

Rising stars crowned at major European Championship

Young golfers competing in Europe's largest junior tournament, held in Scotland, have now been crowned champions.

The 15th annual U.S. Kids Golf European Championship, with 532 young athletes from 55 countries competing, was held on seven of East Lothian's finest golf courses.

The tournament, widely regarded as a launchpad for future golf stars, witnessed outstanding performances, with winners hailing from various parts of the globe.

This year's championship saw fierce competition among 16 age groups, ranging from 5 to 18 years old across both boys and girls.

The event kicked off festivities with its annual Parent/Child event hosted at Winterfield Golf Club, followed by three days of competitive golf at five world-class courses.

The championship ended with the European Van Horn Cup, a team-based event, hosted for the first time at North Berwick

Chris Vonderkall, Vice President of Tournaments, said: "The East Lothian courses and the wider community have always been so welcoming and supportive, it's been an absolute delight to come back this year.

"Our aim has always been to provide a platform for young golfers to experience competitive play in a supportive

environment. It's wonderful to see so many players returning year after year.

"We're incredibly fortunate to be able to have access to such incredible courses in truly historic settings and this year we've seen some brilliant performances from the competing athletes.

"The performances we were lucky enough to see this year should be enough to get golf lovers excited for the future, there are some true superstars in the making here."

Players taking part in the 2024 Championship competed at the following venues: Craighielaw Golf Club, Glen Golf Club, Longniddry Golf Club, Royal Musselburgh Golf Club, and Musselburgh Golf Club.

This year's championship saw a pair of Scottish siblings place first in their respective divisions. Fraser and Stella Walters of Aberlady, Great Britain took home the coveted trophy in the Boys 13 and Girls 11 division, respectively.

In the boys' division, the winners were Manyaveer Bhadoo from Chandigarh, India, in the 15-18 age category; Kodi Dean from London, Great Britain, in the 14-year-old category; Alexander Dunmall from Kent, Great Britain, in the 12-year-old category; Sebastian Duffield from Crowthorne, Great Britain, in the 11-year-old category (who also won last year); Victor Bernardini from Brussels, Belgium, in the 10-year-old category; Zachary Blayney from Hockley, Great Britain, in the 9-year-old category; Alexander Mitchell from Norwalk, United States, in the 8-year-old category; and Nihaal Cheema from Chandigarh, India, in the 7 and under category.

In the girls' division, the champions were Katrina Bulkovska from Ikšķile, Latvia, in the 15-18 age category; Hazel Peters from Paia, United States, in the 14-year-old category; Ananyaa Sood from New Delhi, India, in the 13-year-old category; Sabrina Wong from Hong Kong in the 12-year-old category (who

also won last year), Anna Ponghathaikul from Bangkok, Thailand, in the 10-year-old category; Soleil Lindholm from Toronto, Canada, in the 9-year-old category; and Jay Kang from Duluth, United States, in the 8 and under category.

Additionally, the Van Horn Cup Morrison Medal winners were awarded to the girls' and boys' teams with the lowest rounds.

The boys' medal was awarded to Ethan Evans from the United States and Max Mieschke from Switzerland, while the girls' medal was awarded to Keelee Nogawa from the United States and Shania Valentina Breinholder from the Czech Republic.

Qualifying players from the 11-14 age groups were selected for the prestigious Van Horn Cup at North Berwick Golf Club.

The U.S. Kids Golf Foundation, established in 1996, aims to foster a love for golf among children and encourage family interaction through the sport.

The Foundation runs over 2,200 events annually, including the renowned World Championship at Pinehurst.

The European Championship not only showcases emerging talent but also supports local tourism, with significant participation from Scottish golfers, such as Freddie Bradley from Gullane and the Walters siblings from Aberlady.



Fraser Walters