

NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT FINAL

THERE is nothing more satisfying for the modest handicap golfer to find — when medal play consistency counts — that everything is, for once, going right!

Thus it came about that from a quality field of top-rate amateur golfing talent, competing for honours in the much heralded and fiercely fought ISEKI National Greenkeepers Golf Championships, young **Les Shrubbs**, an unheralded and probably underrated player representing Pyecombe Golf Club and the South Eastern Region, succeeded in scoring a nett 104 for the twenty seven hole final to win by a clear margin of six strokes!

Lest there be cries of "bandit," readers should note that he won the premier award not by fluke, but by dint of sheer good, steady golf, keeping the ball in play when others were finding trouble, and by playing the percentages.

That he was playing the game of his life became clear when Les posted a nett 31 for the first nine holes under conditions that were far from easy, the blustery weather calling for patient steadiness rather than aggression.

Those who finished high in the reckoning, in the main above "fancied" players who were expecting to do well, were exponents of the old caddie's advice that "when it's breezy, swing easy," and it was no surprise to see **Paul Newcombe**, representing the South West, put his sweet classic swing (I am not the only observer to remark on the similarity in style he has to the great Gene Littler) to fine effect in returning the lowest gross score of 114.

For the defending champion **Edwin Walsh**, rock steady always and a hardened competitor who relishes tough courses, there was a tinge of disappointment.

The odd putt or two that lipped, the occasional one that got away, these were present in his otherwise exemplary play which, with a return of 110½ nett, though not enough to regain the title, gave him the first prize in Division 1, a clear 2½ strokes ahead of **Paul Sewell** and a further 2 strokes clear of third **Richard Barker**, both representing the Midlands.

Edwin's score was vital in the team event and did much to cushion the lead of eleven strokes by which his Northern team won, this from the second placed South Eastern team.

Though players were essentially out to win as individuals, all five regions were hell-bent on claiming the team prize. With the best 8 scores out of 9 counting, there was much speculation as to which team was favourite.

All five had team managers, some players had brought pals along to act as caddies, pep talks were rife and there was a deal of good-natured jostling. Some managers expressed quiet confidence whilst others, noticeably the indefatigable **Gordon Child**, (what a fine character!) were chivvying their teams into positive thought channels.



Les Shrubbs
his consistent play paid off.



Edwin Walsh
Division One Victor.



Paul Newcombe
controlled power rewarded with low gross win.



John Coleman
Winner in Division Two.



Champions all —
the winning Northern Team.

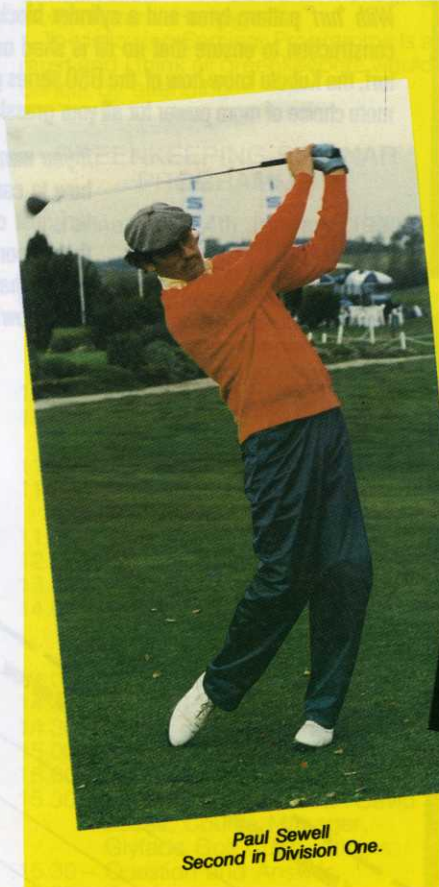
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Peter Solski
Winner in Division Three



Chris Toms
Second in Division Two.



Paul Sewell
Second in Division One.



Paul Malia
Over 55's winner, receives his award from ISEKI's
UK Sales Director, Colin Gregory.

It was all great stuff and did much to demonstrate the overall spirit of good fellowship which permeated throughout the day. On paper the Scottish team looked formidable. With powerful strikers such as Colin McKay, who won the longest drive competition, and internationalist James Taylor aboard they were much fancied, though disappointingly only young John Coleman figured high in the reckoning, scoring 111½ nett to convincingly win Division 2 (and the under-21's award) by 4½ strokes from Midlander Chris Toms and the North's own humorist, Ian (Sid) Matthews.

Division 3 saw the North's Peter Solski score a convincing 113 nett to run away from second placed Northern Michael Warner on 118½. Third, a mere ½ point away, was Midlander Mike Billings.

The choice of Moor Allerton by ISEKI was an inspired one. It is described as "a golfing experience larger than life" and fully lived up to its promise. Fairways were excellent, the rough certainly rough enough and the greens testing but true, a credit to the head greenkeeper and his crew.

When play finished the inquests began and a host of "hard-luck" stories - related. Winner Les Shrubbs summed it all up with the best one-liner yet - "When you win, nothing hurts!"

DAVID WHITE

FINAL ROUND UP

1989 ISEKI NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT FINAL
Moor Allerton Golf Club, Leeds
October 24, 1989
27 HOLE MEDAL

Best Nett: Winner Les Shrubbs, 104 nett
20 Handicap S.E.

Best Gross: Paul Newcombe, 114 nett
Scratch S.W.

Over 55's: Paul Malia.

Under 21; John Coleman.

Nearest the Pin: Stanley Shotton.

Longest Drive: Colin McKay.

DIVISION 1 HANDICAP 0-9

*Edwin Walsh, 110½ nett, North. Paul Sewell 113 nett, Midlands. Richard Barker, 115 nett, Midlands.

DIVISION 2 HANDICAP 10-18 inc

*John Coleman, 111½ nett, Scotland. Chris Toms, 116 nett, Midlands. Ian Matthews, 118 nett, Northern.

DIVISION 3 HANDICAP 18-28 inc

*Peter Solski, 113 nett, Northern. Michael Warner, 118½ nett, Northern. Mike Billings, 119, Midlands.

REGIONAL TEAM PRIZE

ISEKI FINANCE (Best 8 scores from 9)
1st: Northern Region, 946. 2nd: South-East, 957. 3rd: Midlands, 982. 4th: South-West, 993. 5th: Scotland, 998.

*Trophy Winners.

● Photographs of competitors taken at the ISEKI National Greenkeepers Championships are available free of charge, send a self addressed stamped 8 x 4½ envelope to: The Editor at Newcastle.