

Sweet Revenge

Scott MacCallum witnesses a superb performance by BIGGA's Scratch Golf Team.

Perhaps it doesn't rank up there alongside Bangladesh's historic one day win over Australia in the summer or Northern Ireland's defeat of England in the World Cup Qualifier but the BIGGA Scratch Team's 6.5-3.5 win over the Combined Services Team at Burton Golf Club was an exceptional effort.



The gallant runners-up Combined Services team



The glorious and triumphant BIGGA team

It is all the more so when you recall that last year, when the inaugural match was played at The Berkshire, the score in the Combined Services favour was 10.5-1.5, so for five of the team who played last year it was a case of sweet revenge.

Playing Captain Gerald Bruce, Mike Hughes, Graeme MacDonald, Andy Unwin and Rob Welford admitted to have been a little shocked by the quality of their opponents last year but they, together with their new team mates steeled themselves for the return match and although man-for-man the Combined Services players were lower handicapped turned it around superbly.

It is not that the Combined Services performed poorly - in one fourball match in the morning BIGGA's pairing were six under par for the round but lost in the final green and the standard of all the play was exceptional.

It was fitting that in the afternoon foursomes it was Mike Hughes, who last year in partnership with Noel Crawford, had supplied BIGGA's only win, lagged a putt on the 17th green which sealed the victory. But the writing had been on the wall from early in the afternoon series with BIGGA up in four of the five matches from early in the respective rounds.

Both sides were equally complementary about the Burton course. All praised the general conditioning, especially as the match was played in mid-October, but the greens as prepared by Course Manager, Gavin Robson, and his team, came in for special plaudits.

Gerald Bruce led the team from the front with two wins, in harness with Mike Hughes in the morning and Andy Unwin in the afternoon with whom he enjoyed the biggest win of the day.

"Going into the afternoon tied gave us real belief. From then we knew we could win it. I was involved in

the match last year when we lost heavily, so I knew it was important that we kept it close in the morning matches. It's great to get such a fine victory this year," said Gerald.

The match had been organised by Northern and Midland Regional Administrator, Peter Larter, a former RAF man himself and he was equally delighted at the way the results fell.

"Five of this year's team were involved in the 2004 defeat, so they were really up for revenge this time around. The Combined Services are an excellent side, the majority are scratch, with a few +1's in there. Our team had players with handicaps up to 3, so it shows what a great effort it was to win," said Peter.

"We were up against it, but the lads came though in the afternoon matches with Gerald leading the team well on the course. It is a great feeling to turn it around after the hammering last year. We hope to face them again in 2006 and that will be another great match up."

BIGGA Chairman Kerran Daly and Chief Executive John Pemberton also attended on the day to provide encouragement when needed.



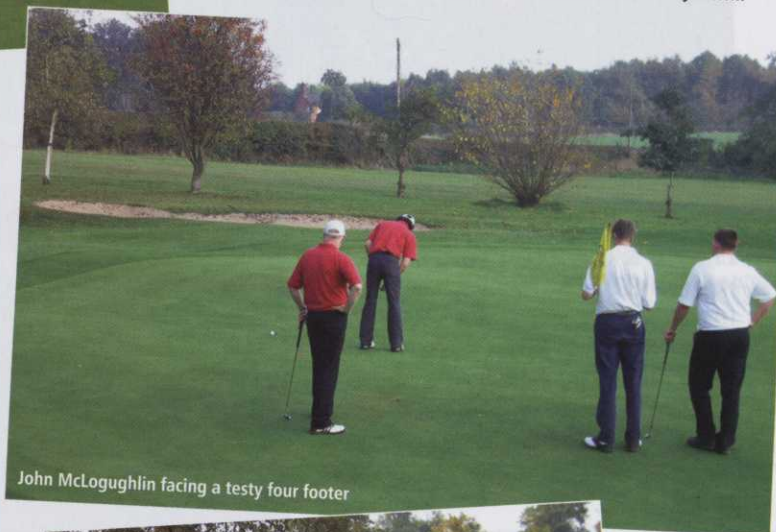
Graeme MacDonald plays to the long uphill par 3 10th in the afternoon foursomes



Job done! Mike Hughes' lagged putt on the 17th produced a concession and the match



Captain fantastic Gerald Bruce and his foursomes partner Andy Unwin



John McLogughlin facing a testy four footer

RESULTS

MORNING FOURBALLS

BIGGA	Combined Services	Result
John McLoughlin Gary Burgess	Ben Churchill Richard Baker	Lost 1 down
David Coupland Graeme MacDonald	Lee McCathie Darren Gould	Half
Mike Hughes Gerald Bruce (C)	Blue Loomie Dean Lewis	Won 2&1
Eddie Ainsworth Andy Unwin	Ned Kelly Mark Snape	Lost 4&2
Ian Mawer Rob Welford	Geoff Ascroft Richard Larratt	Won 2&1

Morning Score 2.5-2.5

AFTERNOON FOURSOMES

BIGGA	Combined Services	Result
John McLoughlin Graeme MacDonald	Ben Churchill Richard Baker	Lost 2&1
David Coupland Gary Burgess	Lee McCathie Darren Gould	Won 3&2
Mike Hughes Rob Welford	Blue Loomie Dean Lewis	Won 3&1
Gerald Bruce Andy Unwin	Ned Kelly Richard Larratt	Won 5&4
Ian Mawer Eddie Ainsworth	Geoff Ascroft Mark Snape	Won 2&1

Afternoon Score 4-1

MATCH RESULT

BIGGA 6.5

Combined Services 3.5



Gary Burgess and David Coupland won 3 & 2



Ian Mawer plays an exquisite chip which partner Eddie Ainsworth went on to hole the resulting putt