

# Scottish Open to be held in Gullane next year



**The Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open will be played at Gullane and Castle Stuart in the next two years.**

The golfing competition will continue to showcase Scotland's finest links courses with the announcement that Gullane Golf Club and Castle Stuart Golf Links will respectively host the championship in 2015 and 2016.

In making the announcement yesterday at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, The European Tour and their key partners – title sponsor Aberdeen Asset Management and the Scottish Government – have maintained their recent policy of rotating Scotland's national open around some of the country's finest links courses the week before the third Major of the season, The Open Championship.

That policy has enjoyed an incredible level of success with each of the last three Open Champions – Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Darren Clarke – having competed in the Scottish Open the week before being declared the Champion Golfer of the year.

Mickelson, of course, won the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open last year before going on to collect the sixth Major of his career at Muirfield just seven days later.

In addition to the future venues announcement at Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, it was also revealed that, from 2015, the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open will be preceded by a new, 54-hole qualifying tournament for Scottish golfers – to take place the weekend preceding the Scottish Open – which will offer six places in the Championship. Further details of

the qualification tournament will be announced at a later date.

Scotland's First Minister, the Rt Hon Alex Salmond MSP, commented: "The Scottish Open has firmly established itself as one of the prime tournaments on The European Tour and has enjoyed another action-packed four days at Royal Aberdeen this week. Scotland is home to some of the very best links courses in the world and it will be great to see some of the sport's best players experience the challenge that Gullane and Castle Stuart will present in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

"We are lucky to be able to have the ability to move this extremely popular competition from one fantastic coastal course to another, spreading the benefits of tourism and television exposure to a global audience. Scotland is famed for staging major international events and this competition will provide a multi-million pound boost to these local economies and Scotland as a whole.

"These two courses are wonderful advertisements for the links game, and I have every confidence that they will enhance Scotland's reputation both as the Home and Future of Golf."

Martin Gilbert, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Asset Management, said: "Along with the Scottish Government and The European Tour we are proud to continue building an exciting future for the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open with this announcement today. Aberdeen is a long-standing, supporter of Scottish golf at all levels of the game and that support extends to all the diverse and wonderful courses we have in our country. Rotating this great tournament around Scotland is of key importance and we look forward to the next two years and beyond, as the tournament continues to deliver for our brand both on a domestic and international scale."

George O'Grady, Chief Executive of The European Tour, said: "Scotland's First Minister, the Right Honourable Alex Salmond,

and Aberdeen Asset Management Chief Executive, Martin Gilbert, have been the driving force behind the recent success of the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open and today we salute their efforts to showcase two of Scotland's superb links courses.

"Together with the Scottish Government and Aberdeen Asset Management, The European Tour is delighted to announce Gullane and Castle Stuart as the next two venues for the championship. At Gullane, we will be treated to one of the game's most historical venues, while Castle Stuart will once again showcase a truly modern links test."

Golf has been played over the links at Gullane for more than 350 years, making it one of Scotland's most prestigious member clubs. With three superb courses to choose from, the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open will be played over a composite lay-out of Gullane No. 1 and No.2.

Gullane Golf Club, located on Scotland's east coast on the Firth of Forth, has long been associated with world class competition having staged Final Qualifying for The Open Championship five times, the Scottish Amateur Championship four times and the Ladies British Open Amateur Championship four times. Gullane will be the ninth different course to host the Scottish Open and the 19<sup>th</sup> Scottish venue to host a European Tour event.

Bruce Dunlop, Past Captain of Gullane Golf Club, said: "Gullane Golf Club has been working closely with The European Tour for a number of months and we are therefore delighted that they chose the Club as the venue for the 2015 Scottish Open.

"We have a long proud record of hosting Championship golf over our historical courses. With some of golfs finest scenery and magnificent links turf and 350 years of golfing history on Gullane Hill, the Club very much looks forward to welcoming

some of the world's finest golfers to next year's Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open.

"In recent years the Scottish Open, driven by the Scottish Government and Aberdeen Asset has quite simply gone from strength to strength. East Lothian hosted last year's highly successful Open at Muirfield and with Gullane being situated at the heart of this most cherished golfing coastline it is terrific news for the Scottish golfing public that the decision has been made to rotate the event throughout the country."

East Lothian Council's Economic Development and Tourism Spokesman, Cllr John McMillan, welcomed today's announcement. He said: "The Scottish Open attracts the top golfers and the selection of Gullane for the 2015 event recognises the quality and challenge of the course and the tremendous knowledge and passion for the game in East Lothian. Scotland's Golf Coast is acknowledged as one of the finest areas for golf in the world and to host another major tournament so closely after the 2013 Open Championship is a real accolade for the county."

Castle Stuart Golf Links may only have been open since 2009 but the Inverness course has already written itself into Scottish Open history having hosted the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open on three occasions between 2011 and 2013, with Luke Donald, Jeev Milkha Singh and Mickelson prevailing as champions at the Moray Firth venue.

Mark Parsinen, Managing Partner of Castle Stuart Golf Links said: "We are naturally delighted to be selected to host the 2016 Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open and to once again be working with The European Tour to attract some of the world's finest golfers back to the links here at Castle Stuart.

"Not only is this a great announcement for the team at Castle Stuart but it is also wonderful news for the whole of the

highlands community, who I am sure will turn out in great numbers once again to support this flagship European Tour event and help to make it a most successful week.”