

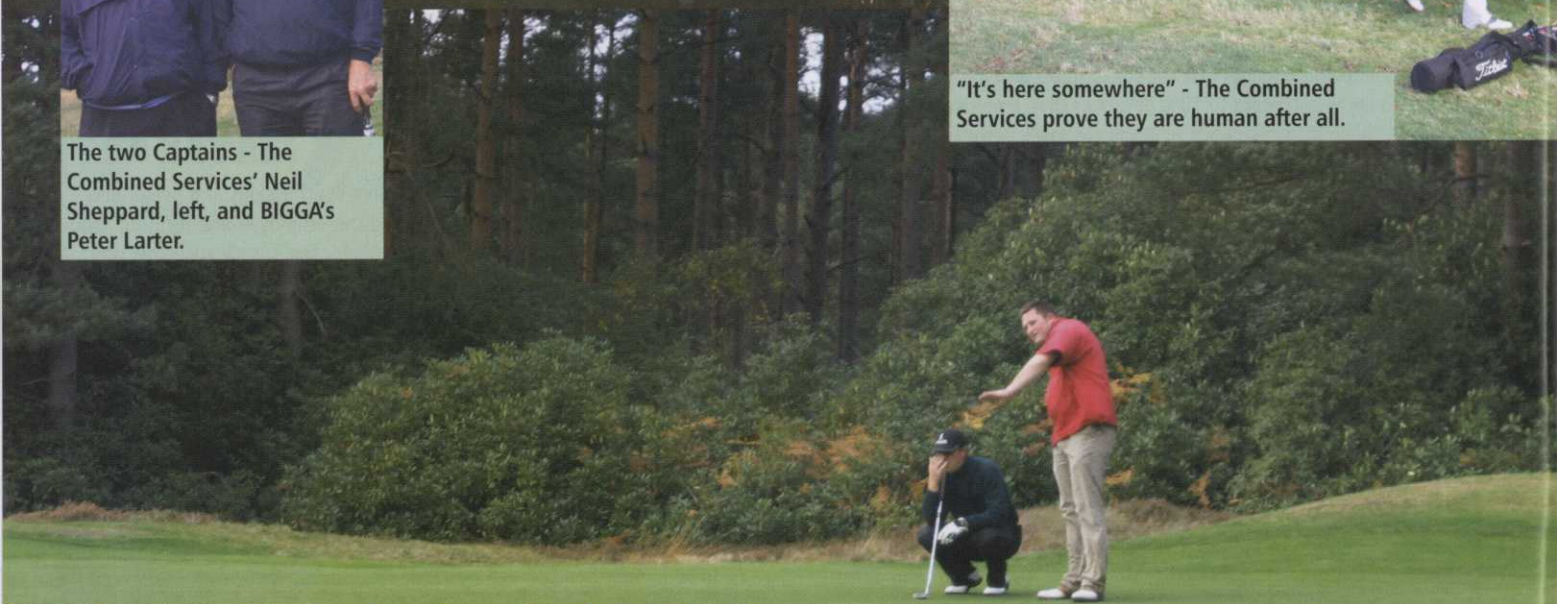
BIGGA's National Champion Graeme MacDonald approaches the green during his tight match.



The two Captains - The Combined Services' Neil Sheppard, left, and BIGGA's Peter Larter.



"It's here somewhere" - The Combined Services prove they are human after all.



Richard Barker putts on the 1st as team mate Chris Lomas watches on during their greensomes match.



Despite defeat the BIGGA Team could hold their heads high and force a smile.

The Combined Services V BIGGA Scratch Challenge

Gareth Jones reports on the inaugural match between the Combined Services Golf Association and BIGGA.

The historic Blue and Red courses of The Berkshire Golf Club, near Ascot, were the settings for the first match up of BIGGA and the Combined Services Golf Association (GSGA).

An impressive looking BIGGA team, captained by Peter Larter, contained the Crawford brothers, Noel and Eamonn, Andrew Unwin, Mike Hughes, Mark Davies, Rob Welford, David Beale, John Jarrat, Gerald Bruce, Richard Barker, Chris Lomas and Graeme MacDonald.

