

Hat-Trick Hugo – Santos Makes History in Pravets

PGA of Portugal Professional, Hugo Santos, produced an outstanding and hard-fought one-under 71 in his final round at Pravets Golf Club to become the 2014 UniCredit PGA Professional Champion of Europe, adding to his successes in 2011 and 2012.



In what has potentially been the most hotly contested edition of the tournament since its relaunch in 2011, the top-five players jostled for position throughout the day, but it was Santos who managed to advance forward one shot for his ten-under par 278 total and cheque for €10,000, a record third win in the event.

“It is great, it’s difficult to explain with words,” explained Santos. “To win this tournament for the third time it’s special. It’s giving me a lot of confidence for the next tournaments coming up. It’s also a huge effort for the sponsors of the tournament...otherwise it wouldn’t be possible to come and play, so it’s good if we can keep these kinds of sponsors.”

Santos began the day one behind leader, Alec Roberts (PGA of Switzerland), and after a solid start dropped one shot at the third to move back but stayed in contention as Roberts' lead reduced. A quick response birdie-bogey-birdie run at holes five, six and seven evened things out making the turn at level-par for the day.

With the back nine being touted as the 'scoring-nine' all week, it was open for the chasers to make their move, however, high winds and soft under-foot conditions made this a more difficult task. Santos' move into lead position early in the back nine came as a result of solid play, and a single birdie at hole 14 gave him the edge to nudge one shot ahead of the field.

"On the second nine I had a bad shot on 16 because I was in a wet area so I hit in thin, so I had a very difficult putt back, but did it in two. On 17 I was quite nervous...my shot was not the best but I made a par with a bit of luck...[and] on 18 I was trying to focus on the shot I had in front of me and then the same on the second shot."



Just one shot behind Santos was round one leader, Ralph Miller (PGA of Holland, pictured right), who once again played things steady with a single bogey at 12 and two birdies at 16 and 18 for a one-under par 71 and a four round total of 279 (-1).

"Coming second is great," said Miller. "Obviously you want to win but after the first nine I was kind of struggling but kept it together. Eventually I made a very silly bogey on the 12th hole...that was a bit unfortunate... you do look at the leaderboard and I saw that nine-under was leading at the time and I dropped back to seven-under. From there it was just trying to keep it together because it was very windy out there."

“I had a great finish at the end of the day...on 18 I hit a good second shot in and it rolled all the way to the back of the green and I holed the putt which was unbelievable because all I was trying to do was get it close...so that was fantastic.”



In third place, carding a level-par 72 for a total of 280 (-8), was Russ Berry (PGA of Great Britain & Ireland – England, pictured left). Berry started his final round in tie-third position with Miller and that was where he stayed as his two birdies and two bogeys kept him just out of reach of a move up the leaderboard.

“It was a lot tougher today – I played really well on the front nine, really solid, had loads of chance but didn’t quite take them,” said Berry. “I was a bit disappointed to make a bogey early into the back nine but I bounced back pretty well and made a couple of birdies in the next four holes and had a go...it was all I could do really...there were only two guys that beat me this week so that’s pretty nice.

“The other guys from England are quality players as well...so to be leading English player this week was great and to feature high up was really good and to know that I was here for England is quite an honour.”

With 24 different nationalities competing, of which there were nine different nationalities in the top-ten, the Championship continues to grow in stature and reputation as European golf, and specifically the profile of golf in host country, Bulgaria, flourish.

The 2014 edition of the Championship marks the first of another three-year agreement to host the tournament at Pravets Golf & Spa Resort and includes the huge support of the event sponsors UniCredit Bullbank, KIA, Glenfiddich, Domaine Boyar, RIU Pravets and Braemar Golf. The PGAs of Europe’s thanks go to all of these event sponsors for helping to make the event a huge success.