

HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF UNION

2007 BOYS ORDER OF MERIT REPORT

The 6th year of The Hertfordshire Boys Order of Merit (BOOM) was the most tightly contested with the result of both tables eventually decided by the very last qualifying event. The interest and success in the BOOM is such that there were 23 junior opens as qualifying events together with the County Boys Championship in the Scratch table. Brickendon Grange, Mill Green and Chadwell Springs joined the "tour" with their inaugural junior opens.

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 monitors their progress especially for the fast improving junior golfers.

The benefits for clubs registering their open as a qualifying event for the BOOM is that the competition is promoted to a wide audience with junior opens listed in the county fixture diary and in the "Events" section on the county website. Entry Forms can be placed on the website for competitors to download. Junior opens help county selectors with feedback on boys' performance throughout the season enabling them to monitor progress, and to identify any promising players for county selection and squad 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 grateful to all the county clubs who run junior opens allowing promising young players the opportunity to compete on some of the best courses in the region. Providing the results promptly enables the BOOM tables featured on the county website to be regularly updated to maintain interest for junior golfers who are keen to measure their performance and review their progress in the tables.

SCRATCH BOOM

The first event in the 2007 diary was the prestigious County Boys Championship with Tom Speyer, West Herts, and Glen Portelli, Brickendon Grange, gaining 40 points each with tied scores after 36-holes stroke play. Glen secured the title in the play-off by getting up and down at the first extra hole.

Ryan Newman, Brookmans Park, in only his third year as a golfer achieved 4th place in the Boys Championship and then further improved his position in the BOOM table with a flying start by winning four of the first six opens. He built what many thought was an unassailable lead. Tom Speyer won over his home course to maintain his momentum but through other commitments was unable to play in any of the next 15 events and fell away until late successes at Berkhamsted and Porters Park ensured a respectable 11th place. The main threats to Ryan came from Will Chambers, Mid-Herts, who although not winning any events remained in touch with high rostrum finishes at Letchworth, Brickendon Grange, Aldwickbury, Bushey, Redbourn, Chadwell Springs and Verulam. He secured the highest number of points along with Jack Woods, Mid-Herts, who won at Aldwickbury and Welwyn Garden City. When netted back to their best 6 combined points Jack finished 6th with 141 points and Will, a highly commendable 2nd with 160 points. Co-incidentally the same points as last year but an improvement of 3 places in the table. Chris Edwards, East Herts won the inaugural event at Chadwell Springs and finished the season in 4th place with 151 points. Matthew Efford, Hadley Wood, and Charlie Welsh, The Hertfordshire, were others who accumulated good points but failed in the ultimate to win an event and finished 7th and tied 5th respectively. Daniel Ellis-Banbury with a 2nd place at his home club, Letchworth, and a win at Verulam took 8th position in the table. Familiarity at Broxbourne brought a win for Rhys Burden. Robert Candler, South Herts, had his best performance of the season by winning at Hadley Wood.

Boys County Captain Matthew Wallace won the prestigious Moor Park open and other successes went to Ben Lawrence, Porters Park, at The Hertfordshire; Jimmy Willson, Welwyn Garden City, at Sandy Lodge; Sam Claridge over his home course at Harpenden Common; Callum Shinkwin, Porters Park, at Bushey Hall and finally Chris Forsyth, Harpenden Common, at Redbourn.

Ryan Newman, after such an explosive start to the season and the most wins, found it difficult to improve his points and, by not playing in any of the opens in latter half of the season, was eventually overtaken and pushed into 3rd place by Will Chambers. The Boys County Champion, Glen Portelli played in just six opens but by securing 2nd place at South Herts, 3rd at Moor Park, a win at the prestigious Brocket Hall, and a tie for first place at Hanbury Manor, eventually wore Ryan down and edged past him by recording 168 points from those 6 opens, plus his maximum Boys Championship points. He successfully defended the BOOM trophy he won in 2006 with an improvement of 19 points over his 2006 counting scores.

With the increase in the number of junior opens, 22 boys, from a total of 151 who obtained BOOM points, secured points in more than six events compared with 14 boys in 2006, but coincidentally from the the same number of 151.

The N. E. Foster Cup will be presented to Glen at the Junior Delegates Meeting at Welwyn Garden City Golf Club on Tuesday 4 March 2008.

HANDICAP BOOM

2007 was the third year for the Handicap BOOM table with competitors obtaining points for the finishing position based on their nett scores. This table has created interest for the younger higher handicap boys.

211 boys recorded points compared with 200 boys in 2006 and 163 in 2005. 12 year old Nick Ward, Redbourn clearly inspired after his award as the best dressed golfer at the Ian Poulter Invitational event at Woburn, collected 162 points from 12 opens. He was possibly the most travelled junior in competing in so many events? His points when netted back to his best 6 ensured a highly commendable 2nd place with 109 points. With 2nd places at Hadley Wood and Verulam he kept the leader on his toes right up until the final event.

George Light of East Herts, another young golfer who will be pushing hard for an U14 team place in 2008 had a great late run, with a tied 2nd at Hadley Wood and 3rd at Verulam, to climb the table and finish 4th with 89 points. The consistent Will Chambers of Mid-Herts recorded 105 points in total but this netted back to 88 points and 5th place. Chris Ryan of Welwyn Garden City, after winning the West Herts nett prize and tied for nett 1st place at Moor Park, maintained his presence and finished 3rd in the table.

The 2006 runner up was Edward Horey, who eventually had to concede victory to his older brother William, but not without a fierce contest. Edward started the 2007 season in fine form with a high finish at Letchworth followed by a win over his home course at Brickendon Grange. There were solid performances at Mid-Herts, Redbourn, Broxbourne, Hanbury Manor and Welwyn Garden City which enabled him to accumulate 158 gross points (2 less than Nick Ward) but when netted back to his best 6 came to 111 points, 2 more than Nick. That would have been just the odd shot or two over the entire season.

18 juniors obtained maximum handicap points in the table with only Rhys Whitehead of Brickendon Grange winning two events at Sandy Lodge and Hanbury Manor. A record 211 players obtained points in the handicap table.

The 2007 BOOM Handicap winner, and keeping the C G James Trophy in the family for the second year and making it a BOOM double for Brickendon Grange Golf Club, is Edward Horey who will be presented with the cup in March.

2008 BOOM

In 2008 Chesfield Downs are to run a qualifying open which will increase the number of opens in the county to 25 when 6 years ago we started with 11 events. A tremendous opportunity for young golfers to test their skills up and down the county. All of the junior opens are listed on the county website www.hertsgolfunion.com

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