

# BMW Masters 2014

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Press Information

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## **BMW Masters: Recently crowned Open winner McIlroy, reigning Race to Dubai champion Stenson and Major winner Rose are the favourites heading to Shanghai.**

Start of the Final Series with three of the best pros in the world.

**Munich/Shanghai.** The crucial phase of the season gets underway for the international pro golfers: the final major of the year, the PGA TOUR playoffs, the Ryder Cup showdown of the teams from Europe and the USA – before the top-class Final Series gets underway with the BMW Masters (28th October to 2nd November, Lake Malaren Golf Club, Shanghai) as the crowning glory of the European Tour. Open Champion Rory McIlroy (NIR, number two in the world rankings), Henrik Stenson (SWE, number three) and Justin Rose (ENG, number four) are in top form and want to celebrate further titles in the exciting closing stage. The BMW Masters is a significant milestone – the tournament with a prize fund of seven million US dollars has a fitting number of many other top stars.

It is only the third time that the BMW Masters will be held, but the event has already firmly established itself as one of the outstanding tournaments in international professional golf. This is evident when you take a brief glance at the world class golfers who have already confirmed their place at the BMW Masters: Alongside McIlroy, Stenson and Rose, they are four-time majors winner Ernie Els (South Africa), 2010 US Open Champion Graeme McDowell (Northern Ireland), Ryder Cup hero Ian Poulter (England), defending champion Gonzalo Fernández-Castaño (Spain), Thomas Björn (Denmark), who ranks second in the Race to Dubai, the winner of the BMW Asian Open 2004, Miguel Ángel Jiménez, and the best Chinese Pro Wu Ashun.

McIlroy returned to dominant form with victory at the 60th anniversary of the BMW PGA Championship in May. His win at the Open Championship ten days ago was the 25-year-old's third major title – a feat that only Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus had achieved by this early stage of their careers. "I said it after my win in Wentworth: I feel like my season is just beginning. And here we are: winning The Open was huge, and I am really looking forward to coming back to the BMW Masters. The course at Lake Malaren suits me and I have always played well here. I would obviously like to be at the top of the leaderboard and get off to a great start in the Final Series," McIlroy said.

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The golfing world must beware of Rory McIlroy, who won the 2011 Lake Malaren Shanghai Masters and then narrowly lost out to Sweden's Peter Hanson on the same course when the 2012 BMW Masters made its debut. He went on to win the Race to Dubai just a few weeks later. The opposition will have to come up with something special if they are to prevent McIlroy from claiming a second Race to Dubai title this year.

One man well capable of halting the McIlroy express is Henrik Stenson. The Swede still has fond memories of last year's Final Series: the 38-year-old started the first of the outstanding final four tournaments on the European tour, the BMW Masters, as the freshly-crowned FedExCup champion, and duly went on to succeed McIlroy as the Race to Dubai champion. In doing so, he completed a historic double, becoming the first player ever to win the money lists on both sides of the Atlantic in the same year. And the Swede is on top form again this year. He may still be waiting for an elusive first title this season, but Stenson has been a regular fixture at the top of leaderboards all over the world, and narrowly missed out on a second title at the BMW International Open in June, losing out on the fifth hole of a dramatic play-off. Just days beforehand, Stenson had also come within a whisker of a long-overdue major win, finishing tied in fourth place at the US Open.

Stenson is looking forward to the BMW Masters and the Final Series: "BMW is one of the greatest if not the greatest of our partners. It always looks after us very nicely and you know, when it is a BMW event, that you can expect high standards. Coming into the last four tournaments, the Final Series, starting with the BMW Masters, it is a good chance to make up some ground if you are behind. Or to pull away from the pack if you are in a great position. It is a very important tournament to get off to a good start."

Justin Rose is hot on the heels of McIlroy and Stenson in the world rankings. Unlike the other two, the Englishman has already won on both the big tours this season, at the Quicken Loans National (PGA TOUR) at the end of June, then the Scottish Open (European Tour) two weeks later. Rose finished tied in sixth place on his only previous appearance at the BMW Masters in 2012. Back then, he teed off in Shanghai alongside the entire European Team that had produced the "Miracle of Medinah" just weeks beforehand. Rose was instrumental in the seemingly impossible Ryder Cup comeback, fighting back to defeat Phil Mickelson in one of the stand-out singles matches of the final Sunday, bringing the left-handed American to his knees with two huge putts on the closing holes. Rose is definitely someone to look out for as the season enters its final phase.

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It is impossible to discuss any Ryder Cup in recent history without mentioning Ian Poulter. The Englishman loves and lives for this competition like no other. With his exceptional talent for match play and outward displays of emotion, he has become a talisman for the Europeans. Poulter enjoys playing in China and Shanghai, particularly since his victory at the HSBC WGC Champions two years ago. "The BMW Masters is going to be a fantastic tournament. I like Asia in general. I love being there and like the Lake Malaren course. And I have some lovely fans over there. I'm looking forward to returning and trying to get my hands on that trophy," said the 38-year-old.

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