

Luton hoo 2

Day 2

Practice day

Well that wasn't the best night's sleep I have had, some serious noises coming from the streets around the hotel. Jesus Christ it was a Monday night and they were still out on the beer till 5am in Luton!!!! Not sure if I am jealous or worried. Anyway I am up and down for breakfast by 7am, nice basic choice for breakfast and I fill up, long day ahead. I go get the car, no damage and no ticket so that's a good start. I am not meeting Alfie till 10 but I am up and ready so head for course. I choose a different route from yesterday and go passed Stockwood Park golf centre. I pop in and have a look as I am early. Driving range, par 3 course and full 18 hole course. Looks cool, and its only £14 for a round and £8 for the par 3 course.

Mmmmmmm I reckon I could be visiting later as I have brought my clubs with me. You may ask why bring your clubs crunch? Well I will let you all know; somehow I have managed to make the club champs final this year and I need to hit some balls before the final. Hence this week I have the sticks in the car just in case I get a chance. So I leave Stockwood and head for Luton Hoo, It's not far 10 mins max. Bit busier today, more pros and caddies around as I head for the office get pins etc. and have a coffee. No caddie shack this week so coffee was £4, not happy with that. I spot two Irish fellas, Paul McBride and John Ross Galbraith. Both played amateur events with Jack so they knew me and me them. We had a quick chat to catch up and also agreed on the state of Luton!!!! It transpires they staying in my hotel, they were very scared last night too. Then in walks Ewen Ferguson, I like Ewen. He was a class act as a junior, played with and against Jack a few times, lovely lad. We all had a chat and again all agreed about the state of Luton, I won't go on but I will say as I had my coffee with the lads another half a dozen players and caddies came in and the conversation was all about Luton Town centre and how scary and shit it was. Well at least it's not just me!!!!

Anyway Alfie arrives and he wants a coffee, OK fine I will have another then. Alfie doesn't seem himself, he is a little agitated and always checking his phone. He took 2 calls but left the table to take them, which is fine and probably polite but he didn't look happy. We head to the putting green after coffee, I ask if he wants to hit balls, he's not interested. We're playing practice today with Bradley Moore and Callum Hill, (Cullum won Irish challenge two weeks ago) we all meet on putting green. It was fun, Alfie, Ewen, Paul, John, and Brad all now mocking Callum a little as he is a winner and has a new

trackman he bought. They're all like "woooooo look at you know big man!" That was quite funny, I kept my mouth shut and just smiled. To be fair they all ask about Jack, I find this really nice they still think of him. Although I wonder if Jack was here and performing would they still be asking after him. It's a cruel, fickle world this pro golf shit and each for themselves I reckon.

So we go to the 1st tee, Mickey again is on Brad's bag and Callum has an American on his bag called Brian!!! I mean come on Brian, who has a Yankee kid called Brian. Turns out he was a great bloke but we did give him a little stick, if ever Callum was slightly long or short, we all as one shouted "BRIAN THAT'S YOUR FAULT!!!" He took it well and gave as good back bless him. Brian has flown over with a big rucksack, that's it. He's caddying on a week to week basis, no ties, no commitments, no job. He was OK and asked me a lot of questions which honestly I enjoyed answering and wished him the best of luck. He was winging it and why not, go for it Brian!!!!

So we get into practice round and still Alfie is not himself. I eventually pluck up the courage to ask him if he OK. He didn't get off his phone for the first 6 holes. Basically I just said that this practice round was a waste of time if his mind wasn't on it. He agreed and told me a few things. It's the end of his first year as a pro and without going into too much detail I will say some of his sponsorship is not being renewed.

Luton hoo 3

Day 3

Pro-am day

Nice relaxed start, up at 8am down for breakfast and head for course about 10ish. We're not off till 1.30 but I need to walk 17 and 18. I head out in the course starting at 18 Green working backwards. It's the morning of the pro-am so the course is quite busy but I like it busy, I can see how people play the holes. 18 seems to be a strange par 4. Either driver over trees try to hit the green, 5 iron plod down fairway or driver onto 9th fairway for simple pitch in. A lot will depend on the wind. 17 is a bit more straight forward, par 5 with huge trees each side of the fairway. It's well in range for 2 but a good tee shot is required. I watched MK KIM and Simon Dyson play this hole, they're not long like Alfie so got some good feedback from them. I head back to the club to meet Alfie, he arrives and we head to the putting green and the range. The putting green was packed but I briefly had time to chat to some of Jack's old mates and competitors. Ewen Ferguson, Rob Macyntire and Paul McBride, all great lads. I like Ewen a lot, he's down to earth and hard worker. He always

asks after Jack and wishes him well.

