

Ganton: a fitting venue for the Hayter Challenge Final



It is unlikely that any finer venue could have been chosen for the final of the 1997 Hayter Challenge than Ganton, near Scarborough.

As a golf course there is hardly a major event, outside of an Open Championship, that it has not hosted and the final Hayter Challenge finds itself on Ganton's roll of honour alongside other such significant events as the Ryder Cup in 1949, the 1975 Dunlop Masters and '81 PGA Championship. Top amateur events include Men's Home Internationals; English Amateur; British Amateur (three times); the British Ladies and Vagliano Trophy while the Curtis Cup will be played there in 2004. All are major events and the Hayter Challenge finds itself in exalted company.

As you would expect Ganton was chosen for a reason. That reason being that it is a magnificent golf course and certainly deserving of its placing near the top of any British, or even, world ranking.

A mighty 6,720 yards off the back pegs there are seven par-4s over 400 yards long and a grand total of 111 bunkers many of which can comfortably house golfers standing to their full height.

One of the finest holes is the 4th on what is regarded as a memorable front nine. At 406 yards it is a tough task if only the distance is taken into account but with a second shot which is required to negotiate a valley to a plateau green well armed with bunkers it provides even more food for thought.

Ganton is riddled with history. Harry Vardon was professional during the time when he was perhaps the best player in the world, winning Open Championships on both sides of the Atlantic.

Ben Hogan, still recovering from his near fatal car accident, was the non-playing Captain of the US Ryder Cup team in '49. That team contained another legendary figure – Sam Snead. The Great Britain and Ireland team which narrowly lost 7-5 included

Open Champions Fred Daly and Max Faulkner as well as Dai Rees and was Captained by Charles Whitcombe.

Another former Ryder Cup Captain Bernard Gallacher won the Dunlop Masters at Ganton while Nick Faldo clinched his third PGA Championship in four years over the course in 1981.

Emma Duggelby, of the BIGGA staff, also competed over the course for Great Britain and Ireland against the Continent of Europe in the 1995 Vagliano Trophy.

The man charged with looking after the historic piece of North Yorkshire is Dave Spurden who, on this occasion, is combining his efforts at producing the course in its best condition with representing the Northern Region in Category 2. Whether an additional handicap to cover his local knowledge has been considered is not known!

At the time of going to press the competitors from across the Irish Sea had not yet been selected.

TEAMS

Scotland

Cat 1. 1. D. Leith S. Taylor 3. D. Wilson Cat 2. 1. A. Wilson. J. Johnston, A. Torrance Cat 3. G. Shearer 2. S. Carmichael. D. Nelson

South West and South Wales

Cat 1. R. Daly, L. Millar, C. Bland. Cat 2. A. Knight, 2. P. Wentworth, M. Porrish Cat 3. A. James, J. Cooper, A. Rideout.

Midland

Cat 1. M. Hughes, A. Cheese, A. Duncan. Cat 2. J. Chesson, A. Bindley, D. Jones. Cat 3. J. Hatton, M. Bindley, M. Jones.

South East

Cat 1. A. Sheehan, N. Gilham D. Murdoch Cat 2. I. Sutcliffe R. Malt, J. Selwood; Cat 3. M. Mison, T. Hindmarch, B. Jackson.

Northern

Cat 1. P. Pearce, D. Norton, R. Lewis; Cat 2. M. Coultas, J. Waite, D. Spurden Cat 3. P. Neve, R. Smith and E. Rowlands.