The 12th Bad Etiquette Classic

Okay, so there have been years when the editor (in his desire to conjure up a modicum of interest in the reader) has described the outcome of the Bad Etiquette Classic as "close", when perhaps a couple of contenders were challenging during the final round or when perhaps the victor's margin was a mere £15 or £20. But that wasn't "close" … that wasn't close to being close … for closeness was redefined at the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic.

Who would have thought it? Not me, probably not any of us. For not even the greatest author of fiction could have conceived such an extra-ordinary plot. All eight participants in with a shout going into the final round? Unlikely. Four putts on the final green each determining the outcome of the event? Implausible. A victor with only £1 to his name before the final game? Incredible. But this wasn't fiction, this is how it was at the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic.

Fielding the most experienced BEC line-up of all time (the "hard core eight" … with 74½ BEC's between them) and following months of balmy summer weather, this year we returned to Wales optimistic at the prospect of putting behind us the wet, windy and worst-ever conditions that had so tormented us in 2004. But as we downed a hearty breakfast on the first morning at the Vale Hotel, a sixth sense (in combination with the lashing of rain against the windows and the roll of distant thunder) stirred in us an inexplicable sense of foreboding regarding what was to come. And rightly so. The wettest round in BEC history, unputtable greens, sodden socks, saturated score cards, abandonment after 9 holes and hair-dryer usage the likes of which has not been seen since Pete's tour of Europe in 1983.

All this and more took place at the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic.

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Recognise this?

Answer on page 2

Participants at the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic enjoy balmy conditions at Royal Porthcawl

The Great "What if?"

The permutations of what might have been on the 18th green at Celtic Manor border on the unfathomable. What if David L's 5ft putt for sandy par net birdie hadn't lipped out? What if Julian had holed his par putt in the four-ball ahead to halve the nine & match? What if Pete J hadn't holed his 8 footer for par net birdie? What if David and Julian had both holed their putts? What if we'd all missed our putts? What if none of us had found the 18th green in four ….. or not found it at all? What if we'd not found Celtic Manor in the first place? ... always a possibility when travelling with the BEC's golfing elite.

Well, the long and the short of it is this; if Julian had holed his putt, no matter what anyone else had done, he'd have won. Yup, he'd have come from £22 behind going into the final round and snatched the Tea Pot. Contrastingly, if David L had holed his par putt he wouldn't have won .... he would have tied for first place with Mark …. and then what? I don't remember the BEC's Constitution being particularly vocal on the subject of a tie (or dress code in general for that matter). Would we have accepted an honourable draw in the club house in preference to a dishonourable scuffle in the car park? Might we have reverted to some form of count-back or shaken the Tea Pot for it? Might it have resulted in a penalty putt-out or putters at dawn? Might we have tossed for it … or would that not have been permitted on the terrace swing-seats? Might we have resorted to playing the 18th again, or perhaps a play-off over 18 holes? Or might we have gone the whole hog and returned the following day for a gratuitous 36? Who knows. And you know what, it gets worse. As it turns out, Mark had failed to record a net birdie at the 17th, so if David had holed his putt on the 18th, having endured the count-up, count-back, tea-pot-shake-rattle-and-roll, toss-up, toss-off, penalty putt-off, sudden death hack-off or whatever, Mark would have learned later that victory had been his but for the taking!

Scenario	Mark P	Pete J	David L	Julian
(1) "As was"	Misses 1st (£21)	Holes 3rd (£15)	Misses 4th (£13)	Misses 2nd (£17)
(2) DL holes	Misses 1st= (£19)	Holes 4th (£13)	Holes 1st= (£19)	Misses 3rd (£17)
(3) JM holes	Misses 2nd= (£21)	Holes 3rd (£15)	Misses 4th= (£13)	Holes 1st (£27)
(4) PJ misses	Misses 1st (£22)	Misses 4th (£12)	Misses 3rd (£14)	Misses 2nd (£18)
(5) PJ misses DL holes	Misses 2nd= (£17)	Misses 4th (£7)	Holes 1st (£23)	Misses 2nd= (£17)

Rising Damp

Day 1

Despite the diabolical weather there was never any doubt that we were going to play Vale of Glamorgan. Huddled beneath umbrellas by the first tee, comparing club technology (as is customary) and dry-suit seal technology (as is less customary), a show of sodden golf gloves confirmed our collective resolve to rejoin battle against the elements where we'd left off at Ballycastle a year previously. Richard was the only dissenter and (as it turned out) the only sane one amongst us.

