

WYDER CUP 2003

On a cloudy autumnal 29th October, 2003 the men of Isis and Wytham turned up to Kirtlington Golf Club at 8 o'clock in the morning to do battle in the annual golf challenge known as the Wyder Cup. The cup had previously always been held by Wytham, but in this sixth year of the competition a fantastic team effort which typified an excellent cricket season saw Isis finally prevail to take away the silverware. The Kirtlington golf course was an established venue for the competition, and Isis might have been worried by the fact that two of the Wytham team were in fact members of the course, with official handicaps. They nevertheless enjoyed a hearty breakfast of bacon rolls and strong coffee and began plotting the downfall of Wytham in the four ball team selections.



The morning brought early drizzle, though the forecast of brighter weather later meant that fifteen brave souls set out for the morning four balls in good heart, though it was a shame that Wytham were unable to field a full side of eight players. For the 9-hole four-balls, with match participants decided by drawing from the hat, both sides adopted the same tactic and selected to ensure that each round was well contested, rather than weighting the odds in favour of specific pairs. The die was therefore cast for the morning competition and at 9 o'clock sharp Wyatt, Hardy, Colonnese and Roper took to the first tee and set the day in motion.

It was Isis who started the day the stronger and in the first three rounds got off to early leads over the first few holes, though all the players were caught out by the speed of the firm and slick greens. In the first round the left-handed Colonnese was the shining star, but the Isis pairing of Hardy and Wyatt held on and despite falling one down at the 5th, recovered to take a 2-up lead into the final hole to secure the opening point for Isis. In the same way, Chris Williams and Keith Ponsford held on for a 2 & 1 win against the pairing of Berry and Le Harne, the latter being the first of the Kirtlington club members and a very fine golfer indeed. A particularly sporting gesture was made by Wytham who docked the extremely talented Derek Thompson (Kirtlington-man number 2) a shot a hole in recognition of the fact that he was playing off an official eleven handicap. Amazingly Trevor Williams and Dave Lawrence held on though and secured another 2 & 1 win, which was surely the result of the morning. In the final round, fortunes see-sawed around the course for the pairing of Khawaja and Whiter against Werlinger and his mates (only joking Bob!), with the Isismen confident of a win as they took a two-hole lead with two to play. However, it was the mark of a real competitor when Werlinger made par on the eighth and then drove to within 10 feet of the hole on the 9th to go all square and get Wytham off the mark. Nevertheless, while they have come back before, Wytham were under no illusions as to the mountainous task left for the afternoon singles competition, with Isis only needing $2^{1/2}$ points to secure their first ever win.

With the sun breaking through for the afternoon rounds, the teams retired to the clubhouse at 11:45 reflecting on the ups and downs of the morning, and in particular the sight of Jon Woodman trying to dig his way to Australia through the back-of-the-green bunker on the 9th hole. While the afternoon match-ups were determined, a welcome lunch of soup and sandwiches (and the odd pint of ale) served by the more than hospital staff of Kirtlington was enjoyed by all. Scores for the morning were taken and the players ranked from one to eight in order of the lowest to highest scores to form the afternoon 18-hole singles pairings. Handicaps were taken by taking three-quarters of twice the difference in the morning round scores, and all was set for the next stage of the competition.

The handicapping fell hardest on poor old Chuck Berry who not only had to play two Isismen in his round but had to give six and eight shots to Khawaja and Ponsford respectively. What a fantastic fight he made of it though, and he took the game to the final hole where he needed a win for a half-point, but fortunately he failed at the final hurdle.

The remaining singles competitions went out as four-balls to ensure a finish before dusk fell too heavily. In the first of these a similar mountain was set for Nick Wyatt, who took eight shots into his match against Derek Thompson. He could have done with three-times that though as the former Wytham cricketer played the round of the day for a net 70 to take the point seven up with six holes to play.

In the corresponding round, Colonnese and Chris Williams had a real dog-fight in which the Wytham man recovered from a 3-hole deficit with four to play to take the game to a deciding eighteenth hole. The result was decided on the last green as Williams holed for the win to take Isis to within a half-point of victory.

Dave Lawrence, with seven shots in his favour, had tried valiantly to recover after going down early to John Le Harne, but the young Wytham batsmen drove hard and long all the way round to keep the pressure on and this match was decided once and for all on the 15th hole as the Isis stalwart unluckily drove out of bounds.

In the corresponding match Whiter and Roper sparred unrelentingly, though it was the Wytham man who recovered from two down to take a three hole lead after 10 holes, playing par golf on the previous five holes, to gain the ascendancy. Whiter got second-wind though and using his three-shot advantage to the maximum fought back to all square before going out-of-bounds on the 14th and falling behind again. A good hole on the 15th and a half on the 16th kept the game nip and tuck though, until Roper was unlucky to drive to the base of a tree on the 17th and fall behind. On the last hole, it was Roper who drove furthest but a great recovery from the rough took Whiter to 30ft from the hole in the middle of the fairway. Whiter's gay third shot saw both balls together for the same score just off of the green and while Roper played on to within 4 feet, the Isis captain sank a 7-footer to secure the point and the match for Isis.

Never-say-die Bob Werlinger fought off the challenge of Nick Hardy who also played with a three-shot advantage but lost on the 17th when Werlinger took a three-hole lead and both players walked the 18th. In the final round, Jon Woodman had an eight shot advantage but was hampered after recovering from an operation on a displaced disc, although after falling behind earlier he recovered to one down after seventeen holes. However, the challenge on the 18th was too much and after hacking down the fairway, he gamely shook the hand of the ever-improving Trevor Williams who rubbed salt into the Wytham wounds to clinch a 4-point advantage on the day.

Back to the bar then, where captain Jon Woodman congratulated the victorious Isis team and presented the coveted trophy to an elated Keith Whiter. After a few drinks, the die-hards retired to the Red Lion, Kidlington for a few pints and then on for a blinding curry at the fabulous Tiffins before saying hearty farewells at the shank end of what was altogether a fantastic day. This competition is underpinned by an unrivalled camaraderie by two clubs who always compete to their best but at the end of the day who simply enjoy the pleasure of competition amongst friendly company. You only have to read of the nail-biting mid-week encounters earlier in the cricket season to see that. On this occasion it was Isis who played the better team golf with all their team members contributing at least a point to the winning total, but where there'll always be an Isis, there'll also be a Wytham, and long may competition between the two clubs such as this continue.

Isis C.C		Wytham C.C.	
7 ^{1/2}		3 ^{1/2}	
ISIS C.C.		WYTHAM C.C.	
Four Balls			
2 & 1	Nick Wyatt Nick Hardy	v	Mark Colonnese Felix Roper
2 & 1	Chris Williams Keith Ponsford	v	Chuck Berry John Le Hane
2 & 1	Trevor Williams Dave Lawrence	v	Derek Thompson Jon Woodman
AS	Keith Whiter Nas Khawaja	v	Bob Werlinger
Singles			
2 up	Keith Ponsford (+8) Nas Khawaja (+6)	v	Chuck Berry
1 up	Chris Williams (+1)	v	Mark Colonnese
-	Nick Wyatt (+8)	v	Derek Thompson
-	Dave Lawrence (+7)	v	John Le Hane
2 up	Keith Whiter (+3)	v	Felix Roper
-	Nick Hardy (+3)	v	Bob Werlinger
2 up	Trevor Williams	v	John Woodman (+8)