So warm ups done, we meet our pro-am team. FFS team England golf, I mean come on, I spent most of my playing life as a junior international hating England, then watching Jack hating England now I am caddying for fella loved by England golf. That's not right is it? As it turns out they are all decent fellas, Sean, James and Alan. Alan is a junior selector now and for those of you that know me, I have a small issue with a certain Welsh junior selector, so eventually the conversation heads in the direction of this said person. Luckily for me, Alan was nearly on my wave length so I didn't upset him too much with my comments on the said selector which helps.

The team played quite nicely, nothing fantastic but it was a decent afternoon. Only issue was the time it took to play 18 holes, we started at 1.45pm and I got off the course at 6.55pm. We were out there bloody ages, it spoils the day and no one wants to be on a golf course for that long trust me. Needless to say we came straight off the course and the team and Alfie headed off straight away. The team had dinner to attend at another venue and Alfie had to get back to his mates house. I on the other hand was knackered so I decided to rest my weary legs in the clubhouse with a beer. Nice and chilled but a little lonely. I hit the road after my beer and headed back to the hotel, quick shower, change and over to wetherspoons again. Well it's close and I need to be up early tomorrow so it will do for tonight.

As you probably all know it was Ryder Cup picks day today. Obviously plenty of chat around the course about selections. You will be aware that Matt Wallace was in contention for selection or so you would have thought. Well I can tell you general consensus here was that he was never getting a pick, only chance he would have got in team was if he qualified outright. For obvious reasons I cannot write about why 90% of players here knew he wouldn't get a pick because it could be judged as slander, but if anyone would like to ask me when I return, I have no problem dishing the dirt verbally hehe hehe hehe. Also had some distressing news today, one of my new friends Tano Goya (married to Hennie Goya from Sky Sports) well they're not together anymore. I had heard a rumour earlier in the week and it was confirmed today on social media. You may think, wow crunch (Jono) why is this distressing you so much, you weren't exactly best buddies were you. Well no we weren't, but that was my best chance of getting to meet Sarah Stirk. Now you're seeing the reason for my distress aren't you... Yep my way in the front door, through Hennie obviously, has now been firmly closed, bugger!! Well I shall cry myself to sleep now and

get ready for an early start tomorrow.

Luton hoo 4

Tournament round 1

Early start! 5.30 alarm, 6.30 breakfast, at the club for 7.10am, perfect. Coffee, get pin sheet and plot my book. Alfie arrives and we go to the putting green. Bit cold this morning but the sun is out, it will soon warm up. Trouble with that is, you start taking layers off as it warms up. Soon the bag will be full of jackets and jumpers, bugger!!

Forgot to say earlier this week, slightly different approach on water for players at this tournament. Each player was given a "unique" water bottle supplied by the sponsor and on the course there are filling stations. Basically these stations are just large plastic containers with taps on full of council pop if you know what I mean. This is a small pain for the caddies as we are the ones filling the water bottles, and of course, us caddies didn't get a unique bottle so I have to buy bottles then fill them at the watering stations, such fun!!!!

Anyway back to golf matters, we warm up and all is good. Alfie's parents turn up and they are well bubbly, his manager arrives as well along with a few spectators, which is cool. We are playing with Jimmy Mullen and Oliver Lindell. Now Jimmy and I go back a few years, we played County golf against each other and have had a beer or two after golf or at some pro events. Jimmy is a past Walker Cup player but just hasn't kicked on in his pro career, I like Jimmy he's nice kid. He's from Devon originally but has recently moved to Scotland with his girlfriend, although rumour has it he left to get away from his ex-girlfriend, maybe if I get enough courage up I will ask him later. Oliver is 19 and from Finland, talented but angry, very angry, I will go into detail later.

So to the golf, we start well, very well, a good drive and wedge to 6 feet gave us a birdie at the 1st. Alfie missed from 8 feet on 2nd and 15ft on 3rd for birdies. 4, 5, and 6 were good two putt pars then a tap in on 7 for birdie was followed by 2 putt birdie on 8, all good so far. He two putted from 30 feet on 9 after a pulled approach and holed a good 8ft par putt on 10 to keep the round going. 11, 12 and 13 are all good holes, 11th is a 500 yard par 4 and we three putted for bogey, 12 is another strong par 4 we missed from 6ft for birdie, 13th 244 Yard par 3 and we three putted for bogey. Mmmmmm putting is becoming an issue, he has now lost confidence, greens are good and quick, he has just lost faith in his stroke. At this point I will add I am reading his putts with him, but it became difficult to agree on pace as his confidence was low so he felt

