



THE R&A LAUNCHES VIRTUAL OPEN AHEAD OF 150TH ANNIVERSARY CHAMPIONSHIP

15 April 2010, St Andrews, Scotland:

The R&A today announced the creation of the Virtual Open Championship. The online game, which is played on a high definition, photorealistic representation of the Old Course at St Andrews, has been produced in partnership with World Golf Tour (WGT) and is free to enter. It will run online in conjunction with the 150th Anniversary Open Championship, offering fans all over the world another exciting way to experience golf's oldest Major, as well as providing the opportunity to introduce the game of golf to new audiences.

Qualifying rounds will take place from 1 June on www.opengolf.com, www.wgt.com and www.espnarcade.com, before the leading 156 competitors contest two championship rounds in the week immediately following The Open. One official winner will receive an all expenses paid trip for two to St Andrews.

“The R&A is dedicated to developing the game of golf, and The Open Championship plays a huge part in our efforts,” said Adam Lynch, Head of Digital Media for The R&A. “This partnership with World Golf Tour enables us to reach more fans than ever before and give them a taste of competitive golf at the home of the game. We are delighted to offer this as we approach the 150th Anniversary of The Open Championship.”

In creating the game, more than 100,000 HD images were captured, geo-referenced and placed into a patented physics simulator, allowing World Golf Tour to replicate the course to an accuracy of within one and a half inches.

“We look forward to welcoming The Open Championship back to the Home of Golf as it celebrates its 150th Anniversary,” said Izzy Cameron, brand development manager at St Andrews Links Trust, the organisation which manages and maintains the Old Course, along with the other six courses at St Andrews Links. “We are pleased to be working with The R&A and WGT on creating the Virtual Open Championship and believe this will help even more people become familiar with the Old Course and its iconic golfing landscape.”

“To be partnered with The Open Championship and the St Andrews Links Trust, is testament to the incredible product we've developed and the vast fan base we've established,” said YuChiang Cheng, CEO of World Golf Tour, who are recognised as the creator, platform-provider and co-host of the Virtual Open Championship. “We're humbled and truly honoured to be working with these prestigious organisations to grow the game of golf.”

A closest-to-the-hole version of the game will be available on www.opengolf.com, www.wgt.com and www.espnarcade.com on 15 April, allowing players to practise for the Virtual Open Championship.