Outsiders and a star – the winners of the Porsche European Open

06/09/2020 The Porsche European Open title winners include an experienced golfer, a rookie, many Englishmen – and a star that loves Porsche sports cars. We take a look back at the overjoyed golfers' big moments.

2015 – Thongchai Jaidee

The first winner? A late starter. Thongchai Jaidee was already 45-years-old when he was honoured as the first winner of the Porsche European Open on the Beckenbauer Course in Bad Griesbach, Germany on 27 September 2015 – but he had only been on the Tour for 15 years. The Thai won by one stroke ahead of the Englishman Graeme Storm. Even if the crowd was perhaps hoping 58-year-old Bernhard Langer would claim victory – he was the top German to finish, in 24th place – the friendly Jaidee was a perfect titleholder for the first Porsche European Open. To practice, he had spent many weeks close to Munich with his German coach, saying: "With the exception of the weather, I love Germany." He secured the win with a nail-biting putt. "I was pretty nervous at the end," admitted Jaidee that evening. To wrap

up the win, he had to first sink a two-metre putt. The green sloped away steeply to the side, the ball took a big curve. "I had the confidence to sink it," said Jaidee, adding with his usual politeness and modesty: "But it was also very lucky." The ball dropped for the win.

2016 – Alexander Lévy

At one point on the day of the final round of the Porsche European Open, 19 players were within three shots of each other. It was a thrilling race – in the middle of it all was Martin Kaymer just before his fourth successive Ryder Cup appearance, plus countryman Florian Fritsch and the Austrian Bernd Wiesberger. In the end however, the player everybody considered to be the favourite before the third and, due to the difficult weather conditions, final round eventually did come out on top. But it was much closer than expected. Aged 26 at the time, Levy had a six-shot lead on the chasers in the morning. He eventually claimed victory with an impressive eight-metre putt on the second extra hole in the play-off against Ross Fisher. He beat his fists against his chest and later said, "It feels fantastic". It was Lévy's third title on the European Tour. "It's difficult to say which tastes the sweetest but at the moment I'm very, very happy." One year later, Lévy narrowly missed out on successfully defending his title in the play-off.

2017 – Jordan Smith

The third staging turned into a triumph for the Tour newcomer. The English rookie Jordan Smith took advantage of some his rival Alexander Lévy's lapses in concentration to take the title in the play-off – his first win in his 24th tournament in his first year as a member of the European Tour. "I love this prestigious tournament and have really enjoyed the whole week here," he said. In addition to the many home players, the Porsche European Open at the Green Eagle Golf Courses complex near Hamburg boasted, as usual, a strong field of international stars like Patrick Reed, Jimmy Walker and Charl Schwartzel. However, in the end, it was a rookie that came up out on top even though he had been outside the Top 30 after the first round. It has remained his only career title right up to the present day.

2018 – Richard McEvoy

The fourth edition of the Porsche European Open was also owned by an outsider. Englishman Richard McEvoy qualified for the tournament with a strong line-up one week before via the second tier Challenge Tour – and then immediately left the top stars trailing in his wake. Above all, Bryson DeChambeau: the American golfer had been the clear favourite after round three and was paired with McEnvoy in the last group for the final round. What followed was a day of disasters for DeChambeau. After a number of bogeys, he had relinquished his solid lead even before arriving at the final hole. Then on the 18th, he twice found the water and the title was out of reach. McEvoy took his chance and holed a long putt on the closing hole. The German amateur Allen John – the surprise package of the tournament – along with Italy's Renato Paratore and the Swede Christofer Blomstrand, who had all

hoped to make it to the play-off, had to be content with a share of second. There was also a record for McEvoy – back-to-back wins on the Challenge Tour and then on the European Tour was something nobody before him had achieved in the history of the European Tour.

2019 – Paul Casey

For the first time, the bell tolled for a top star at the Porsche European Open. Paul Casey, the three-time Ryder Cup winner, was the tournament's fifth winner – and the third in succession from England. Aged 42 at the time, he won by a shot ahead of local hero Bernd Ritthammer, the Scot Robert MacIntyre and Matthias Schwab from Austria, and said: "As a fan of sports cars, I felt very much at home this week and it certainly helped me." It was his 19th title as a professional and he described the achievement as "a very special win". At the very start of the week, the USA resident had revealed that it was no coincidence he had started the European Tour at the Porsche Nord Course near Hamburg. "I love Porsche and wanted to be here come what may." For Casey, who was a childhood fan of the brand and now counts several Porsche in his garage at home, it proved to be a worthwhile trip – and not just because of his love of cars.

Info

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the 2020 Porsche European Open will unfortunately not be held on the Porsche Nord Course belonging to the Green Eagle Golf Courses near Hamburg from 3 - 6 September. During the week, we will instead remember some of the key events and people from the long-standing tournament's history.

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