better dribbling his putts rather than being firm, this means lines change a little and they become feel putts rather than take the break out putts. He was happy with my reads just he couldn't bring himself to commit. Another good birdie chance went begging on 14 and an average chip on 15 left a 6ft par putt which he missed and the ball was quickly dispatched into the trees with gusto. We had a chat on the 16th tee and I basically said he should stop looking so hard, trust my reads and just hit them, he agreed which helped. 16 is another 500 yard par 4 and an unfortunate bounce left us just off the right pin high. His chip just grabbed a little and left 6ft again. "Right Alfie I will read it you just hit it" so I told him left edge, he hit it left edge and it went in the middle. Thank Christ for that. I was crapping myself a little when he was putting but it worked. He hit 2 great shots to the par 5 17th and another good putt for Eagle shaved the hole, tap in birdie. He got bloody unlucky down 18, a drive cutting the corner was only 15 yards from the green but right behind a lone tree 12 inches wide. He had a chip to green but it left 45 feet. He left it 12 ft short but again we went through our new routine and he holed for par.

We finished one under but he played better than that. Let's hope the putter works tomorrow. We had lunch, well he had lunch with his manager in the players' lounge, I had a sandwich from the public stand, no caddie shack this week. We went and had 40mins on the putting green and he released me for the day.

Luton hoo 5

Tournament round 2

Wow what a day!!!! Ups and downs from all parts of life. Let's start at the beginning, such a normal caddy working day; up, breakfast and drive to course at very sensible hour of 10am. I get my pin sheet, my coffee and decide to walk back nine to get a feel for the course. Its windy and cold so playing a little different today. Wind from the west too, it's been northerly all week so could change a few holes. We're not off till 2.20pm today so I have plenty of time to study and watch people playing the back nine.

Right sorry I have to butt in here, I am writing this in Five Guys burger joint because it's the quickest place I can get some food and get back to the hotel as its late. I am in a rush because I have had a huge bit of luck (maybe) or I am just good at my job, and I am bloody excited!!!!!! I will explain later but I will go back to the day now sorry. So I am watching the golf and taking notes when Tom Lewis comes to the 16th tee, he is leading at the time so I pay attention and observe. I watch him make a three putt bogey, shame he was leading as

well. I followed him up 17 where he made 5 and 18 where he made 4. He seems like nice fella and I know his caddie Jonathan, nice name.

Anyway I finish my prep and go meet Alfie. A few of his club members have turned up to support along with Mum and Dad, nice to have spectators. Warm up went well and he really seems up for it. Off we go and a birdie on the tenth, our opening hole sets us up for a good day. Hopefully the putter will work better today. Unfortunately that was not the case, he missed good chances on 11 and 12 and missed a 6ft par putt on 13. That sort of started a run of missed birdie chances and the odd 3 putt that killed his momentum and we were 1 over for the day and level for the tournament after 8 holes. A small fight back occurred on 18 and 1 with good birdies but a 3 putt par on 2 killed us again. Another missed 5ft bride on 3 made Alfie annoyed understandably, and I think that led to the pulled tee shot on par three 4th. He was dead left and a bogey was a good result. He was now deflated and whatever I said to him didn't work or sink in. You could just see the life drain from him, even though we still had 5 to play. More missed chances and another missed par putt left us at level par with 2 to go, he did 2 putt 8 for birdie but a par was all he could manage on 9. We hugged and he thanked me, I think I saw a tear in his eye, which I will explain.

I may have mentioned I didn't think Alfie was himself this week. He seemed to be on his phone a lot and seemed bothered. Well what I also didn't mention earlier, for obvious reasons was on Monday Alfie had a call from a friend about his best friend. Alfie's best mate is unfortunately dying, literally only weeks to live. This chap only 18 months ago got his dream job as a teaching pro in Dubai on the Montgomery course. He had bad back pains and discovered he had a tumour in his kidneys, this then spread to his pancreas and now it's right through him. Alfie bought Ryder Cup tickets for the 2 of them and now they don't think he will live that long. It's a sad time and I didn't mention it earlier as it's an easy excuse for Alfie to use. He didn't he tried his bollocks off and was devastated to miss the cut. We went for a pint in the clubhouse, his members and family were good and fun, all cockneys like but they were fun. We had 2 pints and I left them to get back to the hotel. I rang my wife on way home, told her we missed the cut and it was sad. Told her I would drive home tomorrow as it was late, I was tired and needed a shower, It was 9pm after all.

