

## **LAMBOURNE PAIR TOO GOOD FOR EUROPEAN FATHER AND SON RIVALS**

Martin and Connor Hamilton produced a near faultless display of golf to lead from pillar to post to be crowned the inaugural winners of the 2008 European Father and Son Golf Championship amid emotional scenes in Spain. Competitors of all ages from across Europe gathered at the PortAventura Golf Resort on Spain's Costa Dorada coast hoping to become the first ever champions in the 54-hole event but they had little answer to the Hamiltons' brilliant play.

With Connor leading the way, the nine-handicappers, from The Lambourne Golf Club in Burnham, Bucks, never looked back after scoring 45 Stableford points in the first round over the resort's new North Course - designed by Greg Norman - and held a five-point lead over the 49-team field going into the final day.

Hampshire duo Andy and Tom Tremlett, from Old Thorns Golf and Country Club, and Paul and Lance Round, from The Chase Golf Club near Cannock, Staffs, emerged out of the chasing pack to challenge and reduce the deficit to just two with nine holes remaining.

The Tremletts then halved the lead again with a birdie at the par-four 11th hole but Martin and his 15-year-old son held their nerve under intense pressure on the North Course's treacherous back nine to hold on and lift the trophy with a third round of 40 points - with Connor sealing victory in style with a birdie on the 475-metre par-five 18<sup>th</sup> hole. Their final winning score of 125 points was three clear of the Tremletts with the Rounds, who play off 14 and six, two points further back.

"The first two days were all about Connor and I've never seen him play better," said Martin, a dentist who lives in Slough with wife Gayathri and his son.

"We couldn't eat breakfast on the final morning and things got a bit nervy over the first few holes of our final round.

Our shots were going one club further than normal because of the adrenaline that was flowing but thankfully I managed to hole a few putts to steady the ship and we got things back together.

"I've never known pressure like it with the SKY TV cameras on us but we both played some good shots at crucial times in the final few holes to see us home.

"I'm so proud of Connor and it's hard to sum up what it feels like to have won. We came out here to hopefully play some good golf and have a good time, but the whole event has exceeded all our expectations.

"It's been a fantastic week and we can't wait to come back and defend our title."

The betterball tournament, played off three quarter handicaps, attracted a high-quality field including professionals, golf club secretaries, golf press, juniors and amateurs and the Hamilton's achievement was even more remarkable as Connor only started playing golf two years ago.

The teenager was still a 20-handicapper at the start of this year but his handicap has come tumbling down in the last few months and it looks certain to drop further in the next 12 months.

Connor, who goes to High Wycombe Royal Grammar School, the same school as European Tour star Luke Donald went to, added: "I was never that interested in golf before I started but I played a lot over the summer and my handicap keeps coming down.

"I've actually struck the ball better but I've never putt as well as this before. Everything seemed to be going in, especially on the first day. We knew that everybody was trying to beat us and it's great that we managed to hang on."

The Tremletts thrust themselves into contention by top-scoring on the second day over PortAventura's picturesque South Course with 43 points but had no complaints at the final outcome.

Andy, who plays off a handicap of ten, two shots less than his 17-year-old son, said: "We couldn't have played any better and Tom struck the ball brilliantly. We thought we had a chance at one stage, but we made a bit of a mess of the 17<sup>th</sup> hole and the best pair won over the three days."

Teams from across the UK and countries including Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, France and Germany took part in the event, which was open to any amateur and professional father-and-son pairing with no age restrictions.

Eleven-year-old Jack Fletcher, from South Essex Golf Club, was the youngest competitor with his dad Robin while sprightly pensioner Norman Taylor was the oldest player, competing with his 62-year-old son Les at the age of 87.

Phillip Hokr, who plays at Karlstejn Golf Club near Prague in the Czech Republic, produced the shot of the week after firing a hole-in-one at the 162-metre fourth hole on the final day, the second of his career.

But the event was tinged with sadness on the eve of the tournament following the tragic death of one of the fathers, Brett Payne, from Gravesend, at the age of 51.

Tournament director Toby Marsden said: "It has been an amazing few days but it is important that the terrible circumstances in which the week began should not be forgotten. The tragedy was felt by everybody.

"Martin and Connor showed great courage to come through in such testing conditions. We are honoured to have such worthy champions for our first year look forward to welcoming them back to defend their title in 2009.

"The standard of golf produced at events like this never ceases to amaze me, especially from the younger players, and it is great to see such talent coming through.

"It has been an inspirational week for everyone involved and we're looking forward to the event being the first of many."

For more details on the European Father and Son Golf Championship and how to enter for 2009, please phone +44 (0)1702 337020, e-mail [info@fatherandsongolf.co.uk](mailto:info@fatherandsongolf.co.uk) or visit their website at [www.fatherandsongolf.co.uk](http://www.fatherandsongolf.co.uk).

Final standings

- 1.) Martin/Connor Hamilton (The Lambourne Golf Club) - 125 points (45, 40, 40)
- 2.) Andy/Tom Tremlett (Old Thorns) - 122 (37, 43, 42)
- 3.) Paul/Lance Round (The Chase) - 120 (41, 38, 41)

ENDS

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