

**GOLF:** Teenager claims Norfolk Open title

# Ballingall beats all the odds

Dunston Hall amateur Stuart Ballingall yesterday became one of the youngest-ever winners of the Norfolk Open when he beat leading professional Ian Ellis in a sudden death play-off at Bawburgh.

The 16-year-old birdied the third extra hole to take the title – and seal a remarkable two days.

Only 24 hours earlier he was celebrating his successful debut in international golf as he helped the England schools' team beat Wales.

Ballingall won both his matches at Whitchurch, near Cardiff, before travelling back across the country to prepare for his 7.38am tee-off in the Norfolk Open.

"I'm shattered!" he said almost 12 hours later as he finally held the trophy after 39 holes of golf. It's the latest addition to Ballingall's collection of 2006 silverware for he has already won the Norfolk boys' championship, the Norfolk schools' championship and the inaugural East region U16 championship.

But this is his finest moment of the season. "This is so important to me. It's the biggest competition in Norfolk and I've never been under the sort of pressure I experienced in the play-off."

The play-off took place over the first and 18th holes after Ballingall and Ellis, from Royal Norwich, tied on three-under par at the end of regulation play.

The first time round they halved the holes in par. When they returned to the 1st hole, Ellis's drive finished in a divot in the right-hand rough and his shot to the green pulled up perhaps 40 feet short of the pin. He two-putted for another par. Ballingall's approach, played from the fairway, finished about 12 feet from the hole and he rolled the ball straight in for a winning birdie.

This is the second time Ellis has lost this title in a play-off and he said afterwards: "I'm fated never to win this. It's destiny."

By LYNDSEY HEWISON

He did, however, take the winner's cheque and the trophy as Norfolk professional champion.

Both players won the praise of their playing partners. Weston Park professional Michael Few, who was champion in 1988 and 89, said of Ellis: "He played very well this afternoon and should have walked it. He should have birdied the last three holes but the putts didn't drop."

Tony Varney of The Norfolk, who won this title in 2002, 03 and 04, remarked of Ballingall: "He was awesome. If he missed a green he got up and down and it was a pleasure to play with him."

Few himself was the first-round leader after he posted a three-under 67, but his challenge faded in the afternoon when he returned 72 and he had to settle for a share of sixth place.

Varney was also well in the hunt, opening with 68 and adding a level-par 70 to tie third. "I haven't played a lot of competition lately and I'm happy with my score," he said afterwards.

Sheringham professional Mike Jubb came into the event with his confidence high after a six-under 65 at Brampton Park in a PGA East Region pro-am. He was rewarded with a pair of 69s and a share of third place.

Eaton professional Mark Allen returned the same score, but was left counting the cost of bogeys on his last two holes which prised the title from his grasp.

The Craske Salver, which is awarded to the amateur with the best aggregate score in the Norfolk amateur championship and the Norfolk Open, was won by Dan Henderson of Royal Norwich. Henderson, the county captain, won the amateur title but has since been out of action until recently with an elbow injury. Despite a few tweaks he managed rounds of 74, 68 at Bawburgh.



TEENAGE SENSATION: Stuart Ballingall shows off the Norfolk Open trophy.

## LEADING SCORES

**137** Stuart Ballingall\* (Dunston Hall) 69, 68; Ian Ellis (Royal Norwich) 70, 67. Ballingall won at the third play-off hole.  
**138** Mike Jubb (Sheringham) 69, 69; Mark Allen (Eaton) 69, 69; Tony Varney (The Norfolk) 68, 70.  
**139** Michael Few (Weston Park) 67, 72; Richard Tidy (Dunston Hall) 68, 71.  
**141** Mark Spooner (Bawburgh) 72, 69; Gary Kitley (Thetford) 71, 70. Gavin Halford\* (Bawburgh) 72, 69; Neil Lythgoe (Royal Norwich) 68, 73; Chase Davis\* (Costessey Park) 69, 72.  
**142** David Woolley (Middleton Hall) 71, 71; Dan Henderson\* (Royal Norwich) 74, 68. Danny Chapman\* (Costessey Park) 70, 72; Peter Bower (Bawburgh) 71, 71; Craig Butler\* (Royal Norwich) 73, 69.  
 \* denotes amateur

