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa and CargoLux.

Tuesday Pairs Day 1 with a 9am shotgun start followed by a chicken, rice and fresh salad lunch at the club. The weather had further improved from the practice round with beautiful sunshine and a calmer wind, the ball was much easier to control.

The best scoring pairs for BAGS were Tyrone Houston and John de Rebello 39pts and Surinder Bahra and Satinder Sandhu 38pts which placed the team joint 5th in the Net competition on day one.

The evening was spent in the local restaurants followed by the Puffin Bar across from the hotel.

Wednesday Singles Day 2 and another 9am shotgun start. The wind had almost completely died down, but it was an overcast and cooler day (11c) until nearly the end of the round which gave a near perfect trouble-free round.

BA's best net singles scores came from:

Amarjit Dhaliwal 33pts

Surinder Bahra 32pts

Satinder Sandhu 30pts

Prince Chambers 30pts

The round was followed by a warming lunch of freshly made lasagne and baked bread with homemade coleslaw. We then headed back to the hotel for a rest and wash-up before returning for the Gala dinner at 7pm in formal wear and a dinner treat of four different local fish dishes plus lamb. The fish included cod, ling, wolffish and anglerfish.

The results in the team events meant that the BA Team came 6th in the Net and 7th in the Gross out of 14 men's teams, most definitely one of BA better results in recent years.

The winning men's team in the Gross and Net was IcelandAir/A as was the winning men's singles gross champion Pétur Jaidee of Iceland Air with a gross 67, winning on a countback that included a birdie and an eagle on the last 3 holes.

The winning ladies' team in the Gross was Finnair/A on countback to Iceland Air, but Iceland Air ladies won the Net comfortably and the ladies singles gross champion was Martiina Hintikka of Finnair.

Full results can be found at a live leaderboard <https://gig.golfgatt.is/live/>

If you want to see a selection of photographs taken during the event you can use WhatsApp by scanning the following QR code:

