

Survival the fittest

Jason Hunt coped with the exacting conditions best of all to become BIGGA's 2011 Champion Golfer



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The BIGGA National Championship 2011 is sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota



Breaking barriers to better turf.



WORLD LEADER IN MINI EXCAVATORS

The wind was blowing hard and the formidable West Lincs course was baring its considerable teeth, but one man stood firm to clinch the 2011 BIGGA National Golf Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota.

Jason Hunt, a 29 year-old Assistant at Addington Palace Golf Club, near Croydon, kept his cool and carefully two putted the final hole for a single shot victory and the biggest win of his golfing career.

"I have won a few Open tournaments but the quality of the field here makes this the biggest win I've had," explained Jason, for whom it was the culmination of a fine year which has seen his handicap drop from two to scratch.

"These were the toughest conditions I've ever faced in a top tournament and it is one of the hardest courses I've played. I had to scrap for every par," he revealed.

"I had it in mind that it was between our three ball on the second day, me, Garry Duncan, from Carnoustie, and Kevin Boxall, from Guildford. Kevin had a good front nine and was in front at that stage, but Garry was leading by the back nine. I just hung in and on the final green I thought I might have two for it and that proved correct," said Jason, who is self taught, and who has never changed from the left hand below right grip he adopted when he took up the game.

The opening round was perhaps the difference when, in calmer conditions Jason shot a two over par 74 to hold the clubhouse lead by a single shot from Kevin, and two from Garry. It proved to be the difference when both Jason and Kevin shot 79s on the second round and Garry, dropping a few shots in the closing holes, shot 80 to complete the first second and third in the main competition.

"I thought West Lincs was a fantastic golf course and in superb condition. I'm looking forward to going to Scotland next year to defend my title at Irvine Bogside," said Jason.

"I'd like to thank West Lincs Golf Club, BIGGA and our sponsors, Charterhouse and Kubota, for making it such a wonderful event."

The handicap competition for the BIGGA Challenge Cup produced some real fireworks and one has to feel a little sorry for Mark Tucker, of Saunton Golf Club, who finished third, but had the same 151 score as Mark Blacknell and Gary Burgess.

He did lose out though to two players who, remarkably, both holed 4-irons during their second rounds.

Gary's was the most spectacular as it produced that rarest of birds, an albatross! The Grange Park man, had exactly 200 yards to go on the 478 yard 5th hole and his 4-iron was pinpoint accurate.

"I watched it all the way and thought I saw it drop in but you can never be sure from that distance," said Gary, a three handicapper, for whom, needless to say, it was his first ever albatross.

Mark Blacknell, who won the BIGGA Challenge Cup, was in a purple patch when he arrived at West Lincs, having just won his Club Championship at Leen Valley, but he could not have expected how his 36 holes would pan out.

The 5 handicapper shot a 10 over par 82 on the first day, without making a birdie, but when he set out on the windy second round he soon made up for it.

A 6-iron to eight inches on the





1st was a fine birdie start and he followed it up with a 50 foot eagle putt on the 2nd to be three under par gross after two. But that wasn't the end of it as he holed his 4-iron from 170 yards into the wind at the 13th for a two and his second eagle of the round.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the golf course, it suits my game as I hit a low ball, and I think it is a great event. I've already planned to take my wife with me to Scotland next year. I always enjoy it when we go to Scotland," said Mark, who celebrated his 50th birthday the Sunday following his win.

The Challenge Bowl for affiliates was a hotly contested category this year and it was Phil Dewhurst, of Rigby Taylor, who emerged victorious with a two round score of 157 to win on the better second round.

The 18 hole Stableford Challenge Plate was won by Brian Robinson, of De Vere Belton Woods, with 32 pts, while the Regional Cup, for the best four nett scores from each Region over the opening day was won by the South East Region with a score of 295 with the Midland Region, two shots adrift.

The difficulty of the West Lancs course can be amply illustrated by the fact that the scoreboard operator was deeply concerned

that he was running out of number "8"s, "2"s, "3"s, "4"s and "5"s were in plentiful supply and "6"s and "9" were interchangeable, but with many scratch, and indeed handicap scores, in the 80s and thus including the "snowman", contingency plans were put in place for the second round.

While it was exceptionally tough the course is also very fair and the conditioning was second to none and a real credit to Course Manager John Muir and his team, while the warm hospitality generated by the clubhouse staff was second to none. Club Captain, John Morris, attended the dinner and delivered a lovely speech and personalised Grace, and Lady Captain, Bernadette Metcalf, joined John at the Tuesday Prize Giving.

Charterhouse and Kubota, in the shape of Nick Darking and Curtis Allen, of Charterhouse and Tom Dunlop, of Kubota, were superb partners during the two days and the display of machinery they brought along was a demonstration of the commitment both companies give to the Championship.

The 2012 BIGGA National Championship will be held at Irvine Bogside Golf Club, Ayrshire, on October 8 & 9, 2012.



The BIGGA National Championship sponsors' were a great partnership



Course Manager, John Muir, receives a tankard from BIGGA Vice Chairman, Tony Smith



Club captain, John Morris, speaks at the dinner

2011 BIGGA National Championship, sponsored by Charterhouse and Kubota

Results

BIGGA Challenge Trophy (Best Gross over 36 holes)

1. Jason Hunt (0), Addington Palace GC, 74, 79 = 153
2. Kevin Boxall (1), Guildford GC, 75, 79 = 154
3. Garry Duncan (+1), Carnoustie Links, 75, 80 = 155

BIGGA Challenge Cup (Best Nett over 36 holes)

1. Mark Blacknell (5), Leen Valley GC, 77, 74 = 151 (Better Second Round)
2. Gary Burgess (3), Grange Park GC, 75, 76 = 151
3. Mark Tucker (12), Saunton GC, 73, 78 = 151

BIGGA Challenge Plate (Stableford)

1. Brian Robinson (9), De Vere Belton Woods, 32pts

BIGGA Challenge Bowl (Affiliate)

1. Phillip Dewhurst (11), Rigby Taylor, 157 (Better Second Round)

Regional Cup

1. South East – Kevin Boxall, Dougie Fernie, Jason Hunt, Kane Stone = 295
2. Midland – John Bowness, David Lyons, Paul Reeve, Simon Woolley = 297

Handicap Prizes Day 1

- +1-5 Category. Paul Teviotdale (1), Montrose Links, 76
- 6-12 Category. Kane Stone (9), Ealing GC, 73
- 13-24 Category. Dougie Fernie (17), Upminster GC, 74

Handicap Prizes Day 2

- +1-5 Category. Andrew Riley (2), Colne GC, 73
- 6-12 Category. Peter Hogan (12), Eccle Riggs GC, 74
- 13-24 Category. Tony Thacker (13), RAF Marham, 84

- Nearest the Pin** – Kevin Boxallm, Guildford GC
- Longest Drive** – Duncan Cairnie, Carnoustie Links.

Trophy Winners (L-R): Brian Robinson, Mark Blacknell, Jason Hunt and Philip Dewhurst, flanked by Curtis Allen, of Charterhouse, and Tom Dunlop, of Kubota)



ABOVE: Nick Darking, of Charterhouse, address the dinner, and LEFT: Jason Hunt tops the board



Regional Cup Winners South East: Jason Hunt, Dougie Fernie, and Kane Stone (Kevin Boxall missing) with Tom and Nick