

Golf – US Kids Golf European Championship



A Primary 1 pupil from Craiglockhart Primary School has been named as the winner of a junior golf competition held on Bruntsfield Links short course last week.

Five year old Sam Watson from Shandon, Edinburgh entered the competition alongside primary school pupils from across the capital and triumphed to win the grand prize of a full set of bespoke US Kids Golf clubs.

The 'Nearest the Pin' event was held by the organisers of the U.S. Kids Golf European Championship, which comes to East Lothian next month, bringing 550 of the world's best young golfers from 40 countries together to compete on five of the county's most historic courses.

Ahead of the prestigious championship, the foundation arm of the organisation held the Edinburgh competition to encourage local youngsters to get involved in the sport and reinforce its commitment to introducing the game to children and families.

Sam entered the competition which gave him two chances to hit the ball as near to a designated pin as possible, and on his second attempt the ball stopped just six paces shy of the mark, allowing him to take home the winning title and the set of bespoke golf clubs.

The youngster was joined by his mum Julie, dad Derek and older brothers Guy and Alex.

Julie Watson said: "Sam's interest in golf started by playing the Tiger Woods game on the Wii and as a result he received golf lessons for his fifth birthday which he has been attending at Swanston Golf Club since January.

"When we heard of the competition we knew we had to bring the kids along and they had such a lovely afternoon.

✘ "We are thrilled that Sam is the overall winner as golf is his favourite thing in the whole wide world as he keeps telling us and the clubs will allow him to further develop his love for the sport!"

The event was attended by Gullane PGA professional and U.S. Kids Golf European Championship co-ordinator Alasdair Good, who was on hand to give the young players hints and tips on how to get the winning shot.

Alasdair said: "The 'Nearest The Pin' event was designed to encourage more young people into the world of golf and give those new to the game, as well as those who are developing their talent, the chance to test their skills with a bit of friendly competition.

"The idea was to make the event as inclusive as possible, with a variety of entrants – both boys and girls of all skill levels.

"The day was a great success and the kids all seem to really enjoy themselves. Even better was the fact that there was some real talent on display and Sam was not the only youngster who hit an impressive shot.

"I hope that we have encouraged some of them into the game of golf and that some of them may even sign up for next year's

European Championships, or even become the Rory McIlroys of tomorrow.”

The European Championships takes place from June 5-7 on Gullane No. 2, Gullane No. 3, Craigiellaw Golf Club, Luffness New Golf Club and Longniddry Golf Club. The courses are modified for each age group in order to provide the same level challenge, meaning holes are progressively shorter as the age groups get younger.

It ultimately allows the players to reach the greens in the same number of strokes as the top pros on the PGA tour.

The top finishers in each category will compete in the Van Horn Cup over Gullane No 1 on June 8 – a showpiece event, modelled on the Ryder Cup, where the best European players are matched up against the top golfers from the rest of the world.

The top five finishers in each age and gender group also automatically receive an invitation to the U.S. Kids Golf World Championships at Pinehurst Golf Club, North Carolina, in August.

The U.S. Kids Golf Foundation was launched in 2001 to provide opportunities for kids to play and learn the game through local tours and tournaments such as the European Championships. Since holding its first tournament in 2000, U.S. Kids Golf Foundation now runs some 600 events each year including the prestigious World Championships at Pinehurst.

The Foundation is the charitable branch of U.S. Kids Golf – the world’s largest producer of junior golf equipment. The firm has pioneered the development of golf clubs for young people, eliminating the problem of kids using heavier, cut-down adult clubs which often hurts developing swings and

discourages budding players.

For more information or to register for the U.S. Kids Golf European Championships, visit www.uskidsgolf.com.