Hampshire Sevens Sunday 7th May 2017

Les Mielles G.C. v Royal Jersey G.C.

Sunday saw the postponed 7`s match between LMGC and RJGC. We fielded a rearranged side because of the unavailability of 4 of the previously selected team. This gave the opportunity to include a couple of new players in the team both of whom acquitted themselves with honour. The Royal squad consisted entirely of Juniors, their ages being 13,13,14,14,15,16,17. Our squad was collectively over 200 years older than them.

Match 1 saw “Mr Consistency” Alan Maclachlan (9) receiving 2 strokes from Kit Chamier (7). Alan held sway right from the start and playing some fine controlled golf never let his young opponent get a foothold in the match. Alan closed the game out on the 14th for an impressive 6 & 4 win and put our first point on the board.

Match 2 featured replacement Kevin Therin (6) receiving 1 stroke from “The Flying Finn” Sam Jaakola (5). Kevin kept tabs on his talented opponent for most of the front 9 but could never quite get his game on track and was always up against it. On the back 9 the competitive ski-jumper worked his way into an unassailable lead finally winning the game at the 15th 5 & 3 and tying the match

Match 3 had the indomitable Trevor Simon (9) giving 3 strokes to Adam Hayward (12). Unhappy with his putting Trevor trailed his opponent for the front 9 but as is always the case with Trevor he never let his head drop. Playing consistent tee to green golf it seemed only a matter of time before the putts started to drop. From 13 to 16 Trevor turned the tables on his young adversary and needing only a half on 17 to take the game duly obliged to give LM a 2 to 1 lead in the match.

In Match 4 Joel Pinto (7) gave 3 strokes to 13 year old Tom Chamberlain (10), the first of the Chamberlain twins. Although playing par golf Joel was up against an inspired rival who was knocking the ball in from all over the greens. From 4 down at 11 Joel got it back to 2 down but eventually ran out of holes to lose 2 & 1 on 17.

The match was all square at 2 all.

Match 5 saw the in form Nick Barber (7) make his sevens debut giving 6 strokes to Jon Chamberlain (13). Nick, whose handicap had recently been cut from 11 to 7, was a “wild card” pick for the team. The question was could he continue his current run of good form from his new “lowest” handicap. The signs were not good at the first when, having watched his opponent go 3 off the tee, Nick proceeded to fire several shots straight into the water from the middle of the fairway. This turned out to be a minor blip however and soon back on track Nick worked his way into a lead that he never relinquished. The game was concluded on 14 for a fine 5&4 win.

This gave LM a 3 to 2 advantage and needing one more win from the last two games.

In Match 6 rookie Colum Spillane (12) received 7 strokes from James Draisey (5). Colum held a one or two hole advantage from early on and in receipt of plenty of shots looked certain to prevail. However as the match progressed and it became apparent that the whole fixture might rest on the outcome of this game the pressure intensified to fever pitch. With the final match looking a lost cause for LM (more of that below) the entire crowd of supporters and spectators honed in on Colums` match. As RJGC team captain Ian Daly said to me “this is the match right here”. With his back to the wall young Draisey conjured up some spectacular iron play to keep himself in the match and nailed a ten footer on 15 to keep the deficit to 2 down with 3 to play. When Draisey missed the green short right at the 16th the affable Spillane just needed to find the green from the tee. Unfortunately his tee shot found the water and with that the gap was reduced to 1 down with 2 to play. Both players laid up at the short 17th and playing first Draisey hit a superb wedge to 6 feet piling on the pressure. Colum made the green but left himself a 30 footer for birdie. Colums putt was a good one but slid 4 feet past leaving Draisey with his putt for birdie to get back to all square. When this putt just missed Colum had to make his shortish putt to keep the 1 hole advantage. After what seemed like an eternity and following a “Doug Sanders” moment he rolled it in for his 4 to get his half and it was off to 18 with a one up advantage. Teeing off first Draisey again under clubbed and his shot hit the tree in the hazard but dropped into an unpromising but playable lie. With the crowd willing Colum not be short with his tee shot he fired at the green only to hear the audible groan from the crowd as he too hit short and bounced back into the hazard. Draisey manufactured an excellent escape to find the edge of the green but was 30 feet away from the flag. Colum too made an excellent effort to find the putting surface. Draisey chose to chip from the fringe and left it well short he then missed his bogey attempt leaving Colum with 2 putts from 8 feet to win this game and the whole match for Les Mielles when he left his first putt stone dead the putt was conceded and the Les Mielles were victors.

There was still one game out on the course where the unpredictable Steve Pearson (7) was in receipt of 1 stroke from baby faced Thomas Raine (6). Every time I looked it seemed Smoggy was retrieving his ball from a hazard, bush, field or some other unpromising location and we had all but given up on him. It is, however, unwise to right off the redoubtable Smogster and whilst everyone was watching the drama unfold up ahead somehow he had played himself back into the game and having smashed his tee shot over the green at 17 and salvaged a 4 he stood on 18 one down. He hit his 6 iron to the heart of the green and with his opponent missing the green and failing to get up and down Steve won the hole with a three to go all square. Knowing the overall match was over they were asked if they wanted to continue to find a winner, Steve unsurprisingly elected to head for the bar but his young opponent, clearly made of sterner stuff, wanted a result so they headed to the 1st for a sudden death play-off. It was here, no doubt with all the crowd to play to, that Smoggy played the best two shots of the day a drive straight down the middle followed by an iron to 3 feet and a certain Eagle. His young opponent crumbled topping his second into the water and finally admitting defeat when he failed to hole out from off the green. The game went to Pearson 1 up and Les Mielles took the match 5 to 2.

Full result is below.

Thanks to all the players for some fabulous golf. Special thanks to the caddies who kept our boys focused. Commiserations to RJGC`s squad of youngsters who did themselves proud and showed exemplary conduct throughout the match. Their time will certainly come. Extra special thanks to all of those who turned to show their support and to the green staff for presenting the course in magnificent condition.

We will play the winners of La Moye v St Clement in the Jersey final venue and date to be arranged.

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| **LES MIELLES G.C. V ROYAL JERSEY G.C. HAMPSHIRE SEVENS SUNDAY 7 MAY 2017** |
| **TEE TIMES** | **LES MIELLES G.C.** | **HCAP** | **ROYAL JERSEY G.C.** | **HCAP** | **RESULT** | **L.M.G.C.** | **R.J.G.C.** |
| **10:54** | **ALAN MACLACHLAN** | **9** | **KIT CHAMIER** | **7** | **6&4** | **1** |  |
| **11:03** | **KEVIN THERIN** | **6** | **SAM JAAKOLA** | **5** | **5&3** |  | **1** |
| **11:12** | **TREVOR SIMON** | **9** | **ADAM HAYWARD** | **12** | **2&1** | **1** |  |
| **11:21** | **JOEL PINTO** | **7** | **TOM CHAMBERLAIN** | **10** | **2&1** |  | **1** |
| **11:30** | **NICK BARBER** | **7** | **JON CHAMBERLAIN** | **13** | **5&4** | **1** |  |
| **11:39** | **COLUM SPILLANE** | **12** | **JAMES DRAISEY** | **5** | **1 UP** | **1** |  |
| **11:48** | **STEVE PEARSON** | **7** | **THOMAS RAINE** | **6** | **1 UP** | **1** |  |
|  |  |  |  | **RESULT** | **5** | **2** |