



THE PGAs OF EUROPE **INTERNATIONAL TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP**

Day 1 – Sunday 2nd December

Holland & Wales Leads ITC's Sparkling Start

Sparkling golf with sunshine to match saw the ITC off to superb start as Holland and Wales nosed in front of the record entry of 28 teams from across Europe and beyond here today.

The Dutch and the Welsh tee off the second round on seven under par in what could prove to be the annual tournament's most open and lowest-scoring event with half of the teams on level par or better.

For well-balanced Holland each of their trio carded sub-par rounds but in the 'best two of three' format each day it was Bronno Valk (-4) and Johan Eerdmans (-3) who combined to take them into the joint lead.

Wales's regular 'anchor man', the ever-reliable Jimmy Lee maintained the Red Dragon's consistent influence on PGAs of Europe tournaments with a round of 68 (-4) well-supported by Andrew Barnett's 69.

Behind them were three teams on five-under – Portugal, Italy and UAE – and from this trio the day's star individual round came from Portugal's Nelson Cavalheiro with a six-under round of 66, featuring seven birdies.

"I only missed two greens in regulation," he said. "And my putter was hot all the way round." Carvalho was enthusiastic about the way that the new course has matured in the last twelve months. "The fairways and the greens have come on really well since last year," he said.

Norway and Germany were chasing hard, too, on four under par, the Scandinavian team's surge up the leader board being inspired by Morten Haeras who, beginning at the 10th tee was five-under after five holes !. This score survived to his unlucky 13th hole when he dropped his first shot and then leaked another on his 17th.





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Day 2 – Monday 3rd December

'Two Eagle' Gordon Manson Drives Austria Forward

Welsh pride invariably shines through in PGAs of Europe events and the Red Dragon was breathing fire again here today as rounds of three-under-par 69 by both Jimmy Lee and Peter Evans kept their noses ahead of the field but only by one stroke.

The team performance of the day went to Austria who climbed into second place on twelve-under par, thanks to a round of 66 by Gordon Manson who improved by ten shots on his uncharacteristic first round 76. Manson was well-supported by Florian Ruprecht's 68 for a day's haul of ten under.

The return half of the Roda course was popularly regarded as the less difficult with rich pickings available to those with long, straight driving prowess and a matching short iron game, frequently a wedge.

Manson's trump cards, however, were the par fives that begin each half. Helping himself to an eagle on each of them he was able to drive his team up the leaderboard.

As overnight joint-leaders Holland slipped back with only Mark Reynolds (70) shooting below par, Wales improved themselves by six strokes as other countries closed in on another day of excellent golf in good conditions.

Wales stalwart Jimmy Lee gave a broad smile of agreement to the suggestion that his country target PGAs of Europe tournaments to display national fervour. "Sure we do like to have a go for these titles," he said, having personally made something of a habit of it.

"There are good scores to be had out there with no real rough to worry about and some of the holes being reachable with a wedge second shot. When I was moving along on three-under I felt as though I should have been scoring better."





It was a very good day for Denmark, too. On his debut in the championship assistant pro Thomas Nilsson gave them a useful boost with a six-under-par 66 that featured a phenomenal finish of six birdies in the final nine holes.

After cruising to the turn on level par, based on a bogey five at the fourth hole and a birdie three at the eighth, his game went smoothly into overdrive. "I was driving the ball down the fairway all round," he said. "And I was just going straight at the flags with my approach shots.

This control and precision earned him figures of 4-3-4-2-3-3-4-3-4 for a return nine holes of 30. "I sank a couple of ten footers but all my other birdie putts were short ones," he added. "I know I'm bound to say this after the sort of round I've had, but I think the greens are in excellent shape. They've done a really good job on the course."

Denmark were lying third at the half-way mark on -9, closely followed by Norway for whom Morten Haeras's second successive 67 took them into fourth place on -8 and headed him towards being the lowest individual scorer in the competition.



