



ARMY

AGA OPEN STABLEFORD CHAMPIONSHIP 2018
WHITTINGTON HEATH GOLF CLUB 31 & 1 AUG 18
CHAMPIONSHIP REPORT



The 2018 AGA Open Stableford Championship took place at Whittington Heath Golf Club (WHGC) near Lichfield, Staffs on Tue 31 Jul and Wed 1 Aug 18. There was a nearly full field of 67 players.

With the very warm weather for the summer of 2018, the course was in a hard condition and the rough, whilst thick was wispy; the greens were in great condition and running well. The field comprised a large number of regular attendees. The 2017 Champion was playing, Fus Lewis Phillips RRF but his handicap had dropped from 4 to scratch, so his chance of winning the handicap event was slim. The early starters on Day One faced a deluge of rain, which fortunately stopped before play commenced; this softened the course somewhat and made score slightly easier, despite some of the tricky pin positions.

Leading in Round One with good scores of 40 points were SSgt Keith Simmonds RE and Mr Phil Lowndes; this was closely followed by WO2 Danny Miller R Signals and SSgt Colin Anderson RLC on 39 pts. There were 6 players scoring 36 to 38 points. The Competition Scratch Score (CSS) was 71. The scores were less impressive in the afternoon with only 7 players achieving 36 or better. However, Simmonds had the best score with a superb 42 points, a gross score of 69, one under par, playing off a handicap of 5! This left the leader board after two rounds in order; Simmonds on 82 with Lt Col Ben Baldwin Para on 75, Cpl George Parsons Para and Cpl Fraser Kinninmonth RLC both on 72 pts with four others on 71. Simmonds looked to be the bookies favourite, but there was a lot of golf to play. The other highlight of Round 2 was the hole-in-one by SSgt Neil Wigman AGC (MPGS) on the 7th hole, 184 yards with a 5 iron; it was his first one.

Slightly overcast conditions greeted the players on Wednesday morning, but it was still warm with temperatures due to rise. SSgt Paul Dickinson had the best morning round with 38 pts, 4 players scored 37 and another 4 scored 36 pts, which included the 36-hole leader Simmonds. Most surprisingly there was another hole-in-one on the 7th hole (different location than Day One); WO2 Jason Moore AGC (SPS), a regular at Whittington who always play well at the event. So the 54-hole scoreboard had Simmonds out in front on 118 with a commanding lead of 11 pts from Col (Retd) Phil Bates, Capt Scott Dunn SASC and WO2 Smudge Smith RE all on 107. It was clearly Simmonds' Championship to lose; could he maintain his excellent form?

The afternoon weather remained cloudy with some sunshine and a pleasant temperature of 23 degrees. Whilst the CSS remained at 71, only 5 players bettered 35 pts. Maj Dave Fox RLC lead with 40 pts, Lowndes and Simmonds had 39 and Kinninmonth and LCpl Giles Paver AGC (MPGS) with 38 pts. Simmonds' form over the two days was remarkable and his score of 157 was one better than Phillips' score in 2017 and is now the record for the Championship. Playing off a handicap of 5, which will come crashing down, it was a superb performance and he won the main three trophies, a feat not achieved before. Maj (Retd) Jim Taylor and Mr Chris Bartley, had generously donated a fourth trophy for the best round of the Championship; needless to say that this was also won by Keith with 42 pts in Round 2! He won the handicap event by 13 pts and the scratch by 8. For those interested, the CSS for each of the four rounds was 71 balanced against a par of 70 and SSS of 71. All results are detailed in "Army Golf Association" at www.howdidido.co.uk.

Our thanks go to Whittington Heath Golf Club for once again allowing the AGA to hold this Championship, for the condition of the course and the usual superb Staffordshire hospitality shown to all. Praise must also go to the President (Bob White), Captain (Ray Scambler), Chief Operating Office (Mike Wilson), Ian Summerton and Terry Dell who provided starting support on the 1st and 10th holes and to the WHGC Secretary, Jenny Burton for her invaluable assistance. Thanks also to the AGA Officials – Jim Taylor, David Dufall, Keith Seddon, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary for organising and running the event. Finally the AGA is eternally grateful to Thales, the event sponsor and Headline Sponsor of the AGA for 2018 and the Army Sport Control Board Charitable Fund.

Summary of Results

- Open Stableford Champion (AGA Handicap Cup) – SSgt Keith Simmonds RE 157 pts.
- Runner-Up – Mr Phil Lowndes 144 pts (OCB).
- 3rd – Cpl Fraser Kinninmonth RLC 144 pts.
- 4th – Cpl James Neale REME 139 pts (OCB)
- 5th – SSgt Brad McCallum R Signals 139 pts.
- Senior Winner (Senior's Shield only) – SSgt Simmonds 157 pts
- Senior Winner (Prize) – Col (Retd) Phil Bates 140 pts.
- Scratch Winner (Courage Cup) – SSgt Keith Simmonds 137 pts
- Round Winners:
 - Round One – SSgt Simmonds 40 pts
 - Round Two – SSgt Simmonds 42 pts
 - Round Three – SSgt Paul Dickinson R Signals 38 pts
 - Round Four – Maj David Fox RLC 40 pts
- Best Round of the Championship (Taylor/Bartley Trophy) – SSgt Simmonds 42 pts
- CSS for each round was 71 against a par of 70.

The Future

The 2019 Championship will take place on 30 and 31 Jul 19, with a practice round on Mon 29 Jul 19. This event is open to all Full and Associate members of the AGA with the field limited to 72 players; all interested in playing whatever handicap are encouraged to enter either by post or preferably online at www.armygolf.co.uk (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.

THALES



2018 Champion – SSgt Keith Simmonds RE with all 4 trophies
With Col (Retd) Mark Snape (Thales) and WHGC Captain Mr Ray Scambler

