

## Holt Shield

### Honorary Secretary's 2022 Annual Report

It was Robert Brown's first year as Chairman and due to his dedication to duty, he made it a successful year. Two innovations for the Holt Shield were introduced this year. Players Golf Ireland number was included on the team sheet and committee members were allocated as points of contact for the match-play stages. Both proved to be successful interventions and both will be continued next year.

In attempting to keep everyone safe the temporary rules to accommodate Covid-19 remained in place. Even though Golf Ireland's inter-team competitions continued to cause congestion to the golfing calendar, especially during the months of May and June the 2022 Holt Shield competition was once again a great success.

As in the previous year, the group matches, last sixteen, quarter-finals, and semi-finals were played in a 3 x 3 home and away match format which helped clubs manage playing matches during an extremely busy period. That said it was disappointing that some clubs still managed not to complete their fixtures in the group stages which negatively influenced the outcome of some of the groups.

The final was contested between Dunmurry and Belvoir. Over the past few years, Dunmurry has established an impressive record without actually winning the Holt Shield. However, this year they went one step better and won the Holt Shield. In the first leg, they used the horrendous weather conditions at Belvoir to their advantage by winning three matches. In the return match at Dunmurry, things looked tight when Belvoir won the top match. However, Dunmurry ran out convincing winners by comfortably winning the required three matches to win the Holt Shield for the second time. Particular mention to Darryl Flannagan who managed to get a monkey off his back by finally winning the Holt Shield. Both as a manager and player, he has been disappointed in four previous finals so his win this year was overdue and well deserved.

Dunmurry hosted a memorable presentation dinner. They had to wait thirty-eight years to host this event and it was always going to be a great occasion.

The night was most enjoyable and my thanks to Dunmurry for presenting a well organized event.

The Bobby Conroy Award and silver medal were won by Stuart Berry, Dunmurry. Not only did he manage to win two crucial matches in the final he portrayed great sportsmanship and compassion toward young Jack Conroy when taking time to console him when Jack was understandably upset after losing the match. This caring attitude epitomizes not only the spirit in which the final was played but of the Holt Shield in general. Neil Brennan, Dunmurry deserves an honourable mention for his remarkable performance of being undefeated in eight matches.

The George Stuart Memorial was hosted by Shandon Park on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> August. It attracted a record attendance with twenty-four participants which is a reflection of the popularity of Shandon Park as a golf course. Shandon were great hosts providing a well-presented course and excellent catering. The George Stuart shield and silver medal were won by Mervyn Perry, Knock with an impressive 41 points. Whitehead was to host the 2023 George Stuart Memorial but Ballyclare is keen to be the host as it is their centenary year. Details regarding the venue will be posted when arrangements have been finalised.

The committee hopes to return to normal playing formats next year. A team managers survey questionnaire was sent out to team managers to get their views on certain areas such as eligibility and the format of matches. Before anything is decided for next year, the outcome of the survey will be discussed and agreed upon during the 2023 AGM.

My thanks to Robert Brown for his enthusiasm and dedication to his role as Chairman throughout the year. His presence attending matches was most appreciated by the clubs he attended. His chosen charity for 2022 is Autism NI.

Once again may I thank all the committee members for their support and hard work throughout the year which largely contributed to another successful Holt Shield.

Special mention to Paddy Kearney and Brett Borkowski who have both resigned from the Holt Shield committee. Paddy was Holt Shield Chairman for 2017/18 and was a member of the Ballymena team when they won the Holt Shield in 2019. He served seven loyal years on the committee and he now has the honour of being Ballymena's club captain for 2023. Brett has served on the

committee for twelve years and was Chairman in 2011/12. He won the Holt Shield with Kirkistown in 2007 and went on to win the George Stuart silver medal in 2008. The committee owes Paddy and Brett a great debt of gratitude for all the hard work they have done on behalf of the Holt Shield over the years. The committee wishes them both well for the future and also wishes Paddy a successful year as captain of Ballymena.

Finally, may I wish all participating clubs and players a successful 2023 campaign and thank them for their continued support of the Holt Shield.

Tony Campbell  
(Hon. Secretary)