

Hambrook's Trevor Jones has retained the Gloucester and Somerset Matchplay Championship over the Cherington Course at Minchinhampton after beating Chris Murphy from Rodway Hill in the Final by one hole.



The top players from the two counties gathered at the Gloucestershire venue which is certainly a welcome addition to the courses the G&S PGA visit. Top seed George Ryall was missing though as he had received a late call up to the European Seniors Tour event in Spain which meant a slight re-jig of the top half of the draw. As no replacement was available it was decided that the defending Champion Jones should receive a bye to the Quarter Finals. The other seven matches got underway on a warm October day that was to become possibly one of the best days of the year, more like July than October!

The Cherington course was presented in excellent condition and the superb greens were a joy to putt on. Home Professional Chris Steele accepted an invitation to play in the event but came up against Filton's Daryl Kelley who proved too strong for him. Next up was a Cirencester 'derby' as Ed Goodwin took on his assistant Gareth Bennett with Goodwin winning by 2&1. In the final match of the top half Steve Ritchie beat Giuseppe Licata by the same margin to set up a clash with Jones in the Quarter Finals. In the lower half of the draw Brean Professionals David Haines and Andrew March both moved into the next round with victories. Pat Baker was dispatched 5&4 by Haines whilst March needed 21 holes to edge past Roy Holland. Two of the higher seeds exited at the first hurdle as Chris Murphy beat Kevin Pitts 3&2 and South Cerney's James Harraway sent Mark Sanders home with an excellent one hole victory.

In the afternoon matches Ed Goodwin succumbed to Daryl Kelley at the last before possibly one of the matches of the event between Trevor Jones and Steve Ritchie was decided on the 19th. Birdies and eagles were being traded for fun and a final birdie at the par 5 extra hole by Jones sealed his Semi Final berth. The next match on the course finished on the 15th as Murphy accounted for Harraway. Due to March going to extra holes in the morning round, his Quarter Final with his Brean colleague David Haines started late and was eventually also going to finish late. This time 22 holes were needed to decide an outcome and a superb 3 wood approach to 15 feet on what was his 43rd hole of the day was enough to secure the success for March. It was rumoured that as the weather

was so nice Andrew didn't want to stop playing but his feet were definitely telling him otherwise!

Onto the second day and the weather was much different, still not much wind to talk about but drizzle stuck around for much of the day taking some of the pace out of the greens. In the first match some good golf was played but in the end a poor drive at a crucial stage cost Kelley the chance to go any further and Jones was into the Final. Murphy was in superb form against March and was in the region of 3 or 4 under when the match finished on the 14th as he ended Somerset's last interest in the Championship.



The Final was to produce some more excellent golf from both players as they were both well under par come the conclusion. Jones took the first hole with a birdie but another at the second was only good enough for a half. He completed his birdie hat trick at the 3rd to move two holes ahead. Murphy rallied though and had squared the match by the 13th and some good putting kept the game level. An example of this was on the tricky 17th green where Murphy rolled in a 9ft par save before Jones followed him in from 6 ft to keep it all square going to the last. Murphy's approach found the front bunker whilst Jones hit a majestic 6 iron into 4 feet. With not the best lie in the trap Chris couldn't get his recovery shot inside Trevor's second and it rolled 12ft past the hole. To his credit he knocked that in to make Trevor hole out to win which he duly did and with it retained the title he won at Filton last year.

Gloucester and Somerset PGA would like to extend their thanks to all at Minchinhampton for allowing us to host the Championship at their course and also for their hospitality during the event which was first class.