



AGA Open Championship 2019
The Nottinghamshire Golf and Country Club
20 to 22 May 19
Championship Report



The AGA Open Championship was held this year at the Nottinghamshire Golf and Country Club on their Championship course and was once again generously sponsored by Qioptiq as part of the Team Army initiative. The Championship course was in excellent condition, with the recent period of rain proving sufficient to generate some early growth for the green keepers to work their magic. Good course management was the order of the day and anything not on the fairway was to be punished, on the front nine by water and on the back nine by the thickness of the rough; straight driving was a must.

The weather for the competition was very warm and sunny and perhaps the practice round created a “false sense of security” with many players carding low scores. However, on competition day the wind picked up and the head green keeper ordered a double cut and iron for the greens. Needless to say this put a whole new complexion on the course. The main competition was being played off the White Tees, which measured 6272 yards; the par was 71 with a Standard Scratch Score (SSS) of 72. We decided to extend the advertised field of 63 to 66 to allow all entrants to play. Handicaps ranged from +2 to 20 and only 12 players did not have a single figure handicap. Unfortunately there were no female golfers this year.

The first round proved tough with the bright sunshine drying out the freshly ironed greens and the ever present breeze further testing everyone’s game, Only two players carded a score of level or better, Fus Lewis Phillips RRF lead the pack with an excellent 69 and in the process, created a new course record. He was followed closely by Cpl Ben Churchill RE on 71. Other notable scores from the chasing group, who at this stage were very much still in contention, were SSgt Kerry Roberts RA on 72, Lt Neil Williams LANCS on 75, Col (Retd) Mark Snape on 75, Cpl Ritchie Over RE on 76 and a further 3 on 77; LCpl Jamie Smith R WELSH, Sgt Matt Bruce-Smith Inf and Lt Col Mick Burgess QRH. The Combined Standard Scratch (CSS) was 73.

It would be remiss not to mention at this stage, the dedication of the men’s Army Team Manager, WO1 Dave Sanby AGC, who managed to stumble and fall waist deep into a lake whilst trying to assist his playing partner in looking for his ball. Needless to say he manfully soldiered on to finish his round with a steady 81, 10 over Par.

With a stiffening breeze in the afternoon causing increasing problems, low scores were at a premium with the leader board changing frequently. Burgess carded the best score of the afternoon with an excellent 67 and broke the course record posted during the morning round by Phillips. Speaking of Phillips, he continued his superb form from the morning with 71 level par making him the Clubhouse leader after day one. Capt Jack Musgrove RA made a move upwards with a 1 over 72, Williams N had another decent round with 74, Sgt Gajendra Gurung RE was on 75 and there were two on 77; SSgt Adam Hayward RA and Mr Matt Dale (ex RAPTC). The CSS crept up to 74.

The cut for the top 27 plus ties was made at 165 so 30 players continued in the main competition and the remaining 33 would have some “relief” in the 36 hole Stableford competition played off full handicap, again played from the white tees.

So after day one the leaderboard stood at:

Fusilier Lewis Phillips RRF	140
Lt Col Mick Burgess QRH	144
Lt Neil Williams LANCS	149
Cpl Ben Churchill RE	150
Capt Jack Musgrove RA	151

The weather was somewhat on the change for the start of day two, overcast and with little wind for the early starters; however as the morning progressed, the wind picked up slightly and the sun was back by midday. The morning round commenced at 0744, and instantly saw a 2 shoot swing between the leading group of three and with Churchill bouncing the burn for a birdie on the first while others dropped shoots. The day was set for some impressive golf with a lot to be played for and small margins of error being punished by either the water or the long rough. As the players adjusted to the morning conditions there were 14 cards submitted in the 70s; Mr Dave Holyoak on 71, Burgess 72, Churchill and Phillips 73, Musgrove and Williams N 74 and Snape and Sanby 75 and 6 other 78 or better.

In the Stableford competition scoring was equally as good with the top 10 scores all coming in above 34 pts. Lt William Moore RLC sat atop the leaderboard at the end of round 1 with 38 pts playing off 12. LCpl James Watson AGC was on 36, WO2 Dean Gibson R Signals, SSgt John Williams RE and Sgt Callum Hoyle Int Corps were all on 35. By lunch time the sun was at its height and with the temperature around 21 degrees, the afternoon session would become a real test for all.

Temperatures touched 22 degrees on Wednesday afternoon, perfect conditions for the final rounds. In the Stableford competition, there was some consistent scoring throughout the afternoon with 10 players carding over 30 pts for their round. Moore maintained his early form with 35 pts, although the pick of the round was SSgt Roger Malcolm R Signals with an impressive 39 pts. Unfortunately, his first round score was not sufficient to move him into contention. Others moving up the leaderboard were SSgt Trevor Cooke REME and Cpl Steven Farnworth LANCS with 35 pts and 36 pts respectively. Collating the scores at the end of the day saw Moore winning the 36 Hole Stableford Competition with a combined score of 73 pts, with Cooke 69 pts and Farnworth 68 pts holding on to Runner Up and third respectively.

Moving to the main event and it was clear after 9 holes that Phillips was the man to beat and so remained the firm favorite with Churchill, Burgess, Williams N and Musgrove struggling to make up ground on the impressive and consistent young Fusilier. With three of the top five all scoring a credible two over 73 it was Phillips' championship. He never wavered eventually crossed the line with a superb total two over par 286 and a 6 shot lead over Burgess and 10 over Churchill.

Our sincere thanks go to the Chairman, Captain, Committee, Managers and staff of The Nottinghamshire Golf and Country Club 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 and Peter Jones of Qioptiq for their continued support and for visiting over days two and three and to Mark Snape of Thales as headline sponsor and of course 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.

Summary of results:

- Open Champion (W&G Salver) – Fus Lewis Phillips RRF (286)
- Runner-Up (O'Regan Plate) – Lt Col Mick Burgess QRH (292)
- Handicap Champion (Aden Cup) – Mr Dave Holyoak (308)
- Senior Winner (Carveth Salver) - Mr Matt Dale (Ex RAPTIC) – (310)
- Stableford Handicap Winner (K Smith Memorial Trophy) – Lt William Moore RLC (73pts)

CSS Scores (SSS 72):

- Championship 21 May 19 – 73 (Rd 1) and 74 (Rd 2)
- Championship 22 May 19 – 72 (Rd 3) and 73 (Rd 4)
- Stableford 22 May 19 – 72 (Rd 1) and 73 (Rd 2)

All the scores have been published on the website “HowDidIDo” under “Army Golf Association” in the Club Directory.

The Future

The 2020 AGA Open Championship will be held at **Little Aston GC from 18 to 20 May**. AGA members should note that this is open to both Full and Associate members of the AGA with the field limited to about 63 players; all interested in playing, whatever handicap, should enter. Entry forms will be available on the website in early 2020. Any queries should be directed to the AGA Office on 94222 7078 or 01252 787078.

Trophy Winners Pictures

Fus Lewis Phillips RRF – 2019 Army Open Champion (William & Glynns Salver)



Mr Dave Holyoak – 2019 Handicap Champion (Aden Cup)



Lt William Moore RLC – 2019 Stableford Winner (Ken Smith Memorial Trophy)

