



Warm-up at Porsche European Open

24/09/2015 At the unofficial start of the Porsche European Open in Bad Griesbach on Wednesday, the highly motivated leisure golfers invited to the traditional Pro Am tournament and the professionals both braved the cool and damp weather.

Playing together with US pro Morgan Hoffman, the former Canadian ice-hockey star Claude Lemieux cut a fine figure as did the former skiing star and five-time overall World Cup winner Marc Girardelli, who was guided around the course by the Spaniard Pablo Larrazábal. Amateurs and pros all enjoyed their rounds together.

Have fun and play well – some of the stars will be hoping for the same when teeing off on Thursday at the Porsche European Open which has a two million dollar purse. Major winner and Ryder Cup regular Graeme McDowell intends pressing the re-set button in Bad Griesbach. Normally at home on the PGA Tour, the Northern Irishman has recently taken a break and is returning refreshed and highly motivated. "The tournament here is the starting signal for 2016," said McDowell who continued, "there are lots of good players here and the course is long and demanding. It'll be an exciting week." The feeling of being back in the fast lane is something McDowell had the pleasure of on Monday shortly after landing in Munich. "I drove here on the autobahn in a 911 Carrera 4 GTS Cabriolet – it was wonderful," added a

happy McDowell.

Charl Schwartzel prefers the small steps tactic. After two rather unsatisfactory years by his standards, his game is slowly on the up again. "It's good that the European Open has found such a valuable sponsor in Porsche. I have never played this tournament outside England. It's nice that it's wandered over here to Germany."

It is something that Hunter Mahan is also pleased about. The US pro is enjoying his premier in Germany. "This tournament, Porsche as the sponsor and the German autobahn on the doorway – it's almost too wonderful to be true," said Mahan before getting behind the steering wheel for a test drive in a Porsche Cayman GTS. The crowning glory at the start of the tournament: Mahan will be playing with Bernhard Langer who designed the Beckenbauer Golf Course in Bad Griesbach. "Bernhard is in great form. He appears to be just as good as he was 20 years ago. I'm looking forward to seeing how the German crowd reacts to him. Unfortunately I've had no time yet to pick his brains about the course."

Bernhard Langer does not feel it would be of much help: "I don't have an advantage here even though I designed the course. I would have an advantage if I'd have played the course one hundred times." He nevertheless still wants to be in the running on Sunday. The ambition is still there. Perhaps there will also be a bit of time to cast his eye on compatriot Maximilian Kieffer. Currently the most consistent German on the European Tour, he is highly motivated and not just because Bernhard Langer praised him for his excellent season to date when on a practice round together. Kieffer: "He advised me to remain patient and then the first win will come by itself. And when Bernhard Langer says that then the confidence increases – and you stay that little bit more patient."

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