

5th Bad Etiquette Classic

Introduction

The 5th Bad Etiquette Classic was remarkable for many reasons. Not only was it was the first BEC to be held outside the UK but it was also the first with 6 rounds of golf, a gross eagle and live vomiting action on the fairway.

Pressure from the BEC Committee's leading Francophile, to stage the event in France, finally became overwhelming when Royal Lytham, the other proposed venue, was found to be booked on the Sunday for the final round of the British Open. Meanwhile Pete J had stumbled upon a stunning offer in the Daily Telegraph of a weekend's golf in France.

Most of this year's BEC hopefuls rendez-vous'd successfully at le Folkestone Shuttle terminal at 07h30 on Sunday 19th July, but Mark and David L found their chosen cross-country route from Tunbridge Wells heavy going even in the latter's 16 x 16 Panzer and arrived a little later than intended at the front line. Unable to provide a booking reference, booking date, agent name, vehicle registration number or any other relevant piece of information, a yellow sticker was authoritatively slapped on their windscreen and the instruction given to make tracks to the long term car park (only half a mile away as the crow flies, but 6½ miles via the magnificently designed system of overpasses, underpasses, tunnels, fly-overs, roundabouts, slip roads and T-junctions). On arrival they were advised that six blokes with golf clubs had just departed in a Volvo.

Having rapidly retraced their steps to the terminal and learnt that a vehicle densely packed with golfers had indeed checked through, Mark and David checked in too maintaining a constant vigil for the bulging Volvo. Advised to make haste in view of the impending departure of the 07h51 they boarded Le Shuttle in the certain knowledge that the Dense Six would be a mere pitch-and-run ahead. At that moment David remembered his telephone. "Hi Pete how's things? us? we're on the train off? I doubt it, we've only just got on and the doors are closing oh sh** can't you get on too? sh** but weren't we all meant to be on the 07h51? okay, sorry can you catch the next one? f*** how about 4 in the car and 2 on foot? aren't they? Ashford? well try negotiating! Pete, the train's moving! we'll lose contact in the tunnel what? no it doesn't work outside the UK we'll wait for you by the @:^^\$\$(?!*£\$!~+=#;#£ Pete? f***".

Needless to say spirits beneath the Channel were humour-free as well as duty-free. Would two people have to walk to Ashford and buy further tickets? Or would Pete J come up with a cunning plan to conceal Julian and Dave G beneath

a false floor? Was there a slimmer alternative? Would Julian and Dave G return to the long term car park? Or would they forget the whole thing and go to the pub for a beer? Would Mark and David end up playing with each other? Or would they make the most of it and play golf anyway? Would this be the end of the BEC as we knew it?

Once on French soil, David parked at the side of the road at the earliest possible opportunity – lightly crushing a Citroen 2CV – and waited. After 15 minutes a steady flow of cars began to pass, and then a Volvo with gruesomely distorted faces pressed against the windows appeared, screeched to a halt with smoking tyres and burst open with an explosion of clubs, bags, bodies and carbon-dioxide.

Golfers and golfing paraphernalia were hastily redistributed, and unperturbed, our intrepid 8 put the cross-Channel debacle behind them and prepared to confront the next.



This year's participants at the Sports Bar, Le Touquet

Great "Sporting" Moments

Racing start at Hardelot - Les Dunes

Even as the curb-side rendez-vous was executed, new anxieties began to surface. Would we make the 10h27 tee-off at Hardelot? there was still some way to go and a wealth of back-seat drivers were keen to express a variety of opinions at every junction. Within the Hardelot complex, despite circling every mini-roundabout twice we still managed to pull up outside the wrong course.

Once at the correct course, it was rapid clubs out, shoes on, pay up and straight-off!

Quality Balls on Show

Over the years any golfer becomes acquainted with the jargon of the game. He takes comfort in the familiar brands of Titleist, Ultra, Maxfli, Pinnacle and Dunlop. But no such comforts are available at the BEC where the desire of some participants to minimise expenditure results in an incredible variety of lesser-known brands. Proudly exhibited this year were priceless balls from the Dr Martin's Airwaves, Norfolk Lines 1998 and Moores Roland collections.

