

# The Links Times

Alfred Dunhill Links Championship Daily News

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## HATTON HUNTS A HAT-TRICK

*The Alfred Dunhill Links Championship returned to St Andrews with a day of sensational scoring that ended with a leaderboard stacked with former champions and home hopes – and Tyrrell Hatton out in front, playing with his father*

**T**wo-time champion Tyrrell Hatton staked his claim for a record third title after an explosive 64 at Carnoustie in the first round of the 20th Anniversary Alfred Dunhill Links.

He shares the lead at eight-under-par with Spain's Adri Arnaus, Belgium's Nicolas Colsaerts and China's Haotong Li.

Scotland's Ewen Ferguson was one shot further back after a 65, along with France's Romain Langasque and 2011 winner Michael Hoey, while double runner-up and current Team Champion Tommy Fleetwood was among those on 66.

On a day of low scoring, the golfers showed how delighted they were to be back in action at St Andrews, Carnoustie and Kingsbarns after missing out last year.

Having played at the more difficult Carnoustie, Hatton is hoping to make further strides towards a record third Championship at Kingsbarns today. And he will be doing it alongside his dad Jeff, pictured above, who encouraged him to play the game and is his coach.

Hatton, who won the Alfred Dunhill Links in 2016 and 2017, said: "It's always nice to start pretty good around Carnoustie. You go to

the other ones and feel you've got more of a chance, so we'll see what the week brings."

The highlight of Hatton's round was a stunning back-nine 29. Tyrrell said: "I didn't realise it until I signed my card. We needed a big back-nine and I was very happy with the putter. Hopefully that continues."

Hatton says he isn't currently getting any coaching from Jeff. "He hasn't looked at my swing or anything. He's a bit too excited to play these courses for the first time. He's probably quite tired. He normally plays once every six weeks. But I think he enjoyed it."

The two Hattons lie in joint third place on 11-under-par in the Team Championship, a shot behind leaders Ferguson & Bradley Simpson, and Danny Willett & Jimmy Dunne.

Jeff said: "I've never played in Scotland, so getting Carnoustie first up was a whole different experience. I've never seen any course like it – all you can see is bunkers!"

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# LI OUT FOR UPGRADE AFTER OLD COURSE 64

*The 2018 Team Championship winner has his eye on the big prize, while Nicolas Colsaerts fires up after starting cold*

**H**aotong Li has tasted glory as part of a team at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship and this year he is putting himself in the frame to go one better.

Li won the Team Championship in 2018 alongside tech entrepreneur and Chinese compatriot Allen Zhang.

The 26-year-old carded a bogey-free 64 at St Andrews for a share of the lead on eight-under-par alongside Tyrrell Hatton, Nicolas Colsaerts and Spaniard Adri Arnaus.

Colsaerts shot his lowest-ever round on the Old Course despite not having played for a fortnight.

"I've come here with no game whatsoever. I haven't played golf in two weeks," he said.

"Once you start to play well at the Home of Golf, it's a nice feeling. I made two eagles on the two par 5s and birdied 18. That's ticking every box on the Old Course.

"It's a special event. You play unbelievable golf courses and you meet interesting people."



# TOMMY SET FOR 'PERFECT WEEK'



**E**ngland's Tommy Fleetwood has been runner-up in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship twice and has said it is an event he would love to win.

He did win the Team Championship in 2019 with American financier Ogden Phipps (pictured, right) and the two are going for back-to-back titles this year.

After an excellent first round at Carnoustie, where he shot 66, Fleetwood is in a good position to finally make the breakthrough and win the Championship. To do that, he will need to overtake his Ryder Cup teammate Tyrrell Hatton, who is two shots ahead.

Fleetwood said: "I played well. I felt very in-control and I feel like it's a perfect week after the Ryder Cup. I enjoy playing here. I have a lot of friends here, so I'm in a good head space.

"My swing felt great today. I putt-ed really well. In the end, six-under-par was just like a cruise. It was one of those days that you really enjoy."

