

Sunday the 29th March saw the opening fixture in the 2009 Channel League campaign for new captain Paul Clahane's Cornwall side. The Cornish team had travelled to the famous old links of Royal North Devon on the Saturday to prepare fully for a tantalising clash with the auld enemy in a match that is always keenly contested by the best players from neighbouring sides of the Tamar. Paul Newcombe's Devon team looked much the same as the League winning side of last year, a side that romped to the title winning all six games throughout the season.

The Cornish team would see two new caps on this day in the shape of Alex Boyd from Truro and Aaron Stephens from Newquay, taking the place of more experienced campaigners Mike Reynard and John Piner, both unavailable due to family commitments and injury respectively.

Sunday morning dawned calm and sunny and the foursomes were soon underway with good scoring from both teams, setting the tone for the day's standard of play. Throughout the morning the matches looked finely balanced and a lunch time score of 3-2 to the Devon hosts represented how tight the matches were. Special mention must go to Billy Downing and Alex Boyd with a convincing victory of 3&2 over seasoned campaigners Gee and Bridgwater from Devon. The top two matches would see a half in both games, the second pairing from Cornwall of Nash and Stephens losing the 18th was somewhat tempered by the same result from lead pair Ackland and Chapman who would win the last two holes to secure a half, keeping the score line tantalisingly close.

The afternoon singles would now be a fascinating affair and with a hugely impressive opening victory from Anthony Nash against England squad member Billy Hemstock, a last hole birdie from Richard Ackland securing a half against reigning South West Champion Jon White and a final hole victory from Billy Downing against former tour professional and home favourite Simon McCarthy, the Cornwall side looked set for a famous early season victory. The tone set from the lead games was carried through by the middle and latter games with more victories from new cap Alex Boyd, winning his second point of the day and both Macgregor brothers, Alex and Rob, who romped home, winning their games by the massive margin of 6&5 and 7&6 respectively. This left the Cornwall team on the brink of victory and when Josh Greenaway halved the 17th hole to remain one up and guarantee at least a half the Cornish team had secured a famous and important victory at the start of the 2009 campaign. A further half from St. Enodoc youngster Joe Cruse saw the final result 8 ½ - 6 ½ in favour of the Duchy, leaving new Captain Paul Clahane even more optimistic about the coming season, quoting that 'if we can beat a league winning side such as Devon around there home track, then we should fear no team in the South West or nationally, I truly believe that Cornish golf is set strong and this result proves it!!'

Well done to the victorious Cornish side, as they move forward to their next league clash against South West Champions Wiltshire at Newquay Golf Club on Sunday 3rd May, supporters and caddies most welcome.

P J Clahane
Captain