



JOHN DEERE

Team Championship

BIGGA Chairman, Richard Barker reports on the Brokenhurst Manor's challenge for the John Deere World Team Championship in Arizona.



I am sure that you are well aware that Great Britain & Ireland were included in this year's John Deere World Team Championship for the first time. The World Team Championship are now in their 16th year and several teams from the USA and Canada, plus one each from Germany, Sweden and Australia have normally contested the finals before. However, this time Great Britain and Ireland were also included.

Well as for qualifying approximately 20 local qualifiers were held up and down the country hosted by John Deere dealers. Each of these winners then competed around the Brabazan Course at The Belfry just prior to the Ryder Cup knowing that a winning score would secure them a trip to Scottsdale, Arizona, and a place in the World Cup finals.

The format for the event was unique throughout as a John Deere Dealer made up a four man Texas Scramble with the professional playing his own ball. There were one or two other rules but that was the basic format and the best score of the two was to be recorded, so the scoring was always going to be low. A magnificent 17 under par (nett) was the winning score at The De Vere Belfry which was posted by Brokenhurst Manor Golf Club who then had three months in which to prepare themselves to meet the other finalists.

That time soon passed and on a cool November morning I met with the team comprising of Ed McCabe Course Manager; Bruce Parker, Professional; Paul Clifford Secretary/Manager; Charles Letchworth, now past Captain, and David Harrison, the John Deere representative from New Forest Farm Machinery, at Heathrow for the

eight hours journey to Chicago with a further two and a half hours across America to Phoenix.

Any fears of packing incorrect clothing were soon put to rest as the first sign we noticed read: "Welcome to the valley of sun" and upon leaving the terminal the heat just hit you.

So on to the hotel in Scottsdale and a good night's sleep before rising for the practice grounds. The tournament was played at Greyhawk, home to the 1997 Anderson Consulting Matchplay Championship. Over their two courses the Talon and Raptor. Practice was Thursday, Friday with the Championships held over the weekend.

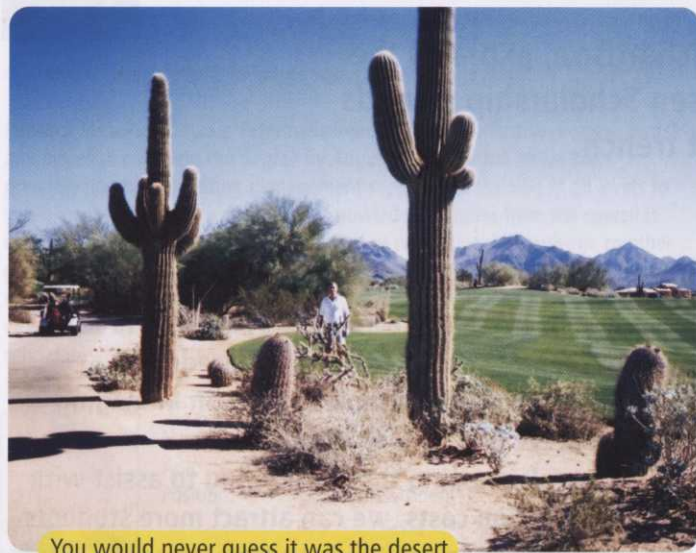
On arrival at Greyhawk we were literally speechless – golf clubs were collected from the car, placed on one of the 160 buggies and taken to the 1st tee for the allotted tee time. The Clubhouse was magnificent as were the surrounding gardens. As for the golf course, well the only grassed areas were the playing areas, ie. tee's, fairways and greens and the rest was desert comprising of shrubs and mainly cacti, which you didn't want to get too close to! But the first real test came on the greens. They were fairly undulating and quite simply lighting fast and also true, the two practice rounds were most useful but we still struggled with speed.

So on to the tournament proper. With five shots to play with we - I say "we" as for the Championship I was a self appointed Brokenhurst Manor cheerleader - set off in a confident mood and scored 11 under on the first day. Not bad you may think but we were eight behind the first round leaders, Beacon Hall of Canada. But with spirits still high



Reasons for taking control
 Why has taken a year out of employment to
 hope will help him fulfil his ambition to become involved in business
 consultancy and research. He hopes to be a professional in the industry
 within the industry. He has been a BGCIA member since 1992 and has already
 achieved a National Certificate in Greenkeeping, at Stroud College and a
 Higher National Diploma in Golf Course Management at Hereford College.
 He has worked at the Herefordshire Golf Club where he occupied the position of
 Deputy Course Manager.

Name:	Steve Jones
Age:	45
Position:	Coursekeeper



You would never guess it was the desert

we started the second day very well. After nine holes we were 7 under for the day but regrettably could not maintain the momentum. It was during this front nine flat that Brokenhurst dropped the only shot in the four rounds they had played from the qualifying to the final.

However we did finish on 10 under for the day and a second round total of 123 – (21 under par). With the worst score being a 130 we far from disgraced ourselves and finished about mid-table. But at the top of the leaderboard it was the Gallery Golf Course, from the USA, (55-56) and Beacon Hall, from Canada, (53-58) who tied on 111 – 33 under par.

Instead of the last 18 holes counting to decide a winner each team member had to play an 84 yard pitch from the 10th tee over the water to the 18th green with the two best shots counting (distances added).

So after an exciting finale it was the Gallery Golf Club, from Oak Harbour, Washington State, who lifted the 16th John Deere World Team Championship Trophy.

In all fairness, however, I believe everyone there was a winner it was a truly superb trip which was organised very professionally by John Deere. Thanks must go to all at John Deere for making us most welcome from start to finish. It was an experience that I won't forget in a hurry.

Thanks also go to Brokenhurst Manor who represented themselves and the Association so well, and to everyone else that supported the



The British Team

tournament. Remember that John Deere paid £25 to our Association for each team entered. This amounted £9,300 and will be spent on the Education Programme at BTME later this month.

Hopefully John Deere will continue with this event so if you weren't successful this year try again next year. IT COULD BE YOU.



The Winning Team