

@rochapears press release

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News article – Pan-disability International England v Scotland “Ryder Cup” style golf event at Slaley Hall

The Disabled Golf Society today announced its team of 16 people to represent England and Wales in the sport of disabled golf being played against Scotland at Championship course, Slaley Hall in Northumberland on 7-9th October 2011.

Captain of the England Team Graeme Robertson, 48 from Berkshire, said “This Pan-Disability International will showcase the true heart of the sport of disabled golf to the world. Players have different disabilities from – amputees, one arm golfers, sight impaired, learning difficulties and a range of mobility issues such as – MS, Stroke, and Arthritis. Members have been selected based on the consistency of their performances over the year, but also illustrate what The Disabled Golf Society (DGS) is all about – different abilities, genders, aged from 17 to 70, and great team players drawn from all over the country. DGS has only been going for 18 months and I am hugely proud of our achievements in this time, to be able to form a team of such a high standard, and to have others on the reserve list and disappointed is incredible. The SDGP from the home of golf in Scotland have been going considerably longer and members are concentrated geographically, the challenge in England and Wales is to cover all the country, and we have clearly demonstrated our ability to do this.”

Dave Wilkinson, above the knee amputee from Oxfordshire, as the oldest member of Team England summed up the feeling in the team “Wonderful news, I’m very proud, honoured and grateful to have been selected. It looks as if we really have a great team”.

Jim Gales MBE, Captain of Team Scotland said, "This is the first ever pan-disability Ryder Cup match between Scotland and England, and although its called the Auld Enemies Cup, we know a lot of the English team and I'm sure that everyone wants to go out and win their games, but I know the banter and camaraderie will be great, especially at the 19th!!”

DGS is a pan-disability, not-for-profit organization, membership is free and event costs are kept low. Some members struggle with financial hardship due to their disability too, so they are ideally looking for sponsorship for the England Team but also for regional events. More information is at www.disabledgolfsociety.com

Follow us on twitter @rochapears which will be updated with pre-match news, player profiles, and news as it happens during the event

Team England (and their handicaps):

Stan Bembenek 27, Berkshire
David Cooksley 23, Nottinghamshire
Paul Cunningham 20, London
Keith Dolman 27, Essex
Darren Grey 9, Tyne & Wear
Nicki Jones 18, Powys
Maurice Lee 9, Sheffield
Peter Morgan 24, Herefordshire
Brian Parsons 22, Leicestershire
Chris Smith 19, Gloucestershire
Mark Smith 30, Derbyshire
Dave Standing 13, Lancashire
Joseph Vanaman 8, Nottinghamshire
Mark Walters 19, Kent
Dave Wilkinson 30, Oxfordshire
Lorraine White 28, Surrey

Team Scotland:

Mark Belcher 23
Stevie Cunningham (Vice Captain) 31
Jim Davidson 22
Bob Drysdale 20
Jim Gales (Captain) 30
Colin Brock 17
Kevin Harmison 3
Garry McNulty 21
Davey More 23
Bryan Neave 23
Peter Osborne 14
Kenny Raeburn 17
Thomas Kerr Scott 12

Non-Playing Support Team



Graeme Robertson
Berkshire
Captain England Team &
DGS Trustee



David Llewellyn
South Wales
DGS Senior Pro



Kevin Booth
West Yorkshire
DGS Handicap Secretary

Graeme Robertson, Director and Trustee for The Disabled Golf Society (DGS) is 48 and based in Berkshire. Graeme was diagnosed with MS 12 years ago and is passionate about golf. In 2010 Graeme and his wife Sue, inspired by the therapeutic benefits of golf, along with Christopher Smith from Gloucestershire established The Disabled Golf Society as a not-for-profit shared enterprise Community Interest Company.

Graeme was featured in the February 2011 edition of MS Society magazine and his story is on the DGS youtube website www.youtube.com/user/DisabledGolfSociety

David Llewellyn, Senior Pro based at The Vale of Glamorgan, has been coaching all levels of players from The Disabled Golf Society, and in particular the England/Wales players during 2011 at events all over the country. One of the most qualified and hugely respected figure in the world of golf, in 1987 David won the World Cup Team Championship representing Wales with Ian Woosnam. As well as his work with DGS, David also provides coaching to The On Course Foundation. David has his own website at www.davidllewellyngolf.co.uk

Kevin Booth, DGS Handicap Secretary is 52 based in Huddersfield. He has run the Order of Merit for DGS this year and is Regional Co-Ordinator for the North. Kevin has bilateral ligament damage and Osteoarthritis in both ankles and was interviewed by the [Huddersfield Daily Examiner](http://www.huddersfielddailyexaminer.co.uk) Aug 9 2011. Not surprisingly, when Kevin found out that in the course of time he will most likely have both feet amputated, it was making him seriously depressed. But he rose to the challenge of becoming heavily involved as DGS Handicap Secretary which has increased his general fitness, and through meeting other amputees and sufferers of Osteoarthritis socially through the sport has realized the road ahead doesn't have to be quite as bleak as it sounds.