Now get this, as I pull up at hotel I get a text from Dimi, who by the way has shot 63,63 and is leading the tournament. He asks me when I am going back to Wales. I tell him and ask why, he then asked if I fancied carrying his bag on the

weekend. Now hang on let me think, Um he is leading the tournament and I am still in Luton. Extra pay day and maybe a bonus. I won't tell you my exact reply but I said yes, suddenly my spirits are high again and now I am excited!

Luton hoo 6

Tournament round 3

New day with Dimi, not gonna lie didn't sleep great. Never been in the last group of a tour event. Yes I did Jack at Europro tour school but this is a little different. Don't get me wrong it's not exactly a major or a main tour event but it's pretty exciting. Like I said, didn't sleep great so was up early and down for breakfast by 7.30. All prepared by 8 but not meeting Dimi till 10.45am. I decide to go to the club as I have a lot to do.

Firstly I gotta get a new meter book. Dimi works in meters so my yards book for Alfie is redundant, luckily the tour office had a few spare but she wanted another £25 for one. I used my best charm and told a little white lie and eventually after I bought the lovely lady a coffee she let me have the book for free, sweet woman!!!! So I go get another coffee, get my pin sheet and start writing my notes in the new book. Now obviously all the pins are done in yards so I have to convert them to meters to start and I also know Dimi is quite a bit longer than Alfie so I change my tee lines and notes accordingly. I then go walk a few holes, check the wind and see if any tees are moved. Traditionally round 3 is moving day and at most events tees are moved forward, so I take a gamble and just walk the holes I think will be moved, I got lucky and picked the right ones. I checked with a few other caddies as they are playing but I pretty much nailed it. By the time Dimi turned up I was as prepared as I could be. "heh Jono looking sweet mate" was my greeting from the new boss as we met on the putting green. I soon slipped into "Dimi mode" it was as if we hadn't been apart, had him laughing and relaxed pretty much straight away. His warm up was still the same and soon we were on the first tee.

We played with Tom Lewis and Stan Matius, both of them are 4 behind Dimi at the start of play. First tee shot was flushed, I mean flushed, we had 96 metres to flag and both Tom and Stan were 30 behind us. I strutted down the fairway like a proud peacock. Looking back now in hindsight, this drive probably didn't help us. Because from then on I just felt Dimi was trying to overpower them from the tee. He is a fantastic putter, I mean fantastic but he seemed to want to smash it from the tee and intimidate the other two. This led to a bogey on 2 and by the time we had played 6 holes all 3 players were tied at 15 under par. There was a big leader board on 7th tee and it seemed quite bunched but we

were still at the top albeit in a tie. Tom was flying, he was really playing well and attacking every flag. Stan was just steady, good steady but steady all the same. It was at this point I had a chat to my man. I basically asked him what the f*** he was playing at. He looked at me angry, and as some of you will know he can be quite volatile at times, so I did wonder if I was doing the right thing. "What?" he stated, so I went on to explain what I had seen in the first 7 holes, I told him he was smashing it and losing his rhythm. He looked at me and just nodded, nothing else. He played 7 nicely but missed his birdie putt. He hit nice tee shot on 8, about 20 yards behind Tom and hit a poor approach but made par. Then he hit lovely easy driver down 9 only five yards short of the green and made birdie. He missed from 8ft, 10ft and 12ft on 10, 11 and 12 for birdie but the golf was good. A poor swing on the 225 yard par 3 13th left us with a horrible chip. Thick rough, over a 6ft high bank onto a downslope to a tight flag. Luckily the spectators couldn't get too close to us to hear our conversation about how we agreed to hit a hard high flop shot, land it on the fringe and see if it will stop about 10ft past the flag. I say this because he took a massive swipe, duffed it, it landed on top of the bank, landed dead, trickled through the fringe, just made it to putting surface and finish an inch short. This led to rapturous applause and Dimi waving thank you to the spectators. I walk across green take out the flag so he can tap it in. As I replace the flag, it's possible I may have muttered "jammy t**t" to which I got a funny look.

Luton hoo 7+

Final day

So we sit and have a beer. He's a pretty cool guy off the course and we discuss passed caddies he has used and where I rank as such. Obviously I am not in Steve Williams' class but I learnt somethings this week that Dimi had told me he had learnt from Steve himself. I did quite well and was in his top 3 caddies and he promised me that when he gets his card sorted he will use me in the northern hemisphere as such. He has a good mate he uses down south, China Asia etc. so that's fine by me. Let's just hope he gets his card and I am still caddying. I have loved this week for different reasons but I have also realised doing this job full time is costly and being away is quite painful at times. I have got to think of my wife, my family and my Mum. Maybe I gotta get a proper job now, get a mortgage, get a house and settle myself down. Decisions that need to be made.

For now friends I shall love you and leave you with this thought, "never stay in Luton"