



Press Information

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BMW PGA Championship: Enjoying the Major Feeling. An interview with defending champion Matteo Manassero.

London. The 2013 BMW PGA Championship saw Matteo Manassero gaining the most significant victory of his fledgling career at Wentworth Club. The 20 year old Italian etched his name alongside such greats as Seve Ballesteros, Bernhard Langer and Colin Montgomerie when he overcame Simon Khan and Marc Warren in a thrilling play-off. Speaking in an interview, Manassero recalls his biggest win, talks about the 'major' feel in Wentworth, the Ryder Cup and his relationship with BMW.

There are some great names on the BMW PGA Championship trophy, including Severiano Ballesteros, your idol. How did it feel to join them?

Matteo Manassero: "It means a lot. It's the biggest win of my career so far. The trophy is at home in my living room and surrounding my name are some of the biggest names in the history of the game. I hope that in 50 years, my name will be looked on in the same way."

How does it feel to be the youngest to have won it?

Manassero: "I'm very proud of the fact that I'm the youngest to have won such a huge event, but I don't think I'll hold the record for very long. I think the way golf is going, it's going to be beaten – and it's not going to take 44 years (the length of time the previous record stood, one held by Bernard Gallacher, the former Ryder Cup captain)."

What makes the BMW PGA Championship so special?

Manassero: "It's a tournament that everybody loves and Wentworth is a place that brings a smile to my face. Being the flagship event it's like the Players' event on the PGA Tour. It's a tournament we love. It gets really big crowds, who are so knowledgeable. For that reason it has a 'major' feel to it. You could call it a fifth major for the Europeans."



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The West Course is very challenging and yet you have done particularly well there in the past. What is your strategy for playing it?

Manassero: "It's not a short course, it's quite long. It doesn't offer many birdie opportunities, but you have to take them when they come along. Off the tee it is a really severe golf course. You need to be really precise with your tee shots and once you are on the green, you have to be a killer. Save pars, accept the occasional bogey, don't waste too many shots and take your birdies when the chances come along. I'm also mentally strong. When I'm up there (in contention), I react well. It's something I've been gifted with. But this course really tests your nerves. You need a lot of patience."

What are your ambitions for this year?

Manassero: "Obviously, I'd like to defend this title. I also want to keep progressing and hopefully win again. If I could win between now and September it would give me a chance of making the Europe Ryder Cup team."

On the subject of the Ryder Cup, what would it mean to you to make the Europe team? And do you enjoy match play golf?

Manassero: "I like match play because it's one against one – taking on another player rather than the course, which makes a nice change. I was behind the scenes at Celtic Manor (in 2010) and I really got a flavour of what it means. I want to be there. I'd love to be a part of Paul McGinley's team, but there's a long way to go. I'm just concentrating on week after week. If I do well on tour, making the Ryder Cup team will look after itself. Paul has been speaking to me and has been really nice. He gives you confidence and tells you to keep doing what you're doing. It's so different to anything else we have ever experienced, though. You are going to shake on every shot."

BMW is not only title partner to the BMW PGA Championship, but also to the BMW Masters in Shanghai, the BMW International Open and the BMW Championship on the PGA TOUR. Which of these tournaments is the one you would like to win next?

Manassero: "I think the BMW International Open is pretty special, but I'd have to go for the BMW Championship because of the quality of the field. If you win that one, it's like winning a major."





With the BMW Championship in mind, are you planning on playing more often on the PGA TOUR?

Manassero: "I'll stay here (in Europe) for sure. But I like to play in the US after the desert swing in Europe. But I'm not considering giving up playing in Europe. I'd like to be a global player – that's the future of the game."

BMW partners you personally. What does that mean to you?

Manassero: "It's a company that is so involved with golf, but more than anything it's an amazing company. Everybody speaks so highly of BMW and its approach to everything it does. I'm really lucky that my favourite cars have always been BMWs. I'm so lucky to have this relationship with them. Obviously winning their flagship event in Europe was pretty special. Everything worked out just perfect."

If you could pick just one of BMW's cars, which one would it be?

Manassero: "The BMW i8 is amazing, but I couldn't drive around the city in it. For me, it's not an everyday car. It would be a tough battle, but I'd go for the new BMW M4."

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Group had a workforce of 105,876 employees. 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.



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