As match 1A headed off into the torrential rain, Mark, Jez, Julian & Richard made ready on the tee oblivious to the fact that that they were about to make history as the BEC's 100th 4-ball …. and embark upon one of the least enjoyable rounds of all time with the steady downpour flooding first greens and then fairways leaving the course unplayable. Although not so for Julian (until then the epitome of damp and despair) who at the 7th made birdie net eagle with a chip to 2ft eliminating the need for "full-back-swing sub-aqua putting" that had earlier been tried, tested and found wanting.

So after 9, we thought the unthinkable, threw in the sodden towel and walked in.

Scenes off the course were no less extraordinary, with the key to the drying room more sought after than a pint of bitter and hotel spa-goers denied access to the dozen or so hair-dryers as BEC hopefuls feverishly blow-dried their trousers, under-pants, wallets, golf cards, pencils, balls and other body parts in readiness for the afternoon round.

Peter Jacobs

After a low key performance early on, Pete challenged strongly in the latter stages and will be well pleased with his 3rd place and winnings of £15 which restore him to 2nd place in the all time Order of Merit. Thanks to Pete for arranging the golf and for pursuing a full refund of our Vale of Glamorgan green fees with Pit Bull Terrier tenacity.

12th BEC	
N. Eagles	5
N. Birdies	9
L. Drives	4
N. Pins	3
Earnings	£15
Position	3rd

TOP CHUMPS ©

Records set at the 12th BEC

- First abandoned round - Vale of Glamorgan after 9 holes
- First ever net albatross (NA) - Richard R, 4th hole Southerndown (AM)
- Tightest finish - all participants within £26 of the Leader going into the final round
- Greatest turnaround - David L & Julian - 5 down after 8 but won 2up vs Peter & Richard R, Southerndown (PM)

Played 8, Lost 8

Within 2 hours of leaving the course at Vale of Glamorgan we were dry, restored (by hot coffee & bacon rolls), en route to Porthcawl and ... LOST ... stuck nose-to-tail down a dead-end country lane not half a mile from our point of departure. But with such an inevitable set-back (registering only 3.6 on the BEC debacle scale) quickly overcome, we were soon stood on Royal Porthcawl's first tee surveying a course bathed in brilliant sunshine.

Out in match 2A Pete J's tap in from 18" for birdie 2 NE at the Postage-Stamp-like 7th put he & Jez 3up against Mark & David L. But whilst down the latter pairing were far from out, clawing their way back to a respectable all square after 16 only to then concede the 17th to a partner-less Jez (while Pete chose the moment to leg it back to the club-house and enquire about accommodation) and then win the 18th as the heavens opened once more, with David's fearless 6 pipping Pete's 7 (variously involving knee-deep heather, a bomb crater and the pebble-dashed wall of the clubhouse) for the match half.

Meanwhile out in match 2B, Dave G & Julian finding themselves unexpectedly 2 up with 5 to play were left with no option but to push in all the stops, step down a gear and avert certain victory by collapsing on cue to a 2 down loss against Andy & Richard and, in so doing, enhance their remarkable record … now played 8 lost 8.

