

Press Release
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BMW PGA Championship: Record final day attendance as Matteo Manassero is crowned the youngest ever winner of the BMW PGA Championship.

The BMW PGA Championship firmly established itself as one of the top Blue Riband events of the British summer this weekend, attracting a record final day crowd during one of the busiest sporting weekends of the year. 26,412 attended the Sunday of The European Tour's flagship event at Wentworth Club, Surrey, where Italian Matteo Manassero became the youngest ever Champion after a three-way Play-Off, lifting the coveted BMW PGA Championship Trophy on the iconic, sun-drenched 18th.

This year's event took place over a six-day period, offering a superb package of fun, celebrity spotting and world-class golf. After a Practice day on Tuesday, a stellar cast of more than 50 celebrities lined-up on Wednesday alongside the best golfers in the world for the official curtain raiser to the BMW PGA Championship; the annual Celebrity Pro-Am. The field of 45 teams included Europe's magnificent 'Miracle at Medinah' Ryder Cup Team who were joined by sportsmen, actors and presenters from the worlds of TV and radio.

World number two Rory McIlroy lined-up alongside England captains Andrew Strauss and Chris Robshaw; Colin Montgomerie went into battle alongside Sirs Redgrave, Pinsent and Woodward; while Graeme McDowell and Radio 2 Breakfast Show host Chris Evans led the way in the afternoon's four-balls, against the likes of Ryder Cup team-mate Ian Poulter, Sir Ian Botham and Jamie Redknapp.

Inclement weather on Thursday and Friday took its toll on some of the 'bigger names', as players such as McIlroy, McDowell, Poulter and reigning Champion Luke Donald all missed the cut. However, the weather didn't deter Jason Levermore or Andy Sullivan who both hit Holes In One in the opening two days. Unfortunately, they were both on Hole 2 rather than the 14th, where a repeat performance would have seen them driving away in a brand new BMW M6 Gran Coupe. On Saturday and Sunday sunshine spilled onto the fairways and greens, as the players produced some world-class golf.

Total attendance at this year's BMW PGA Championship reached 101,542, with the breakdown over all six days as follows: 26,412 on Sunday (Round 4); 24,624 on Saturday (Round 3); 19,764 on Friday (Round 2); 18,264 on Thursday (Round 1); 8,462 on Wednesday (Celebrity Pro-Am); 4,016 on Tuesday (Practice).

Away from the course there was plenty to keep visitors and families entertained in the BMW PGA Championship Tented Village. A number of BMW's Performance Team Members visited the interactive displays and challenges during the week, including England Captain Chris Robshaw, who stopped by the BMW X6 Sweet Chariots Car and rugby kicking simulator. While 2014 Ryder Cup Captain Paul McGinley led the way on the BMW Putting Challenge, scoring a Hole In One at his first attempt.

Crowds in the Tented Village enjoyed star spotting throughout the tournament, mingling with celebrities such as Michael Parkinson, Andy Cole, Westlife's Shane Filan, John Terry, Jeremy Guscott, Keith Wood, Martin O'Neil and Olympic medallists Leon Taylor, Mark Hunter and Pete Reed.

European Tour Championship Director Jamie Birkmyre commented: "We are delighted with the success of this year's BMW PGA Championship and I'm thrilled to see Matteo Manassero become our youngest ever Champion. He's played some inspirational golf over the last four days and thoroughly deserves to have his name alongside other great players who have won this prestigious tournament. I would like to thank all of the players, spectators and our partners for their support this week."

Birkmyre added: "Away from the golf, we have raised £48,000 for this year's Official Charity of the BMW PGA Championship, Shooting Star CHASE. This has been raised through a combination of programme sales and each Professional donating his appearance fee from Wednesday's Celebrity Pro-Am.

"The introduction of the new Park and Ride system has also been a great success, dramatically improving journey times in and out of the course and early feedback has been extremely positive. Finally, I would like to thank our amazing marshals and Championship Hosts who volunteered their services to ensure help and information were always to hand. They did a remarkable job and really added to the spectator experience."

Tim Abbott, Managing Director of BMW UK, said: "On behalf of BMW, I would like to congratulate Matteo Manassero on winning his first ever BMW PGA Championship. The players have treated us to four fantastic days of golf here at Wentworth Club. This is BMW's ninth year of supporting the PGA Championship, an event that continues to go from strength to strength and is now firmly established as one of the most prestigious tournaments in international golf. As the world's best-selling premium car manufacturer it is a natural fit for us to be paired with the European Tour's flagship event and I would like to thank The European Tour and Wentworth Club for organising such a magnificent tournament.

"This year saw a record number of people attend the final day of the BMW PGA Championship, which has now been extended to six days, incorporating Practice on Tuesday, the Celebrity Pro-Am on Wednesday and all four days of the tournament. I would also like to thank them for their support and for helping to create such a wonderful atmosphere at this spectacular sporting event."

For further information, or to book tickets, visit www.europeantour.com

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