

HERTFORDSHIRE GOLF UNION

2008 BOYS ORDER OF MERIT REPORT

The 7th year of **THE HERTFORDSHIRE BOYS ORDER OF MERIT (BOOM)** was fiercely contested throughout the season with the result of both tables undecided right up until the very last event. The interest and success in the BOOM is such that there were 25 junior opens as qualifying events, together with the County Boys Championship in the **SCRATCH** table. Luckily the wet summer only affected one open with Moor Park having to cancel their event this year.

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 2008 diary was at Mill Green in March where the Boys County Captain, **Matthew Wallace of Batchworth Park**, got off to a great start with the first of 6 open victories the most ever recorded by a Hertfordshire player in the seven years of **BOOM** history. These were at Redbourn, Sandy Lodge, South Herts, The Hertfordshire and Welwyn Garden City and would have brought him BOOM success but for an indifferent performance in the prestigious County Boys Championship where he finished in 19th place securing only 21 points. His early lead in the table was short lived as **Will Chambers of Mid-Herts**, soon caught him and eased past him with a 3rd place at West Herts followed by victories at Brickendon Grange, Mid-Herts and Letchworth and 2nd place at both Aldwickbury Park and at South Herts, 1-shot behind Matthew 3rd at Sandy Lodge. In fact Will demonstrating great consistency finished in the top five in the nine junior opens he played in. He then had to watch from early August to see if anyone would catch him as national and international championship commitments prevented him playing in another open until the very last event at Verulam in October.

Charges came initially from the defending **BOOM** holder, **Glen Portelli of Brickendon Grange**, who retained his Boys Championship title to secure top points which was followed by a win at West Herts and good finishes at Sandy Lodge and Berkhamsted. However by playing in only 3 junior opens he fell away and eventually finished in 11th place with 102 points. **Levi Smith** had a late run up the table after sharing maximum points over his home course at **Bishops Stortford**, losing the title on count-back, and with good performances at Sandy Lodge, South Herts, Brocket Hall and Hadley Wood he finished in 6th place with 154 points netted back to 143 points for his best six place points.

The experienced **David Wells of Mill Green** finished in 5th place without securing a victory on his travels although he lost out at Brookmans Park in a play-off for the title. The ever present **Jordan Shepherd of Brickendon Grange** climbed into 4th place with a victory over his former club course, Cheshunt Park, in the Broxbourne open and top six placings at Aldwickbury Park, Mid-Herts, South Herts, Brocket Hall, The Hertfordshire and Welwyn Garden City.

Daniel Ellis Banbury of Letchworth was perhaps one of the most improved players over the year and although not winning an event eventually finished 2nd, 4 points ahead of **Matthew Wallace** with 155 points, and 13 points short of the winner. **Daniel** had top six finishes in the Boys Championship, Aldwickbury Park, Mid-Herts, Letchworth, South Herts, Welwyn and Verulam and lost the title at Chesfield Downs on count-back. One of the youngest competitors, 12 year old **Nick Ward of Redbourn**, after success in winning the Scottish Boys U14 Championship in a play-off, had a tremendous late run with victories at Chesfield Downs and Verulam which followed top 3 finishes earlier in the year at Redbourn, Brickendon Grange and Mid-Herts, to finish in 7th place with 120 points.

Will Chambers was able to relax eventually when it was obvious he could not be overtaken and he finished with a total of 220 points which netted back to 168 points, coincidentally the same as last years champion, but he is the youngest ever winner of the Scratch BOOM.

There were exceptional performances from several boys in particular from the youngest winner 12 year old **William Aldred of Mid-Herts** winning over the challenging Hadley Wood course with a level par round. **Callum Shinkwin of Porters Park** with success at Bushey Hall, **Ryan Coxall** over his home course at Chadwell Springs, **Elliot Leonard** over his home track at **Harpenden Common**, **Chris Edwards of East Herts** at Porters Park, **Brendan Mullarkey of South Herts** at Brookmans Park winning by virtue of a play-off and, last but by no means least, from **Chris Ryan** over his home course at **Welwyn Garden City**. Since then **Chris** has unfortunately been involved, as an innocent passenger, in a serious car accident resulting in him breaking his spine. He presently resides in Stoke Mandeville Hospital and our thoughts go out to him and his family as this has curtailed his education and robbed him of a most promising golf career.

There was a record 180 boys who obtained BOOM points in the 2008 Scratch table with 21 boys securing points in more than six events.

The N. E. Foster Cup will be presented to the **2008 SCRATCH BOOM Winner Will Chambers** at the County Junior Delegates Meeting to be held at Mid-Herts Golf Club on Tuesday 10 March 2009.

HANDICAP BOOM

2008 was the 4th year for the HANDICAP BOOM table with competitors obtaining points for their finishing position based on their nett scores. This table creates interest for the younger higher handicap boys with inevitably their handicap improving throughout the summer.

A record 225 boys recorded points compared with 211 boys in 2007 with 14 boys obtaining points in more than six events.

Samuel Koch of Bushey Hall won the first event at Mill Green and then **Gary Fenton** won over his home course at **West Herts**. These two then fought a keenly contested BOOM table throughout the summer with the result remaining in the balance until the very last event. Scores were evenly tied on 95 points each from their best 6 events with **Samuel** securing 124 points overall from 9 events and **Gary** 122 points from 12 events. The competition conditions state that in the event of a tie the best 5-scores are taken and **Gary** prevailed by just one point. **William Orchard of Whipsnade Park** with a win at Bushey Hall was the next highest scorer with 110 points from 9 events and finished 3rd with 89 points nett with the highly promising **Sam Towler of Letchworth** in 4th place with 84 points from a total of 85 which included maximum points at Hanbury Manor but losing the title on count-back. Further evidence of **Will Chambers** consistency over the season was his 5th place in this table.

The **2008 BOOM HANDICAP Winner** is **Gary Fenton of West Herts** who will receive the C.G.James Trophy in March at the county Junior delegates meeting.

2009 BOOM

In 2009 the number of opens in the county will again be 25 when 7 years ago The BOOM started with just 11 events. Clubs are providing 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

Chris James
E-mail boysorderofmerit@hertsgolfunion.com

March 7, 2009