



For immediate release

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STENSON AND HOWELL HONOUR THE ROYAL TROPHY

David Howell is convinced his Royal Trophy heroics will help him in his ambitious bid to reclaim a place in the top ten of the world rankings.

That is where Howell put himself after he followed up a glorious victory in the inaugural HSBC Champions event in 2005 – where he emerged triumphant after going toe-to-toe with Tiger Woods – by winning Europe’s showpiece tournament, the PGA Championship at Wentworth, a few months later.

Howell also made a triumphant Ryder Cup debut in 2006, and was a member of the European Team that won the first Royal Trophy in the same year, under the captaincy of the competition’s legendary founder, Seve Ballesteros.

The English star surprisingly managed only one more win in the next six years, before making up for a series of near-misses with a victory in another of Europe’s biggest tournaments, the 2013 Alfred Dunhill Links Championship at St. Andrews.

That proved Howell was on the way up again, and earned him a second Royal Trophy appearance at the Dragon Lake Golf Club in Guangzhou, China. And it proved a triumphant return, as he was the man who inspired Europe’s amazing singles session onslaught that earned them a dramatic victory.

Howell was three down with four holes to play against in-form Korean star H.S. Kim, but won every one of those closing holes to record an incredible one up victory. And his European teammates were clearly inspired by that turnaround, as they transformed a 7-3 deficit into an improbable 8 ½ - 7 ½ triumph.

Howell says his performance will also provide him with plenty of inspiration as he bids to continue his recent resurgence. He said: "I don’t think what I managed to achieve at the Royal Trophy really sunk in straight away, because you are more focused on the team performance, and it was great to be an important part of such a wonderful European fightback.

"But now that I’ve had time to reflect I feel very proud of what I managed to do in my singles match, because basically I was down and out before I turned things around.

"That is definitely something I will be able to tap into when I’m trying to close out a stroke play tournament. And even if you fall behind an opponent in the later stages of an event, you can tell yourself it’s never over until the final putt goes in. Knowing you can pull off the crucial shots when the pressure is really on is a great thing to be able to fall back on.

"Ninety per cent of this game is mental, and if you have something to call on in tight situations that will put you in a positive frame of mind it is a big advantage. As golfers we are all looking for positive vibes, and being able to draw on something as extraordinary as the climax to that tremendous Royal Trophy contest is definitely going to prove a big advantage.



"My career got right back on track in 2013, and I want to keep moving forward. And it would be nice to have another Royal Trophy at Dragon Lake to look forward to at the end of the 2014 season – I'd love to go back if I'm selected."

Howell was hugely impressed by the enormous stride the Royal Trophy has taken since he played in the first competition in 2006. He added: "The first match almost had a ceremonial feel to it as the first ever meeting between Asia and Europe, but with Seve so heavily involved we should have known it was going to develop into a no-holds-barred contest."

"The competition had clearly come on leaps and bounds in the seven years between my first and second appearances, and I've got no doubt it will continue to grow in prestige and importance. I have certainly enjoyed participating in it, and I would certainly recommend it to other players – but not too many of them, because I want to be involved again myself!"

Five-time European Team member at the Royal Trophy Henrik Stenson, who was unable to participate in the miraculous European victory at Dragon Lake Golf Club as a result of his extreme tournament schedule following his success at the Fedex Cup Series in the United States said: "I spoke to some of the players who were involved in that European victory, and the excitement in their voices and their descriptions of what a great venue and how well-organized everything was once again made me even more disappointed to have missed out."

"But I would love to be involved in the Royal Trophy again in the future. Everyone who knows me recognises that I love playing in team events - as well as my five Royal Trophy appearances I have played in two Ryder Cups and two Seve Trophy matches, and they have all been fantastic experiences."

"After being on the winning side in my first four appearances – and holing the winning putt twice – it did not feel nice being on the losing side for a change in 2012. I definitely do not want it to end like that, so yes, I'm sure you will see me back at the Royal Trophy looking for win number five before too long."

The eighth edition of the Royal Trophy will be held on 19-21 December 2014 at the Dragon Lake Golf Club in Guangzhou, China.

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The Royal Trophy – Europe vs Asia Golf Championship is the official and traditional competition played between the two continents. The seventh edition of the Championship was held on 20-22 December 2013 at Dragon Lake Golf Club in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in the People's Republic of China. The eighth edition of the Matches will be held on 19-21 December 2014 and will remain at the 54-hole Dragon Lake Golf Club. The Royal Trophy features Asia and Europe competing in a series of 16 foursomes, fourball and singles matches. The Royal Trophy Players' Committee is comprised of Sir Nick Faldo, Ian Woosnam OBE, José María Olazábal, Paul McGinley, Isao Aoki, Naomichi 'Joe' Ozaki and Jeev Milkha Singh.



For further information, please contact:

Doris Chang
Entertainment Group (Asia) Limited
Tel: (852) 2834 0060
Fax: (852) 2838 8593
Email: doris@eg-rt.com
Website: www.TheRoyalTrophy.com

Betty Cheung
Entertainment Group (Asia) Limited
Tel: (852) 2834 0060
Fax: (852) 2838 8593
Email: betty@eg-rt.com
Website: www.TheRoyalTrophy.com