At 8.30am the battle commenced, with four ball better ball being fought out over the challenging Blue course.

The Combined Services of RAF, Army and Navy men had home advantage and, despite BIGGA's secret weapon of The Berkshire's Course Manager Chris Lomas playing for them, the Combined Services took a commanding 6-0 lead into the clubhouse at lunch.

BIGGA needed an exceptional afternoon of greensomes to get back into the contest and, after an inspiring pep talk from BIGGA's version of Bernhard Langer, Pete Larter, the team went out determined to pull the score back, but not before some lunch of Steak and Kidney Pie and a quick pint.

The greensomes on the Red course proved to be more fruitful for the BIGGA outfit. The first pairing out in the afternoon was Noel Crawford and Mike Hughes and the two greenkeepers combined to claim an excellent 1 up win.

The greensomes continued to provide more success as the team of Gerald Bruce and BIGGA National Champion, Graeme MacDonald, gained a 1/2 point. However the damage inflicted in the morning was too great to recover from and, with the Combined Services grabbing victory in the remaining four matches, BIGGA were well and truly defeated 10 1/2 to 1 1/2.

The BIGGA team came off the course beaten, but with their heads held high having played some good golf on tough, but excellent, courses. Ex footballer, and television pundit, Jimmy Hill is a member of The Berkshire and, with most of the matches finishing with tight score lines, I'm sure his message to the lads would have been "chin up".

"I was very pleased with the positive response of our members when they were invited to play in this, the first match. Obviously both the team and myself are very disappointed to lose so heavily, but there were many close matches. In the end we were beaten by a team of very good golfers, who are used to playing team matchplay. The entire team did BIGGA great credit," said BIGGA's non-playing Captain Peter Larter.

Opposing Captain, Neil Sheppard, had similar feelings regarding the day's play and was respectful in victory. "The BIGGA team got off to a slow start, and with us having a lot more matchplay experience that helped us through the event and secure the win. It has been a fantastic day, the weather held well and some excellent golf has been played. Both courses were in great condition, which helped us witness some good golf. We are already looking forward to next year's match now."

The event also exposed BIGGA to another major golfing group, and BIGGA's Chief Executive, John Pemberton, was on hand to inform the hosts of BIGGA's crucial role in the golf world.

The day was such a success that arrangements are already in place to hold a rematch in mid October 2005 at a course in the Midlands area, where BIGGA will have home advantage and be looking for revenge.



Above: A Combined Services player strikes a superb tee shot. Right: John Jarrat with a difficult recovery shot out of the trees. Below: Graeme MacDonald putts to halve the hole.



GSGA		v	BIGGA	
Morning Four Ball Better Ball	Name	Result	Name	Result
Match Number				
1	S. Gilbert	5/4	N. Crawford	
	A. Paterson		E. Crawford	
2	M. Blaber	4/3	A. Unwin	
	B. Loomie		M. Hughes	
3	D. Marshall	1 up	M. Davies	
	L. Meathie		R. Welford	
4	R. Shimwell	2/1	D. Beale	
	G. Norris		J. Jarrat	
5	D. Maclachlan	3/2	G. Bruce	
	C. Audin		R. Barker	
6	B. Churchill	1 up	C. Lomas	
	A. Hawkins		G. MacDonald	
Afternoon Foursomes	Name	Result	Name	Result
Match Number				
1	M. Blaber		N. Crawford	1 up
	D. Maclachlan		M. Hughes	
2	B. Loomie	1 up	A. Unwin	
	S. Gilbert		E. Crawford	
3	A. Paterson	2/1	M. Davies	
	C. Audin		D. Beale	
4	D. Marshall	5/4	R. Welford	
	B. Churchill		J. Jarrat	
5	L. Meathie	1/2	G. Bruce	1/2
	R. Shimwell		G. MacDonald	
6	A. Hawkins	1 up	R. Barker	
	G. Norris		C. Lomas	
Total		10 1/2		1 1/2