Winter Shootout Report: 2026

A perfect spring day greeted the 19 finalists for the 2026 Winter shootout final. Clear skies, very little wind and a beautiful golf course was the order of the day.

The competition actually started the previous day when 4 players were required to “chip-off” for 1 spot to make up the 19-man field.

In a precursor of things to come in the main event, the quality of chips by the 4 involved left a lot to be desired. Frank Van Hattum was the best of a very bad bunch and made it through to the ‘Big Show’.

Despite one player arriving with seconds to go before disqualification, the 19 nervous players got underway under the watchful eye of Andy Roche and Dave Lockton (referees) with top qualifier Ritchie Taitoko hitting the first ball.

Luke Murray had the dubious honour of doing the “walk of shame” after losing a chip off with John Drent and Mark Mora, even though the latter had made a visit to the neighbouring house’s front lawn.

An audible sigh came from the remaining 18 players as they confidently moved to the second tee. Perhaps too confidently for Frank VH, as he hit his tee shot miles out of bounds and finished with a 7 and was gone. The highlight of the hole was Kevin Wall’s hole out from the front bunker, although it was a distant memory on the next hole (3) when he was adjudicated to have only just passed the Ladies tee by 10cm.

A chip-off was required here to eliminate Damien the destroyer Dunlop, who was many people’s pick to go all the way. A tough call here as the 3 in the chip-off all carded a nett 5.

The alarm clock was still not working for the late arriving Welshman Taff Morris on 4 who obviously went to sleep on the green and 4 putted. The hole was also notable for Brian Doherty not making the ladies, a discussion no doubt to be re-commenced next time he’s at the bar.

On hole 5 a 7-way chip-off was required with the dastardly Dave Lockton positioning this behind the greenside bunker. 3 of the players put their ball in the bunker, with the worst being Kevin Wall.

Hole 6 saw Brett Ranga bite the dust after hitting an uncharacteristic shot into the right-hand trees and needing to chip out. After playing a nice shot onto the green, he muffed the putt and carded a 5.

Hole 7 was the end of David P, who had a nett 8. The less said about that, the better.

With 12 players still in with a chance, it was surprising to witness no-one hitting the green on 8! 3 players were required to chip again after carding Nett 5's with no-one again making the green. DC3 was the worst of this bad bunch and he joined his name sake from the previous hole in exiting.

Grant Wenzlick departed on 9 after duffing his way down the fairway and signing for a Nett 6.

Number 10 saw a 6-way chip-off with John Drent taking himself away for a severe spanking, after chipping so poorly and departing.

Number 11 is always a difficult hole for low handicappers to get past, and so it proved again with Logan Phillips shooting 5. At least he was able to leave his clubs at the club house.

Brian Doherty carded a 6 on hole 12 and was eliminated after everyone else had 5 or better.

A chip-off was required on hole 13 between Deadly Daryll Denyer and Rob Page. Unfortunately, the pressure of just returning from 6 weeks in Europe was too much for the Page Boy and he was a gone burger.

Hole 14 was witness to 2 more fannies. Rhys Peeden (the representative player of the year for 2026) and John Trethaway hit their tee shots just off the front of the tee block, which left them a lot of work to do. Rhys added to the calamity by 3 putting which saw him depart.

With only 5 players left at hole 15 (we were down to 1 Dave Campbell by this stage) things were beginning to hot up. A chip-off was required between

Deadly Daryll Denyer and Mark Mora. MM, who had the ignominy of seeing his ball remain stationary after he had swung at it and hitting the ground, watched in horror as DDD bunted his chip 6 inches to win.

On 16 a chip-off was required to separate John Trethaway and Ritchie Taitoko. After chipping exquisitely all day, John's day was over when he faltered. Deadly birdied the hole and Big Dave had a par.

And so to the 17th. With 2 single figure handicappers and the reigning Summer Shootout Champion left, it was anybody's game. Unfortunately for Richie he chose now to produce his worst swing of the day and went out of bounds. In a repeat of the last hole, Deadly birdied the hole and Big Dave had a par. Richie gone.

Big Dave obviously has an effect on people, because Deadly then chose this moment to have his worst tee shot and hooked it out of bounds. Dave calmly hit 2 beautiful shots up the middle, chipped and putted, and "that's all she wrote".

For the first time EVER: the winter and summer shootout has been won by the same man in the same year. An amazing feat.

The 2026 deserved winter shootout Champion: Dave Campbell