

### **OLD THORNS DUO COME UP SHY IN EURO TITLE BID**

Liphook duo Andy and Tom Tremlett's bid to be crowned the inaugural winners of the European Father and Son Golf Championship ended in agonising failure as they were forced to settle for runners-up spot in Spain.

Starting the final day of the 54-hole Stableford event five points off the pace, the pair had narrowed the gap on leaders Martin and Connor Hamilton to just two with nine holes remaining of the tournament, at PortAventura on the Costa Dorada coast near Barcelona.

A birdie three at the par-four 11<sup>th</sup> hole after Tom chipped in reduced the deficit to a single point and the pair, members at Old Thorns Golf and Country Club, scented victory for the first time.

But their bid for glory on PortAventura's new North Course - one of only two designed by Greg Norman in Spain - ended on the 164-metre 17<sup>th</sup> hole as they both failed to get par threes and they finished on a tally of 122 points - three behind the Hamiltons and two clear of third-placed pair Paul and Lance Round, from The Chase Golf Club, near Cannock, Staffs.

Andy, 49, a golf marketing consultant who plays off a handicap of ten, said: "It's disappointing to get so close to winning but we couldn't have played any better and Tom struck the ball brilliantly.

"We thought we had a chance at one stage and it all got very tight, but we made a bit of a mess of the 17<sup>th</sup> hole and the best pair won over the three days."

The Tremletts thrust themselves into contention by top-scoring on the second day over PortAventura's picturesque South Course with 43 points.

Tom, 17, who plays off 12, added: "It has been a fantastic experience and the courses we played were in superb condition. Obviously, it would have been lovely to win but the Hamiltons played some great golf. We'll just have to come next year and see if we can go one better."

Martin and Connor, who play at The Lambourne Golf Club near Burnham, Bucks, 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 Stableford 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, 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 puttied 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 all over 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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