

2012 GRIFFITH HARRIS EARLY-BIRD BACK-NINE CHAMPIONSHIP

May 6, 2012	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	FINAL
Ray		-	-	-			-	-		-
Pete		-	-	-		1	-	-		1
Phil		-	-	-			-	-		-
Matt	1	-	-	3	1		-	-	3	8

It was a long time coming, this first official match of the year, but on May 5 the group finally put tees in the ground and kicked off the 2012 Griffith Harris Early-Bird Back-Nine Championship. This year's match formats would be different than prior years, with all matches individual in nature, split between Skins and Stableford formats. Regardless of format, regardless of margins of victory for each day, points toward the season long competition would be awarded daily on a 3-2-1-0 basis. Matches will end on the eighteenth green, no carryovers...and ties will split points for the day. Simple? Don't worry, Matt has the scoring under control.

We were the third group off the tenth tee, and after enduring endless pontification at the tee box, the group teed off around 6:40 into gray skies. Peter and Phil started the competitive season toward the right side while Ray and Matt found the fairway. Ray hit his approach shot to the back of the green while Matt hit a terrific wedge to about three feet. Ray's long birdie putt came up quite short, as Pete noted the worst three words in golf (You're still away). But Ray made his second putt, putting pressure on Matt to birdie to win the first skin. Matt found the side of the cup, though, and came through and took the first point of the day. Sloppy play on eleven when Ray and Pete both went out of bounds to the right, leaving the door open for Phil and Matt. Phil hit a reasonable chip from off the front of the green, leaving himself a five-foot putt that was directly on the same line as a prior morning player. Meanwhile Matt was lucky out of the left bunker when his shot hit the lip but caromed up and to the far side of the green. Neither player, though, could save par and settled for bogeys that tied the hole and carried a skin to twelve. Three players were in the fairway on twelve, about 120 to the green, while Matt plucked his ball out of the "ground under repair" area. Pete hit the best shot, seven feet left of the cup, but he could not convert the birdie putt and tied the hole after Phil hit a great chip from off the front edge to tap-in distance for his par. Matt and Phil went right toward the trees on thirteen, Pete was in the left hazard and Ray was on the left of the fairway. Matt hit the best shot as his hybrid found the green and after a nice two-putt, he made his par and won the hole and three additional skins. Everyone was in trouble toward the right side of the fourteenth hole, but Phil and Matt ricocheted back toward the fairway and had shots. Ray thought his ball was lost and hit a provisional, but was fortunate to find his ball farther down the rough. Ray's approach to the green was short, Matt was to the left, and when only Matt could save par he won the hole and another skin. Ray hit a nice tee shot onto the fifteenth green, Phil was in the trap and Pete was short. But it was Pete who saved his par with a very nice chip and six foot putt, while Ray came up short on his first putt and pushed his second, giving Pete his first skin of 2012. Phil hit a nice drive that rolled to the right side of the sixteenth fairway, Pete about the same distance but in the middle, Ray farther and Matt just past the trap. Ray found the greenside bunker with his approach while Matt was on the front left and looking good for another skin. But Ray saved the day by making a lovely blast out of the bunker and saving his par, tying Matt and carrying a skin to seventeen. Pete was in the trees on seventeen while the others were in the fairway. Pete came out nicely and hit his approach to the back of the green, and a chip and putt later had his bogey. Ray also made his bogey, and Matt missed his chance at par when his putt came up just short and left. So the hole was halved again, and eighteen would be worth three skins. Pete hit a shorter drive and could not fly the bunker with his second, while Ray and Phil were both in trouble to the left. Matt was long and in the middle, but gave in to negative self-talk and skulled his approach shot, opening the door. But he recovered with a very good chip and made his five foot putt to save par and win the hole, gaining an additional three skins.

Fun day, good to have everyone out on the course, looking forward to the rest of 2012.

<u>Skins Points</u>	
Ray	0.5
Pete	2.0
Phil	0.5
Matt	3.0

<u>Skins Won</u>	
Ray	0
Pete	1
Phil	0
Matt	8