

How the West Will Be Won

Australia's richest, and youngest, major professional golf event hits Lake Karrinyup this month for the third time. And with Geoff Ogilvy joining a host of other big names, we should be set for a cracker.

By Paul Prendergast



The pristine, tree-lined surrounds of Lake Karrinyup Golf Club in the northern suburbs of Perth will again play host to the Perth International, Australia's richest event and one filled with pressure for European Tour players.

Co-sanctioned with the European Tour, the third edition of the IMG-owned event takes place from October 23 to 26 with a tantalising purse of \$2 million.

The references to pressure are due to the event being the last of the European Tour's International Schedule and the last chance to advance to the Race to Dubai

'Final Series' that kicks off in China the following week.

Of potentially more pressing concern to those missing the finals is a return to Qualifying School, as a place in the finals also equates to retention of playing privileges for the following season. The Perth International, however, is far more than just a fork in the road for the European contingent, it's a potential life-changer for them and an aspiring group of Australian players craving career advancement.

Twenty-three-year old Korean Jin Jeong can well attest to this after besting England's Ross Fisher in a playoff to win the 2013 event. The former British Amateur champion had battled in



anonymity on the European Challenger circuit before catching lightning in a bottle to snare \$360,000 from the pool and with it, a two-year exemption on the world's second biggest Tour.

Catapulted overnight into a new world, Jeong quickly added another \$88,000 to his account two weeks later at the HSBC Champions in China and landed another payday of over \$140,000 by virtue of a tie for second in the Joburg Open in February.

Jeong returns to Perth as defending champion but is amidst a lean trot since his result in Joburg. However, the story of his past 12 months highlights the scale of the opportunity that lies before members of the local PGA Tour of Australasia should they replicate his feat.

IMG have again attracted a number of marquee players to Perth, although doubt has been cast on 2013 US PGA champion Jason Dufner's participation as he deals with the lingering neck injury that has sidelined him since his withdrawal during his PGA Championship defence in August.

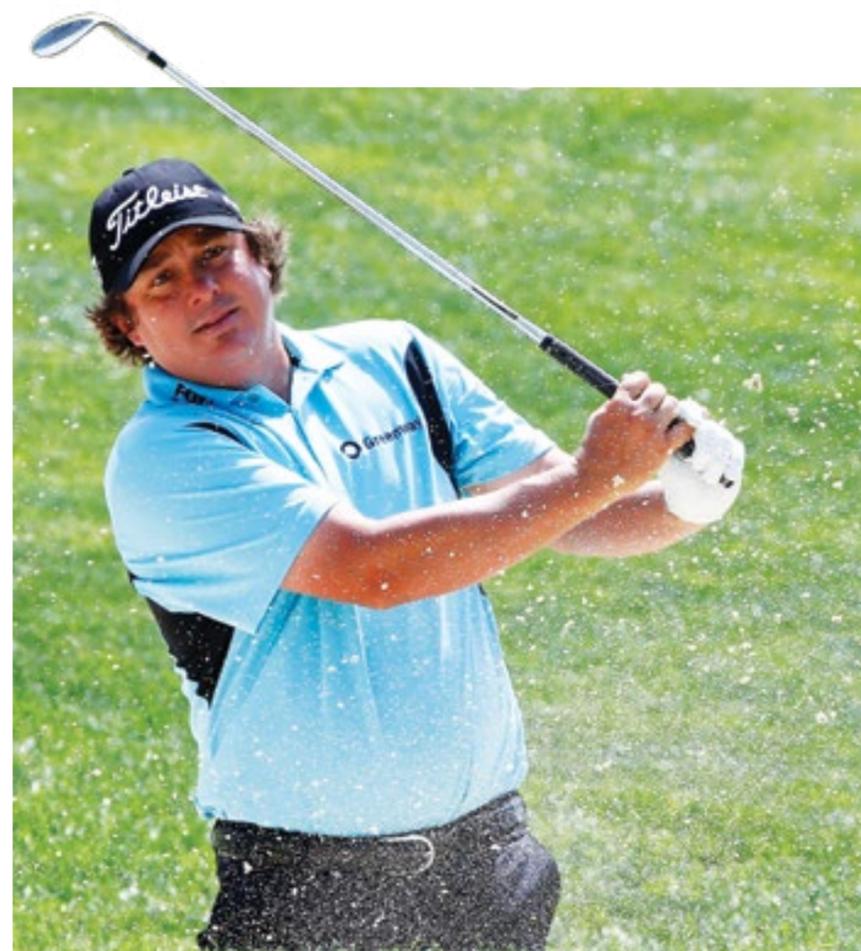
Injury permitting, Dufner is due to return to the lush fairways of Lake Karrinyup after appearing in and almost capturing the inaugural event in 2012, waging a battle with countryman Bo Van Pelt during the final round only to finish two strokes adrift in outright second place.

