



## **MALTA GOLF ASSOCIATION INFORMATION BULLETIN**

### **MALTA JUNIOR OPEN 2018**



A very successful three-day tournament has just been played at the Royal Malta Golf Club. Out of the original 99 entries, 93 boys and girls – all under 18 years – braved the cold winds and sporadic rain that prevailed over the three days. The players arrived from 21 other countries to join the local youngsters in medal stroke play with the winner declared as that having the best gross aggregate score over 54 holes. The conditions, for the competition, took care of gender equity by making sure that the tournament had joint winners according to gender – indeed the girl players contributed to one-third of the tournament's field.

Being the first ever World Amateur Golf Ranking endorsed event on Maltese soil, the tournament attracted a strong field. 50 players arrived with a handicap of 5 or better; 17 had a playing handicap between 6 and 10; whilst another 26 had a handicap between 11 and 28. Four players play better than scratch including Piet Hein Bakkenes from the Netherlands who with a handicap of +1.2 was the best entry from the boys. Katja Mueller from Germany with a handicap of +0.5 led the girls.

From the boys, Bakkenes set the pace already from day one with a round of two under par 66 – one of only three sub-par scores out of the 279 cards returned throughout the tournament. Ahmet Telli from Turkey trailed two shots back with a level par score of 68 whilst Jonas Benedikt Schorratz from Germany placed third with a 69. Five German girls led their gender after 18 holes. Marietta Ruhl with a five-over par was closely followed by Katja Mueller, Theresa Steinberg, Vivien Roesner and Lena Sophie Hassert all two shots back.



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The second day of the tournament saw Bakkenes and Telli playing together. The two-shot difference was retained until the fifth hole when Bakkenes' birdie to Telli's bogey saw the gap increasing to four strokes. The boys matched each other for the next ten holes until the 16<sup>th</sup> when, rather uncharacteristically, Bakkenes tripled bogeyed the par 3 to see his lead dwindling to one shot. The boys then both birdied the 17<sup>th</sup>. Bakkenes again birdied the 18<sup>th</sup> to Telli's par to see his lead restored to 2 shots at the end of day two. With these scores the two boys registered the only other two sub-par rounds for the course for the tournament.

In the girls' tournament, Ruhl could not sustain her first day play. With a score of 7 over par she dropped back to tie second with Mueller who caught her up having made up the two-shot difference from day one. Coming in with a round of 71, Roesner leap frogged to lead the girls by two shots at the end of day two.



On the final day, Roesner managed to just maintain her lead over the other girls despite playing nine over for an aggregate of 19 over (223) for the tournament. With a score of 3 over, Lea Becker moved up a staggering five places just one adrift from Roesner for a tied second place with Mueller.

Playing again together in the final round, Bakkenes and Telli continued to exchange strokes and kept the tournament exhilarating until the very end. Starting with two straight bogeys, Bakkenes forfeited his lead for the first time in the tournament and allowed Telli to catch up until the latter double bogeyed the par three 5<sup>th</sup> to allow Bakkenes to regain a two-shot lead which he sustained until the front nine.

Bakkenes then bogeyed the 10<sup>th</sup> to lose a shot which he duly regained when Telli bogeyed the 12<sup>th</sup>. Telli then went bogey, par, par to Bakkenes' par, bogey, bogey to position himself one shot behind with two holes to play. The boys both made a par on the 17<sup>th</sup> until Telli's bogey on the final hole finally gave the winning place to Bakkenes who with an easy birdie secured the boys' tournament with a +2 (206) – three shots ahead of Telli. Karem Tanpolat, also from Turkey, secured the third place.







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The best local boy was Laurens Schulze Doering who placed tied eighth overall with 18 over par; whilst the best local girl was his sibling Filippa.

Playing behind the field, in a separate competition organised for them, four birdie players of the RMGC Junior Academy showed their mettle when they never gave up despite that they played the same length of course as the main tournament. Aleksandr Vagimov was declared the winner. Other RMGC Junior Academy members were also given the opportunity to play in subsidiary competitions according to their group.





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The success of this tournament was due to an extraordinary team effort from all concerned. On behalf of the RMGC Captain and Irwin Gratil who managed the Organising Committee, I extend our appreciation foremost to the RMGC members who sacrificed their Sunday to Wednesday tee times to accommodate the tournament and to those members who volunteered to walk with a flight during the tournament. The one comment, that prevailed from our guests, was how positive and important they considered this to be.

Our thanks also to those RMGC members who forfeited their trolleys for the use of the players; to the RMGC Chairman for his solid help before and during the tournament; to the ladies who assisted in the registration process; to Nigel and Peter for their assistance with the scoring; to Laine, Gun, Michelle and Mia for their on-course updates; to Thomas for being the master of ceremonies both on and off the course; to Malcolm, Steve, Mia and David for agreeing to be the first-aiders; to Doreen, Marco and John for refereeing; to the RMGC Manager and Secretaries; to Henning; Christina and Kerstin at the pro-shop; to Chris, Silvio and the catering staff of the Putters' Inn; to Trevor and his greenkeeping staff; to those parents and members who helped in the Subsidiary competitions; to Johnnie for his assistance before and throughout the competition; and to Sue and the cleaning staff.

To all of you and to the SPONSORS of the tournament, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We look forward to working again together with you in a year's time.