Asked if he felt drained after the Ryder Cup, he said his energy level was fine. "Last week was a very motivating week, and I enjoyed the energy that I got from my teammates and the Ryder Cup in general.

"This is a nice week and it's such a good atmosphere. I love the golf courses, and whenever this event comes around, I feel like it's a really good opportunity for me to have a great week and I've played well here in the past," he said.

Currently Fleetwood & Phipps are seven-under-par for the Team Championship.





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# VAMP BRAD HITS ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

*Rock star Brad Simpson was left staring at the leaderboard after walking off the 18th at the Old Course sharing the lead in the Team Championship and was hugely impressed by the mindset of his partner, Ewen Ferguson*

**B**rad Simpson went from top of the charts to the top of the leaderboard on the first day of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. The lead singer of The Vamps and his professional playing partner Ewen Ferguson are joint-leaders in the Team Championship on 12-under-par, tied with the team of former Masters Champion Danny Willett and American investment banker Jimmy Dunne.

Before arriving at St Andrews, Simpson had just finished a nine-date tour of the UK to promote his band's latest album, Cherry Blossom. After walking off the iconic 18th hole at the Old Course, Simpson had to take a moment to gaze at the scoreboard and appreciate the first time he actually saw his name at the top of the standings. "That was mad. It was amazing to see - I guess I got lucky with a few shots!" he said.

Simpson was also quick to pay tribute to Ferguson after watching the Scotsman card a bogey-free 65. He said: "I really enjoyed it, and it was great playing with Ewen. Playing with a good guy like him instantly relaxes you and we had a good thing going. "He's got a great mindset and his approach to the game is so positive. It's good to see more young guys coming through with stable heads on their shoulders.

"And Ewen was rattling the ball today, hitting it so well." As the Championship celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, the rocker said it's a privilege to be part of such an historic occasion. He said: "It's an honour to be involved in the anniversary. There are some great players here and it's an honour to rub shoulders with them, see them play and witness it first-hand. That's always one of the best parts of it."

# DUNHILL SUPERGROUP PLANS GREATEST HITS

**M**usic stars Ronan Keating and Tom Chaplin lifted the lid on what the so-called 'Dunhill Supergroup' plan to do to mark the 20th anniversary of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. "There's a lot of people here who are in the entertainment industry - drummers, guitarists, singers, actors - so we all get together and perform somewhere and it's a lot of fun," said Keating. Chaplin said: "This year because it's 20 years of the Championship

we're doing a 'best of' with hits from the last 20 years." Out on the Old Course in the same group, both men were singing each other's praises. Chart-topper Keating - whose round included a net eagle - and his pro partner Eddie Pepperell are a shot off the Team Championship lead on 11-under-par, despite the singer running into trouble on the iconic Road Hole (pictured). Former Keane frontman Chaplin and Nicolas Colsaerts are a shot further back.





## BUCKET-LIST CALL ON CUE FOR HENDRY

**S**nooker legend Stephen Hendry revealed that he's been dreaming of playing in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship ever since the tournament began.

"I've been watching it for the 20 years it's been on and I've always thought it was a bucket-list event but my snooker career stopped me from playing before, as I was always busy," said the seven-time world champion, pictured below.

"I just got the call a couple of weeks ago and I couldn't believe it. I'm thrilled."

Hendry is paired with fellow Scot Grant Forrest in the Team Championship in a duo that won't be surprised by the conditions.

He said: "It's Scotland and the weather is doing what it does, so it's just all about trying to enjoy the experience."

Right behind Hendry on the Old Course yesterday was Scottish actor Craig McGinlay, who will go from swinging clubs to wielding swords as he flies straight to Morocco after the Championship to shoot *Colosseum*, a TV series set in Roman times, in which he will play a gladiator.

McGinlay co-starred in *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* alongside David Beckham. Could the pair play together at a future Championship?

He said: "Maybe I could convince him, hopefully one day - I'm sure he's one of those guys that can turn his hand to anything."



