

# The Links Times

Alfred Dunhill Links Championship Daily News

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## LOOKING FOR A LOCAL HERO

*Robert MacIntyre, the leading Scot in the world rankings, is hoping to end the 16-year wait for a home win at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship: 'I'm not thinking about long-term goals, I'm here to win a golf tournament'*

**T**he Scottish galleries will be keeping their fingers crossed this morning as Robert MacIntyre tees off at Carnoustie refreshed and ready to challenge for a win at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. He would be the first Scottish winner since Colin Montgomerie in 2005.

The 25-year-old from Oban made his debut in the Championship in 2013 as an amateur and knows the attraction and prestige that comes with competing in the event.

"It's great to be back. The Home of Golf is where everyone wants to

play," he said. "I took a few weeks off to refresh myself and I'm looking forward to getting going."

The Championship, a celebration of Links golf at its finest, is staged over three of the most celebrated courses in Scotland: the Old Course St Andrews, Carnoustie and Kingsbarns.

The left-hander, who is currently the leading Scot in the world rankings, believes a solid showing this week can be the springboard for an upturn in form.

He said: "I've missed a few cuts in the last eight weeks, but if I go out here and put in a good perfor-

mance, no-one's talking about them.

"I'm not really thinking about long-term goals. I'm out here this week to try and win a golf tournament."

MacIntyre is part of a talented up-and-coming Scottish golfing contingent. He said: "Calum (Hill)'s trend is rocketing, Grant (Forrest) is in great form and there's me as well. We're all behind each other and pushing each other."

Also in the field is defending champion Victor Perez, the Frenchman who lives in Dundee, who is relishing the experience of playing once again at the Home of Golf,

as he bids to retain the title he won in 2019, the last time the event was held.

He said: "Around here people love the golfers. I'm fortunate to practise here on the range at St Andrews and you have people walking and playing the 17th and waving. It's great having people cheering you on."

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# BILLY GIVES DAD THE PERFECT GIFT

*Billy Horschel Snr. will celebrate his 70th birthday tomorrow playing Kingsbarns with his son – one of four pairings at this year's tournament to feature family connections*

What could be better than playing the three beautiful courses that comprise the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship, with a European Tour title on the line? How about doing it alongside your father or your brother? For four of the golfers chasing the big prize on Scotland's east coast this week, the amateur lining up alongside them will be very familiar.

This will be a family affair for two-time winners Padraig Harrington and Tyrrell Hatton, as well as the newly-crowned BMW PGA Champion Billy Horschel and former World No.1 Martin Kaymer.

Horschel won at Wentworth three weeks ago to claim his second title of 2021, after the WGC Dell Technologies Matchplay event in March. He will partner his father, Billy Snr, at Carnoustie today.

"It's his 70th birthday on Friday and I thought it would be a great present to bring him here. It's just a beautiful place," said Billy Jnr.

Billy Snr. first introduced his son

to golf at the Summit View club in their native Florida. Now the father-and-son pair will take on these famous Scottish links courses.

"I have the imagination for it, but will the ball bounce the way you want it to?" said the World No.18. "I'm getting more experience. I made the cut in The Open at Royal St George's and the Scottish Open, but just didn't make the putts."

Tyrrell Hatton won back-to-back titles in 2016 and 2017 but has never played here with his dad, Jeff, until now. Jeff created a golf training centre, Hatton Golf, in 2004 and coached his son at the start of his extraordinary career. "He beat me off gross when he was six," recalls Jeff.

Playing with the Horschels will be Martin Kaymer, the 2010 champion, and his father Horst, teaming up for the fifth time – Horst also caddied when Martin was partnered by his brother Philip. And it's a fraternity vibe for Team Harrington as Padraig, winner here in 2002 and 2006, tees up with his brother Columb for the first time.



## JAMIE: FINAL ROUND WITH LUKE AND RORY AS GOOD AS WEMBLEY

Former England and Liverpool football star Jamie Redknapp is delighted to be teeing up alongside Luke Donald once again.

Redknapp has been paired with the former world No.1 several times and has particularly fond memories of the 2009 event (left), when Donald was leading going into the final round – an experience Redknapp put on a par with his best days in football.

He said: "I remember looking up at the scoreboard and I was so pleased for Luke.

