

Captain's report on National Finals 2018

The 2018 National Finals were held at the North Devon Golf Club 17-21 September.

For full results refer to England Golf

We experienced some of the most extreme & challenging weather conditions whilst in Devon & England Golf did an amazing job of keeping the tournament going, albeit in a reduced playing format for most of the week. Unlike previous years where the County Captains meet only on the practice day for a general briefing, Scott Allinson (EG Tournament Director) gathered the referees & all 6 Captains together for a weather update each afternoon & suggested his proposed playing schedule. The aim always being to have some form of play but at a suitable time whereby the weather conditions were both playable & safe. With 45-50 mph gusting winds & heavy rain forecast, even the locals were surprised at the prolonged ferocity of the conditions & the tenacity of the players. It resulted in only one day of normal 36 hole play (Monday) with the remaining week reduced to 18 holes. Even then, there were times when the gusting wind affected both the balls lying on the green & on the tee leaving many players struggled to remain stable whilst swinging. Even the spectators found it difficult at times to remain upright. The course is the oldest links course in the country, is on 'common land' & therefore is used by both livestock & the general public. Both proved interesting 'hazards' at times during the week & free relief was offered for any ball coming to rest in 'liquid or solid' animal poo! With one of the largest squad in attendance consisting of 7 juniors (some who had not even experienced Regional County Match Week), we had hoped all our players would have played their first match by the end of play on Tuesday afternoon. With the curtailed format our plans had to be revised. Monday versus Surrey - full schedule of 3 foursomes & 6 singles Tuesday versus Norfolk - 1 foursomes & 4 singles Wednesday versus Staffordshire - 2 foursomes & 4 singles Thursday versus Yorkshire - 1 foursomes & 4 singles Friday versus Gloucestershire - 3 x sessions consisting of 4 singles, 1 foursomes & 1 foursomes Despite the suggested format each day, some Counties pushed for more matches (presumably because they wanted all their players involved rather than having to make the difficult decision to omit some. Some also felt more matches gave them more opportunity for a fairer test of golf). On Wednesday an additional foursomes match was permitted & on Friday play was divided into 3 separate sessions with the onus being on finishing the singles matches (which held the most points). Sessions 2 & 3 consisted of a single foursomes match with the caveat being if session 3 wasn't able to be completed in toto, none of the scores would count. If session 2 matches weren't completed only session 1 (the singles matches) would count & if session 1 matches couldn't be completed then the results at the end of Day 4 (Thursday) would stand & the champion County would

be awarded accordingly.

I'm thrilled to report that on Thursday evening with 1 loss & 3 wins under our belt, we stood as joint leaders with 6pts alongside Gloucestershire & Surrey. We knew we had to beat Gloucestershire on Friday to stand a chance of winning overall, but they proved too strong (both physically coping with the extremely adverse weather conditions & in their superior performance on the course) & we suffered a 1-5 defeat.

With a 2 point lead over the rest of the field Gloucestershire were victorious but I'm proud to say Bucks had our most successful result in the history of the tournament & finished a creditable 4th.

The full results are available at: www.bclga.org.uk & there were several EG press releases from the week which highlighted both our successes & some of our key players.

Sue Ashworth Bucks County Capt 2018