



AGA Open Championship 2018
Frilford Heath Golf Club 21 to 23 May 18
Championship Report

The 2018 AGA Open Championship, once again generously sponsored by Qioptiq as part of the Team Army initiative, returned to Frilford Heath Golf Club. The Red Course, used for the event, was in excellent condition following the warm and dry weather of late. Straight driving was a must as the fairways were hard and the rough was long and thick.

The weather for the competition was very warm. The main competition was being played off the White Tees, which measured 6785 yards; the par was 72 with a Standard Scratch Score (SSS) of 73. There was an excellent field of 70 players with handicaps ranging from +2 to 16; only 14 players did not have a single figure handicap. There was also one female playing: LCpl Kirsty Kennedy RE, the 2017 Army Ladies matchplay runner-up.

Scoring in the first round on Tuesday 22 May 18 was reasonable. The best round of the morning went to Col (Retd) Mark Snape from Thales with a superb 70, which really was a round of two halves; 40 (4 over) on the front 9 and 30 (6 under par) on the back. SSgt Paul Dickinson R Signals was in second place with a 73, Gdsm Jordan Slater Cldm Gds on 74 and SSgt Stu Hawkins RAPTC and Mr Glyn Hannah on 76. LCpl Dean Farrimond RE playing off an 11 handicap scored an 80, net 69, in the handicap part of the event. The Combined Standard Scratch score (CSS) was 75.

Despite a stiffening breeze in the afternoon, the scores improved with 17 of the 69 players equaling the SSS of 73 or better. Cpl Ben Churchill RE, who had had a very poor morning with an 80, got himself back in the tournament with a 71. Fus Lewis Phillips 1 RRF, who had been playing some excellent golf of late, reducing his handicap from 4 to scratch since last August, scored a 73, as did Slater. Maj Mick Burgess QRH and Mr Chris Woolsey both scored 74. Snape only managed a 77. The CSS dropped to 73. The cut line for the 30 best scores and ties was set at 166, exactly the same as at Little Aston Golf Club last year. Leading the pack were Slater and Snape on 147, Phillips and Dickinson on 150 with Churchill on 151. 34 golfers made the cut, and the remainder would have some relief in the 36-Hole Stableford competition played off full handicap off the Yellow Tees; more about that later.

A cool and somewhat overcast start to the morning faced the early starters; however the weather remained favourable for the day, with warm sunshine. Play got underway at 0745 hrs. In the Stableford event Capt Benjy Brown R Signals and Sgt Milan Rai R Signals each scored an impressive 37 points with Cpl George Dickinson REME on 36, WO2 Carl Wray REME on 35 and three others on 34. The competition of the yellow tees was proving to be a slightly easier course for the higher handicapped golfers. The CSS was 74. In the main event, Churchill followed up his previous round form with a superb 70, four shots better than Woolsey on 74 and 5 better than Burgess, Slater and Paterson on 75. This left the 54-hole scores as follows: Churchill on 221, Slater 222, Snape 226 with Woolsey and Burgess on 227. The betting money was on Churchill but there was a lot of golf to be played.

The sun shone in the afternoon with the temperatures touching 22 degrees. In the Stableford competition, Bdr Dan Hunt RA and Cpl Sam Shrubsole REME each scored 36 pts with Maj Sean Stevenson RLC, Maj Scott Hewitt AAC, LCpl Kirsty Kennedy RE and WO2 Sanjeev Rai R Signals on 35 and three others including Rai M on 34; the CSS was

73. Collating the scores at the end of play meant that Sgt Milan Rai was the 36-Hole Stableford Champion on 71, Stevenson runner-up on 69 and Rai S third on 68.

Moving to the main event and it was clear after 9 holes that Churchill remained the firm favourite with Slater and Snape falling off the pace. In fact the only player making a charge was Fus Jonny Stevenson Scots who scored an excellent 71, but he had been well behind the leaders following an initial 84 in his first round. Woolsey and Burgess scored 73 and 74 respectively and Slater managed a 75. However the round of the day and the Championship was an excellent 67 (5 under par) from Churchill, which gave him an overall score of 288, level par; considering he started with an 80, this was most impressive. The CSS was 74. This is the 7th time he has won the event and he is now only one behind WO2 Ian Gray RAOC, who holds the record with 8 victories. In the handicap event, Farrimond continued his domination with every round below the CSS; LCpl Samuel Davis RE was second some 11 shots behind.

Our sincere thanks go to the Chairman, Captain, Committee, Managers and staff of FHGC for allowing the AGA to hold the Championship, especially during a very busy period for the Club. In addition, huge thanks go to Jason Botterill of Qioptiq for staying to present the prizes. Special mention must go to the AGA officials for running the event in their usual professional and tireless manner both at the Club and back in the office. Finally the AGA is eternally grateful to Qioptiq as sponsor of the event and Thales as the AGA Headline sponsor for 2018.

Summary of results:

- Open Champion (W&G Salver) – Cpl Ben Churchill RE (288).
- Runner-Up (O'Regan Plate) – Gdsm Jordan Slater Cldm Gds (297).
- Handicap Champion (Aden Cup) – LCpl Dean Farrimond (285).
- Senior Winner (Carveth Salver) – Maj Mick Burgess QRH (301).
- Stableford Handicap Winner (K Smith Memorial Trophy) – Sgt Milan Rai R Signals (71 pts).
- CSS Scores (SSS 73):
 - Championship 22 May 18 – 75 (AM) and 73 (PM).
 - Championship 23 May 18 – 73 (AM) and 74 (PM).
 - Stableford 23 May 18 – 74 (AM) and 73 (PM).

All the scores have been published on the website "How Did I Do" under "Army Golf Association" in the Club Directory.

On a very sad note, the first Secretary of the AGA/AWSA in the Army Sport Control Board, Maj (Retd) John Ayres, who served from 1991-2000, passed away on 28 Apr 18 following a short illness. His memorial service took place on the final afternoon, which meant a considerable number of the AGA golfers were unable to attend. However, to mark his passing, there was a minutes silence observed by all the golfers on the course at 1500 hrs; our deepest sympathy goes out to his family.

The Future

The 2019 AGA Open Championships will be at **The Nottinghamshire from 20 to 22 May 2019**. AGA members should note that this is open to both Full and Associate members of the AGA with the field limited to about 72 players; all interested in playing whatever handicap should enter. Entry forms will be available on the website in early 2019. Any queries should be directed to the AGA Office on 94222 7078 or 01252 787078.

Trophy Winners Pictures
(all pictured with Mr Jason Botterill from Qioptiq)

Cpl Ben Churchill RE – 2018 Army Open Champion (William & Glyns Salver)



Gdsm Jordan Slater Cldm Gds – 2018 Runner-Up (O'Reagan Plate)



LCpl Dean Farrimond RE – 2018 Handicap Champion (Aden Cup)



Maj M Burgess QRH – 2018 Senior Open Winner (Chris Carveth Salver)



Sgt Milan Rai R Signals – 2018 Stableford Winner (Ken Smith Memorial Trophy)