"I thought, 'Luke's leading; Rory McIlroy's second; so that means on the Sunday I'm going to be in the final group with Rory and Luke

Donald and Rory's dad (who was partnering McIlroy).

"I'd had a couple of glasses of wine the night before and remember getting onto the first and trying to put my ball on the tee and thinking, 'This is not gonna go on here'. It wasn't the red wine, it was nerves.

"To tee it up in the last group of a tournament of so much significance felt amazing. I've played at Wembley, but playing here, I put that right up there."

Teeing off just before Redknapp and Donald at St Andrews today are two former winners of football's Ballon d'Or, Ruud Gullit and Andrii Shevchenko. Gullit is partnering Wil Besseling, while Shevchenko is joined by the Italian Lorenzo Gagli.





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# BACK ON THE BAG, BUT SMART WILL NOT FORGET HIS OLD COURSE VICTORY

*When Danny Willett told his caddie he'd be playing at the Alfred Dunhill Links it began an adventure that included a football legend and a win in the Team Championship*

**J**onathan Smart still remembers the moment his dream came true. 2016 was already a good year - 'Smartie' had been on the bag for his childhood friend, Danny Willett, as he won the Masters to claim his first Major. Then, with that year's Alfred Dunhill Links Championship on the horizon, his boss gave him some unexpected news.

"Dan gave me the invitation (for the Alfred Dunhill Links) and I was a bit taken aback. He said 'You've got a change of role'."

Like many caddies, Smart grew up with the ambition of making it on the other side of the bag. When

that didn't work out, he had found the next best thing - assisting Willett, who he has known since he was 13, in a stellar career. Now he was walking out to take on the Old Course.

"We'd just come from the Ryder Cup, and we went to play four holes at St Andrews on the Tuesday night. It was just me and Dan and we nipped out because I was so excited to play. It was amazing - that was probably one of my highlights, not a tournament round or anything. It became real that I was playing in the Dunhill."

From there, things got even better for Smart. He got to play alongside

the Ballon d'Or winner Luis Figo ("just like when he played football, there were little bits of flair in his golf game") and ended his week by winning the Team Championship alongside his friend.

Smart has been reunited with Willett after a period apart that included Smart caddying for Lucas Bjerregaard when the Dane won the Championship in 2018, and his unique history with this event means he has advice for the first-timers in this year's field.

"The week goes so fast, so you've got to try your best to enjoy it," he said. "We took it seriously, but not too seriously."



## 20 YEARS OF MEMORIES FOR DUNHILL ROYALTY

**A**s the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship celebrates its 20th Anniversary, some of the returning amateurs have reflected on their experiences of a unique event that allows them to play alongside the best golfers on the European Tour on three of the most beautiful courses in the world.

Sir Steve Redgrave is a member of an exclusive club, having played the event in each of its 20 years. The Olympic rower was the best in his sport and appreciates the chances he has had to play with so many elite golfers.

"What sport can you do and be next to the cream of the cream? Nobody could get in a boat alongside me when I was racing," he said.

"You're competing on a better ball, while they're playing for the third biggest money earner on the European Tour, so it's nerve-racking walking the fairways while they're playing at the highest level."

One behind Redgrave is Lord Ian Botham. The England cricket legend said: "I've only missed one tournament in the 20 years, and that was because of a back operation. It's a truly great week and both the professionals and us amateurs enjoy it hugely."

Twenty-time Champion Jockey Sir Tony McCoy added: "It's a great event to meet other sports people. There's nothing like it because it gets you out of your comfort zone, and it makes you competitive."



# TIME TO HONOUR THE GREAT SEVE

*Seve's children, Javier and Carmen Ballesteros, lead the tributes on a memorable evening as the golf-loving town of St Andrews opens its heart to the man who reflected the soul and passion of golf, the sport we all love*

**A**n exhibition of pictures chronicling the extraordinary golfing life of Severiano Ballesteros has been opened at the R&A's Museum of Golf at St Andrews, and will run for at least a year.

The Seve Exhibition, launched yesterday on the eve of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship, was also followed by the premiere of an emotive 93-minute documentary film about Ballesteros.