Nail Biter of a Finish

On the 18th tee in the second of the afternoon matches, Mark and Andy found themselves all square against the two Davids. Neither Andy or Mark could match David L's fairway-splitting drive down the narrow par 5 with Andy losing his ball to the right and Mark running off the fairway into an abyss on the left. Playing a carefully calculated percentage shot David found the lake with his second, dropped out and chipped through the green in four.

Meanwhile, Mark had found the front of the green in 3 and had lagged up to 10ft making the match half look safe. But under enormous pressure, with grim concentration and in front of a sizable gallery (unofficial estimates of 4 to 5), David holed his putt from off the green for what might well have been a match-winning par 5. But, as the crowd yawned and looked at their watches went wild, Mark rolled his own putt down the hill & into the cup to halve the match.

Big Match Preparation

In true BEC spirit, sensible food, alcohol in moderation, an early night and a little light early morning practice on the driving range were rejected in favour of another late night, bowls of Moules Mariniere and vast quantities of beer. Such preparation together with varying degrees of sunburn ensured that we all felt like death as we congregated around the breakfast table on Monday morning unable to appreciate the excellent spread.

The Eagle has Landed

In match 3B Mark and Richard found themselves paired against Jez and Andy. 25 over par between them for the first four holes no one was exactly feeling good after the indulgences of the night before, but from the start it was clear that Andy was feeling even rougher than the rest. No one could therefore have anticipated his miraculous gross eagle 2 (the first in BEC history) at the 290m 5th, holing from 100m with an immaculate pitching wedge that made a bee-line for the hole as soon as it touched down.

Dinner Revisited

And if the eagle was gross and unexpected, then Andy's performance at the next hole was even more spectacular, as half way down the fairway he leaned over, put his hands on his knees and reminded the rest of the 4-ball (and the fascinated young son of a nearby French couple) what he'd had for dinner the previous evening.

Trees and What They're Made Of

Conjuring-up an impressive variety of push-shots, fades, slices, pulls, draws and hooks, the two David's set out during Match 3A to provide starkly contradictory evidence for the composition of timber. Dave L's ball sailed unhindered and back onto the fairway through thickets, woods and forests so many times that those playing with him were left in no doubt that trees consist 95% of air. But Dave G with his trusty swish-clonk-thud routine and with the ball ricocheting about his head maintained an entirely different opinion.

Short Drives and Daisy-cutters

During a most remarkable first hole in match 4B, Pete J struck his longest drive attempt at the 443m par 5 an impressive one inch. Indeed, use of the word "struck" is overly generous and totally misleading, as it was only the rush of air from his Great Big Bertha (if you'll excuse the expression) that blew the ball off the tee!



Mark Powderham receives the Pink Jacket and BEC Tea Pot from Andy Slamin on board Le Shuttle

David L meanwhile had hit a worthy longest drive down the centre of the fairway, and little realised that his world was about to be shattered by Pete who was to attempt the world's first recorded 350m 3-wood. So violent was Pete's swing that the ball scuffed along the ground at such great speed that David L barely had time to see it let-alone have a chance to move his bag lying on the fairway some 30yds ahead.

Whilst the BEC is not the Masters nor the British Open, the Rules of the Royal and Ancient are firmly applied and there was little option but to disqualify David from the match-play and penalise him 2 strokes in the medal. This had a sufficiently devastating effect upon his psyche, swing and partner (Richard)

that they found themselves plunged to 6 down after six.

Julian's 64 is not Enough

Many an average golfer might consider that a gross 86 containing no less than 6 nett birdies, a nett eagle, 3 longest drive's and a nearest-the-pin would be sufficient for any 22 handicapper to win any match against any opposition. But then your average golfer lacks a detailed understanding of the subtlety and mastery of the BEC. Despite the above remarkable performance during his 4th round, pocketing him an impressive £26, Julian and his partner Andy were unable to defeat Jez and Dave G who doggedly trailed throughout by one hole and scraped a half at the last.

A Two Horse Race

Overnight following day 2 there were those that believed it was a two horse race with Pete leading on £73 ahead of Mark on £60.

When drawn against each other in match 5A there was ... how does one put it? a certain atmosphere. For most of the match Mark did little or nothing to overhaul his rival, but thanks to 3 nett birdies from Julian, who continued in similar form to Monday afternoon, they found themselves 3 up at the turn. With Pete and Andy posting their highest gross rounds of the event,

Courses Played

Rounds 1&2	Hardelot - Les Dunes
Rounds 3&4	Le Touquet - La Foret
Rounds 5&6	Le Touquet - La Mer

Julian was able to carry Mark to a 5&3 victory. As a result, the tables were turned and the two horse race continued into the final furlong with positions reversed; Mark on £73 ahead of Pete on £60.

