

### **Aces at Oakbank**

According to the Hole in One boards in the clubhouse, since May 1996 there have been 45 aces on the course – an average of a little over 2 each year. While that's interesting it doesn't paint a reliable picture of when they have occurred.

For instance, nobody achieved an ace in 1999, 2005, 2015 or 2016. And so far this year, none have been recorded. By contrast, in some years there have been multiple aces. 2010 stands out as the record that is unlikely to be ever repeated – there were an unbelievable 8! Our current vice-captain, David Schultz, got 2 of them along with Ashley Deane. Incidentally, David's son Scott has struck twice in 2014 and 2017.

In the period in question several golfers have made doubles but only one, Ashley Deane, has got on the board for 3 aces – 2 in 2010 and another in 2013. Only two current members are in a position to equal Ash's record at this stage. They are Ray McVey (2002 & 2004), David Schultz, when he gets back on the course, Matt Heading (2012 & 2013) and Scott Schultz (2014 & 2017).

As I wrote in the newsletter some years ago and as stated previously, analysis of the record board reveals that 2010 was the best year for aces—a total of 8. And three of those were within 3 days in November! In most years there have been only one or two.

Why so many within a few months? What changed? The course? Maybe. Aggregate ability? — probably the same. Player numbers about the same. Weather—shouldn't make much difference..... makes you think doesn't it?

And when 2015 and 2016 (the only consecutive years since the 1996 records) are considered, years in which no aces were achieved, one has to ask how can that be explained?

8 aces in 2010 and only 8 since 20/4/13 when Grant Parker achieved every golfer's dream. How's that? Maybe a maths expert can explain it?

Which holes have been aced most frequently?

For this question I have analysed the stats since 2000 as that was when the course changed.

There have been 40 recorded aces since that time and it is very interesting to see which holes have been aced. The 14th is by far and away the standout—there have been no less than 12 recorded aces on this hole compared to the next favoured, number 10 which has been aced 9 times and the 1st, 7 times.

The 5th and the 8th have been aced 5 times each and the 17th once. This ace occurred long before the establishment of the separate 17th tee so effectively this could be added to the 8th's record.

One wonders why the 14th (171 metres) has been aced over twice as often as the 5th (156 metres). Certainly the 14th is more open than the 5th (which has the threat of the rough and out of bounds) and perhaps that helps psychologically when shooting at it. Remember, golf is 90% mental and 10% mental!!! And the 14th is the longest of the holes capable of being aced. Having said that, one shouldn't rule out the possibility of one of the longer holes being aced. A big hitter with the wind behind may very well do it one day. We'll soon have other changes to the course. Who will be first to ace the new 8th or 17th? I reckon the Club should make up a book on that. And I'll go on record as saying that I think it won't be too long before a big hitter goes over the trees and aces the planned new 9th or 18th. DB