

Monday 29th June 2026

Southern Counties Seniors Foursomes Qualifier

@ Royal Blackheath Golf Club

The Southern Counties Seniors Foursomes Qualifier comprises of a team of ten players; five pairs, playing two foursomes matches over two rounds in one day, against teams from Essex, Middlesex and Kent.

Played at the oldest club in the world, instituted in 1608, Royal Blackheath https://www.royalblackheath.com/history_of_rbgc in south-east London, was the setting for our first event of 2026.

With one point available for each win, we got off to a mixed start, down in the first two matches, up in the next two and all square in the fifth match, with the back nine to play. Our first two pairs were unable to overcome the holes they'd lost to eventually lose their games, leaving us with three morning matches alive. Fortunately, the ever dependable and experienced John Ambridge and Gordon Stewart, Simon Kay and Paul Nancarrow, came through with wins, but unfortunately, with Paul Marshall injured during his warm-up, the last pair bravely soldiered on until losing 2 & 1 to Kent.

So, with just 2 points on the board and with Essex leading with 4 points (out of 5 available) we felt our only chance of winning the day, would be to win all 5 matches in the afternoon. Not impossible, but a tough ask.

It turned out to be a very exciting afternoon, as despite losing the first game, with three of our remaining games in the lead and one narrowly down, there was a slim chance that if we could just win all four, we could get close to overturning Essex. Once again, the above pairs won their afternoon matches first, but David Lang and Michael Charles somehow had to overturn a deficit of 2 down with three to play to stay in it.

They were gifted the 16th when the Middlesex pair's tee shot kicked at right angles into a penalty area. Back to one, with two to play. A gutsy 7-foot putt from David won the 17th! Back to all square. Game on! Then the Middlesex approach shot to the last spun off the green into a virtually unplayable lie on the edge of the greenside bunker, which to their credit, managed to chip to 10 feet. Michael then narrowly missed his birdie putt for a concession, and you could feel the tension as Middlesex had a putt to end our fight-back. They missed; we were still alive!

A comeback, the likes of which has not been seen since the "Miracle of Medinah" was now a real possibility!

You could feel the momentum build as Peter York and Dave Scammell (in as sub for Paul) were coming down the stretch, 2up with 3 to play.

They lost the 16th, halved the 17th and came to the very awkward, short par 4, 18th needing to halve the hole and win their match. By this time a large crowd had gathered behind the green, to watch this nail-biting moment. Essex played their second shot approach to 12ft and then Peter

played an excellent approach pitching 6 feet away, but instead of biting, bounced and rolled towards the out of bounds inches behind the green! With hearts in mouths, eventually it pulled up two feet from out of bounds! Dave chipped, expecting it to release, but instead, it grabbed, leaving Peter a nasty 8-footer (Dennis Wise on stilts) for a half, after Essex just missed their birdie putt. He had to hole it for us to have any chance of winning the day. Cool as you like, he did! The team ran on to the green for a group hug akin to Shane Lowry holing out to win the Ryder Cup. What a fantastic scene.

We managed to win 4 out of 5 afternoon matches, which was a great effort, only disappointingly to come up ½ a point short of winners, Kent.

Still, the team did themselves and Hertfordshire proud. They never gave up and nearly pulled it off after a slow start in the morning. Brilliant fighting spirit and team camaraderie.

If we to continue with that spirit into our league matches, we should have a good season.

Finally, thanks to Royal Blackheath for superb hosting and Kent Golf staff and volunteers for organising such a well-run event.

Matt Cohen

County Seniors Captain



