**Eagles Under 17 Championship Report 7-9 October 2024 Cromwell GC.**

For the first time in its 43-year history an Otago player has won the annual Eagles National Under-17 Boys Championship.

And with a bit of luck an Otago teen might have won the girls champs for the first time since the current Otago Golf Club professional Shelley Duncan won the first girls’ championship in 1984.

The event, which is made up of 3-person mixed teams all representing 15 Eagles provinces, plus 12 invited Otago golfers was held over 54 holes in Cromwell on Tuesday and Wednesday Oct 8 and 9.

Conditions were cool with often blustery winds making low scoring difficult, though it was Cromwell’s more challenging greens that caught a few out.

After 36 holes on Tuesday the best of the boys was Auckland representative Oscar Guo with rounds of 78,71 by one from Futures Dunedin club member Connor Howes who scored 72, 78. Otago’s Ricky Kang was in third overnight with rounds of 76 and 75 while Canterbury’s Jonathan Fry was fourth with 79, 73.

However Howes turned up the heat on Wednesday morning with a solid 72 to take the title with a combined gross score of 222, while Guo, not helped by an Out of Bounds tee shot on the18th finished 5 shots back on 227.

Fry (77) had a slight edge on Kang (79) to reverse their placings in the final wash-up.

Keelan O’Neill from Northland had a 3 round nett score of 216 closely followed by Blake Novak from Waikato and Jayme Bremner from Manawatu/Wanganui, both on 217.

While the boys had a clear winner the girls championship went down to the wire and was decided on the 54th hole.

After 36 holes on Tuesday Auckland’s Cherry Lee (73, 76) and Otago’s Yoonae Jeong (76, 73) from the Millbrook Club were tied and a tight tussle ensued in round 3. Lee was one better by the 53rd hole.

Jeong had an opportunity to force a playoff on the 18th but her 3-4m birdie putt slid just past the hole, while Lee chipped close from off the green and sunk her par putt. Lee’s 3 round total was 222 and Jeong’s 223.

Canterbury’s Junie Chang completed the 3 rounds in 226 as did Elise Barber from Wellington, a great effort for the young 12-year-old who played on a scratch handicap at Cromwell.

In the Girls’ nett competition Southland’s Xanthia Piggott found the conditions to her liking with scores of 66, 63 and 70 (199), followed by Josie Keast from Poverty Bay on 207 and Niamh McGillicuddy, Hawkes Bay on 212.

The teams’ event was won by the Southland trio of Xanthia Piggott, Will Carson and Cooper Boyce with a combined 54 hole stableford score of 328.

Among the invited players Toby Gallie a member of the Future’s Wakatipu club had a 54 hole gross total of 225 (77, 74, 74), six shots clear of Chisholm Links’ Kairangi Koni on 231.