

Briggs betters stars by winning European title

GOLF

Young golfer Toby Briggs has gone one better than Luke Donald and Justin Rose, by winning the Andalucia Junior European Open.

The talented 14-year-old has triumphed in the competition in windy conditions, winning by 10 strokes.

The Royal Norwich Golf Club member, who last year made the decision to pull out of Norwich City's football academy to focus on his golf, carded a six under par score to take the title.

The result sees Briggs go one better than England golf stars Donald and Rose, who both only managed third in the competition when they were juniors.

Donald reached the final of the event when it was first staged in 1993, but could only manage third place, as could Rose a year later when the competition was held on the West Course at Wentworth.

This year the first two rounds of the competition were played over the Links Course at the Alcaidesa Resort in the southern Spanish region of Andalucia, before the third and fourth rounds were played on the resort's Heathland Course.

The final was then played at Finca Cortesin, the venue for the Volvo World Matchplay for five years.

Toby's father, Peter, who is the pro at Dunston Hall, said: "He went there with the thought of making the cut, which was from 48

down to 24. But he turned in a first round course record of 66 so from there he was trying to hold his lead. I think he was stunned when he actually won.

"He's played well this season but he's not continued on and actually won anything before this, so this win should be great for his confidence going forward.

"It's his first big win and that should be good for him next season, to play in some good events, so it will be interesting, but he has still got a long way to go."

It is the latest in a string of accomplishments for Thorpe St Andrew School pupil Briggs, who is part of England Golf's East Under-16 regional coaching squad.

Mr Briggs continued: "He dropped out of the Norwich City academy because his ambition is to play golf, to play for his county, to get his England cap, and he really wants to go to college in America, he would go tomorrow if he could.

"But it's a one in a million chance, there are a lot of good golfers in Norfolk, so he has got to keep working hard.

"He came back and England had sent through a sheet of events for next year so he has already planned all the tournaments he wants to go to, like a Spain Under-18s, some really good events."

Briggs lives at Brundall and although a member at Royal Norwich, he plays a lot of golf at Dunston Hall and also practices at the Norfolk Premier Golf driving



■ Toby Briggs at the Daily Express Andalucia Junior European Open, alongside female winner Fauve Birch.

Picture: SUBMITTED

range at Blofield.

Mr Briggs added that another supporter of Toby was Peter Clarke, the former county treasurer who passed away at the end

of last month, saying: "Peter would always come up and ask about Toby so it was sad to hear about him, he would have loved that Toby had won."