

## FYLDE DISTRICT GOLF LEAGUE



### 2011 Fylde Amateur Match Play Championships The Bowman Trophy Match Review



The qualifying rounds for the 2011 Fylde Match Play Championship, The Bowman Trophy, were staged at Fairhaven Golf Club during the week commencing Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August. Qualification for the Championship, as in previous years, was determined by the top 16 finishers in the Fylde Amateur Championship 2010 which had been competed for at Fairhaven last August.

Over the past 12 months a number of immediate qualifiers have become ineligible to play due to their decision to join the professional ranks, whilst others were unable to play due to being unable to commit to the defined fixed schedule of qualifying rounds and the final. This year's move to play the qualifying rounds over a single week, effectively on every other evening commencing from Monday and concluding with a semi-final on Friday, was viewed as a success by those that competed and will be carried forward into next year's event, assuming this can be supported by our hosts for next year's event, Fleetwood Golf Club.

The highlights of Round 1 included some key short putting by Paul Drinkwater for halves as his match against North Shore's Mikiel Tchebanian, moved to the 18<sup>th</sup> with the match, all square. Both players hit solid drives leaving Tchebanian to play first, a factor that was to possibly prove decisive for the match as his second shot headed right and out of bounds was a possibility. This prompted the home player to lay up with a short iron, which headed in the same direction but came up short of the trees. Miki was to find his ball a matter of inches over the boundary line and a few minutes later his 30 foot putt for a potential half was to prove irrelevant as Paul held a 20 foot putt from off the green for birdie. Elsewhere there was a notable victory for Toby Roberts in his inaugural appearance in the Championship as he saw off Tom Holmes from North Shore in an emphatic 6&5 victory.

Regrettably two of the four round 2 matches had to be conceded, one resulting from work commitments, always a possible issue in amateur golf. This led to David Hannis receiving a walk over, whereas in the other match Tom Stuart was given his match by Mike Hedges. This left Carl Smith and Toby Roberts to take on home players, Lee Mayers and Paul Drinkwater respectively. Toby was to continue the strong form that had seen him home so comfortably in the first round as he took full advantage of the odd error by Paul a four foot par putt on the tricky 17<sup>th</sup> resulting in his progression to the semi-final. The other game between Carl and Lee was to prove a match play classic. Despite home advantage and a 3 shot handicap difference, Fleetwood's former scratch team captain raced to the turn with a three hole lead. This was to soon disappear though as the big hitting home player got back in to the game making impressive birdies at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> before going on to make a comfortable par at the 12<sup>th</sup>. The 13<sup>th</sup> hole was to prove the first halved hole of the match, which was to go the 18<sup>th</sup> hole, with Lee having a one hole advantage. However a pulled second shot into the

trees finally led to him having to make a 30 foot putt for par which in not disappearing led to the conclusion of the match.

The Semi-final draw that followed immediately after round 2 saw Lee drawn against Tom Stuart and Toby to play scratch league veteran and championship organiser, David Hannis.

As always the draw was to prove decisive as Tom was left to watch something of an exhibition from Lee in how to play Fairhaven's "blue giant", being hit by 5 birdies in 14 holes as he sealed his place in the final. The standard of golf in the other semi-final was not of this calibre but proved to be somewhat of a putting exhibition with both Toby and David making a series of large putts. In the end David's 30 years experience of scratch league golf was to give him the edge as Toby found trouble with his second shots to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, running in a 1 up victory.

The final between Lee and David will take place at Royal Lytham Golf Club on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August, the players teeing off at 5pm. All spectators are welcome. A match report will appear in due course.

#### THE FINAL- MATCH REPORT

The final of the Bowman Fylde Matchplay Championship took place between Fairhaven's Lee Mayers and North Shore's David Hannis, on a blustery evening at Royal Lytham. The course was in pristine condition and the changes introduced over recent years proved testing for both players, with par being a good score for any hole. After a fairly tight start, a missed 6 foot putt for par at the fifth saw Lee take a one shot lead to the par 5 sixth, where a difficult lie in the greenside bunker was to cost David a bogey and the loss of the hole. A three putt on the ninth extended Lee's lead to three holes, and 10 minutes later this was four, as David found a fairway bunker off the tee which took two attempts to get back in play. Although the thirteenth went David's way, a 340 yard drive by Lee on the fourteenth followed by a wedge to 4 feet was to prove the final nail in the coffin for David, who unlike Lee was unable to reach the fifteenth in two, a comfortable par from Lee resulting in a 5 & 3 victory.

After the match, refereed by League President, John Roberts, Lee was delighted with his maiden victory in this prestigious event. "I think it really helped me to get through to the final since the qualifying rounds were staged at my home club. I was really pleased to learn that the final was going to be staged at Royal Lytham as it is always a great experience to play this superb course and equally to play against David".

Lee now moves on to try and repeat the feat achieved by St Annes Old Link's Paul Thornton last year, who became the first player to win both the Bowman Matchplay Championship and Fylde Amateur Championship in the same year. The Fylde Amateur Championship is being held at Fleetwood Golf Club on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September and is open to all golfers off a handicap of 9 or less, whose club has competed in the Fylde Scratch League, be it over this season or in previous years. Entries can be made on line at <http://www.fleetwoodgolf.co.uk/visitorlogin.php> by no later than Wednesday 31st August.