Scott Richardson, who made history by becoming the first amputee competitor in the world to compete in a national speedgolf championship



Winner Luke Willett

# Fast and **furious**

**This September the British Open Speedgolf Championships, in which competitors played two 18-hole rounds in two days, took place, in which some players completed both rounds in under 40 minutes, shooting close to par both times. Pam Painter reports**

The Springs, a beautiful parkland golf resort near Wallingford in Oxfordshire, played host to the British Speedgolf championship in September which, for the first time in its history, was a 36-hole event over two successive mornings, where the winner would prove a level of consistency to rival any golf tournament. For most, it is hard to imagine completing 18 holes in under an hour with those at the top of the leaderboard shooting close to par, but completing two rounds of 18 holes on successive days was both physically and mentally demanding.

Players were set off individually at six minute intervals with an appropriate running start to the first tee and ending both their rounds with a running finish.

A Speedgolf score combines the total shots taken (plus any penalty shots) added to the time to complete the entire 18-hole golf round. Scorers in golf buggies tracked the limited field (17) of 'Speedgolfers' who jogged on foot between holes and saved time by eliminating time consuming practice swings and other rituals associated with the regular golf. Finding the optimum pace to maximise golf performance is the key challenge and as with any great golf tournament consistency is key. Players use fewer clubs (up to seven) which are carried by hand or in a golf bag.

The championship title went to PGA pro Luke 'The Iron Golfer' Willett, who, among other incredible charity ventures last year, played three different 18-hole golf courses, at three different golf clubs, in less than three hours – and the time includes him running between each venue. At this year's the British Open Speedgolf Championships he shot the first 18 holes in under 38 minutes and the second in under 40 minutes on the par 72 course, also managing to keep his golf strokes at 77 and 82 respectively. George Boxall completed both rounds in under 38 minutes to secure his second place. Former World Speedgolf champion Rob Hogan, from Ireland, was a close third.

All the field were in complete awe of Scott Richardson, from Buckinghamshire, who made history by becoming the first amputee competitor in the world to compete in a national speedgolf championship. He completed his first 18 holes in under 75 minutes and the next

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morning thrilled again by going even faster in 71 minutes, 16 seconds. Scott has been playing golf for 10 years, always as a leg below the knee amputee, following a racing accident whilst competing in the Isle of Man TT in 2000.

Great golf is at the heart of Speedgolf so it was no surprise that the most accomplished golfers prevailed. What motivates these players is their passion in one sport that unites two of the largest athletic communities in the world, golf and running! Speedgolf also satisfies a myriad of today's modern challenges to a healthy and active lifestyle and provides the thrill of a challenge; there was no prize purse for the winners but something far more valuable, the accolade of becoming a British champion plus an unforgettable experience. Speedgolf is much more physically demanding than traditional golf, but also delivers greater fitness benefits, whilst addressing the issue of pace of play head on. The championship will return to The Springs on September 10-11, 2022. T**GB**

## 2021 British Open Speedgolf Championships

**Date:** September 19 & 20, 2021
**Location:** The Springs Golf Club, Wallingford Oxfordshire UK

**Results:**
1. Luke Willet. Round 1, 77 strokes in 37 mins 59 secs; Round 2, 82 strokes in 39 minutes, 57 seconds. Speedgolf score: 236:56.
2. George Boxall. Round 1, 84 strokes in 37 mins 36 secs; Round 2, 81 strokes in 37 minutes, 27 seconds. Speedgolf score: 240:04.
3. Rob Hogan. Round 1, 79 strokes in 42 minutes; Round 2, 80 strokes in 40 minutes, 46 seconds. Speedgolf score: 241:46.

**For more information on the sport visit britishspeedgolf.co.uk**