



# Golf to the Fore in Sydney

Goans may love football, but in Australia they prefer teeing off at the golf course. Captain of the Goa Golf Club in Sydney, Alwyn Henriques shares details about the club and his golfing Goan compatriots with *NICOLE SUARES*





Alwyn Henriques

**Can you tell us a little more about the club?**

Before I dwell on that, it will be interesting to know how Goans have taken to golf here. Unlike football which was brought to Goa by the Portuguese, golf was a game Goans picked up when they moved to Africa, UK, USA, Canada, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand where golf was historically popularized by people of British descent. Goans started arriving in Sydney in the early 70s and in 1977 the Goan Overseas Association, New South Wales was formed. The association had a couple of golfers in its early years but by 1986 there were enough Goan players for the association to start its own golf club and run an annual golf league. The Goa Golf Club was started in 1986 under the umbrella of Goa-NSW. It was an initiative taken by around 6 to 8 golf enthusiasts. Now we currently have around 32 golfers who are part of the club in Sydney.



Trophies won by the club

**Has any Goan golfer made it to the national or regional level?**

We have an exciting young talent in Patrick Ferris who has won quite a few tournaments in Sydney. Though our club is not affiliated to any course, it conducts its competitions at different courses in the Sydney Metropolitan area.

**What are the kind of year-round tournaments held?**

The Annual Golf League is played at various courses all over Sydney with a round every month. The annual season tees off with a game in January and ends with the final game in December. The golfers are categorized in two categories based on their handicap with Div A for handicaps 1-24 and Div B for handicaps 25-36. We have 8 individual strokeplay games, 3 Individual stableford games and 1 pairs stableford game.



Prize winners all in Sydney

Winners and runners-up in each division are awarded





Goan golfers before tee-off at Sydney



At the annual luncheon held in the golf club

of four rounds for the strokeplay competition and best of two rounds for the stableford competition.

Being fun-loving Goans, an annual luncheon is held at the end of every golf season. It is an event where all golfers, their families and members of the association get together to reward our top performers for the year and also to celebrate yet another successful year of Goa Golf.

*It has been 29 years since it started. How has the journey been?*

Goa-NSW is the only migrant association in Australia to run a structured annual golf league for its members. When the club was formed in 1986, the aim was to provide a platform for Goan golfers in the association to get together once a month for a competitive game. Till 2008 the club competitions consisted of only eight monthly strokeplay rounds and the remaining four hot summer months were treated as off-season for golf. That changed in 2009 when we added a pairs stableford competition and in 2011 we added three more individual competitions to complete a full golf season for the calendar year.

The club has a four member golf leadership team to manage various aspects of the operations. Goa-NSW has all along supported the club towards meeting expenses for the prizes. We were also fortunate to be able to secure a sponsor partnership with Complete Lending Company, a mortgage brokerage business in Sydney for our annual golf season prizes. We are very grateful to the Managing Director of

prizes at the end of each game in the club house. The most coveted of the annual awards is the "Golfer of the Year" which goes to the player who accumulates the highest number of points based on his leaderboard position in each game.

**'What initially started in 1986 as a 10-member golf club comprising only Goan golfers has now grown into 32 members from various multicultural backgrounds.'**

The winners and runners-up for the annual awards which are presented at the Annual Day Luncheon are based on the best

CLC Alan Ferris for supporting the association. The club is also grateful to Roy Rosario, our Goa-NSW Sports Director and Managing Director of Dynaflo for sponsoring the prizes for the Dynaflo Pairs Stableford competition.

The current 2015 season is the 30th year of golf operations which is a significant milestone achieved by the club which has continued to grow in popularity with new golfers joining the league every year. What initially started in 1986 as a 10-member golf club comprising only Goan golfers has now grown into 32 members from various multicultural backgrounds. This has been an enriching experience for members in forging new friendships and building a closer community.