

BMW International Open 2014



Press Information
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BMW International Open: England and Spain lead the way after day one.

Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof winner Danny Willett and Rafa Cabrera-Bello shine with opening round of 64 – Cejka best-placed German.

Cologne. The 156-strong field at the 2014 BMW International Open completed their opening rounds in perfect golfing conditions, with glorious sunshine and temperatures above 20 degrees Celsius at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof, near Cologne. Danny Willett (England) and Rafa Cabrera-Bello (Spain) both shot 64 to top the leaderboard at -8. The two playing partners go into the second day two shots ahead of a seven-man group, which includes Denmark's Anders Hansen (-6) – two-time winner of the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth and the man who lost to Martin Kaymer in a play-off at the 2008 BMW International Open. After 4,500 golf fans poured through the gates to watch the two pre-tournament days, an impressive 14,500 spectators followed the action in Pulheim on Thursday.

"I played very well today," said Willett, who won the BMW International Open the last time it was held at Gut Lärchenhof in 2012. "That was one of those days where we rolled a few nice ones in. I didn't make any mistakes and hit it relatively close to the pin. It helps a little bit that I have fond memories of this place, but you still have to go out there and play well." Cabrera-Bello added: "That's a really, really good way to start. What I enjoyed most about the round was that I played pretty steady."

Best-placed German, with six birdies and two bogies to his name, was Alex Cejka (-4) in 19th place. One shot back is BMW Golfsport Ambassador Maximilian Kieffer (-3), who celebrated his birthday on Wednesday. "I am still right in there at -3. However, it is important to shoot a low round tomorrow. I must improve off the tee. The rest was quite okay," said the 24-year-old.

Marcel Schneider made for the biggest surprise among the German pros in the field: The current overall leader of the Pro Golf Tour also shot a 69. Marcel Siem (-2) was less than happy with his round. "I putted very badly today," he said. "I should actually have been four under already through eight." Like Siem, former BMW International Open winners John Daly (USA), David Horsey (England) and Thomas Björn (Denmark) also carded opening rounds of 70 on the Jack Nicklaus-designed course.

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Siem was joined in the morning's marquee group by Belgium's Nicolas Colsaerts and Martin Kaymer, the newly-crowned U.S. Open champion and only German winner of the BMW International Open. Kaymer highlighted his putting as his greatest weakness en route to an opening round of 71 (-1). "It was a tough day for me on the greens. I think the conditions were the best you could get here, but I just didn't make many putts," said Kaymer. "It's not my favourite golf course in the world. I find putting particularly difficult here. I think there were even more fans today than there were last year. Even at 07:30 in the morning there were quite a lot of people out on the course. I think it is going to be full when we play in the afternoon tomorrow."

BMW Austria Golfsport Ambassador Bernd Wiesberger continued where he left off on Tuesday and Wednesday. Wiesberger first won the "BMW Foot Golf Challenge", then led his group – including Olympic luge champions Felix Loch, Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt – to victory in the Pro-Am tournament on Wednesday. He opened his BMW International Open campaign with a fine round of 68 (-4) on Thursday.

Wiesberger played in one of the top flights of the day alongside world number two Henrik Stenson (Sweden) and rising star Victor Dubuisson (France), who ended day one at Gut Lärchenhof on -4 and -1. For the German amateurs in the field, the BMW International Open represents an excellent opportunity to gain valuable tournament experience. Dominic Foos enjoyed a large following and, like Kaymer, ended the day one under par. Maximilian Röhrig is two shots back on +1.

The second round at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof gets underway at 07:00 on Friday – and the stars immediately come thick and fast at ten-minute intervals on the tenth tee: Willett (07:10), Daly (07:20), Kieffer (07:30) and Stenson (07:40). Kaymer and Siem tee off at 12:40 from the first tee.

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