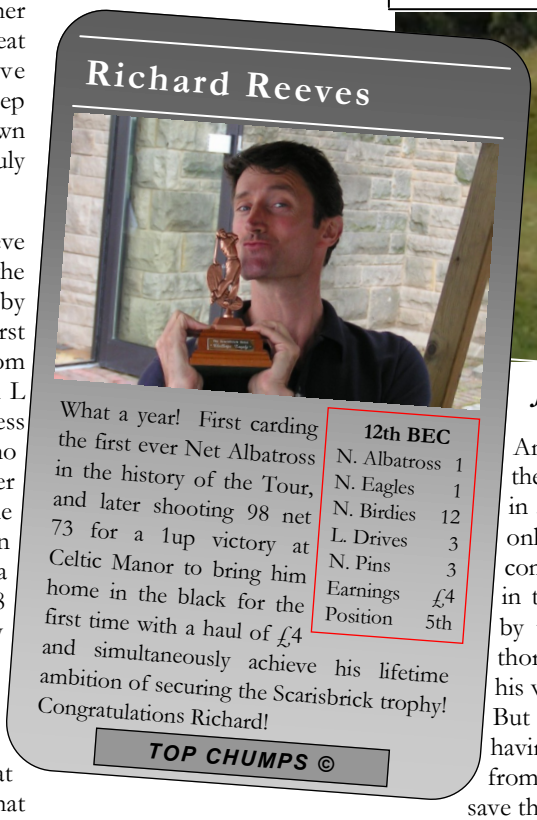
The Albatross has Landed

Day 2

Southerndown's first tee on Sunday morning was a vast improvement over the previous day with the tee above the water-table rather than below, blue skies, a great view and an impressive opening drive across to a steep dune sheep-strewn close-hewn fairway setting us up for a truly extraordinary day of golf.

For starters, who would believe that Mark's birdie NE at the 336yds 4th would be beaten by the Bad Etiquette Classic's first Net Albatross, a birdie 3 from Richard, putting he & David L 4up after 4 against the hapless Mark & Andy? And who would believe that the latter pairing would then suffer the ignominy of trailing 8 down after 8 (with the risk of a record-breaking 10&8 mauling) before eventually yielding 5&3?

And for main course, who would have thought (in a remarkable preview of what was to follow the next day) that Julian's par putt at the 18th for the match half with Pete against Jez & Dave G would lip out costing him a remarkable £17?



Further Analysis

Thanks to the marvels of modern technology, a calculator and the backs of many envelopes, the BEC's 80Gb data warehouse (back-up wot back-up?) has been reanalysed to make possible the reporting of some new, fascinating and essential statistics. Relax, take a deep breath, I know this is exciting.

Parkland vs Links

Parkland Players	
Julian	51%
Mark	44%
Peter	39%
David L	33%
Richard R	25%
Andy	20%
Links Players	
Jez	5%
Dave G	1%

So what incredible insight does the analysis offer? Well … truthfully … not a lot, but having spent half the night on it, you're getting it any-way. Firstly, we've played, 32 rounds on links and 28.5 on parkland, 31.5 in the morning and 29 in the afternoon. Okay, not riveting I know. So what else is there? Well, most of us play better on parkland than links (including Pete J who I've always thought of as a bit of a links man). Excited now? No? Okay, how about this; most of us play better AM than PM, with Richard R & Julian the clear EB's ("Early Birds") & Dave G an obvious SOFTBALL ("Suffers Out First Thing, Better After a Long Lunch").

AM versus PM

AM Players	
Richard R	42%
Julian	36%
David L	12%
Mark	12%
Andy	4%
Peter	4%
PM Players	
Dave G	22%
Jez	2%

[Figures are % by which avg. medal result is superior AM vs PM, parkland vs links etc.]

Jez. Sorely unimpressed by thorn bush up arse

And for dessert who could have imagined that play in the afternoon would be equally dramatic with 4 NB's in 5 holes from Richard putting he & Peter 5up after 8 only for David L & Julian to then stage the greatest come-back of all time to take the match 2&1? And that in the final game the extraordinary would be replaced by the absurd with Jez chipping to the 5th despite a thorn bush up his arse and Dave G taking a call from his wine merchant before holing from 80yds at the 15th. But that was nothing as compared to the 18th where having witnessed the opposition and his partner take 3 from the tee, Dave topped his ball from tee to green to save the match with a rock-solid and memorable 7.

Day 3

Putting for Dough

A third successive year of draw-rigging before the final round paired those lying 1st & 4th (David L £16 & Jez -£1) against those lying 2nd & 3rd (Pete £9 & Mark £1) leading to a final round of such drama that the format will surely be written indelibly into the BEC Constitution. For this was a match like no other, a nail-biter from beginning to end.

Clear from the outset that a solid match win would be enough to defrock David of the Yellow Cashmere, Mark & Pete partnered selflessly & tirelessly to scrape the front nine 1up. But from the turn it was every man for himself as they battled to maintain their lead and out-do each other's tally of positive extras.