Dave Rollo from IMG said that Dufner had given event organisers every indication he would take his place at one of his 'favourite stops' alongside French drawcard Victor Dubuisson, Queenslander Steve Bowditch, who

“The last time I actually played in Perth was in 2000 for the Heineken Classic, so it’s been a long while since I visited the West. I’m looking forward to playing there again.”

— Geoff Ogilvy

Geoff Ogilvy [pictured] joins fellow major winner Jason Dufner [right] in the field, who won last year's US PGA Championship.



broke through for his first win on the PGA Tour at the Texas Open this season, and local Perth favourite Brett Rumford.

The enigmatic Dubuisson is making his second visit to Australia after representing France in the World Cup of Golf at Royal Melbourne last year. Suffering from allergies, Dubuisson was below his exciting best that week but we saw what he was capable of with a demonstration of outstanding golf to make the final of the WGC Match Play Championship in Arizona earlier in the year.

Dubuisson pushed Jason Day to extra holes in the 18-hole final before succumbing at the 23rd hole, but not before pulling off a series of exquisite and downright outrageous recovery shots, including two from impossible positions from the desert and beneath cactus that had everyone, including Day, shaking their heads in awe and amazement.

A similar deft touch will be required on and around the intricate green complexes at Lake Karrinyup.

Rollo pointed out that the depth of the field in this third iteration is likely to be the strongest thus far following changes to the European Tour schedule this year.



“With Hong Kong (Open) rather than Portugal preceding Perth, it will make it easier from a travel perspective for the players, so we fully expect to have the strongest field yet in terms of strength and depth,” he said.

The success of Australian players on the PGA Tour this season has also allowed for the added bonus of not only Bowditch making a commitment to Perth, but former US Open champion Geoff Ogilvy also signing on recently.

Over the past two years, but especially so last year after the introduction of the Tour's 'wraparound' schedule, which begins in October, Australians playing on the PGA Tour have opted to remain in the US as opposed to making the trip to Perth to support a home event.

However, with the pressure of playing for their immediate futures lifted, courtesy of Bowditch's win in Texas and Ogilvy's at the Barracuda Championship at Reno in August, organisers are grinning broadly at the prospect of two additional high profile Australians in the field to tackle Lake Karrinyup.

For Ogilvy, the event holds added significance as he will be playing Karrinyup for the first time since his course design partner Mike Clayton redesigned the layout in 2007.

“The last time I actually played in Perth was in 2000 for the Heineken Classic, so it’s been a long while since I visited the West. I’m looking forward to playing there again,” Ogilvy said.

“I’m sure Mike will be putting pressure on me to perform well!”

Clayton and the rest of their design team will be close by to apply that 'friendly pressure', as they will all be in attendance in Perth now that Ogilvy is playing.

Clayton is obviously excited that the eight-time PGA Tour winner returned to his winning ways in Nevada and feels that on current form, Lake Karrinyup might be right up the former major champion's alley.

“High draws off the tee and good iron shots—it suits him perfectly,” Clayton said of the course routinely considered Western Australia's finest and ranked among Australia's top 10 layouts.

Rollo added: “The venue has met with universal praise from the players over the past two years, and no doubt Course Superintendent Trevor Strachan and his team will again present a wonderful course and a great test of golf.”

“The partnership with the European Tour delivers a phenomenal broadcast platform with 2,379 hours of live/



“I hope all of you guys take heart from this and realise just how good you all are. Believe in yourself. Don’t die wondering.”

- Wayne Grady



Frenchman Victor Dubuisson is a renowned shotmaker.

Steven Jeffress was another who stunned a quality field recently to claim the inaugural Fiji International at Natadola Bay and earn a career-high payday and future opportunities for starts on several major tours.