Worst Putt Candidate

Although it goes without saying that it was not funny at the time, perhaps mention should be made of a truly remarkable worst putt candidate on the first hole of the match just described. Into the teeth of a howling wind down this 445m par 5 Pete found the heart of the green with three magnificent shots. With only 15ft between his ball and the hole he eagerly anticipated his nett birdie only to stub the putt 2ft. A single whispered word, let alone any suggestion that the stroke was worthy of a worst putt nomination, might well have had fatal consequences.

Titanic Struggle

Meanwhile match 5B was also very closely contested with David L and Jez taking on Richard and Dave G. With contributions from all 4 players and both pairings having had a taste of the lead, they reached the turn all square. Dave G's nearest-the-pin nett birdie par 3 at the 10th and stunning shortest-drive ring-7 at the 13th were sufficient to give he and Richard a two hole lead, but after 15 they were back to all square. At the 16th it was Richard's turn to make nett birdie and go one-up, but David L pulled that back at the 17th so that as they got their first glimpse of the sea on the 18th tee they were all square for the eighth time. At the last, as Jez and Richard fell by the wayside, the two David's battled it out with Dave G fearlessly holing-out for a double bogie 6 and David L missing from 6ft for the half.

Putt for BEC History

BEC history might have been in the offing in match 6A when at the 185m (stroke 5) 2nd Dave G struck a magnificent iron to 15ft setting-up a very gettable nett albatross opportunity. But it was not to be, and sadly David suffered the double agony of seeing Julian's tee-shot roll to 14' 9" to steal nearest-the-pin, and then three-putting himself to miss-out on a nett birdie.

Accommodation

This year's accommodation did not take the form of the usual bed and breakfast, but that of the 4-star Holiday Inn Resort Le Touquet. And excellent it was too with it's "modern architecture and passageways of roofed glass". Pity we didn't make full use (or indeed any use) of the "large indoor heated swimming pool, jacuzzi, solarium, fitness room, table tennis, billiards, bicycles, locally

available sail karting, horse riding, tennis, shooting, VTT [any guesses?], casinos, sea excursions, fishing, galleries and cultural exhibitions".

BEC's Golfing Greats

Mark Powderham

From the moment his opening tee-shot split the fairway to notch up a longest drive, Mark's form looked good. Opening rounds of 85, 85, 81 and 83 made it quite clear that he was in with a very good chance of notching up his first BEC victory.

With 5 match wins, 2 nett eagles, 21 nett birdies, 12 positive extras and only 2 negative extras Mark made money in all six rounds finishing with winnings of £83, sufficient to win him the 1998 Bad Etiquette Classic and catapult his all time tour earnings into the black for the first time.

Mark received the Bad Etiquette Classic Tea Pot from last year's BEC victor Andy Slamin in a moving ceremony (120mph through the Channel Tunnel), so emotional that some couldn't bring themselves to watch.

David Law

In third place following 17 nett birdies and two match wins in his opening 3 rounds, David may momentarily have considered himself in with a chance at this year's BEC. Certainly there appeared to be greater grounds for optimism than during either of the two previous events. But alas David managed only 2 more nett birdies in the next 54 holes and, whilst managing to retain his 3rd position to the close, fell ever further behind the tournament leaders.

David's reputation for making par at the first hole of every round was blown irrecoverably out of the water this year with a bogie 6 and five double bogie 7's. He is however to be congratulated for his fifth round performance during which he became the first golfer in BEC history to play 18 holes without a single positive or negative extra. David took home a healthy £16 taking his adjusted tour earnings to £25.

Julian Malton

Unlike David L, Julian had little cause for optimism at the half way point having lost 3 matches, 17 balls and forty-six quid. Indeed, very little appeared to be going right for our friend, with no sign of a golf swing on the course, a piano at the Holiday Inn or the irrepressible Angie at the fairway's edge.

His change of fortunes during the second half of the event is therefore truly remarkable. Not only was a piano located, but following rounds of 99, 99 and 94, Julian produced a stunning 4th round 86 (nett 64) containing no less than 6



Julian delights his fans in Le Royal Bar despite the disappointment of losing his head cover

nett birdies, a nett eagle, 3 longest drive's and a nearest-the-pin. Steady performances in rounds 5 and 6 reduced his losses still further bringing him home only £4 down.

