



## HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF UNION

### 2009 BOYS ORDER OF MERIT REPORT

The 8<sup>th</sup> year of **THE HERTFORDSHIRE BOYS ORDER OF MERIT (BOOM)** proved again to be very popular with players and had several leaders contesting the top position throughout the season with the result of the handicap table undecided right up until the very last event. The interest and success in the BOOM is such that there were 25 club junior opens as qualifying events, together with the County Boys Championship in the **SCRATCH** table. Unluckily this year Brookmans Park suffered a wet open and had to abandon their event so points could not be awarded.

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 improving junior golfers.

There are several benefits for clubs registering their open as a qualifying event for the **BOOM**. 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. Clubs can place Entry Forms on the HGU website making it easy 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 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 appreciate and thank clubs for running junior opens allowing promising young players the opportunity to compete and experience some of the best courses in the region. Providing the results promptly enables the **BOOM** tables featured on the county website to be updated regularly which maintains 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 2009 diary was the prestigious County Boys Championship held this year at Letchworth where on a dry day **Tomasz Anderson of Mill Green** got off to an impressive start with an opening round of 5 under par (a score which later in the year was good enough to get him into the Daily Telegraph Grand Final in Abu Dhabi, where he eventually finished a very creditable 3<sup>rd</sup> place). His 2<sup>nd</sup> round score of 4 over was not up to the same standard but he held on to win by one-stroke from George Hewitt from Chadwell Springs. A 40 point opening BOOM score is always a useful start and when Tomasz then won the first junior open of the season at his home club he further consolidated his position. However Tomasz left the door wide open for other competitors as due to other commitments he did not play in any other events during the season.

**Jordan Shepherd of Brickendon Grange** was the first to close the gap with victories over his home course and at Aldwickbury Park. Jordan then had to see the table topped by others until he hit form again during August with a run of successes which included wins at The Hertfordshire, Hanbury Manor, and Chesfield Downs and two 3<sup>rd</sup> places at Harpenden Common and Welwyn Garden City. He eventually finished 3<sup>rd</sup> overall with 142 points, 6 points worse than 2008 but a place higher. Five open wins in a season has only been beaten once before by Matt Wallace last year with six.

**Ben Rees of Mill Green** had finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the Boys Championship and found time from being an active green keeper to successfully compete at Brickendon where he was 3<sup>rd</sup>. He then won at Letchworth and Brocket Hall to lead the table for several weeks. Unfortunately for him work pressure through the busy summer restricted his playing schedule. Ben in his last season as a junior eventually finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place. Another late developer and relatively new to golf was **Luke Groves of Porters Park** who won at West Herts and consolidated his 6<sup>th</sup> position in the table with good performances over his home track and at Sandy Lodge and Moor Park.

**Daniel Ellis Banbury of Letchworth** provided a late run after losing out from winning Brocket Hall on count-back from Ben Rees with wins at South Herts and Verulam which propelled him into the runners up spot with 149 points. Finishing in 4<sup>th</sup> spot was **Evan Omelia of West Herts** who obtained the highest number of points from all events with 196. Although not winning an open Evan had impressive performances in a number of events including 2<sup>nd</sup> places at Brickendon Grange, Porters Park, Bishops Stortford and Verulam to finish with 142 points.

However the 2008 winner **Will Chambers of Mid-Herts** again proved the most consistent performer in the seven targeted events he played in. These followed a good showing in the Boys Championship where he finished 6<sup>th</sup> and shared the Malcolm Reid Trophy for the best U16 age player with Sam Cutting of Berkhamsted. Will obtained a net total for his 6-best combined total of 169 points – one more than last years table topping performance. He won at Redbourn and Bishops Stortford, 3<sup>rd</sup> at both Sandy Lodge and South Herts, and 4<sup>th</sup> at Letchworth and Harpenden Common to prove the most consistent competitor.

Will is the second county boy to retain the BOOM Scratch trophy, the other was former Boys County Captain Jason Mitchell of Porters Park who has recently completed his degree at a USA College.

There were other notable performances in 2009 with fine wins achieved by **Milo Phillips of Sandy Lodge** at Moor Park, **Grant Neal of Brickendon Grange** at Chadwell Springs, **Alistair Tubbs of Redbourn** at Welwyn Garden City, **Chris Mach of Ashridge** at Hadley Wood. In addition there were a number of victories at players home track against highly competitive fields which included **Joe Richardson at Bushey Hall**, 13 year old **William Aldred at Mid-Herts**, the improving **Shaun Brosnan at Sandy Lodge**, the affable **Marcus Fox at Harpenden Common**, 15 year old **Bobby Bradford at Broxbourne**, and the experienced **Luke Colgate at Berkhamsted**.