About the Disabled Golf Society

Our main aims are to promote the game of golf as a pathway to a healthier lifestyle and greater social inclusion for those who are disabled, irrespective of age, gender or disability. This includes providing the means to make it easier for the disabled player to access the facilities both on and off the course. We aim to provide the equipment to permit that increased accessibility, this can be done by means of single-seater buggies specifically designed for the disabled player, bespoke club and prosthetic adaptation as well as supplying professional coaching at events from those who have been trained to teach the sport. We aim to attract not only those who have played in the past prior to an illness or injury, but also those who have never played the sport but are seeking the unique benefits of a sport which can be played by anyone either alone against the course, or in teams against each other.

We are also keen to provide a playing environment where the clubs are disabled friendly and accessible and the courses are pre-vetted to ensure that they are capable of being played by those with limited mobility. We are helping to assist in the launching of coaching academies and training sessions throughout the UK. Also from our base in Gloucestershire we aim to provide information on courses, equipment and holiday resorts for the disabled golfer. We hope to offer all of these benefits for our members and others but also employment for those in the area who are disabled and can join us.

All our members are kept aware of the activities of the society by a comprehensive web site and active facebook site, which attract new members on a daily basis. We also actively seek and need feedback from our members on such diverse subjects as new events, holiday resorts, new equipment and opportunities to volunteer and assist in future direction.

We interact with all of the governing bodies of the sport as well as some well known major suppliers and a wide cross-section of disability organisations such as The Papworth Trust, Leonard Cheshire Disability, The Stroke Association, The Cerebral Palsy Association and CP Sport, REMAP and DIAL.

In our first year in 2010 we achieved over 200 members with associates throughout Europe and have links with other disabled golfing organisations throughout the world. In 2010 we arranged or been involved with 12 events which is unique in the world of disabled golf, we have attracted a true cross section of disabilities and our members realise they can enjoy friendly and enjoyable experience.

In 2011 we intend, with the help of our funding partners to increase our membership to 500 and introduce a series of events for newcomers as well as those requesting competition plus a unique series of par-3 events for those with limited mobility. In July 2011 we were featured in a 4-page centre spread in Motability Lifestyle magazine which led to 100 new members in just one week! We have organised 24 events in 2011 and a whole series of taster sessions for those new to golf, covering all regions of England and Wales. In August 2011 we received notification of our official registration as a shared-enterprise Community Interest Company.

In 2012 we plan to launch **fairways4all** as a method of raising funds to assist those who need financial assistance with specialist equipment.

For more information contact:

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MEDIA: Follow us on twitter for this event @rochapears 07795 483 440

About the SDGP

Jim the Captain of Team Scotland said, "This is the first ever pan-disability Ryder Cup match between Scotland and England, and although its called the Auld Enemies Cup, we know a lot of the English team and I'm sure that everyone wants to go out and win their games, but I know the banter and camaraderie will be great, especially at the 19th!!

Jim, who has played in fourteen other such internationals, has Captained three of those teams to victory. Two were against England and a third, the most recent, was when he took a squad of 20 from 9 different countries, including Australia, South Africa and Germany, across to Ontario, Canada to play a Ryder Cup style match against a combined Canada and US team representing North America

Stevie Cunningham, the Team Scotland Vice Captain said, "We have quite a strong team selected from our Order of Merit for this year, all we need now is the weather. Many of our players are good matchplay golfers, so we are hoping to get the pairings right for a steady start with the foursomes on day one. It will also be nice if we do manage to win, to come home and say that Scotland actually can produce a winning sporting team".

The Scottish Disability Golf Partnership, which was created in 2004 and generated the Auld Enemies event, is governed and operated by disabled people and is the only group in Scotland which actively encourages and involves anyone of any age, with a disability, serious health problem or mobility issue and their coaches, who wish to play golf and includes amputees, the blind, deaf, those with learning difficulties, downs syndrome, stroke and heart attack victims, wheelchair users and anyone with other similar issues, who wish to learn or play the sport.

For more information contact:

Jim Gales
SDGP

www.sdgp.co.uk or by contacting info@sdgp.co.uk