

# Lundin event becomes first battle of sexes in Scottish amateur golf

● East of Scotland Open Championship is opened up to leading women at Fife venue



**Martin Dempster**

The East of Scotland Open Championship is to become the first battle of the sexes in a leading Scottish amateur golf tournament after a decision to open up the 48th staging of the event at Lundin to women.

The tournament on 27-28 June will feature men and women playing for the same prize, won in the past by some famous names in Scottish golf, including George Macgregor, Sandy Stephen and Richie Ramsay.

The change, which has the support of the R&A and Scottish Golf, comes just over five years after Lundin, founded in 1868, became a mixed membership club.

"It is an exciting change," said David Moir, a long-serving East of Scotland Open committee member and past president of the Scottish Golf Union. "We've actually been thinking about this for a while as we have club competitions among members that are mixed events, which is great."

"The organising committee remain very passionate about the East of Scotland Amateur Stroke Play Championship and we are delighted to be incorporating women into the event for the first time."

"The Women's Amateur Championship is taking place at the same time but, with that down to the semi-final and final stage by the weekend, we are hoping to get some of

the players coming over from Kilmarnock (Barassie)."

A maximum of 18 women will feature in a 72-strong field on the Fife coast this summer in a move that mirrors the Berkhamsted Trophy in England being opened up to women for the first time. In the professional game, a mixed event is being hosted by Henrik Stenson and Annika Sorenstam in June.

The East of Scotland Open Championship committee is working on a flexible teeing system with the R&A and Scottish Golf which will ensure that both sexes compete on an equal footing.

Ramsay, the winner in 2004, has welcomed the change, saying: "It is good that they are trying new ways to open up this event. Being proactive like this is essential for the future of many events. It's a lovely course and the design lends itself to this format."

Hannah Darling, the top Scot in the Women's Amateur Golf Ranking, also backed the decision, though she will be unable to play at Lundin due to the aforementioned Women's Amateur Championship coming to a conclusion on the Ayrshire coast at the same time.

"This is a great opportunity for women to be introduced to this event," said the two-time Scottish Girls' champion from Broomieknowe. "Hopefully, it's the first of many opportunities we will be given. Unfortunately, I can't play, but it will be interesting to see how it turns out."

With World Amateur Golf Ranking points on offer, the Lundin event will be open to players with handicap of 0.4 or better. While competing for the main prize, the Denholm Trophy, women competitors



↑ Hannah Darling, Scotland's top-ranked woman amateur, has welcomed the change for the Fife event.



## MIXING IT UP

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## HANNAH DARLING

will also be playing for a separate piece of silverware.

If no women qualify for the final 36 holes, the leading four after two rounds will progress to the Sunday to compete for that trophy as opposed to it being awarded to the top woman following Saturday's play.

Clare Queen, performance director at Scottish Golf, said: "We are always looking at ways we can strengthen the

female game in Scotland. The opportunity to compete on a great course like Lundin in a high-quality field is a great one for females who compete in Scotland, especially during the quieter summer months.

"I believe that the increased level of competition could help to raise the bar for female golf in Scotland and give those players with ambitions of competing internationally or at professional level the perfect chance to develop their games."

"This type of event is becoming more popular on the professional tours, so it's been great to see that Lundin have been so forward thinking and we are excited to see how the event develops."

Duncan Weir, executive director – golf development and amateur championships at the R&A, added: "The R&A is very supportive of initiatives



↑ Richie Ramsay: Past winner.

which broaden golf's appeal and recognise the benefits of staging mixed gender golf events for both amateurs and professionals, particularly as we want to see more women and girls competing at the top level.

"Personally, having played in the East of Scotland Open on many occasions, I commend Lundin Golf Club for its forward thinking."

## Scottish Golf joins forces with Lawrie and Gallacher to boost 'frontline junior events'

### JUNIOR GOLF

By **MARTIN DEMPSTER**

Paul Lawrie and Stephen Gallacher, right, have joined forces with Scottish Golf to create a new series of junior events aimed at helping golf clubs both attract and retain young members.

The two multiple European

Tour winners and Ryder Cup players are supporting the new Scottish Junior Flag Championship through their respective foundations.

The initiative, which also involves The Junior Flag Challenge, aims to increase the number of flag golf events for juniors across the country.

Taking place in all regions of Scotland, the new championship is designed to "create

playing opportunities for golfers in the early stages of their development" while also "supporting golf clubs to retain more junior members". This will be achieved by introducing golfers under the age of 12 and without a handicap to competitive golf in a "fun and friendly environment".

Scottish Golf's junior development manager Gavin For-

rester said: "This format has proved popular across our partners' junior events and we are looking forward to working with both Stephen Gallacher [inset] and Paul Lawrie's Foundations as well as The Junior Flag Challenge to ensure it is successful for everyone involved on the frontline of junior golf. We are keen to encourage clubs to get kids out on the course playing in fun competitions and this format is a great way of doing that."



## SPORTS DIGEST

The Milwaukee Bucks stumbled again without injured star Giannis Antetokounmpo and several other big names, going down 109-95 at the Denver Nuggets.