## SUPERSTARS AND HIGH FLYERS TAKE TO LINKS

*Legends from the worlds of sport, music and movies, and titans of business sampled the unique atmosphere and unforgettable challenge of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship*

**A**merican businessman Dan Friedkin, whose international group of companies owns Serie A football club AS Roma, is eyeing a unique double at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

In 2018, on his Dunhill debut, he partnered individual champion Lucas Bjerregaard, finishing tenth in the Team Championship, and this year he is paired with Victor Perez, the defending champion from 2019, with whom he carded an opening 68 at Carnoustie.

"It was a great thrill for me to partner the champion and I also remember we had a lot of fun and a lot of laughs that week," said Friedkin.

"Victor has been solid all day and was a real pleasure to play with. It will be interesting to see how he does this week, and perhaps I'll get to do a sort of double!"

Meanwhile, England Test cricket captain Joe Root enjoyed his first experience of the event despite encountering some typical Scottish weather at the Angus links.

Root was paired with compatriot and 2009 World Match Play champion Ross Fisher and in the same group as Robert MacIntyre, the highest Scot in the world rankings, and his playing partner Ashton Curtis, managing director at Morgan Stanley.

He said: "I've had a brilliant day and everything about it has made it a really special experience in my first Dunhill Links. I'm looking forward now to playing Kingsbarns in our second round and then the Old Course."

"Ross was a great partner, and Bob MacIntyre and his amateur partner, Ashton Curtis, were also nice to play with."

"The weather eased by the time

we were on the back nine and it was like playing a totally different course!"

Legendary jockey AP McCoy has played in a number of Alfred Dunhill Links Championships but still found himself marvelling at the two professionals in his group, Spain's Ryder Cup player Rafa Cabrera-Bello, who shot a four-under par 68, and another young Scottish hope in Calum Hill, who carded a 73 around Carnoustie.

"Weather like we had this morning just shows how mentally strong the pros are," he said.

At the Old Course, the sporting legends were joined by stars of a different kind, including the actor Andy Garcia, pictured above with singer Huey Lewis. The pair went out together with their respective partners, Troy Merritt and Adri Arnaus, who finished the day with a share of the lead.





# BAHAMAS-BOUND STUDENT GRACES THE OLD COURSE

Grace Crawford, a rising star in Scottish youth golf from North Berwick, enjoyed a solid debut in this year's Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

"It was a great day for me. There's been lots of good chat, some good golf played out there and it's definitely been a great experience," said the 14-year-old, who was partnered with Australian professional Jason Scrivener in the Team Championship.

Among the highlights of her day was her third shot at the first, when she almost holed from the bunker to make par.

Grace, a third-year pupil at North Berwick High School, plays off a plus 1.7 handicap and is currently ranked seventh on the Scottish Girls Order of Merit. She's due to represent Great Britain & Ireland in

the Junior Vagliano Trophy in the Netherlands later this month, and will then head to the Bahamas to begin a four-year scholarship at the Albany Academy, whose alumni include Justin Rose and Tiger Woods.

"It's a really exciting opportunity," says Grace. "Tom Hearn, who coached Tiger, is going to be my coach there."

In May Grace won the Scottish Junior Tour competition at Southerness in Dumfries & Galloway and she also claimed the Under-18 title in the Stephen Gallacher Foundation Vase.

Teeing off in her second round today, Grace is looking forward to making her debut at Carnoustie. "I've walked this course many times but it's so surreal having the opportunity to finally play it. I'm really looking forward to it and I'll be hoping to keep it straight."

# CARNOUSTIE WARMS TO GLOVE STORY

*Jimmy Dunne wanted to take on Carnoustie at its most foul, but when he saw one scorer was less than prepared for the fierce conditions, the battle with the course had to wait*

Jimmy Dunne relished taking on Carnoustie at its wet and windy worst, but that didn't mean he could stand by as one young scorer's hands turned blue. As our picture shows, the investment banker and broadcaster managed to do a deal when it mattered the most and found a pair of gloves for Meggie Martin-Lyall.

