

CAPTAIN V PRESIDENT 2011

The annual challenge match between the Captain's and President's team took place on 24th October at its traditional home of Royal Winchester. This year the Captain, Dave Tulloch, was bidding to regain the trophy that President Terry Wall had captured for only the second time last year.

Twenty players were scheduled to play, five nine-hole fourballs in the morning and ten 18-hole singles after lunch. However, early bouts of flu reduced the numbers to 18 so Dave and Terry played as a two-ball in the morning. A crucial decision was agreed, that those nine holes would not be counted as the first 9 of their match but would be used for practice. A fateful decision, as will be seen.

As there were nine ex-Captains plus Dave on his team and seven organisers and committee members with Terry, senior ex-Captain Mike Harris was once again co-opted to the President's team – could he repeat his match-winning transfer last year with two invaluable wins?

By lunchtime Terry was regretting his agreement not to count the first nine holes having built a substantial lead, but it hardly mattered as his team responded to the challenge by halving just one of the matches in an almost perfect performance to sit down for lunch with a 3.5-0.5 lead. Ideal in a situation where the ex-Captains would be expected to come back strongly in the singles matches.

Just how strong was soon to be realised. Terry failed to reproduce his morning form and an error-strewn game against Dave ended with Terry's birdie putt at 18 sliding by the hole to lose by the narrowest margin, despite his two twos. Still two ahead, however, until the next two pairs, playing together, were each wins for the Captain, to draw level at 3.5-3.5. When the following two games also went to the Captain things looked bleak for the President, but the penultimate group was split 1-1.

Two victories for the President's men would result in a drawn match, for the third time in the series, and, as holders, the trophy would be retained (allegedly), as in the Ryder Cup. Mike Harris duly came in with his second full point of the day but the last match between Gerry and Ron was, like the first, won by the Captains by just one hole. Final result 7.5-5.5 to Dave – in nearly 2500 strokes played on the day just two putts made the difference. Terry was left regretting his decision not to count the full 27-holes as this could have tied the match – except Captain Tulloch would probably not have allowed such a lead in a game that counted!

A most enjoyable get-together, the threatened rain only arrived in late afternoon, and the *three* meals in the day sent the players home well-satisfied. A great opportunity for former Captains, particularly Roy Moore and Mike Harris who now live out of the area, to enjoy the company of the committee members and organisers who contribute so much to the society.