

The Eisenhower Trophy (The World Amateur Team Championship).

Part 1: The History of The Eisenhower Trophy.

Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Bob Charles, Vijay Singh, Gordon Cosh, Colin Montgomerie, Amar Arslanagic, Phil Mickleson, Ernie Els, Sergio Garcia, Callum MacAulay, Gavin Dear, Camillo Villegas, Wallace Booth...just some of the great players that have graced this event - an indication of its importance in golf's history and development through the years.

But it would be misguided to think that the Eisenhower is all about great players and top level amateur golf because in fact it is as much about the spirit of the game and its development across the globe as anything else. Indeed the ethos of the Eisenhower Trophy is 'To foster friendship and sportsmanship amongst the Peoples of the World'. During the 1950s the USGA were progressively receiving more invites for international matches than they could accept and as a solution, in early 1958 they approached the R & A and representatives from 33 other countries with the proposal of a World Team Championship. This was enthusiastically received by all and in October that year the inaugural event took place on the Old Course St Andrews with Australia emerging victorious (50 years later Scotland emerge victorious in Australia!!).

President Dwight D Eisenhower also known as 'double D' 34th President of the USA, gave his the name to the competition on the basis that it would provide a platform for golfers from all around the world of varying standards to perform and mix socially with one another. Double D was a keen golfer himself, occasionally breaking 80(a few putts conceded here and there and some Caddie kicks perhaps!) and he was particularly keen that his tournament embraced the Countries where golf was in its infancy and whose players were still learning the game. His idea being that they would greatly benefit from involvement with players of a high standard on courses that were demanding. The Tournament Committee agreed with him but thought that calling it 'the Double D Trophy' didn't quite capture the image they wished to project (although it has to be said it is huge cup).

What a success the championship has proved to be. Played biannually on courses around the world, there were 29 teams competing in the 1958 event whilst in 2008 there were 65 teams. It is a joyous event with players of all nationalities, colours and creeds mixing freely, befriending each other and in general restoring one's faith in human nature. From the years 1958 -2000, each country was represented by 4 players playing one round of stroke play each day over four days, the best 3 scores counting on each day. England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were represented as the GB & I team, therefore, it was a tremendous achievement for any player to be chosen. **Gordon Cosh** current Vice Captain of Cowglen was chosen twice - in 1966 and 1968 - a tremendous feat. In 1968 he helped the team to a silver medal in Australia with GB & I finishing an agonising 1 shot behind the US. Gordon soon got over his disappointment however when he returned to Glasgow the following week and scooped the Captain's prize in the Cowglen Autumn meeting -and with it a cracking carriage clock which still keeps good time on Gordon's mantelpiece to this day. In 2002 the format was changed with a reduction in team size to 3 players and the Great Britain & Ireland countries being represented in their own right.

Next time we'll take a look at past results and some of the stories behind the tournaments; also who Amar Arslanagic is...and it is not an anagram!