



Media Information
BMW International Open
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BMW International Open: Unheralded Bland steals the show from Masters champion Garcia.

- **Englishman produces spectacular golf to thrill 14,000 spectators.**
- **New European Tour rule brings in third round cut for the first time.**
- **Unlucky Kieffer misses out on chance of a birthday round.**

Munich. England's Richard Bland turned in the performance of a lifetime to move into a share of the lead after three rounds of the BMW International Open at Golfclub Munchen Eichenried today and will play the final round in the company of Sergio Garcia, the Masters champion.

The two players both had rounds of 67 to move to 13 under par and open a gap of one stroke over their nearest rival. It would be fair to say, however, that it was Bland – still looking for his first win after 15 years on the European Tour - who stole the show.

Henrik Stenson, the defending champion, finished five strokes in arrears after a disappointing level par round of 72 and will need a very low final round to have a chance of overhauling the leaders. Those still in with a good chance are Sweden's Joakim Lagergren, who trails by one, and Thomas Detry, of Belgium, who trails by three.

"I think it was the most fun I've had on the course for a long time," Stenson said. "I hit a lot of good shots and will take the positives out of that."

If fortune favours the brave, then Bland deserved his success in front of the 14,000 fans who came to watch. After locating his ball in shallow water at the front of the par-five 11th, he donned waterproof trousers and proceeded to play the ultimate 'splash' shot.



With the ball finding the heart of the green, the 43-year-old Englishman coolly rolled in the putt for a birdie and was up and away. Two holes later he arguably bettered the feat when his approach shot to the 13th green landed to the side of the hole, spun sideways and dropped below ground for an eagle two.

Reflecting on his shot out of water, Bland said: "I was walking around thinking, 'What kind of boxer shorts have I got?' Fortunately Gaz (his caddie) saved my blushes by saying that he had the waterproofs in the bag. It was a 50/50 shot. It was one of those, if it doesn't come off, you're going to look silly. There's a lot of golf yet to be played and there's some great, great players. I'm playing with the Masters Champion tomorrow. And we all know what Henrik can do when he gets on a run."

Garcia is where he would have wanted to be after 54 holes although his round could have been better had more putts dropped. Even so, he was pleased with a 67. "It's nice, but it doesn't mean that it's finished," he said. "We still have a long day tomorrow. We've got to go out there, play well again, and see if we can pull it off."

Six German players made it through to the third round, but only five will get to play on the final day. For the first time a new European Tour rule was used to bring in a third round cut in order to reduce the field to 72 players. This meant that Maximilian Kieffer, Friend of the Brand, was the one to miss out. It was particularly poignant for him as Sunday is his birthday.

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