



Press release
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BMW Italian Open 2010. **Italy's young golfing star Manassero makes professional debut.**

Turin. Even before the first shot is made there can be no doubt that the BMW Italian Open 2010 will go down in the history of golf as a very special and memorable event. At the Royal Park I Roveri near Turin thousands of golf enthusiasts will witness the professional debut of Matteo Manassero, Italy's young golfing star who just turned 17 years old three days ago. From May 6 to 9 he will face tough competition in what is one of the European Tour's oldest and most coveted tournaments.

"Obviously, I am very much looking forward to my first event as a professional", Manassero said on Thursday at a press conference in Palazzo Madama in Turin. "And I am absolutely excited to make my debut on home soil and at such a prestigious event as the BMW Italian Open." Two weeks ago, the prodigious Manassero, of Negrar in the province of Verona, became the youngest player ever to make the cut at the US Masters at Augusta, finishing eventually for a tied 36th place. Last year, in his first start at a major tournament, he had already amazed the golf fans in the home of the sport, sensationally finishing the Open Championship at Turnberry (Scotland) in a tie for 13th place.

The 2010 edition of the BMW Italian Open, a tournament which dates back to 1925, is being organized by a partnership between the Italian Golf Federation, the European Tour and BMW, and is one of the most eagerly awaited events on the calendar. Its purse is 1,3 million Euro.

"BMW has enjoyed a very strong partnership with The European Tour for more than two decades and we are delighted with the success of the BMW Italian Open since adding this esteemed tournament to our golfing portfolio last year.", stated Magnus Wiese, BMW Golfsport Marketing, "We have a tremendous line-up to look forward to next month, led by Italy's World Cup winner Edoardo Molinari, Europe's Ryder Cup Captain Colin Montgomerie, and one of the most exciting talents in world golf, Matteo Manassero. I am sure that all visitors to the beautiful Royal Park I Roveri will see excellent golf and also enjoy a fascinating time with the whole side program."

Last year's tournament, the first with BMW as Title Partner, was won in dominating fashion by Argentine player Daniel Vancsik who finished six shots better than John Daly (USA), Robert Rock (England) and Raphael Jacquelin (France). BMW has been participating in the event since 2005, the year in which, on the 16th hole (par 3), French golfer Julien Van Hauwe shot a masterful hole-in-one from a distance of 188 meters, thus winning the BMW 645 Cabrio offered by BMW Group Italia. Any player shooting a hole-in-one during the 2010 edition will receive a new BMW 5 Series.

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Corporate Communication

BMW's presence as Title Partner of the BMW Italian Open falls within the framework of the global Golf engagement of the German car brand. With a heritage in professional Golf dating back to 1989 when the first BMW International Open took place in Munich, BMW by now is the most important partner of the European Tour. Apart from the tournaments in Turin and Munich it partners the BMW PGA Championship in Wentworth, the Flagship Event of the Tour. Moreover, BMW hosts the BMW Championship on the US PGA Tour and is Partner of the Ryder Cup in 2010, thus being Golf's most important global player. This year, thanks to the "Participate and win the PRO AM" contest organized in collaboration with RCS, three persons whose names are drawn will have the possibility of participating on 5 May in the PRO AM on the same team with a professional golfer. The contest is reserved for card-carrying members of the Italian Golf Federation, who at the time of registration and participation in the match will be given a maximum handicap of 18 for the men and 24 for the women playing EGA (full hcp).

BMW Group Italia entered the world of golf in 1987, serving as partner in the women's Italian Open. Since that time, the relationship between BMW and golf in Italy has grown and, after a pause of several years, has been consolidated and broadened to include the whole world of golf. BMW Group Italia went from its initial role as partner to becoming Title Sponsor of the women's Open from 1991 to 1994, a period during which prestigious names such as England's Laura Davies and Sweden's Annika Sorenstam were coming onto the world stage. The year 2004 marked the return of BMW Group Italia to the world of golf, lending its name to four consecutive editions of the Ladies Italian Open, the key event of the season for women's golf in Italy and the second most important tournament on a national level after the men's Open.

On an amateur level, BMW Group Italia became involved for the first time in 1989 with the BMW Golf Cup International, a series of matches for world-class amateur players, which today involves forty countries and over 100,000 competitors each year. The tournament, which since 1990 has had world finals organized by the Munich manufacturer, was played in Italy without interruption up until 1999. After a pause of five years, it returned to Italy in 2005. The Italian edition of the tour began as usual this past 10 April in Milan and will continue with 20 legs throughout the peninsula. The setting for the Italian finals, scheduled for this coming 3 October, will be the prestigious Golf Club Royal Part I Roveri. Here will be decided the three winners who will then participate in the world finals to be held in Phuket / Thailand together with the winners of the various editions of the tournament played throughout the rest of the world.

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BMW Group

Corporate Communication

The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 24 production facilities in 13 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

The BMW Group achieved a global sales volume of approximately 1.29 million automobiles and over 87,000 motorcycles for the 2009 financial year. The pre-tax profit for 2009 was euro 413 million, revenues totalled euro 50.68 billion. At 31 December 2009, the company employed a global workforce of approximately 96,000 associates.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last five years.