



MALTA GOLF ASSOCIATION INFORMATION BULLETIN



MALTA JUNIOR OPEN 2017

Spearheaded by the success of previous International Junior competitions hosted by the Royal Malta Golf Club; the host Club, the RMGC Junior Academy, the PGA of Malta and the Malta Golf Association joined forces to organise for the first time this competition over 54 holes.

This enabled the tournament to be a probationary event towards the World Amateur Golf Ranking which is administered by the R&A. Indeed as the text is being inputted into this document the R&A have confirmed that the event will be included in the WAGR listing from 2018.

The lead up to the competition proved exciting as much as the tournament itself. The RMGC greenkeepers under the supervision of Andy Holland and Trevor Briffa rolled up their sleeves and put their backs behind ensuring a presentable course for the tournament. Their endeavours prevailed and gave the visitors a glimpse of what the RMGC par 68 could offer.

The determination behind the RMGC office, the Pro-Shop, the Putters' Inn, the Organising Committee and the volunteers that offered their assistance throughout the four days of the tournament ensured the smooth running of the event which was additionally shored up by a number of sponsors which ensured the well-being of the participants as well as making the whole set up more colourful, brighter and well organised.



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Apart from making it WAGR compliant, the 54-hole competition, played in the week leading to the Easter holidays, attracted a good number of players including six from Cyprus, fifteen from Germany, seven from Italy, three from Latvia, four from Poland, two from Switzerland and one each from Spain, Sweden, Russia, Czech Republic and France. These were joined by ten local players, three of which could not continue to the final day of play due to different reasons. Out of the fifty players, fourteen were girls.



Valentina Albertazzi from Italy was the best player in the field with a handicap of +0.1. Marco Rossrucker from Germany and his friend Niklas Beetz entered the tournament with handicaps of 0.0 and 1.3 respectively. The best RMGC player was Laurens Schulze-Doering with a handicap of 4.2. Whilst the tournament was played off scratch, these players were all to feature throughout the event.

The tournament started with a practice day on Sunday 9th April. The day broke with grey skies and strong winds. The RMGC course showed its character... not an easy par 68 in these conditions. Some of the young feathers were ruffled and became wary of an island wind combined with small greens.

Whilst the last flights were finishing their practice rounds, the Junior Academy was holding a subsidiary competition for its birdie, par and bogey groups playing a nine-hole; six-hole and driving range competition respectively. The prizes for this subsidiary competition were presented ahead of the welcoming ceremony and as follows:



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BIRDIE GROUP

Winner: Erik Nordstrom

Runner-up: Laya Cristina

PAR GROUP

Winner: Ken Pavlov

Runner-up: Max Schembri

BOGEY GROUP

Winner: Timothy Attard

Runner-up: Amy Grima

THE TOURNAMENT

Sunday's weather prevailed during the first day of the tournament. Albertazzi started the tournament with straight pars over the first ten holes except the 5th where she registered a bogey. She then proceeded to bogey the 11th, par the 12th and bogey the 13th and 14th before making a birdie on the 15th and 16th and coming home with two other straight pars for a two-over-par 70 to lead the tournament after day 1. Rossrucker, on the other hand started badly with four bogeys and a birdie on the front nine. He got another birdie on the 10th followed by two pars and two bogeys. Like Albertazzi he got one back on the 15th to drop it again on the 17th and back again on the 18th to finish with 71. Bosse Lenssen started his round with an eagle but six bogeys with only one birdie tied him second with Rossrucker and three shots ahead of the next player in the field. Local boy Laurens carded in double bogeys on the 3rd and 8th, five bogeys, nine pars and birdies on the 11th and 18th to end his first day with +7.

Tuesday heralded calmer almost non-existing winds and clear blue skies. Crazy enough this seemed to have the opposite effect on the leaders perhaps because they felt they could challenge the RMGC course. Albertazzi's was the most painful beginning. She tripled bogeyed the 2nd; double bogeyed the 4th and the 10th and had four other bogeys in between. She bogeyed the 12th and 13th, birdied the 14th to drop the shot again on the 15th before coming in with a birdie, birdie, par towards a +11 for the round yet still maintaining her lead as the best girl. Rossrucker also failed to take advantage of the conditions with six bogeys matched by only one birdie for the round for a +5 albeit good enough to keep him overall leader for the tournament. The biggest movers in the top positions and the players with the best scores of +3 for the day were Laurens and Niklas Beetz. The best girl shaker was Anna Marksa from Latvia who improved her previous day score by 13 shots for a gross 72.



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The third day of the tournament saw the penultimate flight composed of the three best girl players - Albertazzi, Marksa and Clara Goetz - drawn together; whilst the ultimate flight was composed of Rossrucker, Beetz and Laurens. Lenssen on tie third with Laurens after the second day was drawn in the flight before the girls together with Barrios from Russia and Lindberg from Sweden.

The girls' three ball played their final round without much unexpected upsets. Albertazzi managed to control her game slightly better than her fellow competitors to retain her lead throughout. Her +5 of the day for an overall +18 for the tournament eclipsed Marksa's +33 and Goetz's +42.

The boys' competition ended a little more exciting. At the end of the front nine Rossrucker maintained his two shot lead over Laurens with nine straight pars compared to Laurens five pars, two birdies and two bogeys. Beetz dropped back with five bogeys to a birdie and three pars whilst Lenssen's triple bogey on the eight distanced him from the top two for the rest of the round.

Beetz then double bogeyed the 12th also to move him away from contention. Laurens bogeyed the 10th and made pars on the next three holes. Rossrucker made pars on the 10th and 11th but followed these with two bogeys leaving him only one shot ahead of Laurens with six holes to play. Laurens bogey on the 14th to Rossrucker's par opened the gap again to two shots which lead was maintained after both players made par on the 15th. Laurens soft chip on the 16th gave him another bogey and Rossrucker took advantage to extend his lead to three shots when he made par. A strong birdie, birdie finish to Laurens' par, par meant that Rossrucker played level par for the course on the final day and extended his victory to five shots.



The end result showed Rossrucker with a +8 for 54 holes; Laurens with a +13 and three other players tying third with a +15 with Fritz Zickuhr from Germany elected as third place winner on count back over Beetz and Lenssen.

Oliver Stuart with a -12 and Filippa Schulze Doering with a -11 had the best net scores for the tournament. Finley Gratil with a +11 was awarded the best net from a local player.