



News release

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Young Maltese Golfers Urged to Test Their Game at Junior “Open” in Scotland

Young golfers from Malta are being urged to showcase their skills against hundreds of the world’s best junior players when the prestigious U.S. Kids Golf European Championship returns to Scotland this year.

Entries are now being sought from junior golfers across Europe for this year’s event – the biggest golf tournament taking place in the ‘home of golf’ Scotland in 2010, even surpassing the Open Championship at St Andrews.

The tournament has become one of the highlights of the junior golf calendar and will likely see around 500 players from 30 countries competing over four historic East Lothian links courses.

Organised by the U.S. Kids Golf Foundation - which provides opportunities for children across the world to learn and play golf - the event has emerged as Europe’s premier junior competition to showcase the next generation of golfing stars.

Kids as young as six and – for the first time – up to the age of 18 will be challenging for the various age group European Champion titles at the event, which also aims to promote the sport among children and families, as well as giving young players the chance to forge lifelong friendships through the game of golf.

Dan Van Horn, President and founder of U.S. Kids Golf, said: “We’re delighted to be coming back to Scotland once again to stage the U.S. Kids Golf European Championship. The 2009 event was a tightly contested tournament and I expect the standard of play at this year’s event to be even better.

“The skill of the players really has to be seen to be believed. Despite their age, these players demonstrate great poise, balance and professionalism and are a credit to the game.

“I am sure that many of these youngsters will go on to become at the very least competent golfers, but possibly even the Rory McIlroy’s of tomorrow.

“Of course, we are still looking for more competitors from Malta to enter this year’s tournament, which will once again be staged on some of the most stunning courses in the home of golf. I’m sure it will be an eye-opener for many of those who are travelling from overseas and may have never played on a traditional Scottish links course before.”

The tournament over June 1-3 will take place on four historic courses - Gullane No. 2, Gullane No. 3, Craighielaw Golf Club and Longniddry Golf Club – which are modified for each age group in order to provide the same level challenge, meaning holes are progressively shorter as the age groups get younger. It ultimately allows the players to reach the greens in the same number of strokes as the top pros on the PGA tour.

The top finishers in each category will then compete in the Van Horn Cup over Gullane No 1 – a showpiece event, modelled on the Ryder Cup, where the best European players are pitted against the top non-Europe golfers. The top five finishers in each age and gender group also automatically receive an invitation to the U.S. Kids Golf World Championships at Pinehurst Golf Club, North Carolina, in August.

This year's competition has also been expanded to allow 15 to 18-year-olds to compete for the first time, and it is hoped that this will encourage even more entries from budding junior golfers across the globe.

Tournament Co-ordinator Alasdair Good, Head Professional at Gullane GC, said: "2010 is a big year for golf in Scotland, especially with the Open Championship taking place at St Andrews. However, in terms of the overall number of entrants, the U.S. Kids Golf European Championship will actually be the biggest tournament taking place in Scotland this year – as there will be more than 400 players competing.

"We're going to see some of the world's best young golfers in action over four days and the standard will be exceptionally high. I've no doubt that we could even see a few Major winners of the future among the field of competitors.

"I'm delighted that the U.S. Kids Golf European Championship is back to East Lothian for another year. The tournament will continue to showcase both golf in Scotland and the emerging talent in the game and I'll guarantee no one will be disappointed at the golf they will see."

The U.S. Kids Golf Foundation was launched in 2001 to provide opportunities for kids to play and learn the game through local tours and tournaments such as the European Championships. Since holding its first tournament in 2000, U.S. Kids Golf Foundation now runs some 400 events each year including the prestigious World Championships at Pinehurst.

The Foundation is the charitable branch of U.S. Kids Golf - the world's largest producer of junior golf equipment for ages 14 and under. The firm has pioneered the development of golf clubs for young people, eliminating the problem of kids using heavier, cut-down adult clubs that often hurts developing swings and discourages budding players.

For more information or to enter the U.S. Kids Golf European Championships please contact the Malta Golf Association.

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Issued on behalf of U.S. Kids Golf by Holyrood Partnership.

PS: The competition is open to all handicaps. As long as each player has an official handicap, then they are free to register. U.S. Kids Golf will then look at details about each competitor's playing career before deciding whether to approve their entry in the competition (this is to ensure that the standard of competition is fair – and that all players will enjoy the tournament. It's also beneficial for players to have some previous experience of competing in tournaments. www.uskidsgolf.com