



PRESS RELEASE

TGI reward Sutherland for going the extra...1,000 miles

TGI Golf, Europe's leading buying group for golf professionals has rewarded member Craig Sutherland for an extraordinary display of dedication which saw him make a 1,000-miles round trip.

Sutherland was determined to play in the Ashworth Cup, which will see rival buying groups TGI Golf and Foremost go head-to-head on the course in a Ryder Cup style match at The K Club, in Ireland, that he drove from Biggin Hill, Kent to Fife in order to play in a TGI Regional Qualifier.

The group held four qualifiers – two in England and one in Scotland and Ireland – with the top two players from each qualifier cementing a place in the TGI team to be captained by former PGA captain Parnell Reilly, who had four picks to make up the 12-man team.

However, Craig was unable to make either of the English events as he was playing in Open Championship qualifiers. But this did not deter the Cherry Lodge Head Professional. He hopped in his car and made a 500-miles journey to Crail Golf Society to contest the Scottish qualifier.

If the eight-hour journey wasn't bad enough, he arrived so late he was unable to find a hotel for the evening, so was forced to bed down in his car overnight.

"I hadn't pre-booked somewhere to stay as I wasn't sure if I'd get all the way to Scotland before wanting to stop," said Craig. "But the journey went well and I ended up arriving at around midnight."

Unable to find a hotel near to the course he ended up driving as far as Dundee to find somewhere to stay, but to no avail. With only seven hours until his tee off time he was forced to bed down in his car.

Having spent the night cramped up in his car Craig took to the Craighead Course along with 26 fellow members in an attempt to grab one of the two qualifying shots.

Unfortunately for Craig he finished fifth, a mere three shots from a place in the Ashworth Cup team.

Having heard of such dedication to the cause though, captain Parnell Reilly has ensured it was not a fruitless journey and handed Sutherland one of his captain's picks to ensure he will line up alongside 11 of his fellow TGI Golf members as they take on Foremost in the inaugural Ashworth Cup.

Parnell added: "Craig showed tremendous dedication in an effort to qualify for the TGI team and everyone has great admiration for him. That kind of determination cannot go unrewarded, so Craig was always going to be one of my picks."

"I was absolutely delighted when I received the call from Parnell, a little surprised too that I'd been picked from the other 390-odd members of TGI," said Craig. "I cannot wait to get out to Ireland now and compete against Foremost, I think it's a great concept and will be a fantastic occasion."

TGI Golf members who qualified by finishing in the top two at the regional qualifiers were Chris Gray (Cottingham Golf Club), Gordon Cattrell (Middlesbrough Golf Club), Gordon Stewart (Cawder), Andrew Crerar (Panmure), Stephen Hamill (Lisburn), Raymond Burns (South County), Barrie Stevens (Beau Dessert), Simon Buckley (Ham Manor).

Parnell Reilly had four captain's picks to fill the final slots on his team. As well as Craig the former PGA Captain plumped for Ken Hutton (Downfield), Steve Burrige (The Richmond) and the experienced Peter Hanna (Lurgan).

Parnell said: "Each of my four picks came either very close to qualifying or went the extra mile in attempts to qualify.

"Kenny Hutton and Steve Burrige both missed out on qualifying automatically by the smallest of margins with Kenny just a shot behind and Steve beaten on countback.

"Peter Hanna was due to play in the Irish qualifier but was called into a PGA board meeting on the same day so couldn't make it. Peter has great experience at this kind of contest having been involved in PGA Cups as well as numerous Ryder Cups in an official capacity, so his knowledge will be invaluable to the team."

For more information on this event please visit http://tgifolf.com/events/supplier_promotional_events/

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Picture caption:

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