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Day 3 – Tuesday 4th December

Florian's 67 Opens Austria Lead on Wales

The Austrian team has been boosted this year by the return of Gordon Manson to their ranks after his four-year stint as national team coach...and the St Andrews-born Scot proved his quality in a powerful team challenge to win the ITC for the first time.

Austria begin the fourth and final round of the 2007 championship tomorrow on twenty-one under par, having drawn two strokes ahead of **Wales** to set-up what promises to be a shot-for-shot duel final day.

The Welsh were kept in close contention thanks to a fine 68 by Andrew Barnett, the same score as Manson but it was Austria's Florian Ruprecht, one of the country's new generation of promising players who have progressed through their education programme, who opened up the lead with his five-under-par 67.

A birdie at the tempting 500-metre par five first set him off with confidence high and though he dropped shots at the par fourth and the par seventh in between came the score-saver of an eagle at the short, 442-metre par five fifth.

Ahead of him then was the back-nine with its offers, in such benign conditions, of birdies on most holes for those whose short game is in place. Ruprecht's certainly was as he sank his putts at 10, 11, 15, 16 and 18 to confirm his country's all-round improvement in the sport.

"I've enjoyed the four years as national coach," said Manson, now in his 23rd year of working in Austria, away from the home of golf where he was born. "But I've missed tournament play and I'm pleased to be back. I'm driving the ball well and playing good shots into the green but I missed so many opportunities. Although I finished on four under I'm disappointed because it could have been better."





Among the upwardly mobile teams on the day were past champions **Ireland** whose rounds of 68 by Robert Giles and 70 by Leslie Walker gave them a six stroke improvement to a three-round score of eight under par. **UAE** climbed too as scores of 69 by Simon Payne and 71 by Greg Holmes added a four-under day for a total of seven under.

Italy were also one of the third-day movers, with their trio of Mauro Bianco (71) , Fernando Pasqualucci (71) and Mario Tadini (70) claiming third place in advancing their score by three strokes to nine under par. Of the excellent trio, Bianco has been slightly the main contributor with rounds of 68-71-71.

Poland also moved up the field encouragingly to seven-under as Peter Bronson equalled the day's best with his five-under, 67. After the first-day promise of a wide-open competition to the finishing line, however, it appears to have become a two-country chase for the prestigious title between Austria and Wales....barring any huge turnaround.



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Final Day - Wednesday 5th December

Manson's Play-off Birdie for Austria Sinks Welsh

St Andrews-born Scot Gordon Manson sank a 12 foot put at the second hole of a sudden death play-off in fading light here today to finally conquer Wales and win The PGAs of Europe's ITC for the first time.

After the two teams had ended a four-round tussle for supremacy on twenty-five under par, trading birdies and body blows in seemingly never-ending fashion, Wales sent out Andy Barnett in a head-to-head shoot-out with Manson.

The 486-metres par five eighteenth, with its yawning water hazard in front of a sloping, undulating green is no place for taking chance, so it was down to third-shot target golf with a wedge.

After regulations pars at the first attempt, Manson sent his approach to sinkable distance with the Welshman facing an impossible-looking task much farther out...and sure enough it was all over when he failed with his lengthy putt.

These dusky dramatics as a nightfall wind chill moved in followed previous final green heroics when Austria's Florian Ruprecht sank a long putt leaving Wales needing a similar birdie to force a play-off. This time it was Jimmy Lee who delivered with a similar long bulls eye...but only after his ball threatened to lip out.

In earning the play-off Barnett, son of John Barnett of the PGA of Wales chairman John Barnett, was a red-shirted hero with a magnificent five-under-par 67. When he declared: "I played awesome..." it was probably an understatement, based on a round that boasted six birdies and an eagle.

His purple patch came between holes four and seven with a run of birdie 3, eagle 3, birdie 3, birdie 2...five under in four holes!





In contrast Manson was a shade disappointed with his day's work, good though a round of 70 may be. "I just couldn't get close enough to the flags today to get more birdie chances," he explained. As it turned out he was saving it for the final thrust...