As the only Australasian Tour event co-sanctioned with the European Tour, the springboard that Perth represents is enormous for someone like a Papadatos, Nick Cullen, Jake Higginbottom, Cameron Smith or Brody Ninyette to climb to a new level; or equally, for a Michael Sim or a Scott Strange to get back to a level they were at not too long ago.

Former PGA champion Wayne Grady took to social media in the wake of Jeffress’ breakthrough in Fiji, congratulating Jeffress first and foremost but using the significance of the moment to encourage the rest of the current generation to grasp the nettle.

“I hope all of you guys take heart from this and realise just how good you all are. Believe in yourself. Don’t die wondering,” were among Grady’s comments.

The Perth International represents another great opportunity for many to do just that. ■

delayed coverage in 2013—showcasing Perth to 473 million households around the world.

All the more impetus for a local or relative unknown to step up, such as Jeong or NSW’s Dimi Papadatos, who finished third last year. Papadatos put the confidence gained and the added financial security to good effect by going on to win the New Zealand Open just a few months later.

PERTH INTERNATIONAL
19-24 NOVEMBER 2014

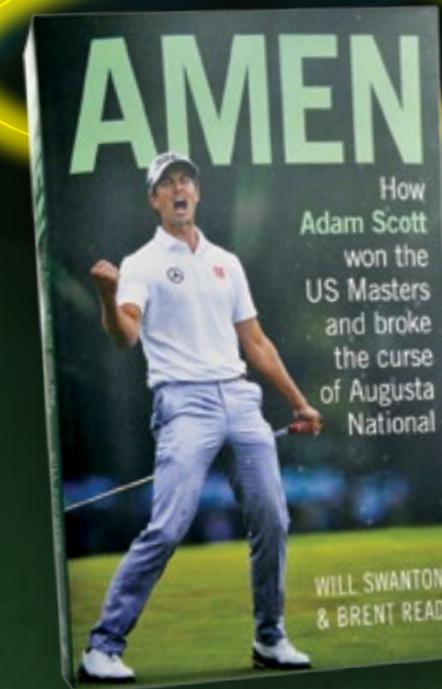
LEGEND

- ENTRANCE GATE
- MERCHANDISE TENT
- FIRST AID
- TOILETS
- DISABLED TOILET
- CONCESSIONS
- VIDEOBOARD
- LEADERBOARD
- CROSSOVERS

PUBLIC VILLAGE & 18TH HOSPITALITY

HOLE	MTRS	PAR
1	294	4
2	428	4
3	507	5
4	388	4
5	179	3
6	415	4
7	580	5
8	291	3
9	344	4
OUT	3,216	36
10	337	4
11	508	5
12	135	3
13	414	4
14	302	4
15	487	5
16	428	4
17	298	3
18	406	4
IN	3,216	36
TOTAL	6,432	72

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The US Masters: the most famous tournament of all. A global TV audience of 150 million, a string of legendary winners ... and a curse for Australian golfers.

From Jim Ferrier blowing a huge lead in 1950 to Greg Norman’s litany of disasters over decades, the Masters constantly turned its back on any Australian who looked likely to get close to the Holy Grail. The curse grew a life of its own. Norman spent 22 years trying to win the title he craved above all others, only to be stopped cold by nerves, rotten luck and bizarre twists of fate.

As a boy, Adam Scott had cried while watching Greg Norman’s implosions. He became world junior champion, and a protege of Norman. Respectful and dignified, he was one of the most popular players on the US and European tours. His swing was to die for, but his putting was a nightmare. He kept falling apart in big tournaments. In 2009, when Scott’s career was in free-fall - when his world ranking plummeted and his personal life was on the skids - the only two men to show faith in him were Greg Norman and the Argentinian player, Angel Cabrera.

Come 2013, Scott is in the thick of an impossibly dramatic Masters. Three Australians are among those fighting for the lead. Only Scott makes it to a sudden-death playoff - against Cabrera. As darkness closes in, he has what Norman never had: one putt to win the Masters.

Featuring exclusive interviews with Adam Scott, Scott’s father Phil, Greg Norman and every prominent Australian golfer from British Open champions Peter Thomson and Ian Baker-Finch to Masters runner-up Jack Newton, all of whom tried and failed at Augusta, Amen is the definitive story of how Adam Scott broke the biggest hex on Australian sport.

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