

'Big Brother' Hugo to Defend as Passport to Pravets Race Hots Up

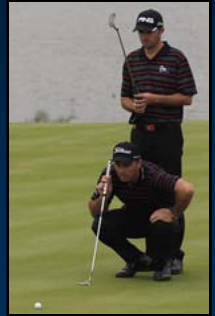
HUGO SANTOS, the elder brother of two Portuguese golf professionals will be bidding for a repeat performance when he defends the UNICREDIT PGA Professional Championship of Europe, at the PRAVETS Golf & Spa, Bulgaria, on September 17-20

As the pursuit of a coveted Passport to Pravets hots up, the senior of the golfing brothers 33-year-old Hugo, who is based at Vilamoura Laguna, gets his entry as the inaugural winner, after a play-off against Ben Collier, in 2011.

To back up his bid to successfully defend the title of PGA Professional Champion of Europe, Hugo now has the valued tournament experience of having represented Portugal, alongside brother Ricardo, in the Omega Mission Hills World Cup in China last November (right).

The PGA Professional Championship of Europe has already established itself as a 'must play' event for the elite of club and teaching professionals who include tournament play in their varied list of activities and the pursuit of places is now underway in earnest as players at national championships and other leading events across the PGAs of Europe member countries jostle for the chance to win the title of individual champion of Europe.

Several countries have already staged their qualifiers, as the list below indicates, and soon more names of qualifiers will be announced as others compete to join them for a shot at the prestigious European crown currently held by **Santos**.



Israel's **Oren Geri** (left), a professional who will have benefited from the Golf Development Programme staged by The R&A and the PGAs of Europe, is among the growing list of qualifiers. Aged 37 from Tel Aviv, Geri earned his place while competing at the Caesarea club championships in trials for the country's Maccabi Games which takes place every four years there, and will be held next in 2015, one year before the return of the sport's eagerly-anticipated return to the Olympics, in Brazil.

Though initially a leading amateur, golfing progress was not straightforward for him in his teenage years due to the obligatory three-year military service but he persevered to eventually become the pro at Herzelia where he works to service the golfing requirements of its members in terms of lessons and club fitting.

Geri, who played in the PGAs of Europe-endorsed BlackSeaRama Pro-Am in Bulgaria in July, said: "My goal in participating in the event at Pravets is to represent the relatively young PGA of Israel in the true spirit of the game, network with our colleagues from Europe who are so kindly helping us develop our organisation and skill level...and create awareness to our existence."

UNICREDIT PGA PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP of EUROPE (Confirmed Qualifiers to date)

DEFENDING CHAMPION: Hugo Santos

AUSTRIA: Christopher Bausek, Stephanus Waltman

CROATIA: Marin Stahan

FINLAND: Sakari Aho, Joonas Paananen

FRANCE: Bertrand Cornut, Frederic Cupillard, Benjamin Nicolay

ISRAEL: Oren Geri

SLOVENIA: Janez Grlic

SWEDEN: Peter Grimfjord, Frederic Almskoug