

Shootout Report: 2023

Just when you thought it could not be as bad as last year, another miserable day greeted the 19 finalists for the 2023 shootout final. Gale force winds (although no rain this year) was the order of the day as well as freezing temperatures.

With the start time pushed back a couple of hours to allow competitors to view the Rugby Final, 19 grumpy men and 3 referees arrived at the course, ready to take their frustrations out on the fairways. Assistant referee, David Lockton did not endear himself to the gathering by announcing that he would be the TMO for the day.

As is traditional, top qualifier, Pete Spiers, had the honour of getting the competition underway with a howling wind right behind. This must have inspired him as he finished the hole with a nett 2, which resulted in much muttering about burglars and other adjectives that can't be repeated here.

Alex Standfield had the dubious honour of doing the "walk of shame" after going in the bunker, then "airmailing" the green over the fence, finally making the green and then 3 putting. After several re-counts, and several comments about Aussie Adding, he finally settled on a nett 7 and was gone.

An audible sigh came from Mal Coldicutt as his early exit last year was still a festering sore.

Our top qualifier, Pete Spiers was next to go on 2 (despite Jethro Meares hitting the wrong ball) after losing a 6-way chip-off. There was some sympathy for him as the position of the Chip-off presented by Chip-off Manager (Mike Matu) was dastardly to say the least.

Nic (the Ham burglar) Davies went out on 3, after being on the receiving end of a Wayne Brierely chip in during the chip-off.

Earle White bit the dust up on 4 in another chip off, probably the victim of a poor clothing choice (it really was not a day for shorts).

Murray Butterworth hacked his way down 5 into the wind, with several visits to the rough, and it was some relief when he could join Spiersy in the cart as an observer.

On the 6th, Mark Tomsett lost in another epic 6-way chip-off which included the final top 3 place getters. Chipping from behind the rear bunker to a top right hand pin placement was a tough call. It was so close that the referees had to get the tape measure out to determine the loser.

Axel Rose succumbed on 7, losing to Dave Campbell, which many felt was a surprising result.

8 was always going to be an interesting hole given the wind whipping across the green. 6 players found the greenside bunker which was to be expected, however all 6 managed nett 4's or better which left Nigel Sanderson's 5 (after playing safe down the left) the losing score.

Frank Van Hattum was a goner on 9 after a dismal chip-off against 3 others and Mal Coldicutt hacked his way down 10 into the hurricane and paid the price for 3-putting.

Taff Morris exited on 11 (again) and vanished immediately to go home and thaw out. 11 must hold some serious mental scars for Taff or else his cart refused to go any further.

12 was the end of the road for Jethro Meares after Cultsie holed out his chip from the back of the green. This was one of the few holes that Wayne Brierley was not part of the chip off.

After hitting nearly every ball down the middle on previous holes, John Drent's day was over on the 13th after he uncharacteristically duffed his way to the green recording a 5.

David Campbell's luck ran out on 14 after he and Mark Bryant both decided to play safe and dug several big trench's' on their way to making the green in 4 shots. A further 2 more on the putting green meant that they were chipping off. The chip-off manager was kind to them both after their exhausting trip up the fairway and provided them a relatively easy option.

Graeme Culton went out on 15 after leaving his tee shot short and not getting 'up and down'. A pleasing result for the 'born again' golfer who won this event 30 years ago in his only other attempt.

So down to the final 4 players and it was a surprise to many that Mark Bryant was the only one on 16 not involved in a chip-off. This was Wayne Brierely's 6th successful chip-off, and this was another nasty position conjured up by 'Matu the Mean' which resulted in last year's Summer Shoot-out Champion, Mark Mora departing.

Many were saying at this stage that surely Wayne's luck cannot hold and so it was. His poor bogey on 17 left Mark Bryant and Logan Phillips to fight it out down the last.

In one of the most dramatic final hole play offs ever seen, Logan teed off first and put it in the adjoining farmers paddock, over the trees lining Woodland Road. The head wind was really playing havoc with ball flights and concentration levels. Mark drilled (by his standards) his drive up the fairway to about 150 out. Logan hammered his second ball out onto the 12th fairway parallel with the 7th green.

Mark hit his second into the left greenside bunker and Logan put his 4th onto the green. With a difficult stance in the bunker, Mark just managed to get his ball out and then left his next shot woefully short.

At this stage they were both lying 4. Logan putted first and binned his 12 - footer for a 5 despite recording an out of bounds. Mark had an 8-footer to force a chip-off but subsequently missed.

The 2023 deserved shootout Champion (in his first attempt): Logan Phillips