



澳娛綜合澳門高爾夫球公開賽

SJM MACAO OPEN 2023

October 18, 2023

SJM MACAO OPEN ENHANCES MACAO'S STATURE AS AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTING DESTINATION

The SJM Macao Open 2023 returned with much fanfare last week (12 to 15 October 2023), presenting world-class golf from the past, present and future stars of the sport at the Macau Golf and Country Club. The SJM Macao Open also went a long way towards enhancing Macao's stature as an international sporting destination, while highlighting its numerous tourist attractions and rich culture.

Making a welcome return to Macao after six years, the USD1 million Asian Tour tournament treated spectators to four days of exciting on-course action along with engaging off-course activities. The action came thick and fast as the field of 144 players battled over four days at the picturesque and challenging Macau Golf and Country Club layout. When the dust finally settled, Minwoo Lee was deservedly crowned as the champion of the tournament's landmark 20th edition.

World-ranked 46th Lee, led the field from his first round, with 62 strokes on his maiden competition in Macao. On the second and third days, he maintained his lead with totals of 64 and 65 strokes respectively, entering the finals with a two-stroke advantage. In the Final Round, Lee managed one eagle, 6 birdies, beating his opposition with a total of 63 strokes and taking the coveted Champion's trophy.

If not for the preferred lies, Lee's opening round of nine-under-par 62 at the par-71 Macau Golf and Country Club layout would have tied the course record set by India's Amandeep Johl in 2004 and matched by compatriot Anirban Lahiri in 2014.

Large crowds showed up over the weekend to enjoy the stunning golf on display, not just by Lee but also from his playing partner, Thailand's Poom Saksansin who finished second after a fascinating final day duel. The tenacious Thai golfer matched the Australian blow for blow but came up two shots shy despite matching Lee's closing 63.

"This win means a lot to me and I'm going to cherish it. I'm really proud of the way I handled myself," said Lee, who earned a cheque for USD180,000.

"I really like this golf course. I feel like it really suited my game, my chipping and putting has been on point, the driving has been really good, and the approach play was pretty solid too," he added.

Lee noted that he had an enjoyable stay in Macao and at the iconic Grand Lisboa Palace Hotel. "This whole week has been amazing! I really enjoyed my time here. The hotel is unbelievable, probably one of the best hotels I've been in, and I really loved the Asian food. It was a spectacular week. And yeah, I hope to come back, it's an awesome course and awesome place."



PETER MILLAR





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Lee stayed at the iconic Grand Lisboa Palace Hotel, located very close the golf club, and also enjoyed having his mother and grandmother watch him on the final day – when he had to overcome stiff resistance from playing partner Poom Saksansin from Thailand, whom he beat by two.

He added: “Even on social media here the support has been unbelievable. I wish it was a little easier, but yeah, you know, got it done at the end. I'm really happy and a big thank you to my family and friends that came out and supporters. I haven't played too much in front of mom and grandma, so it was really, really nice to win in front of them.”

For Poom, it was yet another excellent performance coming off the back of the 30-year-old's success in the Yeangder TPC and a joint third placing in last week's International Series Singapore.

“Lee is a very good player. He hits it very far and had a very good game plan. His chipping and putting are awesome. He should have been better than 30-under-par,” said Poom, whose small stature belies his huge golfing talent.

Another Thai talent, Phachara Khongwatmai, finished in sole possession of third place on 20-under-par, while Chinese-Taipei's Lee Chieh-po and Miguel Tabuena from the Philippines tied for fourth two shots further back.

47-year-old American Jason Knutzon, who won this event in 2005 and has not played tournament golf for five years, rolled back the years by finishing on 17-under-par. He tied for sixth place with 2023 Asian Games gold medallist Taichi Kho of Hong Kong, China, and India's Honey Baisoya.

Indian star Gaganjeet Bhullar, who won the tournament's last edition in 2017, finished equal 17th on 14-under-par.

While the six promising amateurs who were given invitational spots missed the halfway cut, the experience of competing with the region's best professionals proved invaluable for Liu Zonghan and Chang Xihuan of China, Isaac Lee, Lander Lee and Michael Yuen of Hong Kong, China, and Macao's very own Hun Pui In.

The spectators who thronged Macau Golf and Country Club enjoyed a great day out in fabulous weather. Entire families including toddlers congregated at the Fan Village to taste the great food on offer or just chill in the sunshine while watching the players walk by, and also meeting SJM's Tourism Ambassador “Sam the Rooster”. Another popular spot was the viewing deck behind the 10th teebox, which provided spectacular vistas of the golf course and the South China Sea.

After six years' absence, the Golf Tournament also brought a Golfing Carnival to Asia's golfing fanatics and Macao's community. World-renowned golfers were invited from all over the world, and numerous visitors from the Greater Bay Area and neighbouring Asian Countries were attracted to tour Macao in all its glory. This all helped to raise Macao as an international





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sporting destination amongst its regional neighbours, featuring its rich tourist resources and cultural depth.

Pun Weng Kun, President of the Sports Bureau of Macao SAR Government, lauded the success of the tournament, saying: “The SJM Macao Open was certainly a huge success and went a long way towards promoting Macao as a preferred international sports destination with the widespread exposure and coverage generated. It was great to see many young fans among the spectators, witnessing both the established Asian Tour stars and the up-and-coming players, including recent Asian Games medallists. This is in line with our initiative to promote ‘Sport for All’, and we hope that more youngsters will be inspired by these players to take up the game.”

Daisy Ho, Managing Director of SJM Resorts, S.A. (SJM), noted: “As the title sponsor, we are extremely pleased that this year’s SJM Macao Open went smoothly and was so well received by players and spectators alike. The tournament certainly cemented its place as one of the highlights of Macao’s international events calendar, showcasing our capability to stage world-class sporting events laced with warm hospitality. This is just the beginning of our three-year partnership, and we will work closely with the Sports Bureau of Macao SAR Government, the Asian Tour, IMG and other stakeholders to make the next edition even bigger and better.”

Asian Tour Chief Operating Officer, David Rollo, noted that the tournament was one of their favourite stops. “The SJM Macao Open is certainly one of our members’ favourite tournaments and this year’s edition truly enhanced its popularity. Everyone had an enjoyable stay in Macao, thanks to the clockwork organisation and wonderful hospitality. We also welcomed a terrific new champion in Min Woo Lee. Our heartfelt thanks are extended to SJM Resorts, Sports Bureau of Macao, Golf Association of Macau, Macau Golf and Country Club and IMG for their unwavering support and we look forward to continuing this partnership for the next tournament and beyond.”

Grant Slack, EVP & Managing Director, Golf Events of IMG, noted: “IMG is immensely proud to have been part of the Macao Open through the years and to have played a part in the successful staging of the 20th edition. We have really enjoyed working with the Sports Bureau of Macao, the title sponsor, SJM and partners, and will continue to collaborate with them to further elevate the tournament and help grow the game in Macao.”





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World-ranked 46th, Australian Lee Minwoo, makes his first visit to Macau and was deservedly crowned champion of the tournament. Lee noted that he had an enjoyable stay at the iconic Grand Lisboa Palace Hotel.



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