



Stuart Cameron - Under 21s winner

DAVID WHITE reports from Coventry
on greenkeepers' favourite tournament

ISEKI
CHAMPIONSHIPS 1992

REVVED UP FOR GLORY

History buffs will know that the city of Coventry can boast more than its fair share of power and glory. It is therefore fitting that a city which is immortalised by the escapades of a publicity-seeking Lady Godiva, which continues to revel in the splendour of Jaguar's winning ways at Le Mans a decade or so back and which has always been at the forefront of Britain's technological superiority, should proudly boast the staging of the 1992 Iseki Championships - the favourite championship of BIGGA greenkeepers everywhere.

Fitting too that this final of finals, the last to be staged under the Iseki sponsorship banner, should have been a total rip-roaring success.

We can now cast our minds back over five successful Iseki championships - all held at exquisite courses of undoubted repute and all masterminded (save the final of finals) by the ebullient Colin Gregory, whose vision of a championship incorporated players of every standard of ability competing at all levels (sectional, regional, national) and bringing together in the spirit of competition those whose paths

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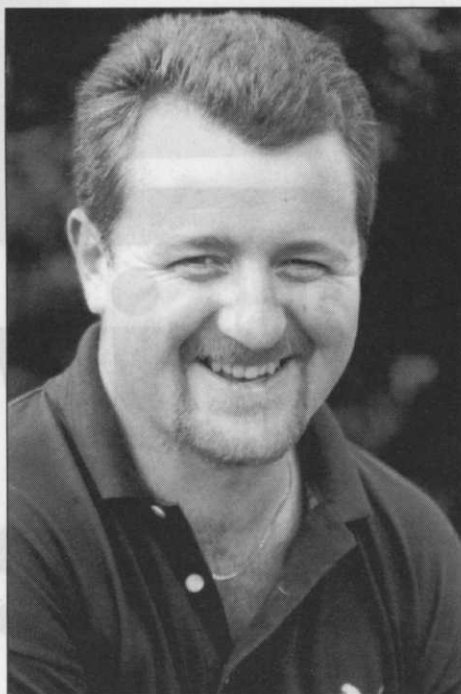
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Contact: Mr Colin Urquhart, Langside College, 50 Prospecthill Road, Glasgow G42 9LB. Tel: 041 649 4991



Stuart Taylor – Best Gross



Jim Cassidy – Winner, Category Three



Alan Carter – Winner, Category One

ISEKI CHAMPIONSHIPS 1992

RESULTS

The Iseki Trophy and winner on handicap:
Jim Byrne, Eire 106.5

Best gross:

Stuart Taylor, Scotland
113

Over 55s:

Owen O'Connor, Eire
111.5

Under 21s:

Stuart Cameron: Scotland
113

Category One:

1st: Alan Carter, South
East 109
2nd: Tony Burke, Eire 110
3rd: Michael Gunn,
Northern 111 (countback)

Category Two:

1st: Owen O'Connor, Eire
111.5 (countback)
2nd: Mike Coultas,
Northern 111.5
3rd Stuart Cameron,
Scotland 113

Category Three:

1st: Jim Cassidy, Midland
113.5
2nd: Kevin McGuire,
Scotland 114
3rd Leslie Hallett, SW & S
Wales 115

Team Prize:

1st: Midlands 926.5
2nd: SW & S Wales 931.5

Nearest the pin:

Ollie English, Eire

Longest Drive:

Pat Devine, Northern
Ireland

'Minor miracles' clear the way for an event to be remembered

22 → might not otherwise cross. For all that this last Iseki event was tinged with sadness, we are certain that the sponsor's original aim – to be identified, recognised and remembered – has been reached and surpassed, and that the Iseki Championship will be recalled with affection for decades to come. Iseki, we salute you!

The cries for rain that echoed through the land must surely have been heard, for during those days leading up to the final the heavens opened – literally – and many parts of England were submerged – roads turned into rivers, golf courses closed, fears of tournament cancellation or curtailment uppermost in many minds.

Finham Park did not escape the deluge but we need not have worried, for John Bayliss and his crew performed minor miracles in removing surface water and the course at Finham Park was looking – and playing – at its best. From the very back medal tees (step back and fall over!) John laid out a challenge that demanded solid striking and length – no run on the ball on damp fairways – and accurate target play to clever pin positions: full marks for this very proper examination!

Space limitations will not allow a ball by ball account of play, but suffice to say that the cream of the crop – including players from Northern Ireland and Eire – were on tenterhooks and fidgeting with putting strokes when Scotland's Stuart Taylor answered the command of starter Bert Cross to "play away." His drive was perfection, followed by 27 holes of immaculate play which brought him the coveted low gross award with a score of 113. It was left to another Scot, Stuart Cameron, to produce the best Under 21s score of 113 nett and team captain Harry Diamond must have been very proud indeed.

