

"Q and A" with Laurie Owen,

Hertfordshire – Mens 1st Team Manager

Background

The county is there to nurture, develop and support talent from an early age, so that they can reach their full potential, represent the county, maybe even progress to earn international honours, but more importantly being involved and enjoying our great game of golf for a lifetime

Laurie Owen is one of our many success stories and a wonderful role model for the county, a true ambassador for Hertfordshire Golf, he is currently the Men's 1st Team Manager.

We sat down with Laurie to discuss his background in golf, outside interests, aspirations and vision of how golf can continue to make great strides in Hertfordshire.

Sit back, relax and enjoy our conversation ……



Champion Golfer

Interview

Interviewer

- How long have you been involved in golf and with the County?

My journey in golf began at Letchworth GC when I was just 10 years of age, joining as a Junior member, I am still at Letchworth today, with a brief spell spent at Harpenden Common where I represented the club winning the county championship.

My first involvement with the County was via the U16's having got their attention in Junior Opens.I then progressed to the U18's, U21's (Colts of old) and eventually to the Men's 1st Team in 2014. In the last couple of years, I have been Team captain and this year Team Manager



Letchworth GC

- Following school where did your working life and golf take you to?

On leaving school I was fortunate enough to be offered a apprenticeship at Letchworth. At 19, can you believe I was heading to Baltimore CC on a Ohio State Internship for 6 months. This was a amazing experience with the opportunity to work at the PGA tour Wells Fargo Championship at Quail Hollow golf club, preparing the course for some of the best in the world.



Quail Hollow

I returned from the USA and had stints at various clubs as a Green Keeper, including Letchworth, East Herts, Brocket Hall and now at Gog Magog as the Old Course Supervisor, reporting to the Deputy Estates manager and Estates Manager.



Gog Magog GC

- Where are you now with Golf, as a career and as a pastime?

I'm currently undertaking BIGGA's professional development program "Future Turf Managers Initiative". I get to be mentored by many experienced professionals from across the country. Where I will focus on Leadership and Course Management with the help of my mentors preparing me for when the right opportunity arises for me to progress into golf course management.

- What does your current role involve at Gog Magog?

As the Old Course Supervisor, I lead the team on the day-to-day priorities which need to be completed. We plan ahead to keep a close eye on the golfing calendar and changes in conditions. As you would expect, this year has been a particularly challenging one for all.
Close contact with all the team is essential in being as productive and organised as we can.

- Is there a role for fairway cutting robots?

They certainly have a role and across the country we are seeing more and more being adopted. The tide is turning in their favour, they free up valuable man hours to work on other key areas and be more productive. Plus being electric they save on increasingly expensive diesel and are more environmentally friendly. Also being considered, as machines come up for renewal and replacement or working alongside current fairway mowers. One massive benefit with the current hot dry summers we are experiencing now is the weight of the mower as oppose to a traditional heavy cylinder. These are less stressful to the plant and reductions in herbicides and PGR's (Plant Growth Regulator) have been seen with the frequent cutting producing a more uniformed finish. They were used to cut all the fairways

and surrounds last year in the AIG Women's Championship so that just shows the quality of cut they are producing. Like anything though, they have there pros and cons.

- Do you see clubs understanding the pressure / demands for water in the future and what are the solutions?

Certainly, after the last couple of summers, water is becoming a hot topic, supply is restricted and having your own source could become the norm for sure and clubs should be actively be looking at ways to do this.

- How do you balance this with being an Elite Golfing Amateur and 1st Team Manager

Careful planning helps balance county commitments and the various Opens. As much as possible I try to show priority to the county, but sometimes you have to juggle.



1st Team 2026

- Did you have many new faces in the 1st Team this year?

  Yes, we have been fortunate to be able to include County Champion Rio Saigal, Max Hopkins and our college stars Zach Little and James Baxter

- How big is your squad and pool of players?

  Relatively small, at just 12, which keeps everyone focused and we can rotate if there is the issue of availability, so we always have a strong 8.

- How does somebody make the team management aware of their availability?

  The best way is to enter County and Open events to get yourself noticed – results always helps awareness. Plus, of course Word of Mouth is powerful too.

- What has been your greatest achievement in golf to date?

  I am fortunate to have had so many great memories from County Championships, Various wins across the country and most recently making final qualifying for the Open at Royal Cinque Ports. It showed me that I have the game and if the putter gets hot anything is possible. It was a great experience playing with the likes of European Tour players at such a well-organized event.

- What are your next key commitments for the county?

The County scene quietens for now, with it all starting again in January.

- What is the one big challenge that the County faces?

Diary pressure and availability. There are so many golfing opportunities that can make it difficult to always be available, we all do try and prioritise the County when we can.

- How best can you support the next wave of elite players in the County? There must be so many good practises you could advise them on

It's important to integrate new players in the team, maybe by pairing them with someone that they know or are familiar with. It's also important not to overcrowd and let them know they are there on merit, so be yourself, know that you are good enough.

- What in your view is Hertfordshire's greatest strength?

We have proven that our system of player development works with so many players progressing through to the highest levels, such as Jamie Rutherford, Tom Lewis. Hertfordshire really does produce great talent in both the Men and Women's games with plenty more talent coming through.

- Other than golf, what are your other great life passions?

I've learned to switch off from golf because it can be all-consuming. Away from the game, I enjoy football, Formula 1 and spending time with my girlfriend.

- Who would be in your dream 4 Ball?

That's an easy one – would have to Seve, Tiger and my Dad.

- Other than your home course, which course would you go back to and play again?

After my experience this year at final Open qualifying it would have to be Royal Cinque Ports…..

- What is your choice of golf ball and why?

Has to be a Pro V1

- What's the longest iron in your bag? And are there any clubs you would encourage the average golfer in Hertfordshire to consider?

The longest iron in my bag is a 2-iron. For the average club golfer, I'd recommend a 7-wood—why not make the game easier?

- How many wedges do you carry?

A standard configuration really of 4, PW / 50 / 54 / 60

- What's the last thing you watched on Netflix / Streamed

It was on NetFlix … Lizzy Borden – All about an Axe Murderer… (note to self always give Laurie a 3 footer)

- Facebook / Twitter or Instagram?

It has to be …Instagram / Twitter - .

- And finally, what would be your message to someone thinking about committing to county training, representing the county and maybe a career in golf?

My message would be simple: Get involved, there are just so many opportunities for all. There is a good chance you will experience golf with some better players and will help you improve too. There is so much to learn from each other.

Interviewer: Thanks so much for your time Laurie, I am sure you will inspire the current players to greater things and bring on those on the fringes to be real county assets. Others will want to follow In your spikes. Prepare well for 2027 and let's report back on maybe your journey to Open qualification and Mid-Amateur success.

If you are interested in learning more about the county, check out the webpage

https://www.hertfordshiregolf.org/


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