

Boys warm weather training at Desert Springs 2008

The county again decided to take the boys to Desert Springs G.C in Spain in preparation for the coming season after the success of our 2007 trip for warm weather training. The cost was met by contributions from the boys themselves, their clubs and the county and started at Stansted Airport with the boys looking smart in their county blazers as they departed for Almeria in Spain.

This year the party consisted of 8no Under 18 boys with Mike Hart the U18 team manager, 8no Under 16 boys with Steve Morrison the U16 team manager and the county president elect Mike Thirkettle. We also had David Brooks our county coach for two days to help the boys with any technical issues in their swings and Andy Morrison our Titeleist performance coach to work on their early season conditioning and flexibility. Both proved a valuable



addition. As last year the Desert springs complex proved an excellent facility for our training and had a championship course in magnificent condition, although the high winds experienced on some of the days proved havoc with the scoring.

The first four days was taken up with coaching and a four round medal tournament off of the professional tees on the splendid Indiana course. On day one in sunny conditions the boys had some time on the practise area before playing and the winner was from the U16 squad, Joe Sullivan (Stockbrook Manor) with a level par 71 closely followed by James Webber (Channels). Day two arrived with our two coaches in attendance and during the morning the U18 squad worked with David Brooks on the range and short game area, while Andy Morrison assessed the conditioning and flexibility of the boys and checking their programmes for the coming season. Out on the course extremely high winds were causing the U16 boys problems and the best score in the morning was our England U16 squad member Jack Heasman (West Essex) and Joe Sullivan again both with a77. After lunch the two squads changed over and the U18 squad now had to deal with the challenging conditions while the U16's worked with the coaches. On this occasion the best score of the day came in the afternoon from Christian Foreman (Rochford) 75 closely followed by Harry Eden (West Essex) 76. The day ended with us leaving Desert Springs at 7pm for our bus journey to the hotel and some well earned rest.



Day three arrived and the course was again bathed in sunshine but this time with very little wind and while the individual squads worked with the coaches out on the course the scoring was much better. The day was won by Rob Tredgett (Channels) 72, closely followed by James Webber (Channels) and Ben Herbert both with 73. We again boarded our bus at 7pm for the journey back to the hotel where a quiz on the rules and other topics awaited

the boys. On day four the boys said goodbye to the coaches who were leaving for home and headed off to the course for the conclusion of the four day tournament and in even more challenging conditions the winning score for the day was posted by James Webber (Channels) with a 78. This was enough to give James the prize as overall winner with a score of 304 for the four rounds off of the championship tees on a very demanding course in some very windy conditions. Well played James. In second place with a score of 310 was Joe Sullivan (Stockbrook Manor) from the U16 squad who was our best U16 ahead of Ben Herbert (Clacton) and Steven Jones (Canons Brook).

As Desert Springs is highly regarded by national and county teams as a winter training venue we found we had two other counties (Dorset and Somerset) using it during the week we were there and were able to arrange a match against the Dorset U18 team on our fifth day. This took the format of an 8 man triangular between Essex U18 squad, Essex U16 squad and Dorset U18 squad off of scratch and proved a very interesting match.

The Desert Springs course is unique in being Europe’s only true desert course and county boys triangular matches have a habit of being unpredictable to the end and on this true championship course it was no exception. In matches 1 and 2 Essex U16 boys Steven Jones (Canons Brook) and Jack Heasman (West Essex) won maximum points beating both opponents, while Christian Foreman (Rochford) and Joe Galbraith (Rochford) halved with Dorset. In matches 3 and 4 Jay Beisser (Rochford) and Rob Tredgett (Channels) pulled the Essex U18 team back in contention, while in match 5 Matt Capps (Ballards Gore) won both his matches for the Essex U16 team. With 3 matches remaining on the course, Essex U16 boys were leading their senior Essex U18 boys by 14 to 11, a major upset looked certain, while Dorset had capitulated to both Essex teams.



In match 6 Essex U18 Harry Eden (West Essex) gained maximum points bringing the Essex U18 boys to one point short of their juniors. In the next match Andy Milne (Rochford) turned his matches around to win both and bring the Essex U18 team into the lead by 19 to 18 points, while Dorset had 5 points. In the final match we had Jonathan Day (Braintree) represented Essex U18’s and Lewis Adair (Orsett) representing Essex U16’s. Jonathan who had not been at his best during the trip rose to the occasion winning maximum points for his team on the 18th hole, finishing with a wonderful 25 yard chip to 6 inches from the pin.

Final score:-

Essex U18 Boys	23 points
Essex U16 Boys	20 points
Dorset	5 points

Essex U18	Dorset	U16	Dorset U18	U18	U16	Essex U16	Dorset	U18
Chris Foreman	1	0	Cory Coshan	1	0	Steven Jones	2	2
Joe Galbraith	1	0	Darryl McMahom	1	0	Jack Heasman	2	2
Jay Beisser	1	2	Lloyd Walton	1	2	Joe Sullivan	0	0
Rob Tredgett	2	2	Sam Parson	0	0	Ben Herbert	2	0
James Webber	2	0	Rob Cunningham	0	0	Matt Capps	2	2
Harry Eden	2	2	Ben Trickett	0	0	Chris Moore	2	0
Andy Milne	2	2	Isaac Fredricks	0	0	Tom Prewer	2	0
Jon Day	2	2	Billy Joe Bugden	0	0	Lewis Adair	2	0
	13	10		3	2		14	6

For our final day we moved from the Indiana course at Desert Spring to another local course that we had played last year, Vale Del Este, a much more undulating course. On this our final round we played 4 ball better ball to give a final relaxing day after a week where the boys had worked hard with the coaches and on their own and played incredibly well in some very windy conditions.

Finally a trip like this takes a lot of organising and we are all grateful to our president elect, Mike Thirkettle who did a splendid job as always.

Steve Morrison and Mike Hart (Team Managers)