



# **MALTA GOLF ASSOCIATION**

## **INFORMATION BULLETIN**

### **MALTA JUNIOR OPEN 2024**



A record number of 93 young players travelled from 22 different countries to join another 6 local members to participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the tournament, endorsed by The R&A towards the World Amateur Golf Ranking points system.

The format of the competition was medal stroke play with the winner declared as the player having the best gross aggregate score over 54 holes. Three categories were in place – one for the under-21, one for the under-18 and another for the under-16. The conditions for the competition, took care of gender equality by making sure that both the best boys and the best girls in each category were equally awarded with an additional criterion that the joint winners of the Malta Junior Open were reserved for those participating in the under-18 category.

Of the 99 participants, 56 were boys and 43 were girls. On paper, the best two boy players had a handicap of +6.5 and + 4.0 whilst the two best girl players shared a similar handicap of +3.1. Overall, 24 players registered with a handicap better than scratch and another 33 players had a handicap better than 5.0. This augured towards a strong competitive spirit over the three days of the tournament.

The first day of the competition was played in relatively good weather but strong winds prevailed over the following two days testing the players' resolve to the limit. Out of 297 scores over the three days, only sixteen were level par 68 for the course or better and only two aggregate scores over the three days were under par for the course. These were both 4 under for the course and from boy players. The best score from a girl player was 10 over par.

The under-21 girls' category was won by Laura Mizlerova from the Czech Republic by a six-shot lead over her compatriot Nela Travnickova who was leading the category by two shots before the last day. Last year's winner of the category, Zsofia Foldhazi-Nagy from Hungary, placed third.



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In the under-21 boys, a three under par for the round on the first day gave Timotej Formanek a strong lead which he secured by another sub-par round on the second day followed by a level par for an aggregate of four under par for the tournament. Maxime Lam from France placed second 10 shots back despite a hole-in-one achieved on the par three 17<sup>th</sup> hole whilst Matyas Vysusil from the Czech Republic and Felix Holzer from Austria placed 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> respectively.

Elena Duduleanu from Austria led the under-16 girls' category by three shots on the first day of the competition. She held on to first place despite finding the conditions difficult on the subsequent days of the competition. Emma Viscovich from Denmark claimed second place with a two-shot deficit ahead of Alicja Herbiak from Poland. Eliana Buhagiar, of Maltese ancestry who travelled all the way from Canada for the tournament, placed fourth.

The under-16 category for the boys presented a change of scene throughout the three days. Louis Rickett from England led the field with a three under par for the course and a three-shot lead ahead of Malta's Alexander Vagimov. Noah Gratil, also from Malta, was seven shots behind. In the second day, Constantin Bauer Mitterlehner from Austria hit an amazingly six-under par for the course to leapfrog him to first place ahead by three shots from Alexander. Noah crept up to third place through a one-under par for the course. Another one-under par on the third day secured Noah's top position for the category as both Constantin and Alex found it difficult to sustain their earlier rounds. Kai Notteboom from Switzerland claimed the third place two shots ahead of Alex and Louis who tied fourth.

Two Austrian girls dominated the under-18 category from the start. Katharina Schroll's level par for the round on the first day placed her one shot ahead of Johanna Janisch which she continued to sustain over the next two days giving her an overall five-shot lead at the end of play. Mila Tang from Germany pipped Filippa Mortensen from Denmark on the last day of the tournament to claim third place.

Yves Koller from Switzerland and Alexander Viscovich from Denmark level par for their rounds in the under-18 boys' category put them one shot ahead of three other players after the first round. Yves then shot three-under for the second day, but this put him in second place as Alexander hit five under par. The positions changed again on the final day as Alexander could not keep to his previous form, giving the lead to Yves whose one under par for the round gave him a comfortable seven-shot lead. Alberic Le Bos-Niclot claimed third place whilst Henrik Schmitt from Germany placed fourth. Alberic also managed an impressive hole-in-one on hole 16 – the most difficult par three hole on the course.

According to the terms of the competition, Katharina Schroll and Yves Koller were declared winners of the Malta Junior Open 2024.

The other prize on offer was for the best net score from a local player. This was claimed by Mark Ganado who played eight over his handicap over fifty-four holes.

Parallel to this event, the RMGC Junior Academy held a subsidiary Stableford competition for its Eagle players. This was won by Alex Ganado ahead of Alex Mece and Antonio Bianco.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I extend our appreciation to the sponsors, the volunteers and to all those who helped to make this tournament a wonderful success.