

Brabazon winner Stow misses out

Written by Sport4Salisbury Reporter
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RUSHMORE Golf Club's Ben Stow will not be joining an exclusive club.

He was hoping to become only the fourth player to add the English Championship to his Brabazon Trophy secured a month ago, but he failed to reach the match play stage courtesy of two bogeys in the final three holes.

The England international returned an uncharacteristic second round 76 on the East Course for 150 to miss finishing in the leading 64 players by two shots. The bogeys at 16 plus a three-putt on the 18th green proved his downfall in a back nine of 38 while he found just one birdie in his round.

“Three putts at the last was stupid,” he said. “I hit the ball well but I putted poorly. It’s a bit embarrassing to be honest but if you don’t hole any putts you don’t make birdies. I just had too many three putts but I’ll probably go out next week and win. That’s golf.”

It was somewhat ironic that as Stow motored back to Wiltshire, the man he pipped for the Brabazon Trophy was claiming top qualifying spot.

Ryan Evans (Northamptonshire) shot 69 over the East for 137, five under par, and looks to be the man to beat when the knockout stage begins.

“If I could hole some putts I’d be dangerous,” said the England international from Wellingborough. “I had lots of opportunities today but I can’t seem to hole my birdie chances.

“It’s nice to be leading the qualifying and I’m pleased with my game. But the main task is still ahead.” Evans had an eagle and two birdies on his card despite dropping a shot at the first and finding another bogey at the short 17th.

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Yorkshire's Nick Marsh (Huddersfield Golf Club) returned the best round of the day, a 66 on the West for 138, one behind Evans. He had an eagle and four birdies and just one dropped shot.

"I was very steady from tee to green and I don't think I missed a fairway," he said.

"I also putted much better than yesterday while I also made two up-and-downs for par which kept the momentum going." Harry Casey (Enfield Golf Club, Middlesex) was much happier on the greens after he also shot 69 on the East for 139, two behind Evans.

"I'm very happy," he said. "I played solid but having an 8.20am start meant there was not much wind. Conditions were much easier and the greens were soft. But I'll take one day at a time.

"Also on 139 is boy international Joe Dean, from Lindrick Golf Club in Yorkshire, who was a playing partner of Evans and went round the East in level-par 71.

Andrew Wilson from Darlington Golf Club in Durham, finished 2-4-2, all for birdies for a 70 on the West for 140. The 20 year old, who won the North of England Youths Championship last year, said: "I was trying to consolidate and do nothing stupid.

"I qualified in the English at Silloth-on-Solway two years ago but lost to Jordan Smith in the first round." Smith (Bowood Golf & Country Club, Wiltshire) also qualified on 144 after a 73 on the East while European Amateur champion Ashley Chesters (Hawkstone Park, Shropshire & Hereford) is also through after a 69 on the West for 141 but others who beat par failed to make the top 64.

The qualifying score was 148, six over par, with Harrison Greenberry (Exeter Golf & Country Club, Devon) the only player on that mark to get through. Greenberry will face Evans in the first round, while Marsh meets boy squad member Billy Spooner (Boston Golf Club, Lincolnshire).

On a much calmer day for scoring, 30 players bettered the pars of 71 but a number failed to

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qualify after high first round returns. Somerset's Jamie Clare, beaten finalist in the 2011 English Amateur at Woburn, returned 69 for 149 to miss by one, as did Garry Slade from Wiltshire who followed an 81 with 68.