

Paul wins handicap title

N.E. DISTRICT CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS 2010

PAUL SINCLAIR admitted that preparation held the key to him winning the Evening Express Champion of Champions handicap title.

The 12-handicapper, from Auchinblae, beat Buck pool's Duncan Lamont 2&1 in the final at Newburgh. Paul, who received eight shots from four-handicapper Duncan, said: "I played in the Newburgh Open and learned where to go and where not to.

"But I also played better in the final and used my shots well.

"Winning the Champion of Champions title is everything to me.

"It felt unreal out there on the course. It just felt brilliant to be a part of it.

"I've never played with a referee before and it all seemed so strange.

"There were friends out on the course that I didn't even realise were there until the match was over it was so bizarre."

The first was halved in bogey fives before Paul moved ahead with a net three at the second. Duncan squared the match with a birdie four at the third but Paul's net four at the par 4 fourth restored his one-hole advantage.

And a great drive into the wind at the 201-yard fifth set up a winning par 3 to double his advantage. Paul increased his advantage to three holes with a net three at the sixth before Duncan hit back with a winning par 4 at the next.

Duncan was conceded the eighth after Paul found trouble but the lower handicapper birdied the par 5 ninth to be only two under at the turn.

A par 4 at the 10th was also good enough for Paul to win the 10th; however, Duncan hit back to win the 11th with a net par four.

Paul went 3up after another net par four at the 12th but Duncan stormed back to win the 13th with a par 4.

A bogey five was sufficient for Duncan to also win the 13th as the wind continued to blow before the pair halved the 15th in par 4s.

Paul took a stranglehold on the match with a winning par 3 after Duncan struggled to get up and down from the left-hand side of the green for par.

Standing dormey two on the 17th tee, it all turned upside-down for Paul ... and Duncan.

Paul, aided by his caddie Bob Cattanach, hit his first tee-shot to the right and out of bounds ... and Duncan did the same as the wind continued to blow and the Newburgh course showed its teeth... Paul reloaded and pulled his next into the whins to the left ... Duncan fired another out of bounds.

Paul found the fairway with his third ball ... as did Duncan and they both had played five off the tee. Duncan's ball was 15ft from the cup while Paul, who was receiving a shot, was at the front left edge of the green.

Paul played up to 12ft before Duncan failed to convert his effort and the man from Auchenblae safely lagged up for a winning 9 ... net 8 ... for victory.

Paul said: "Everything went to plan until the 17th. We didn't play off that tee in the Newburgh Open. "The tee was further left. We couldn't see the out of bound markers and my second ball ended up in the whins on the left.

"But it's taken my game to a different level. I knew we were both five off the tee but I as the game stood I hit a great hybrid to the edge of the green and I've gone on to win. I fair chuffed."

Many thanks,

Alan Brown