2009 saw a record 186 boys obtain BOOM points in the Scratch table with 31 boys securing points in six or more events.

The **N. E. Foster Cup** will be presented to the **2009 SCRATCH BOOM Winner Will Chambers** at the County Junior Delegates Meeting to be held at Mid-Herts Golf Club on Tuesday 9 March 2010.

## **HANDICAP BOOM**

2009 was the 5<sup>th</sup> year for the **HANDICAP BOOM** table with competitors obtaining points for their finishing position based on their net scores. This table creates interest for the younger higher handicap boys with hopefully their handicap improving throughout the summer.

Another new record created this year with 233 boys recording points compared with 225 boys in 2008 with 16 boys obtaining points in six or more events.

**James West of Welwyn Garden City** won the first event at Mill Green with **James Woor of Redbourn** being successful at West Herts. James proved to be the only double winner this season when he took 1<sup>st</sup> place at Bushey Hall and with good finishes at Hadley Wood and Verulam helped him to an overall 6<sup>th</sup> place in the final table on 96 points just 10 points behind the top places.

**Jordan Shepherd** shared top spot at his home course, Brickendon Grange along with the rapidly improving **Evan Omelia of West Herts**, who with good results at Bishops Stortford and Porters Park eventually finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place in this table with Jordan back in 10<sup>th</sup> place. Terrific performances by two low handicap players. The young Kumar Starkie-Gupta of Redbourn finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the table, 2 points behind the winner on 104 points with sound performances and 3<sup>rd</sup> place at Brickendon Grange, Welwyn Garden City and Verulam and 2<sup>nd</sup> place at Bushey Hall.

Throughout the summer months the table was dominated by the young **Brad Skeates of West Herts** who showed that with consistently sound performances points could be accumulated. He was 3<sup>rd</sup> at Brickendon Grange and then finished highly at Letchworth, Bushey Hall, Sandy Lodge and Chesfield Downs. It looked for a long time that he would not be overhauled, however some players had other ideas. Firstly the more experienced **Grant Neal of Brickendon Grange** and secondly **Neal Pabari of Porters Park** eventually hauled him in and all three players were level going into the very last open at Verulam. **Grant** although not winning an open outright closed the gap with good finishes over his home course and at South Herts, Chadwell Springs, The Hertfordshire and Hanbury Manor and finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the table on count-back. **Brad** eventually finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the table, and was unsurpassed with the most accumulated points – 157 from 11 events. Both players finishing tied on 106 points for their best 6 combined totals. **Neal** had a late run up the table with a win at Redbourn, a 2<sup>nd</sup> at both South Herts and Hanbury Manor and gained high points at Welwyn Garden City and over his home course. With all three players tied on 106 points the result was in the balance going into the last open at Verulam. **Neal** must have been very tentative as he could not improve as he was abroad celebrating his sisters birthday and had to watch from afar. However, both **Grant** and **Brad** failed to finish in the points leaving **Neal** to win on count-back with the best total for his 5 best-combined points.

Other open wins were spread around the county with **Thomas Pipe of Sandy Lodge** winning at Letchworth, **Callum Maginnis of Mid-Herts** at Porters Park, **Matthew Willmott of Brickendon Grange** at Broxbourne, **Richard Stilwell of Mill Green** at Sandy Lodge helping him to finish 5<sup>th</sup> in the table; **Joss Gosling of Harpenden** at Brocket Hall, **Alistair Tubbs of Redbourn** at Welwyn Garden City, **Neal Sears of Whipsnade** at Berkhamsted, **William Stredwick of Brookmans Park** at The Hertfordshire, **Jack Ellis-Banbury of Letchworth** at Chesfield Downs, **Jake Cooper of Chesfield Downs** at Hanbury Manor, **Alex Lee of Stevenage** at Mid-Herts, **Adam Thomas of Sandy Lodge** at Verulam. Several players won over their home track including **Conor Maher at Aldwickbury Park**, **Thomas Barker at South Herts**, **Adam Highfield at Moor Park**, **Michael Davies at Hadley Wood**, **John Martin at Chadwell Springs**, **George Scott at Harpenden Common**.

The **2009 BOOM HANDICAP Winner** is **Neal Pabari of Porters Park** who will receive the C.G. James Trophy in March at the county Junior delegates meeting.

## **2010 BOOM**

In 2010 the number of opens in the county is likely to increase to 26 with Knebworth holding an event for the first time. Hertfordshire clubs are providing a tremendous opportunity for young golfers to test their skills throughout the county which is helping these young players gain immense playing experience. All of the junior opens are listed in the Events section on the county website [www.hertsgolfunion.com](http://www.hertsgolfunion.com)

Chris James  
E-mail [boysorderofmerit@hertsgolfunion.com](mailto:boysorderofmerit@hertsgolfunion.com)

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