

## **A ROUND IN EUROPE IS JUST THE TICKET FOR CHASE DUO**

Father and son team Paul and Lance Round enjoyed a dream first-ever golfing trip abroad to only narrowly miss out on becoming the inaugural European Father and Son Championship winners.

Paul, who plays off a handicap 14, and six-handicapper Lance decided to play their first golf outside of the UK in the 54-hole Stableford event at the PortAventura Golf Resort on Spain's Costa Dorada coast and they ended up finishing in third place, just five points behind winners Martin and Connor Hamilton.

The pair, who are members at The Chase Golf Club near Cannock, Staffs, began promisingly with 41 points and lay six points off the pace going into the final round on PortAventura's new North Course - one of only two designed by Greg Norman in Spain.

A birdie four from Paul at the par-five 16<sup>th</sup> hole narrowed the Hamilton's lead to just two points to raise their hopes of victory.

But the duo were unable to make any further inroads and Paul and Lance, 17, eventually finished with a tally of 120 points - five behind the Hamiltons, from The Lambourne Club in Burnham, Bucks, and two adrift of Hampshire duo Andy and Tom Tremlett, from Old Thorns Golf and Country Club.

Paul, 48, said: "We had never played abroad before and didn't know what it would be like.

"We just wanted to play some good golf courses and give a decent account of ourselves but the event exceeded all our expectations and we never dreamed of finishing in the top three.

"We have no regrets at not winning. The best pair won at the end of the week, we have met some wonderful people and are looking forward to having another go in 2009."

Martin and Connor produced a near faultless display of golf to lead from pillar to post to be crowned the inaugural winners amid emotional scenes in Spain.

With Connor leading the way, the nine-handicappers never looked back after scoring 45 points on the first day over the par-71 North Course.

And 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.

"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."

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 Hamiltons' 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, said: "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 putted 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."

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 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 players, Brett Payne, from Gravesend, from a heart attack 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)

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