Peter Jacobs

Leader in the club house after each of rounds 1, 2 and 3, Pete might also have been contemplating a first BEC victory. And in round 4 there was no sign of any reduction in the relentless pressure that he was exerting, shooting a steady 92 with 4 nett birdies on his way with Mark to a crushing 8&7 victory (another BEC record) over David L and Richard.

However, on the final day Pete seemed to lose his way, struggling to notch up the nett birdies and longest drives that he'd made with such ease on days one and two. Two match losses meant that Pete had little choice but to settle for his third consecutive runner-up position. But whilst BEC victory continues to elude him, Pete can take consolation from this year's incredible total of 12 longest drives and his number one position on the BEC tour with adjusted earnings of £103. Pete also holds the record for the most nett birdies (92) and the most longest drives (21). Clearly Pete's day will come!

Thanks yet again to Pete for his impeccable organisation. This year he took the BEC to new heights as well as new lands in what has to be the best value for money Bad Etiquette Classic ever.

Richard Reeves

Richard's form during a couple of pre-BEC friendlies made clear that his ability to keep the ball on the course was greater than ever before, and this was dramatically confirmed by match victories in rounds 1, 2 and 3 putting him firmly in the black on £5. But, on the wrong end of a couple of crushing defeats in the closing stages and a few too many furthest-from-the-pins (6), Richard ended with losses of £42.

There can be little doubt that Richard's ability to score off the course (in down-town Le Tourquet) was greater than on, with an impressive array of birdies (one or two of them gross), some good up-and-downs and superb exploitation of preferred lies. Richard is clearly comfortable playing in the company of hookers and pullers although is prone to the occasional solitary shank.

David Grimbley

With no visible sign of pain, the BEC tour's leading sponsor crashed through the newly established £60 Maximum Liability Insurance barrier early on in the third round. And with nothing further to lose, David produced some quality golf in rounds 4, 5 and 6 with two sub 100 rounds and a good spattering of nett birdies.

David contested some of the most closely fought matches including a 1 up win, a 1 down loss and a match half, but was none-the-less bailed out by his MLI taking his adjusted tour sponsorship to £157 (excluding balls, drinks, meals, transport, accommodation and VAT). A big hand for David.

Andy Slamin

Whilst demonstrating the same trademark inconsistency as last year, the BEC Tea Pot Holder wasn't able to capitalise upon it in the same way this time round. And it's hard to understand precisely why. With 5 nearest-the-pins and 9 longest drives Andy certainly scored well in terms of positive extras. Shooting similar gross scores to last year, perhaps it was the 13 nett birdies (23 last year) and only 2 match wins that let him down.

Andy's earnings of £3 slipped him from 2nd to 3rd in the BEC order of merit.

Records set during the 5th BEC

- First gross eagle
- First Mulligans
- First overseas event
- First (and last) Shuttle debacle
- First (and last) time event consists of 6 rounds
- First round without a positive or negative extra

Jez Ellison

It was not abundantly apparent that Jez enjoyed his time on the course this year. With 5 match losses and a final round of 107 containing 14 ringed double bogies, 3 double bogies and a bogie, it clearly wasn't Jez' BEC. As he admitted later himself, he was simply "not hitting the ball well enough to enjoy it". Jez can however seek

consolation from his 7 nearest-the-pins ... more than any other player. We hope to see him again next year.

The BEC Constitution

Indicative of the sick mind that he possesses and the sad life that he leads, the BEC Founder Member took it upon himself during the months preceding the 5th BEC to prepare the first draft of the BEC Constitution. This landmark publication is expected to revolutionise management of the event.

Copies available on request from the BEC Committee.

Worst Etiquette

Notwithstanding the introduction of paragraph 10.2 of the recently inaugurated BEC Constitution, nominations for the Worst Etiquette award were not invited this year.

Handicaps

Following this year's event It has been brought to the attention of the Founder Member that a certain amount of dissatisfaction exists regarding the management of the event and in particular regarding the highly subjective handicapping system as laid out in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.5 of the Constitution.

The Committee has therefore undertaken to conduct a full review of handicapping and other issues prior to next year's event.

**See you at the 6th
Bad Etiquette Classic !**