



JOHN DEERE

YORKSHIRE'S FINEST TAKE THE HONOURS

Scott MacCallum was lucky enough to attend the John Deere Team Championship at Turnberry to share the experience with the finalists.

FEATURE



The 2008 John Deere Team Championship, at Turnberry Hotel, proved to be an occasion everyone lucky enough to be in attendance will remember for a very long time indeed.

None more so than the members of the Rotherham Golf Club team, who emerged victorious on a day when the rain stayed away and the sun shone over the Ailsa course the very same course that will test the world's best at The Open Championship next July.

Rotherham, in the shape of Club Captain, Peter Smallman; Chairman of Green, Peter Daughtrey;

Deputy Head Greenkeeper, Andy Unwin, and John Deere dealer, Adrian Holroyde, of Bob Wild Grass Machinery, of Hedben Bridge, topped the leaderboard and took away the John Deere Team Championship Crystal trophy, to keep for the length of their reign, while each member of the team was presented with a pewter replica of the Open Claret jug. They also received a voucher for a round on the Ailsa's sister course – the Kintyre.

"I've never been treated so well at a golf event as we were at Turnberry and congratulations have to go to John Deere for the organisation. The tournament, the course and the hotel, everything

was just spot on. I can't think I've ever done anything in golf that betters it," said Peter Smallman.

"We knew we'd made a good score, but we didn't know it would be good enough to win the tournament. We managed an eagle at one par-5, which was probably a clincher, but we didn't know we'd won until just before the announcement was made at the presentations. It came as quite a shock to hear Rotherham's name read out," added the delighted Captain.

Rotherham's nett score of 54, 15 under par, in the modified Texas Scramble, was just one better than Kennay Golf Club, of Aberdeenshire.





Third place went to Donaghadee, from County Down – making them the top placed team from Ireland, on countback, after tying on 56 points with Bandon Golf Club, from County Cork.

For many proceedings had begun the previous day with a number of the 24 official, and five guest, teams having a practice round over the course – again the weather defied the forecasts and meant the waterproofs, so carefully packed for the event, stayed folded up in the golf bags and people were actually applying sun cream!

The opportunity to play such an iconic golf club, not long before it closed in preparation for The Open, ensured that everyone who attended felt like a winner just from teeing up and the buzz at the dinner confirmed that everyone left the course with their own personal memories and stories to tell... and retell!

I was lucky enough to play as part of the Media team superbly captained by Henry Bredin, of John Deere. The golf we produced left us in danger of losing our Olympic Funding and it would be fair to say that it was much quicker to check our scores from the bottom up on the leaderboard rather

than the top down but all four of us who played took something from the visit.

Me? Since you asked. It was the 6-iron from the hanging lie on the edge of a fairway bunker to four feet on the 18th hole during Wednesday's practice round in the company of Rob Surgey, of Burhill Golf and Leisure and Joedy Ibbotson, of John Deere. That birdie three will be remembered long after Tiger Woods is more than satisfied to make par next summer to clinch his fourth Open.

Others who deserve mentions in dispatch were David Hart, of John Deere, who single-handedly eagled the 17th for his team with a crunching drive, a superb fairway wood and deadly putt while his colleagues could only watch in admiration, and his colleague Joedy, who followed up a monumental 300 yard plus drive on the 10th during the practice round with the Nearest the Pin on the 11th during the event itself. All from a 22 handicap would you believe!

But the man who can still take on all-comers was George Brown himself, who played some great golf to take the lion's share of the money on the practice day and was still firing on all cylinders

when it counted. He also had the audience in stitches during the post dinner presentation with a well chosen selection from his back catalogue of hilarious anecdotes.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of a cheque for £7,380 by John Deere UK Managing Director Richard Johnson to BIGGA Chairman, Kenny Mackay. The figure represented £25 for each team who had entered the competition with the money going to subsidise BIGGA Learning and Development initiatives.

The evening had begun with a Nearest the Pin Challenge on the Putting green outside the hotel with one attempt each at a 100 foot, curling downhill. It was won by Shaun Sturrock, Course Manager at Betchworth Park GC, who showed great touch to get within 18 inches.

The evening ended for a few guests at least in Turnberry's legendary Whisky Bar, where the knowledgeable barman spent as much time educating his willing pupils as he did pouring. The knowledge gleaned during the early hours session surely justified the eye watering figures that appeared on so many bills later that same morning.



Richard Johnson presents Kenny Mackay with the cheque for £7,380, with the money going to subsidise BIGGA Learning and Development initiatives