

## 2014 NZSGA International Seniors Tournament

The top men's trophy for the 32<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand International Seniors Golf Championship has been awarded, at the prize giving function last night, with the title going to New Caledonia. Olivier Peres, a member of the La Ouenghi Golf Club, currently the highest-ranking senior player in New Caledonia, took out the coveted Air New Zealand Trophy with an impressive win over the defending champion, Rod McBride (Port Kembla GC), 6/5. The 2014 Championship was played in a new format on multiple courses, seeded match play from round one. The tournament played two rounds on Taupo's Centennial course and two rounds on the shorter Tauhara course.

Peres was seeded 4<sup>th</sup> in the top division, meeting Bill Barber from Manawatu in the first round, which he secured 4/3. His next win was over Manor Park's Richard Gibbs 6/5, before he met one of the 'masters of the short game' as he acknowledged at the prize giving event, Peter Rankin, also a member of Manor Park. Rankin who was previously a member of Royal Wellington with a long history of representing his district, was the top seed going into the championship, but lost to Peres 4/2 in a close battle. Peres then met the tall Australian, McBride in what was billed the match of the week. Peres however secured the match convincingly, more than justifying his selection to the event from the French Golf Federation.

The tournament attracts players from all around the world with players normally entering under their 'own steam'. In the case of the 11 strong contingent from New Caledonia a number were funded by the federation, after qualifying events held in New Caledonia. Peres was the top qualifier in that team.

Accepting the award, Peres stated that he was extremely proud to take the title, representing New Caledonia, "I will be back in 2015", he said. The plate winner in the men's top division was Greg Cowie, from, Waiuku.

Miguel Sobrino, from Reefton GC, won the men's second division, competing for the DB Trophy in handicap match play, with the runner up being Ron Gold from Howick. Sobrino had won this final, 5/4. The plate was awarded to Ross Moreton from Boulcotts Farm.

Clarks Beach, Colin Bava won the Te Awamutu Trophy, in the men's 3<sup>rd</sup> division, in a close battle against Vice President of the New Zealand Senior Golfers Association, Keith Hickman, 1up. Hickman is a member of the Levin Golf Club. The plate was won by Manukau's Tim Reehal.

In the special men's Super Seniors Division, for players over 75, Gordon Taylor from the UK with a New Zealand membership at Whangaparaoa, won this division. Taylor had faced off in his final against Bill Baillie, from Maungakiekie, with a 3/2 win. Baillie is perhaps better known for his exploits on the athletic track. An Olympian, Baillie finished 6<sup>th</sup> on the 5000m track at the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo and still holds the national record for the 20000m run. In addition to his Olympics debut, he represented New Zealand at the 1954, 1958, 1962 and 1966 Commonwealth Games. The plate winner in the Super Seniors was Bill Platt, from Manor Park.

For the third year running the tournament included women's competition with the top division being won by Ann Hogg from Levin. Hogg had a good win over Beryl MacLeod from Sherwood Park, 7/6. Helen Beaurepaire, (Urenui GC) won the plate in this division.

Local Jill Lloyd, who is a member of the Wairakei Golf Club, won the second division 4/2 over Rosalie Groom, who is a member of the Howick Golf Club. Marilyn Christ from Australia's Townsville GC won the plate.

Competitors were also invited to compete in an optional stroke play 18 hole round at the nearby Turangi Golf Club.

Peter Rankin, while not able to get into the final of the match play competition took line honours with an impressive round of 71, one under his age during the mid-week Stroke competition. Best net in the men was awarded to Ray Howarth (Springfield) with a net 70, and Patrice Hasaani (New Caledonia) won the best stableford with 36 points.

Jill Blenkey from Australia's Newcastle had the best gross round in the women, 75 with Matamata's club member Chris MacKenzie winning the best net, with a 73. Sherwood Park member, Beryl MacLeod had the top stableford points in the women's division, 36 points.

The tournament has been managed by PaR nz Golfing Holidays for four years who announced **the event will return to the Taupo Golf Club in 2015**. "It is just a great option," said Tournament Director, Denise Langdon, from PaR nz Golfing Holidays. "The North Island's central location is a winner, Taupo Golf Club has two great courses, there are options for players to enjoy the world renown golf challenges of Wairakei and Kinloch while they are here, and there is just so much for players and partners to do outside of golf. We will be back in 2015".

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