Despite mounting tension and some truly extraordinary holes (including the fierce dog-legged 12th where David & Pete tickled their balls ineffectually, and the "tighter-than-you'll-like-it" 14th where all four balls were lost from the tee) the score-line remained unaltered until the 263yds 17th where a magnificent tee-shot from Pete to within spitting distance of the green was good enough to win hole and match despite David's heroic efforts to hole for birdie and the half.

But it's not over until the fat lady sings (or in this instance until the bloke of average height & build putts from 6ft for par) and it remained likely that the outcome of the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic would be decided at the last hole. And minutes later it was with Pete running his birdie putt eight feet passed the hole, Mark missing from 12ft for par and David within a hair's breadth of holing for birdie from off the fringe. Then, "just when they thought it was all over", Pete holed his par putt back up the hill to put the 9 beyond reach, and David's 5 footer for sandy par, net birdie lipped out. "Well, it is now". But no one was too sure who had won the 12th Bad Etiquette Classic. Mark? David? Or perhaps someone in the preceding four with a sensational final round?

Mark Powderham

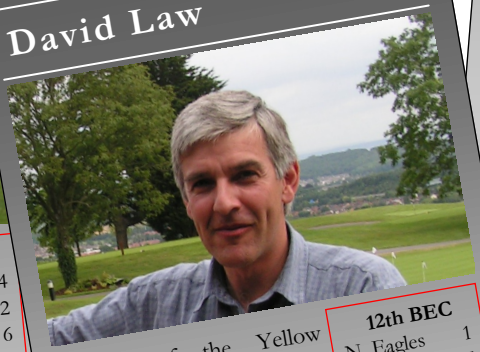
With never more than £5 to his name, only one match win throughout the event and teeing-up in the final round on just £1, Mark's was certainly a most extraordinary victory.

12th BEC	
N. Eagles	1
N. Birdies	15
L. Drives	2
N. Pins	7
Earnings	£22
Position	1st

But in so doing Mark becomes the first player to have held the Tea Pot aloft 3 times. Congratulations!

TOP CHUMPS ©

David Law



Wearer of the Yellow Cashmere after no less than 13 of the last 17 BEC rounds, David might wonder how it is that in both 2003 & 2005 he has been overhauled on the home straight. None-the-less, his recent 2nd, 1st, 4th finishes have earned him £122 and restored him to a respectable 4th place in the Order of Merit.

12th BEC	
N. Eagles	1
N. Birdies	15
L. Drives	5
N. Pins	1
Earnings	£13
Position	4th

TOP CHUMPS ©

Julian Malton

Despite not making it into the leading 4-ball for the final round, Julian came within a bald patch of repeating his remarkable North Berwick victory, with a staggering 5 NB's, NE, 3 NP's and an LD earning him £23 in the final round and hauling him from 7th to 2nd … and only a missed 5 footer at the last denying him his 3rd BEC victory.

12th BEC	
N. Eagles	4
N. Birdies	12
L. Drives	6
N. Pins	6
Earnings	£17
Position	2nd

TOP CHUMPS ©

Also Ran

Jez Ellison

This was not Jez' year. In last place after Vale of Glamorgan, Jez overcame his varied form to claw his way back to 4th= (just £1 in the red) going into the final round. But there he was caught in the cross-fire of a ferocious 3-way tussle for the Tea Pot, forced to fork-out for 18 positive extras (against just the one LD of his own) and setting him back £27 to bring him home in 7th place.

David Grimbley

And it wasn't Dave G's year either. Languishing in the lower half of the field for much of the event, Dave was unable to rediscover the form that earned him £20 and 3rd place in N. Ireland in 2004.

Highlights are hard to come by other than his spectacular 80 yard chip-in (for bogie) on the 15th at Southerndown and equal highest number of net birdies (15).

Dave will no doubt be distraught that his all time tally of 22 net eagles was surpassed this year by Pete J (23).

