



Press Information
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BMW International Open: "We are visiting a stronghold of German golf and the home of Martin Kaymer."

An interview with Tournament President Karsten Engel, Head of Sales BMW Group Germany.

Question: In the future, the BMW International Open will be held in Cologne every two years. What is the reasoning behind this decision?

Engel: For the last two years, the BMW International Open has been the only German tournament on the European Tour, and we are obviously proud of this fact. At the same time, however, it is rather a shame that there are not more top events like the BMW International Open in Germany. With this in mind, we feel that BMW has a particular responsibility for the development of golf in our country. For this reason, it is only logical that we consider the next step.

Question: What exactly is the venue concept for the coming years?

Engel: It is actually very simple. Golfclub München Eichenried will host the 23rd BMW International Open as planned from 23rd to 26th June 2011. The preparations have obviously been in full swing for a long time, and we are already really looking forward to an exciting week with a first-class field. Next year, the BMW International Open will be held at Gut Lärchenhof in Pulheim, near Cologne, for the first time. In 2013, the players will return to Eichenried for the 25th anniversary of the tournament, before heading back to Gut Lärchenhof in 2014. So we are alternating between the two venues every year.

Question: Why did BMW decide upon Gut Lärchenhof?

Engel: On the one hand, the Rhineland, which includes the major cities of Düsseldorf, Cologne and Bonn, is traditionally a golfing stronghold. We are expecting a big response from spectators in the Ruhr area, as well as neighbouring countries like Belgium and Holland. On the other hand, Gut Lärchenhof has a top-class tournament course, which was designed by Jack Nicklaus and has already hosted European Tour events like the German Masters in the past. All this makes Gut Lärchenhof the ideal venue for us to achieve our goal of allowing as many golf fans as possible to enjoy the special BMW International Open experience.



Question: The tournament will be played in the backyard of Germany's top professional Martin Kaymer. The BMW brand ambassador grew up in Mettmann, just 50 kilometres from Pulheim.

Engel: Indeed. That is a great bonus. We are delighted to be able to offer Martin Kaymer fans from the Rhineland region the chance to see "their" Major winner live at a professional tournament. The support enjoyed by top German sportsmen and women will ensure a magnificent atmosphere, akin to a home match, at Gut Lärchenhof. I am sure Martin will be cheered on passionately. Maybe he can add victory at the BMW International Open in Cologne-Pulheim to the title he won in Munich-Eichenried in 2008.

Question: Is there any question of the tournament moving permanently to the Cologne-Düsseldorf region?

Engel: Absolutely not. A very close relationship has developed between the BMW International Open and Munich. The BMW company headquarters are in Munich, and it is no coincidence that what has since developed into a 22-year commitment to professional golf began there in 1989. The permanent home of the BMW International Open will continue to be Golfclub München Eichenried. It is with the support of the management, the team and, last but not least, the committed members of the club that we have been able to make our tournament what it is today: high-class sport in a very professional environment and with a certain flair. Furthermore, the BMW International Open has established itself as a permanent fixture on the calendar of events in the Bavarian capital.

Question: What will the BMW International Open bring to the Cologne-Düsseldorf region?

Engel: For years, the tournament has been one of the most popular events on the European Tour. It is renowned for excellent sport, highly efficient organisation, and a friendly atmosphere. The BMW International Open is also held in very high regard by the players. We regularly have top international stars teeing off and also offer spectators an attractive programme away from the course.

Question: What can spectators at the 24th BMW International Open expect at the new venue?

Engel: It is still too early to reveal any definite details. We have an initial concept, such as how the Public Area might look. Our experienced organisational team has already had a few interesting ideas. One thing is certain: we will be integrating local Rhineland traditions in our programme.

Question: To what extent does the change of venue affect the sponsorship of the BMW International Open?



Engel: We are in discussion with all our existing partners and sponsors, and are delighted that Emirates, ROLEX, DIE WELT and HUGO BOSS are already fully supporting the concept of alternating venues at this early stage. We assume that, with time, we will be welcoming more sponsors on board.

Question: What are your personal expectations of a BMW International Open in a new environment?

Engel: As Tournament President, I have grown very fond of the BMW International Open, and it has become very important within the company. Furthermore, the tournament is also very popular among employees here at our group headquarters. It is obviously exciting to see what happens when we present this little bit of "home" to golf fans in a different part of Germany. At the same time, however, it is also a great opportunity to add new ideas to an already successful concept. It will definitely be interesting to see the combination of tradition and new emphases.

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