

Hickory

The Hickory Grail • The Swedish Hickory Championship
Falsterbo GK • 30 July – 1 August 2009



Grabbing the Grail. US team Secretary John Crow Miller, Europe Captain David Kirkwood and US Captain Roger Hill.

Grail golfers played at the highest level



Our heroes – here they come.



BGCS Captain David Hamilton celebrated a decisive win for match-play golf.



At last – relaxing. Swedish organizers Jörgen Linse, Adam Mednick, Claes Kvist and Pehr Thermaenius.

Europe defeated USA in the sixth contest for The Hickory Grail in Falsterbo, on the southern tip of Sweden. But the real winner was matchplay golf. The teams enjoyed golf at the highest level, according to A.J. Balfour's definition – the days, the green and the opponents were all highly "tolerable".

To start with the days, they were splendid with an interesting breeze that rewarded links-smart players. The green was Sweden's premier links course in excellent condition. After a rather wet summer the fairways were unusually green. David Hamilton, Captain of the British Golf Collectors, observed that the players often found their balls resting in inviting "brassie lies".

The opponents, finally, were two teams of golfers eager to win, but more importantly playing golf in the finest tradition of the game.

After the usual flag raising ceremony, led by a piper, the fourball matches started in the afternoon of Thursday 30 July. In the top match Europe's – and Sweden's – Pierre Fulke and Adam Mednick played against Randy Jensen and Mike Stevens for USA. A crowd of spectators followed the match and they were treated to some spectacular shots. But they could also see that hickory golf is a difficult game that even these four professionals could not always master. The European pair proved the stronger, undoubtedly helped by their knowledge of the links.

Europe held a one-point lead after the fourballs and looked like extending it in the

foursomes on Friday morning. But the reliable firm of Wehring-Farmer came in with a point in the last match. So the scene was set for the singles with Europe holding the slimmest possible lead, 6 1/2- 5 1/2.

Europe's captain David Kirkwood explained his tactical dispositions: "Sweden, Sweden, Sweden."

He sent out Pierre Fulke, Claes Kvist and Klas Ohlsson in the first three matches and they came back with three wins. Joe Guerard and Rick Wolff fought back but then came Ian Hislop, John Pearson, Mika Hjorth and Willie Tanner with victories.

When Mark Wehring came in with his third win, the match was already decided and the score was 14 1/2 - 9 1/2.

The beaten Americans came back strongly in the song contest. The European team teed off with regular song writer Ron Beatt's 2009 hit, extolling the courage and skill of the home side. The guests answered with team secretary John Crow Miller's adaptations of Abba songs, reminding winning captain David Kirkwood to look after the Grail until 2011. The match was a draw.



Mika Hjorth scored Finland's first Grail win, playing with Antti Paatola in the fourballs.



"A tolerable day, a tolerable green and a tolerable opponent..." A.J. Balfour would have enjoyed playing in the Grail match at Falsterbo.



Grailers (left to right): Nigel Notley, lined up at the Falsterbo lighthouse. Randy Jensen watched Adam Mednick drive into the wind on the long 13th hole. Mike Beckerich and caddy Breck Speed agreed on the line. John Crow Miller was at the first tee to encourage his players.

Hickory faces



Nigel Notley worked in the Grail back office, handling the captain's e-mail correspondence.



John Crow Miller is the American team's untiring master of one thousand details.



Our BGCS president Philip Truett, as always at hickory events, raised the level of elegance.



Ron Beatt is a regular in Sweden and the European team's songwriter.



Mike Beckerich brought home a valuable win for the US team in the foursomes.



Randy Jensen brought star quality to the Grail match and the Championship.

The teams in the sixth contest



EUROPE. 1 Klas Ohlsson. 2 John Still. 3 Jörgen Linse. 4 Tony Norcott. 5 Owe Werner. 6 Antti Paatola. 7 John Mullock. 8 Chris Homer. 9 Andreas Wijkström. 10 Mika Hjorth. 11 Christoph Meister. 12 Ian Hislop. 13 Hamish Ewan. 14 Ron Beatt. 15 Patric Andersson. 16 David Kirkwood. 17 Claes Kvist. 18 Willie Tanner. 19 Rudi Tanner. 20 Pierre Fulke. 21 John Pearson. 22 Clive Mitchell. 23 Philip Truett. 24 Adam Mednick. 25 Nigel Notley. 26 Scott Patrick. 27 John Sherwood. 28 Lionel Freedman.



USA. 29 Breck Speed. 30 Mark Wehring. 31 Rick Bauer. 32 John Crow Miller. 33 William Farmer. 34 Mike Stevens. 35 Curt Sampson. 36 Randy Jensen. 37 Rob Ahlschwede. 38 Roger Hill. 39 Joe Guerard. 40 Jim Davies. 41 Chris Deinlein. 42 Ken Holz. 43 Mike Beckerich. 44 Rick Wolffe. 45 Jay Harris.



Hickory faces



Scott Patrick, Swedish Hickory Champion in 2004, holds a Scotland-Sweden season ticket.



Rob Ahlschwede shared his knowledge of club maintenance with the Falsterbo players.