Javier Ballesteros, Seve's 31-year-

old eldest son, attended the exhibition and film launches and is playing for the first time in this week's tournament with his sister, Carmen, caddying for him. It is also, remarkably, the first time he has visited St Andrews. Javier and Carmen are pictured at the exhibition launch.

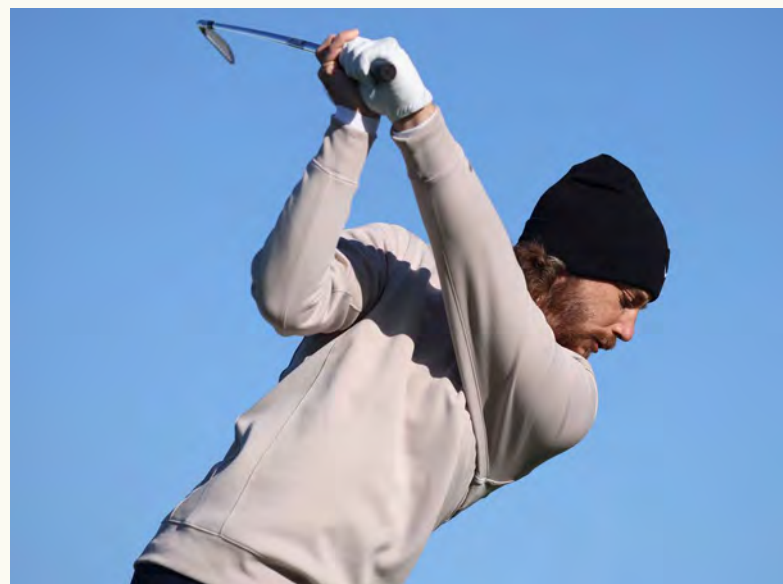
Javier Ballesteros recently told the BBC: "Every day I wish my dad was still here and we could do things together, like practice and enjoy life. He won five Majors,

helped Europe to five Ryder Cups and has a record 50 victories on the European Tour, but I can tell you he was a much better dad than he was a golfer."

The film, *Seve: Artist, Fighter, Legend*, was shown at the New Picture House Cinema in St Andrews and includes interviews with fellow Spanish icon Jose Maria Olazabal, Seve's great friend and legendary Ryder Cup playing partner, and a host of other high-profile golfing names and Major champions.

The exhibition features many of the pictures from Getty photographer, David Cannon's book, *Seve: His Life Through The Lens*, which was published in May this year to mark the tenth anniversary of Ballesteros's untimely death from brain cancer in 2011 at the age of 54.

It was Cannon who took the world-famous 1984 photograph, seen above, of Ballesteros celebrating his moment of Open Championship victory on the Old Course's 18th green.



## TEAM CHAMPIONS GO LIVE FOR THE LAUGHS

**H**ow do champions prepare to defend a title? If Tommy Fleetwood and Ogden Phipps are anything to go by, the answer is: by mercilessly bringing up each other's failings on the golf course.

The winners of the most recent Team Championship took over the @dunhilllinks Instagram feed during practice at the Old Course and from the start were in a playful mood.

"Tell them about the final day,"

prompted Fleetwood.

"There wasn't a lot of confidence in Tommy's four-footers," said Phipps. "I had five feet and I jumped in front and yelled 'I'll go!'"

"Fun fact," countered Fleetwood. "Ogden Phipps holds the record for most balls out of bounds on 1 and 18 in a single round. Four!"

"That's what champions do, they back each other up," concluded Phipps. On or off camera, Phipps and Fleetwood are a winning pair.

England's Test cricket captain Joe Root cannot wait to make his maiden appearance in the Alfred Dunhill Links - and says he is "in awe" of top professional golfers.

Root, a 13-handicapper who plays his golf at the Abbeydale club in his home city of Sheffield, only took up the game at the age of 19.

"It was when I started as a pro cricketer," said the 30-year-old Yorkshire and England batsman. "That's when I began to play with some of the other players - lots of cricketers like their golf. There are also opportunities to play when we're away on tour with England."

Root, who will be playing with Ross Fisher in the Team Championship, added: "I was thrilled to get the invitation to this tournament, and it's great I was available this week. These three courses are all incredible and I'd never played any of them until a couple of practice rounds at Kingsbarns, which is spectacular. I am looking forward now to playing the Old Course and Carnoustie."

