

Howie Claims Historic Scottish Boys Win

Peebles golfer Craig Howie is the new Paul Lawrie Foundation Scottish Boys Champion, becoming the first player from the Borders to win the country's flagship junior golf event.

The 17-year-old Peebles High School pupil defeated St Andrews' Ewan Scott 7 & 6 in the final, having coming through a field of 256 players at Murcar Links near Aberdeen and received the famous trophy from former Open champion Paul Lawrie, who was sponsoring the event for the first time.



Howie's win comes just three years after Peebles club-mate Ailsa Bain won the Scottish Girls Championship and will see him join the club's "Hall of Fame" alongside Paul Gallacher, who won the Scottish Boys Stroke Play Championship back in 1974.

Having worked his way through six rounds to reach the final, including two dramatic extra hole comeback wins, Howie found himself two holes down early on in the 36-hole match, which was played in cold and windy conditions with a strong Peebles following who had made the 3-hour drive north early on Saturday morning. However, he demonstrated the battling qualities which had been the hallmark of his week, edging one hole clear by the halfway stage against his former Scotland Boys Under-16s team-mate in a tight morning round.

Scott quickly drew level at the 19th hole with a winning par, but that was to be his last success and Howie took control following a remarkable winning run of holes. The Peebles youngster's found his putting touch, reeling off wins at the 20th, 21st and 22nd to go three up, before edging four clear at the 24th following a Scott bogey.

Howie kept the pressure on his opponent and a superb birdie at the 27th was his seventh success in eight holes to go seven up. He clinched his win on the 12th hole of the afternoon

round after another great iron approach shot, before shaking hands with Lawrie and lifting the silverware.

“It feels great,” said Howie, who finished third in the recent SGU Junior Tour event at Gullane, giving an indication that more was to come this season. “I played really well the whole afternoon, especially my putting. Euan struggled a bit in the afternoon round but I don’t think anyone could have beaten me on that form and in those conditions.”

“I thought I was playing well and had the game to win this week, but there are 256 players in the tournament. I was four down to Jake Scott in the quarter-finals so I thought I might have been going out then, but I managed to turn that game around well and kept it going for the rest of my matches.”

Scott, the third lowest handicapper in the field off +2, was magnanimous in defeat and said: “Craig played proper good golf and holed putts. He was a tough opponent to beat and he thoroughly deserved to win the way he played.

Lawrie, who’s Foundation supports the development of junior golf in Scotland, said: “I’d like to offer huge congratulations to our champion Craig Howie and commiserations to Ewan Scott the runner-up, who both played very well in tough conditions.

“The Scott Boys is a huge event, the biggest for boys in the country, and we were very happy to be involved at Murcar Links. Hopefully we’ll be supporting the championship for years to come. Thanks to the host club and the SGU for such a well run tournament.

Howie joins some prestigious former winners’ names on the trophy, which dates back to 1935, including former European Ryder Cup player Andrew Coltart, European Tour player Steven O’Hara and GB&I Walker Cup star Michael Stewart.

His win also lifts him to the top of the Scottish Hydro Junior Tour standings and will likely earn him a place in Scotland’s European Boys Team Championship side, which will travel to Sweden this summer.

Having returned to Peebles Golf Club on Saturday evening to a heroes’ welcome, with many members turning up to pay tribute to the new champion, Craig’s celebrations had to be curtailed as he is in action again this week, flying down south on Monday to compete in the McEvoy Trophy, one of the biggest events in the English amateur golf circuit.

To watch footage from the final, visit www.facebook.com/PeeblesGolfClub.