

HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF UNION

2006 BOYS ORDER OF MERIT REPORT

This is the 5th year for The Hertfordshire Boys Order of Merit (BOOM) and its success continues to grow thanks to the increasing interest from clubs running junior open competitions. Dwindling adult golf club membership makes it even more important for clubs to encourage junior golfers. They can do this by supporting competitions where youngsters can pit their competitive instincts against their peers in an environment that promotes good sportsmanship. The number of qualifying opens this year increased to 22 with Hadley Wood and Verulam running junior opens for the first time.

The merit table is based on points awarded to boys for their finishing position in junior opens registered as qualifying events with the Hertfordshire Golf Union (HGU).

The winner of the SCRATCH BOOM is the boy, based on gross scores, with the 6 best-combined position points in junior opens, plus his position points from the premier county event, the Boys County Championship. Experience has shown that this table invariably favours the low handicap player.

The winner of the HANDICAP BOOM is the player with the 6 best-combined net position points in junior opens. This table allows a greater opportunity for the younger and higher handicap player to receive recognition and encourages younger golfers to compete in junior opens.

One of the benefits for clubs in registering their open as a qualifying event for the Boys Order of Merit is that the competition is promoted to a wide audience with all events listed in the county fixture diary and in the "Events" section on the county website. Clubs can also place their Entry Forms on the website for competitors to download. From the county viewpoint, it helps selectors by giving feedback on boys' performance throughout the season and enables them to monitor progress, and to identify any promising players for county coaching. Additionally, it reveals the younger up-and-coming boys who are keen to broaden their golfing experience by playing courses other than their home club.

The HGU are delighted with all the county clubs who run junior opens giving promising young players the opportunity to play some of the best courses in the area. They are also grateful for them providing the results so promptly. This allows the BOOM tables featured on the county website to be regularly updated to maintain the interest for junior golfers.

SCRATCH BOOM

This year's Scratch BOOM has been a continual game of leap-frogging for several of the boys who have been in contention during the season. Last year's report highlighted two names to look out for this year, and they didn't disappoint. 13-year-old Will Chambers of Mid-Herts and 15-year-old Glen Portelli of Brickendon Grange have been swapping places throughout the season whilst playing catch up with James Tinworth of Welwyn Garden City who hasn't been out of the top six all year. James won at Brookmans Park but could not repeat this success and although recording points in nine events eventually finished 3rd in the table. Perhaps surprisingly this season there has not been one dominant young golfer as demonstrated by 18 titles going to 17 golfers, the greatest spread in the BOOM history. The tenacious Luke Colgate with wins at Mid-Herts, and over his home course at Berkhamsted, was the only golfer to record more than one win. This resulted in the closest of title races. Despite the increase in the number of junior opens, only 14 boys, from the 151 who in total obtained BOOM points, secured points in more than six events.

After an explosive start to the season, with a second place in the Boys Championship and a top ten finish at West Herts, the promising David Wells of Mill Green had a disappointing summer but thankfully rediscovered his form late in the season with top three finishes at Porters Park and The Hertfordshire. He clambered up the table to finish 4th with 131 points. He will be one of many who will be looking for more consistency next year. Oliver Brown of Chadwell Springs was another to promise much but could only manage a win at Letchworth and with top five finishes at Bishops Stortford and Hanbury Manor climbed above James Tinworth to claim the runners-up spot in the table.

The talented Will Chambers secured the second highest total with 160 points from nine events, which netted back to 127 points for his best six events, and came 5th in the table just 6 ahead of another highly talented 14 year old young golfer from Welwyn Garden City, Josh Johnson who finished with

119 points. Both players will reflect on their lowly finish in the Boys Championship and will be looking to improve next year.

One golfer has shown steady progress throughout the season and although only winning one title at the challenging Hanbury Manor course, has not been out of the top ten in his scoring events. By sheer consistency Glen Portelli of Brickendon Grange obtained 217 points from ten events and won the 2006 SCRATCH BOOM with 149 points from his six best-combined together with his 13th place in the Boys Championship, a very satisfying result after his 6th place last year.

The N. E. Foster Cup will be presented to Glen at the Junior Delegates Meeting at Welwyn Garden City Golf Club on Tuesday 6 March 2007.

Notable performances during the year came from several players winning events at their home club. These include Tom Speyer retaining his title at West Herts, Robert Daw winning at Broxbourne, Chris Forsyth at Harpenden Common, Jimmy Willson at Welwyn Garden City, and the 2005 BOOM Handicap winner, Shaun Brown, taking the prize at his new club, Brickendon Grange. Whereas Jack Woods of Mid-Herts returned to his previous club Aldwickbury Park to pick up their title, and Will Chambers did likewise at Redbourn, while Ben Cooper of Brocket Hall did it at Great Hadham. Richard Smith of Moor Park travelled the short journey to take the trophy at Sandy Lodge. There were two successes for Mid-Herts players with Tom Shadbolt winning over the Palmerston course at Brocket Hall, and Tom Lewis successful at Moor Park Junior Stag. Josh Johnson had a late success at Porters Park and the final event at The Hertfordshire went to the County Boys U16 Captain, Matthew Wallace of Batchworth Park.

HANDICAP BOOM

2006 was the second year of the Handicap BOOM table with competitors obtaining points for the finishing position based on their net scores. This table has created more interest for the younger higher handicap boys.

200 boys recorded points in this table in 2006 compared with 163 the previous year with Josh Johnson of Welwyn Garden City obtaining the most with 130 points which when reduced to his 6 best-combined came to 113 points and 3rd place in the table.

After his 2nd place in this table last year Glen Portelli of Brickendon Grange recorded points in seven events and finished equal 5th with 102 points only three less than 2005. The defending holder, Shaun Brown, now of Brickendon Grange nearly matched last years tally with 116 points, only four down, and finished 2nd behind long time leader William Horey who though missing several late events due to holidays had to wait nervously to see if any competitor would catch him. Try as they might they didn't. William's younger brother Edward, also had a good summer and at one point was lying second only to get overtaken late on but claimed a highly respected 5th equal place alongside Glen.

Again the 1st place prizes were spread amongst several players with only 10-year-old William Aldred of Mid-Herts securing maximum points in more than one event and eventually finished 8th in the table. He had the best net scores at Mid-Herts and at Sandy Lodge, his first ever 36-hole event.

The Boys Order of Merit – Handicap Cup donated by C G James will be presented to William Horey of The Hertfordshire at the Junior Delegates meeting in March.

2007 BOOM

Next year Brickendon Grange, Mill Green and Chadwell Springs join the "tour" when they run a junior open for the first time This increases the number of qualifying events to 25 opens when only 6 years ago we started with 11 events. All of the junior opens are listed on the county website www.hertsgolfunion.com

Chris James
Boys Order of Merit Manager
E-mail boysorderofmerit@hertsgolfunion.com

December 18, 2009