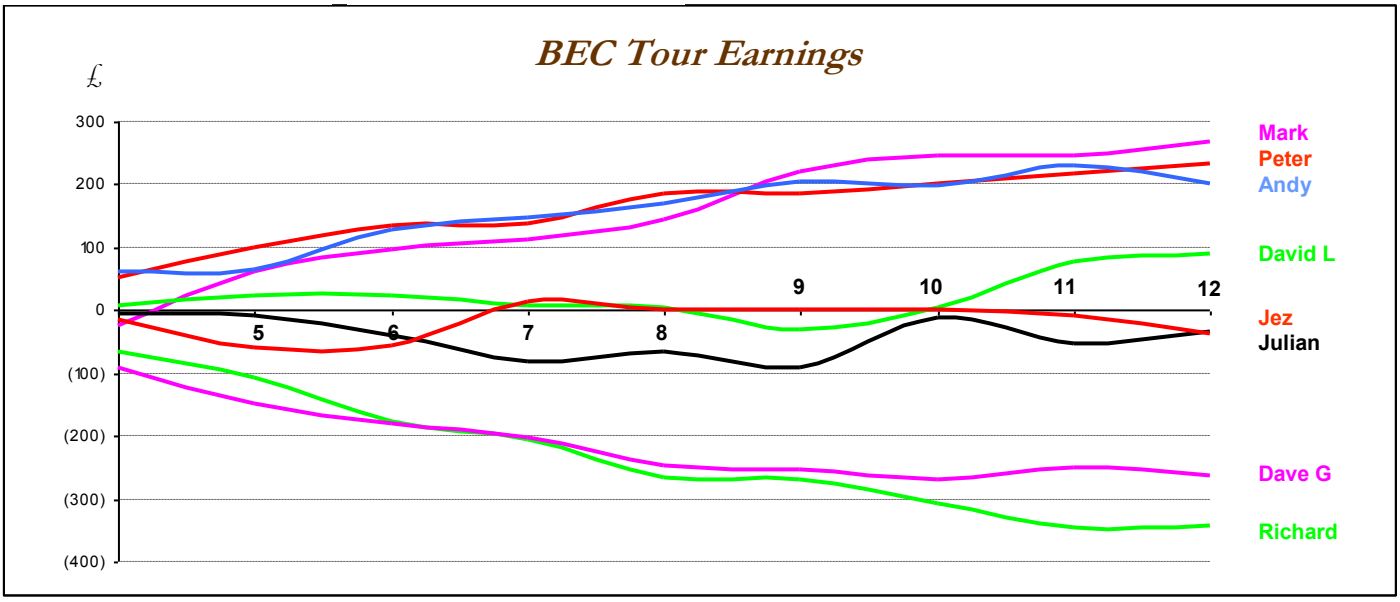
Also Ran Too

Andy Slamin

And it wasn't Andy's year either. Despite the customary moments of brilliance (exemplified at Porthcawl with a miraculous pot bunker escape for par at the 4th and a 35ft putt for birdie at the 11th) Andy struggled at the rear of the field. And just when he sensed an outside chance (teeing-off at Celtic Manor a mere £21 behind the leader) a truly disastrous positive-extra-less-net-birdie-free 98 net 83 cost him an unexpected £25 and brought him limping home in an embarrassing and unprecedented 8th place with losses of £30.

Coming so soon after his 7th place finish in 2003 and with his last recorded victory in the previous millennium, Andy will be looking for radical improvement at the 13th Bad Etiquette Classic in 2006.

BEC Tour Earnings



DEPARTURES

DATE	FLIGHT	DEPART	TIME	ARRIVE	TIME
SAT 15 JULY	FR407	LONDON STANSTED	08:40	GLASGOW PRESTWICK	09:50
TUE 18 JULY	FR422	GLASGOW PRESTWICK	17:40	LONDON STANSTED	18:55

SEE YOU AT THE 13TH BAD ETIQUETTE CLASSIC

The Courses

Ayr Belleisle	Sat PM
Troon Lochgreen	Sun AM
Troon Darley	Sun PM
Royal Troon Portland	Mon AM
Royal Troon Champ	Mon PM
Glasgow Gailes	Tue AM

The Scarisbrick Trophy Roll of Honour

2000	David Grimbley	(73)
2001	David Grimbley	(67)
2002	David Grimbley	(69)
2003	Julian Malton	(64)
2004	David Law	(74)
2005	Richard Reeves	(73)

Apology

The Editor apologises for the 297 days that it has taken to prepare the 12th BEC Write-Up. The delay is attributed to a combination of the following factors: 3 months of domestic building work, liquidation of the builder, 2 months of dispute with the local County Council, competition for computer time with other domestic users, unreasonably demanding employment, unseasonal weather, Christmas, the M25, Easter, the threat of terrorism and out-of-date printer technology.