The men from Eire were in scintillating form, with a perpetually grinning Owen O'Connor delighting in steady play to win the Over 55s and the handicap award in category two, bettered by Jim Byrne's wizardly play in taking the premier award, this off a reduced handicap and demonstrating his mastery of the putter – sliding

'em in from every direction! They were to leave Coventry as the happiest of men, with Tony Burke also gaining a sound second place in category one.

In any championship there is always the "dark horse", though the Midland's Jim Cassidy proved his rock steady play was no fluke by pulling off a coup with a score of just 113.5 for the 27 holes in category three – bringing jubilation to the Midland camp.

It is left to the low handicap players to produce fireworks, and in Alan Carter the South East team had a winner – he fired off shot after immaculate shot to win the first category, proving Norman Exley's prediction that he was the "main man"!

Let's hear it for the mighty atom – Welshman Les Hallett, who though beaten into third place by Scotland's Kevin McGuire in category three was at one point leading the field – nett 32 for the first nine holes in the afternoon – a spirited performance from the "wee one".

The Iseki Championship is also about team performance, and the fact that winning team Midlands produced a total of 926.5 to win should not be regarded as a walk-over. Runners-up SW and S Wales were a man short when poor Tony King was hauled off to hospital with a collapsed lung (we heard later that he was "comfortable" and would be up and about in a few days) and they are to be congratulated. In fact, the final team scores were the closest for many a year, just 11 strokes separating the first four teams.

To end on a really upbeat note, it gladdened my heart to hear Hugh McLaughlin describe this Iseki Championship as "the best four days of my life." He further expanded by saying, "I'm 42 years old, I've never been further than Dublin before now – and I'm having a marvellous time. I hope the spirit of good fellowship in such a competition can continue and that perhaps another sponsor will recognise the potential for such a wonderful way for us to meet – and occasionally beat – our fellow greenkeepers."

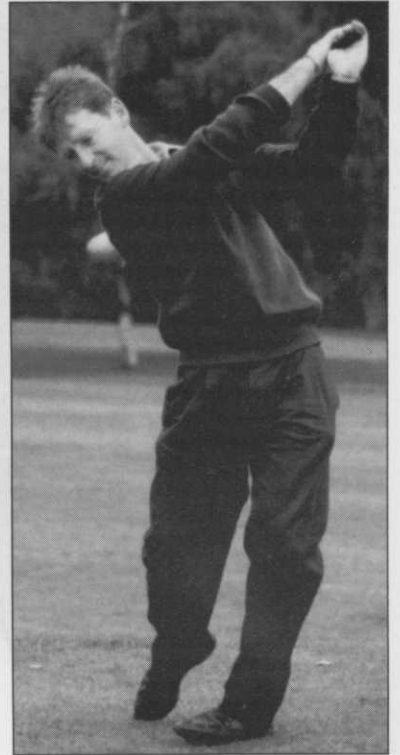
A sentiment echoed by us all.



Winners all: Jim Byrne, left, with the Iseki Trophy as overall victor, with Owen O'Connor, winner of Over 55s Category and winner of Category Two.



Les Hallett - the 'mighty atom'



Pat Devine - Longest drive

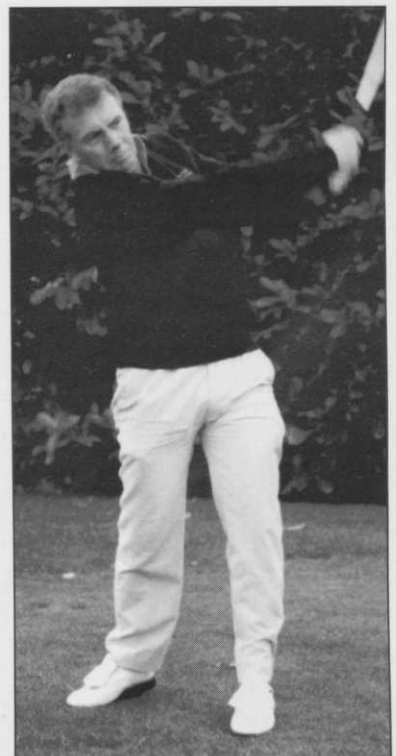


ISEKI

CHAMPIONSHIPS 1992

Left: Our sponsors: Iseki's Ian Pogson and Peter Powell.

Below: Iseki's Bill Murton, left, with Under 21s winner Stuart Cameron and BIGGA Chairman Roy Kates



Ollie English - Nearest the pin