Four members of Whickham Golf Club in County Durham are off to America after winning the Great Britain national final of the 2003 John Deere Team Championship golf tournament, held in July on the Brabazon course at The De Vere Belfry.

The team, joined by a fifth player from the local John Deere dealership Greenlay (Grass Machinery) Limited of Choppington in Northumberland, beat off stiff competition from clubs across Great Britain to take home the title. With this comes an invitation to Scottsdale, Arizona where they will play in the world final at Grayhawk Golf Club in November, against teams from Ireland, North America, Canada, Australia, Germany and Sweden.

Bill Hopper, Club Vice Captain; Gary MacDonald, Competitions’ Secretary; Tony McLure, Head Greenkeeper; Andrew Hall, Club Professional, and Roger Stewart, Greenlay, finished three shots clear of the field on a net team score of 56. It was second time lucky for Whickham, as the club also played at The Belfry in last year’s Team Championship finals.

"Playing on the world famous Brabazon course is amazing for a golfer like me," said Roger.

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After reaching the final last year but failing to make the final step Whickham Golf Club will be representing the UK in the John Deere Team Championship.

"I only took up the game 18 months ago and had to buy a new set of clubs for this final. The weather was atrocious, and for the first few holes it felt like I was only there to hold the umbrella!

Now I find myself in a team of very experienced golfers and on the way to a world championship competition in America. I just can't believe it," said a delighted Roger.

"Tony McLure has won a few prizes in the past. He's played for Durham and represented England in the Nations Cup. Also, our young pro - Andrew is just 25 – only joined the club in March. We're all delighted about the trip to the USA," said Gary.

Last year the UK was represented by Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club, with Course Manager Ed McCabe flying the flag for the Association. While not winning, the team performed admirably in the final, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience of playing in such a prestigious event.

Whickham Golf Club was founded in 1911 and has around 700 members. Set in the Derwent Valley, it is a picturesque course with spectacular views, although it is only a few miles from Gateshead's Metro Centre.