

BMW International Open 2014



Press Information
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BMW International Open: Former winners set sights on another title.

Four-way tie at the top after 36 holes at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof – Stenson, Jiménez, Siem, Cejka, Björn and a plethora of stars poised to pounce.

Cologne. The top of the leaderboard at the 2014 BMW International Open at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof is even more closely bunched together after Friday's second round, which was played out in front of a record crowd of 17,500. Four players are now tied in the lead on -12. Behind the leading group, which includes former champions Danny Willett (ENG, 2012) and Pablo Larrazábal (ESP, 2011), as well as Rafa Cabrera-Bello (ESP) and Emiliano Grillo (ARG), a chasing pack consisting of top stars and previous BMW International Open winners is in hot pursuit. Marcel Siem and Alex Cejka are the best-placed of four home-grown players with their sights set on only the second German victory in the history of the tournament.

Play was suspended at 16:41 when a thunderstorm passed directly over the course in Pulheim, Cologne. The players returned one and a half hours later and were able to complete their rounds before darkness descended.

"I possibly played better yesterday than today, but I couldn't hole any putts. That was a different story today," said Pablo Larrazábal (-12), whose nine-under round of 63, featuring nine birdies and not a single dropped shot, was among the best of the day. "It definitely helped to make birdies early on. After that I just tried to play my own game. I'm very happy, but let's wait and see what happens on the weekend." Larrazábal overcame compatriot Sergio García in a dramatic play-off to win the 2011 BMW International Open in Munich.

The chasing pack includes Miguel Ángel Jiménez (ESP, -10, 2004 winner), Robert Karlsson (SWE, -10, 1997 winner), world number two Henrik Stenson (SWE, -8, 2006 winner), "Race to Dubai" leader Thomas Björn (DEN, -8, 2000 and 2002 winner) and crowd magnet John Daly (USA, -7, 2001 winner). Germany's Alex Cejka (-10) also played his way into contention with an impressive round of 66. The former runner-up now goes into the weekend tied in fifth place with the likes of Jiménez and Karlsson, just two shots off the lead. Looking ahead to the final two days of competition, Cejka said: "I just want to continue playing the way I have done so far. There is no reason to make any major changes. Hopefully I will hit the fairways, as that is the key on this course."

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The rain delay did Marcel Siem (-8) no harm at all. When play resumed, the German finished with five birdies in the final six holes to go from being in danger of missing the cut to starting the weekend in contention. "If I continue to putt like I did on the last four holes, anything is possible," said the man from nearby Düsseldorf. "My goal was to win. At the moment the course is there for the taking. However, a bit of wind and rain over the weekend might help me to attack from further down the leaderboard."

BMW Golfsport Ambassador Max Kieffer and amateur Maximilian Röhrig (both -4) will also fly the flag for Germany on Saturday and Sunday. In contrast, the only European Tour event in Germany came to a premature end for two-time Major winner Martin Kaymer (level par), who missed the cut after a disappointing round of 73.

Kieffer was also less than happy with his game after a mediocre round of 71. "You cannot be happy when you end your round with a bogey and a double-bogey on the final three holes – particularly as the dropped shots came about from relatively easy positions," he said. "I was a little bit tired towards the end, so maybe that was the reason."

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