



3rd WORLD STROKEPLAY CHAMPIONSHIP

IMJELT DRAMMEN 6-9 July 2017

Over 80 players representing eleven member associations and three continents will make up a strong field for the 2017 World Strokeplay championship at the Imjelt course near Drammen, Norway from July 7-9.

Five-time individual Irish champion **John Walsh** is the holder of the World Strokeplay championship. The Collins, Co. Cork player will defend the title he won four years ago at the Tambre course in Galicia. Walsh was also third in the inaugural World Strokeplay championship at La Grande Motte, France in 2009.

Walsh's two colleagues on Ireland's 2016 World Cup winning side will contest this year's World Strokeplay. **John Ross Crangle** will have positive memories of Imjelt, host venue for the championship. Crangle was runner-up (to Ian Farrelly) in the 2011 European Strokeplay championship, which was held at Imjelt. JR just edged out John Walsh then for second spot on the tiebreaker. **Eamon Gibney** is a practised exponent of international Pitch and Putt. In addition to World Cup success in Andorra last year, Gibney won the 2014 Irish Open at Glenville and has been a podium finisher in previous Catalan (3rd, 2013) and British (2nd, 2016) Opens.

Three-time Australian Open champion **James Rogerson** (Australia) finished second to John Walsh in 2013 World Strokeplay championship having been a World Cup runner-up with Australia at Royal Meath in 2012.

Reigning European and Irish Strokeplay champion **Liam O'Donovan** (Ireland) will travel to Norway on the back of the latest in a long line of overseas successes. The four-time European Team championship winner with Ireland teamed-up with **Pacelli Darcy** (Ireland) to clinch the recent World Pairs championship in Galicia. Darcy is the master of international seniors (over 55) Pitch and Putt and is the reigning European Seniors Strokeplay champion.

A rival to Pacelli for the World seniors crown will be Riverdale's **Sean Minogue** (Ireland), who finished third in the seniors' categories of the 2016 Catalan, Irish and British Opens.

Gonzalo Mendoza (Andorra) scored 100 to place third in the III World Cup Strokeplay qualifying round at Xixerella in 2016. He later had a 100 % Matchplay record, winning six out of six. Gonzalo finished third in the 2015 Andorra Open.

Txema Beitia, Kepa Ikutza and **Gerardo Pagalday** represented the Basque Country in the 2016 World Cup of Pitch and Putt. Kepa Ikutza beat John Walsh during Ireland's quarter-final success over the Basques in Andorra.

Frank Dineen (Ireland) is a two-time Irish Open champion, having won again at Rocklodge in 2016. Dineen has contested the two previous World Strokeplay championships, finishing tied fifth at Tambre

in 2013 and eleventh at La Grande Motte four years earlier. He is another with experience of Imjelt as he was fifth at the Drammen venue in the 2011 European Strokeplay championship.

Angel Navarro (Catalonia) finished as runner-up in the 2017 Catalan Open at Sant Cebria.

Stephen Murray (Ireland) has been close twice in international events. Stephen and clubmate Paul McGreal were runners-up in the 2016 Catalan International Pairs tournament at Sant Cebria. Murray contested a play-off for the 2010 Irish Open at R.G.S.C., before losing out to Frank Dineen.

Amador Rodriguez (Catalonia) is reigning (over 55) World Strokeplay champion (he scored 212 in the searing heat of Tambre four years ago) and is the current Catalan Senior Open champion.

John Evans (Catalonia) was second to Amador Rodriguez in that 2017 Catalan Senior Open.

Shane Murphy (Ireland) was runner-up in last year's Catalan Open. Unfortunately, Shane has had to withdraw but his father **Weeshie Murphy** (Ireland) is a regular competitor in international events and was second in the 2015 Catalan International Pairs tournament at Lloret Papalus alongside Chris Scannell.

There will be three representatives from South America. **Margarita Valenzuela** (Chile) qualifies by virtue of winning the Chile Ladies Open last year.

Reigning ladies' world champion Chrissie Byrne is unable to defend her title but Ireland will have a strong hand in the 2017 renewal courtesy of **Breda White** and **Eleanor Walsh**. Breda won the Irish Open at Rocklodge last autumn. Breda and Eleanor were second and third respectively in last year's British Open at Central Park in Dagenham.

Leading musician **Noel Shannon** (Holland) was the senior winner at the FIPPA (Koudum) Open in 2016.

Mark Millar (Ireland) was tied tenth behind John Walsh at Tambre four years ago.

Galicia's **Juan Carlos Iglesias Surribas** was the runner-up in the 2014 Galicia Open. Juan Carlos played for Galicia in the 2012 and 2016 World Cups.

Another with past impressive form at Imjelt is **Frank Johnsen** (Norway) who scored three successive 50s to win the 2010 Norwegian Open. **Jan Andersen** closed with a level par 54 in that event seven years ago to place third on 156.

Frank Kristiansen (Norway) scored a 158 aggregate to garner the award of Best Senior at the 2010 Norwegian Open.

Roger Wernerson and **Helge Eggja** (2016 Norwegian Strokeplay champion) joined current Norwegian Strokeplay champion Frank Kristiansen in the Norway trio at the 2016 World Cup.

Harald Brinkmeyer played for Germany at Royal Meath in the 2012 World Cup.

Anders Christian Juel has played Pitch and Putt internationally for many years. He captained Norway at the 2007 and 2010 European Team Championships. He also played in 2014.

Franck Menard represented France at the 2016 World Cup in Andorra.

2015 Norwegian Strokeplay champion **Per Ove Langeland** represented Norway at the 2012 World Cup of Pitch and Putt in Royal Meath as did **Bernt Kristian Nerland**.

Declan McCarron (Ireland) was National Intermediate Strokeplay champion of Ireland in 2010.

Switzerland's **Claudio Naiaretti** and **Felix Eberle** both played in the 2016 World Cup in Andorra.

Other Norwegians who may fancy their chances are **Espen Bergmann** and **Finn Tore Tokle**, who both rank highly in the NPPF Order of Merit.

Ian Farrelly scored 145 over three rounds to win the 2011 European Strokeplay championship at Imjelt. John Crangle's final round 46 was the lowest 18-hole score. The winning ladies score was 177. Leading Norwegian was Frank Kristiansen on 156.