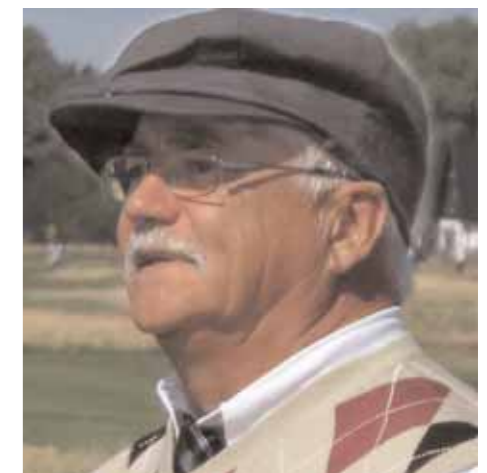
Europe won the Grail – but no European player could beat Rick Wolffe.



Hamish Ewan had escaped from the BGCS engine room to play in the Grail match.



Clive Mitchell refused to lose when the Americans fought back in the singles.



Joe Guerard went out twice and came back with wins in both matches.

Look at this – golf is growing



Britta Nord of Bro-Bålsta GK is one of the players that drives hickory golf in Sweden towards a bright future. Britta is a regular at the Championship and in her club's hickory team.

A record 182 golfers returned cards in the twelfth Swedish Hickory Championship on the links of Falsterbo GK. Visitors from Europe and America even said it was the biggest field in the world since hickory golf was awakened like a Sleeping Beauty.

And not only was the Championship big, it was also beautiful. The ladies skirts fluttered in the light wind while gentlemen, properly dressed for golf, lined the horizon.

The gentlemen's championship was decided in a playoff between former tour professionals Per G Nyman, Växjö, and Pierre Fulke, Eksjö. Their scores of 74, three over par, show that the links was not defenceless even in excellent scoring conditions. Per G Nyman holed the winning putt for a birdie three on the 20th hole.

He started to play with hickories last year after a friend had been to watch the championship and bought a set of clubs. This is how hickory golf grows in Sweden. The game has reached critical mass. Nine hickory golf societies have sent out invitations to open competitions this season.

The ladies championship was won by the holder, Marie Wennersten-From, from



Assistant pro Markus Turtiainen took his junior players out to watch the Championship.



2009 Swedish Hickory Champions Marie Wennersten-From and Per G Nyman.

Lund, with a score of 90. The veterans' championship went to Thomas Frick of the host club with a score of 88.

Among the guests, Mark Wehring came closest to winning a championship. He rounded off three days of steady golf with a 76 to finish third and he won the handicap prize.

The 13th Swedish Hickory Championship will be played on 24 July 2010 at the Kevinge course of Stockholms Golfklubb. For further information, please visit the website of the Swedish Society of Golf Historians, <http://golfhistoriska.golf.se>. There you will also find Sveriges Hickorykalender, with dates and contact details for hickory golf competitions in Sweden.



A trio of champions played in the final group (left to right): Defending champion Anders Carlsson, 2007 champion Pierre Fulke and multiple hickory champion Randy Jensen. Christoph Meister, president of the EAGHC, carried for Randy.



The jury for the atmosphere prize had a long shortlist, including (left to right): Falsterbo's Ann Stahle, 2000 winner Christian Lefèvre, starters Lennart Molander and Sven Rüter, the winner Johan Eriksson with caddy Herman Drakhammar and Falsterbo's Charlotte Becker.

Hickory faces



Klas Ohlsson is the center of the hickory hub at Lunds Akademiska GK in southern Sweden.



Mike Stevens maintained his delicate timing while playing alongside some quick swingers.



Tony Norcott scored a win in the bestballs together with Grail rookie Jörgen Linse.



Chris Homer, champion in 2001, helped us get hickory golf growing in Sweden.



Finland's Grail rookie Mika Hjorth has played hickory golf since 1996.



Ken Holz won his foursome together with touring (in Sweden) partner Joe Guerard.



Sure, winning is not everything. Hickory golf has so much more to offer. But Europe's captain David Kirkwood clearly enjoyed lifting the Grail.

So many winners

FOURBALL		FOURSOME		SINGLE	
EU Fulke-Mednick	4/2	EU Ohlsson-Kvist	1UP	EUROPE	USA
US Jensen-Stevens		US Jensen-Stevens		Fulke	Jensen
EU Sherwood-Patrick		EU Truett-Histop		KVIST	Speed
US Harris-Deinlein	1UP	US Holz-Guerrard	1UP	Oelsson	Holz
EU Norcott-Linse	1UP	EU Nolte-Kirkwood		Patrick	Guerrard
US Bauer-Speed		US Wolfe-Beckerich	3/2	Mitchell	Beckerich
EU Werner-Still	A/S	EU Bratt-Mednick	1UP	Wicksbom	Wolfe
US Hill-Ahlschwede		US Deinlein-Harris		Still	Miller
EU Paatola-Hjorth	5/4	EU Tanner-Mullock	2/1	Hilop	Stevens
US Sampson-Miller		US Sampson-Bauer		Pearson	Sampson
EU Mitchell-Homer		EU Ewan-Pearson		Hjorth	Farmer
US Farmer-Wehring	3/2	US Wehring-Farmer	4/2	Tanner	Bauer
				Nolte	Wehring

The sixth contest for the Grail was a close affair. Eight matches out of 24 reached the final green and another two reached the 17th.



Randy Jensen received the Ralph Livingston III Award, presented by Philip Truett.



...and all of us enjoyed a week of good company.