"These are exactly the conditions in which I want to play Carnoustie," said Dunne, who this week is paired with former Masters champion Danny Willett in the Team Championship.

"I wouldn't walk my dog in weather like this, but to be here at Carnoustie and to be able to experience this great course in these conditions - it's wonderful! It's just the way I like it."

Dunne predicted he and Willett would be leading the Team Championship after their first round and incredibly that's exactly where

they were by the end of the day, sharing top spot on 12-under-par.

Dunne, now in his mid-60s, has been a hugely talented amateur golfer. In 2010 he shot a course record 63 at Shinnecock Hills and in 2018 qualified for the US Senior Amateur Championship.

On September 11, 2001, though, it was because he was trying to qualify for that year's US Mid-Amateur Championship that he was not in his office on the 104th floor of the south tower of New York's World Trade Centre when it was hit by the second plane.

The investment bank he then worked for lost 66 employees - many of them close friends - and, Dunne says, there has never been a day since that he does not think about that terrible day.

He is now vice-chairman of Piper Sandler, a leading US investment bank, and a frequent commentator on CNBC and Bloomberg.





To be playing at the Home of Golf in one of the biggest tournaments for a Scot, it couldn't have gone much better for Ewen Ferguson. The talented 25-year-old shot a 65 to be just one behind the leaders.

"It adds a bit of pressure because you don't want to let anyone down that's watching. Your heart rate can go a bit up and down. To see myself just one off the lead is fantastic.

"My partner was Brad Simpson, the lead singer of The Vamps, and I'm a bit of a Vamps fan myself. We pushed each other on. He's a really chill guy."





# WARNE FAN FOX FINDS A FRIEND

*The New Zealand pro grew up idolising the leg-spin legend but through golf, the two have become teammates and friends*

**W**hen Ryan Fox was growing up in New Zealand, he played as much cricket as golf, bowling leg spin, just like his idol, Shane Warne. This week they are playing together once again at the event that turned Fox's sporting hero into his friend.

"It's amazing that I'm now good friends with Warney, because he was one of my idols when I was growing up," said Fox.

"I was big into cricket as a kid and Shane was one of my biggest heroes. I ended up playing Premier League 1st XI cricket in Auckland, and I only gave it up to concentrate on golf after I had left school.

"I met Warney on my first appearance here, in 2015. I was paired with Michael Vaughan and Shane was in our four-ball. We kept in touch, we've been partners at this event several times and he's great to be around."



## TRAGIC DEATH OF CHIEF MARSHAL

**C**hris Smith, Chief Marshal at Carnoustie, has collapsed and died during a round of golf there with friends.

Chris, 68, had worked with the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship for many years and had been a familiar face to hundreds of professional and amateur golfers over the years who played in the event.

Yesterday his friends gathered on the 11th tee, where he had collapsed, to toast his memory and

lay a wreath which will remain there during this week's Championship. They recalled that Chris, a passionate golfer, was two holes up in his match at the time.

Peter German, Tournament Director, said: "Chris was a very recognisable face. He was a much loved member of his golf club and a valuable friend to the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. On behalf of everyone at the Alfred Dunhill Links, I would like to express our sorrow at his loss and our sympathy to his family."



## LOUIS WIN WAS SPARK FOR TOTO

**I**n 2010, Sunshine Tour professional Toto Thimba Jnr. watched Louis Oosthuizen walk over the Old Course's famous Swilken Bridge on his way to victory in The Open. And he'll never forget how Oosthuizen spoke of Nelson Mandela in his victory speech.

Those memories came flooding back to Thimba Jnr. as he walked the same Old Course on Wednesday and stood on that famous little stone bridge over the burn as he made his debut in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

"It reminds you that great things can happen in this game," said Thimba Jnr, who secured his place by virtue of his finish on the 2019-2020 Sunshine Tour Money List. "It's my first time playing the Old Course. It's such a privilege and an honour to be playing here."





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