EDP special competition

**Filby Fete  
speedkick results  
Monday  
August 28**

**SPEEDkick**

Age	Forename	Surname	Speed mph
<b>Boys</b>			
0-5 yrs	Sam	Cater	22
6-9 yrs	Jack	Reeve	38
10-13 yrs	Gabriel	Luckhurst	43
14-16 yrs	Jack	Waite	47
<b>Girls</b>			
0-5 yrs	Yve	Cater	17
6-9 yrs	Evie	Luckhurst	29
10-13 yrs	Lucy	Hall	33
Adult	Toni	Luckhurst	35

## Westwood out of sick bed and into Ryder contention

Lee Westwood climbed off his sick bed yesterday and gave a performance that ought to make every European – not just Ian Woosnam – want him in the Ryder Cup next month.

Suffering from suspected tonsillitis and felling jelly-legged and generally "rotten", Westwood returned a four-under-par 68 to be only off the lead after the opening round of the BMW International Open in Munich.

The event is the last leg of the year-long race for places in Woosnam's side for the K Club in three weeks' time and while the former European number one cannot qualify on points any more, he and Darren Clarke are favourites to be given the two wildcards on Sunday night.

With Ian Poulter, another possible pick, crashing to a 76, 10th-placed Paul McGinley managing only a 75 and Jose Maria Olazabal, who may end up

needing one, controversially deciding not to play, the ailing Westwood had done himself a power of good.

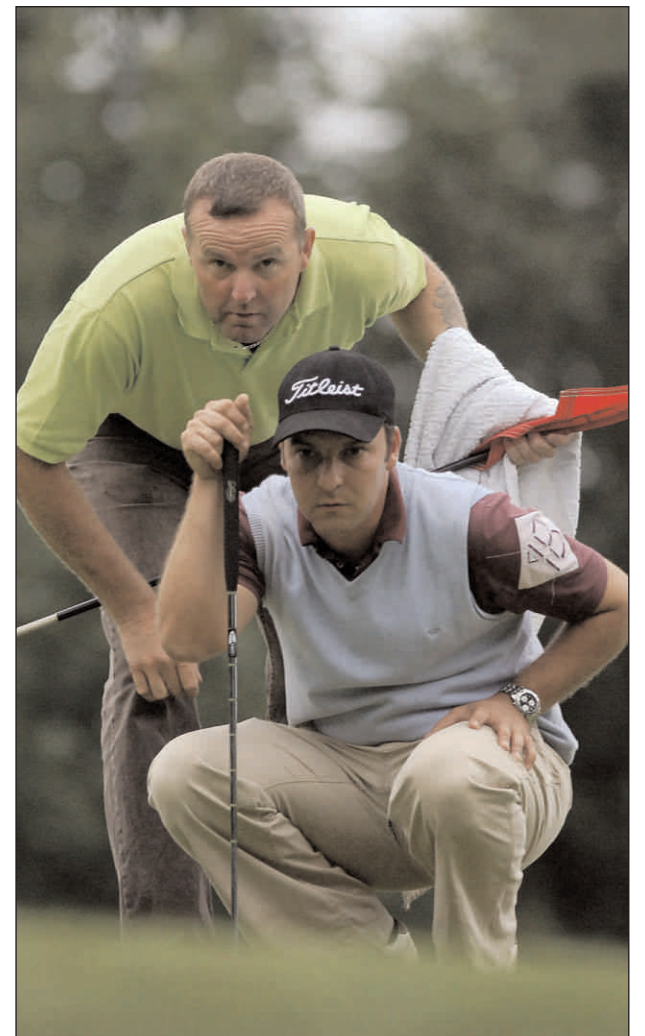
"If it was not the last Ryder Cup event I would certainly be in bed," said the Worksop golfer.

"I spoke to Woosie on Tuesday and he said 'if you are really ill you should not come, but if you do I'll be pleased'.

"My legs started to go at the end of the round and my head's spinning, but I don't think my mental strength has ever been in doubt. You don't win 27 events without being mentally strong.

"I've been getting tonsillitis twice a year and getting run down very easily. It makes me wonder why I am bothering to play both tours (America and Europe) – my schedule's been very poor this year."

Norfolk's Andrew Marshall made to steady start to his first Tour event for three weeks when he opened up with a level-par round of 72.



TESTING SHOT: Ian Ellis ponders his next move.