"My all-time golfing hero is Seve Ballesteros, but I am in awe of how well the professionals hit the ball, the way they strike it so purely. It's great to be able to watch them so close-up."

While Root makes his Championship debut at Carnoustie today, cricket fans in St Andrews can catch some of the legends of the sport if they get to the Old Course.

Lord Ian Botham, Shane Warne, Michael Vaughan and Darren Gough all tee off in quick succession, starting just after 10am.

Lord Botham leads off, playing with David Horsey in the Team Championship; Warne and Vaughan go out with Ryan Fox and Jordan Smith, and Gough is partnered by Sam Horsfield.

# THE ONE TIME JOE ROOT WAS TRYING TO GET OUT...



## GILBERT BACKS HOME HOPES

*The new chairman of Scottish Golf has a strong connection with the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship and hopes to remove the barriers keeping young people from the sport*

As Chairman of Scottish Golf, you can forgive Martin Gilbert for hoping that the 20th Anniversary Alfred Dunhill Links Championship at St Andrews produces a Scottish winner, for the first time since Colin Montgomerie in 2005.

Gilbert has played as an amateur in every iteration of the Champion-

ship since he partnered Paul Lawrie as he won the inaugural event in 2001.

He said: "Bob MacIntyre has the ability to be the real thing, but there are others who have won. We had two Scottish winners this year [Grant Forrest and Calum Hill] and David Law and Marc Warren last year."

After taking over at Scottish Golf in March following a successful career with Aberdeen Asset Management, Gilbert hopes to find a broader player base for the sport. "I've always been a great believer that one rule is one rule too many at a golf club," he said. "We've got to not frighten youngsters from joining clubs."

# ON THE CREST OF THE WAVE AT KINGSBARN

Where do brilliant singer-songwriters get their inspiration? In the case of Tom Chaplin, lead vocalist of British rock band Keane, it might just be on the spectacular Kingsbarns golf course. Did this amazing vista influence Tom to create his solo album *The Wave* a few years back? This stunning picture of him on the 3rd tee shows him in his last practice round before the 2021 Championship begins.



# TICO AND HUEY AT BEACH CLEAN-UP

On Jovi's Tico Torres and rock legend Huey Lewis took time away from the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship to join a beach clean on West Sands in St Andrews.

The clean-up, organised by St Andrews Environmental Network board member Daphne Biliouri-Grant, is part of a wider collaboration with the Alfred Dunhill Links Foundation which aims to create a strategy for sustainability in the local community.

The two music stars said their love of St Andrews had been enhanced by playing in the Championship each year.

Tico Torres said: "This is a wonderful event with a great format. We look forward to coming back every year. It's like a family get together. We're delighted to be able to support this wonderful initiative."



# FLASHBACK TO DAYS GONE BY

There was everything to play for going up the 18th at the Home of Golf as the sun set yesterday. A memorable golfing match was taking place - with a historic twist.

Shane Warne and Michael Vaughan faced Jamie Redknapp, Ruud Gullit and Piers Morgan in a fun Hickory Challenge on the eve of the Championship at St Andrews.

Warne hit what he called his "best drive of the day" with the antique clubs. Morgan found the fairway but his next two shots took chunks out of the turf and laughter erupted as he jokingly bellowed for the cameras to be turned off.

After mixed results on the approaches, cheers went up as Redknapp sank the winning putt on golf's most iconic green.



# IWC PARTNERSHIP IS PERFECT TIMING

World-leading watch maker IWC Schaffhausen is the new official timing partner of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

IWC time pieces will be present on all three courses as the 20th Anniversary of this prestigious golf event gets under way today.

Chris Grainger-Herr, CEO of

IWC Schaffhausen, said: "We are delighted to be the official time partner of the iconic Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. Played over three magnificent courses, it is a true celebration of Links golf and is understandably much loved by fans and players alike. I am looking forward to an electrifying championship in the Home of Golf."



# IWC PILOT. ENGINEERED FOR ORIGINALS.



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The functional design with its easy-to-read dial and distinctive cone-shaped crown has ensured the Big Pilot's Watch of its iconic status. Now, for the first time, it is available in a 43-millimetre case that combines a striking

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