With the experienced Claude Grenier, who has twice been a runner-up with Austria in previous years, having a disappointing round of 73, it the 'new generation' young player, Ruptrecht, who became their best player of the day and, indeed, shared the best individual total for the entire tournament of twelve under par.

"I've been through the education system under Jonathan Mannie," he said "And I'm a teaching professional, not a player," he stressed. So, would his brilliant form in this event change his career path. "I'm not sure yet," he smiled.

In one of the closest and most enthralling final-day battles ever in the competition, the two leaders were chased superbly for third place by Italy who were fifteen-under at one staged but fell back a couple of shots.



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Final Scores

(Par 72 x 8 = 576. Best two scores from three to count each round.)

- 25 **AUSTRIA 142 134 135 140** (Florian Ruprecht, Gordon Manson, Claude Grenier)
* **Austria won sudden-death play-off at second extra hole**
- WALES 137 138 138 138 (James Lee, Peter Evans, Andrew Barnett)
- 13 ITALY 139 143 141 140 (Mauro Bianco, Fernando Pasqualucci, Mario Tadini)
- 11 GERMANY 140 142 143 140 (Mark Stevenson, Paul Archbold, Simon Brown)
- 10 IRELAND 145 141 138 142 (Brendan McGovern, Robert Giles, Leslie Walker)
- 9 SOUTH AFRICA 141 140 143 143 (William Guy, Morne Botha, Paul Marks)
ENGLAND 141 149 138 139 (Michael Nesbit, James Whatley, Danny Taylor)
- 8 FINLAND 145 139 142 142 (Harri Murtonen, Jyry Peltomaki, Sakari Aho)
POLAND 144 143 138 143 (Martyn Proctor, Mike O'Brien, Peter Bronson)
SWITZERLAND 144 138 143 143 (David Clarke, Carl Robinson, Giles Hickman)
- 7 SCOTLAND 145 138 143 143 (Gary McFarlane, James McKinnon, Sam Cairns)
- 6 UAE 139 146 140 145 (Greg Holmes, Craig Martin, Simon Payne)
- 5 NORWAY 140 140 144 147 (Thomas Hansen, Morten Haeras, Thomas Oderud)
- 4 PORTUGAL 139 145 143 145 (Sergio Ribeiro, Nelson Cavalheiro, Almerindo Sequeira)
HOLLAND 137 146 142 147 (Bronno Valk, Mark Reynolds, Johan Eerdmans)
- Lvl SPAIN 143 143 144 146 (Juan Rosillo, Mariano Aparico, Alberto Ocejo)
CZECH REPUBLIC 144 148 144 140 (Jiri Nemeck, Petr Strougal, Jan Juhaniak)





- +3 DENMARK 143 136 146 154 (Ronny Kert, Thomas Nilsson, Henrik Larsen)
- +11 SWEDEN 145 142 148 152 (Petter Jonsson, Niclas Bjornsson, Ricard Thornqvist)
- +14 CROATIA 148 150 144 148 (Miro Raic, Darko Ljubanovic, Neno Smoljenivic)
- +18 SLOVENIA 147 145 155 147 (Andrej Kraljic, Janez Grilc, Rok Pisek)
- +19 MEXICO 150 150 147 148 (Ismael Estrada, Arnulfo Romero, Israel Mendez)
- +25 BELGIUM 147 153 144 157 (Arnaud Beaupain, Matthieu De Lille, Frank Dhondt)
- +27 RUSSIA 152 153 145 153 (Alexey Matrosov, Alexander Gruzdov, Artem Nesterov)
- +33 LUXEMBOURG 158 149 156 146 (John Pickford, Leon Marks, Julien Pallier)
- +42 GREECE 152 148 157 161 (Eugenie Papadopoloulos, Harry Zervos, Themis Ginis)
- +46 BULGARIA 162 153 152 155 (Robin McGarr, Neil Turley, Nikolay Stanew)
- +50 SLOVAKIA 152 159 157 158 (Peter Spacek, Michal Oravec, Lukas Valuch)