With the reigning MVP missing his second game in a row with a knee ailment, Milwaukee - who lead the Eastern Conference - lost their third game in row as they were overpowered by the Nuggets, who are third in the West. The Bucks, who have the best win-loss record in the NBA at 53-13, in fact played without their top six scorers of the season, as they rest several top-liners ahead of the play-offs. Jamal Murray scored 21 points, Paul Millsap had 20 and Jerami Grant added 19 for Denver, while Kyle Korver made 23 points for the Bucks.

### BASKETBALL

**NBA:** Atlanta Hawks 143 Charlotte Hornets 138 (OT), Denver Nuggets 109 Milwaukee Bucks 95, Utah Jazz 92 Toronto Raptors 101.

### GOLF

**WOMEN'S WORLD RANKINGS:** 1 Jin Young Ko (Kor) 8.42pts, 2 Nelly Korda (USA) 5.82, 3 Sung Hyun Park (Kor) 5.72, 4 Danielle Kang (USA) 5.41, 5 Nasa Hataoka (Jpn) 5.34, 6 Sei Young Kim (Kor) 5.04, 7 Brooke M. Henderson (Can) 4.85, 8 Minjee Lee (Aus) 4.72, 9 Lexi Thompson (USA) 4.63, 10 Jeong Eun Lee (Kor) 4.54, 11 Inbee Park (Kor) 4.23, 12 Hinako Shibuno (Jpn) 4.23, 13 Hyo Joo Kim (Kor) 3.88, 14 Aia Suzuki (Jpn) 3.78, 15 Ariya Jutanugarn (Tha) 3.67, 16 Carlota Ciganda (Spa) 3.66, 17 Jessica Korda (USA) 3.61, 18 So Yeon Ryu (Kor) 3.42, 19 Mi Jung Hur (Kor) 3.33, 20 Lizette Salas (USA) 3.30, 21 Hannah Green (Aus) 3.20, 22 Amy Yang (Kor) 3.15, 23 Shanshan Feng (Chn) 2.93, 24 Hee Jung Lim (Kor) 2.87, 25 Charley Hull (Eng) 2.74.

### ICE HOCKEY

**NHL:** Buffalo Sabres 3 Washington Capitals 2 (SO), Edmonton Oilers 2 Vegas Golden Knights 3 (OT), Los Angeles Kings 3 Colorado Avalanche 1, St Louis Blues 1 Florida Panthers 2, Winnipeg Jets 4 Arizona Coyotes 2.

### TENNIS

**WTA RANKINGS:** 1 Ashleigh Barty (Aus) 8717, 2 Simona Halep (Rom) 6076, 3 Karolina Pliskova (Cze) 5205, 4 Sofia Kenin (USA) 4590, 5 Elena Svitolina (Ukr) 4580, 6 Bianca Andreescu (Can) 4555, 7 Kiki Bertens (Ned) 4335, 8 Belinda Bencic (Svi) 4010, 9 Serena Williams (USA) 3915, 10 Naomi Osaka (Jpn) 3625, 11 Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) 3615, 12 Petra Kvitová (Cze) 3566, 13 Madison Keys (USA) 2962, 14 Johanna Konta (Gbr) 2803, 15 Petra Martić (Cro) 2770, 16 Garbine Muguruza (Spa) 2711, 17 Elena Rybakina (Kaz) 2471, 18 Marketa Vondrousova (Cze) 2307, 19 Alison Riske (USA) 2256, 20 Maria Sakkari (Gre) 2130, 21 Angelique Kerber (Ger) 2040, 22 Anett Kontaveit (Est) 2010, 23 Elise Mertens (Bel) 1950, 24 Donna Vekic (Cro) 1880, 25 Dayana Yastremska (Ukr) 1835, 26 Karolina Muchova (Cze) 1813, 27 Ekaterina Alexandrova (Rus) 1775, 28 Amanda Anisimova (USA) 1717, 29 Qiang Wang (Chn) 1706, 30 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) 1540, 31 Barbora Strycova (Cze) 1530, 32 Svetlana Kuznetsova (Rus) 1527, 33 Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 1525, 34 Saisai Zheng (Chn) 1510, 35 Shuai Zhang (Chn) 1475, 36 Caroline Wozniacki (Den) 1463, 36 Magda Linette (Pol) 1472, 37 Sloane Stephens (USA) 1453, 38 Julia Goerges (Ger) 1423, 39 Ons Jabeur (Tun) 1373, 40 Veronika Kudermetova (Rus) 1373, 41 Jelena Ostapenko (Lat) 1360, 42 Kristina Mladenovic (Fra) 1335, 43 Anastasiya Sevastova (Lat) 1288, 44 Rebecca Peterson (Swe) 1225, 45 Polona Hercog (Slo) 1205, 46 Caroline Garcia (Fra) 1175, 47 Marie Bouzkova (Cze) 1147, 48 Jennifer Brady (USA) 1144, 49 Iga Swiatek (Pol) 1139, 50 Heather Watson (Gbr) 1122.