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Battle for a Passport to Pravets Now On...Golfing Passport for the Juniors, Too!

The pursuit for a coveted **Passport to Pravets** is now underway in earnest at national PGAs across Europe as the list of qualifiers for the PGAs of Europe's 72-hole stroke-play championship begins to take shape with more scheduled for staging in the coming weeks.



Objective for Passport to Pravets seekers is a place in the **UNICREDIT PGA Professional Championship of Europe**, at the PRAVETS Golf & Spa, Bulgaria, on September 17-20, and the honour of representing their country in the bid for the individual European crown.

Some ten countries have already staged their qualifiers, or are about to – **Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Slovakia** – and soon the names of these early qualifiers will be announced as others jostle to join them for a shot at the European title currently held by Portugal's **Hugo Santos (pictured)**.

With more qualifiers emerging in the coming weeks it is a positive indication that the championship has already established itself as a 'must play' event for the elite of club and teaching professionals who include tournament play in their varied list of activities.

Past Champ Paul Wesselingh Shines...

One indelible sign of the quality of entry over the years of the championship's history can be found in the recent PGA Seniors Tour victory by **Paul Wesselingh**, who was one of the winners of the PGAs of Europe 72-hole stroke-play championship when it was staged for several years at Pevero on the island of Sardinia.



Wesselingh had already established himself firmly as one of the PGAs of Europe's most successful campaigners with the remarkable start to his European Seniors Tour career in having previously tied second and tied seventh in his early events.

Another past participant in the strokeplay championship is **Zeke Martinez**, the Italy-based Californian who recently won the PGAs of Europe-endorsed Aegean Airlines Pro-Am and who, like Wesselingh, is starting out on a European Seniors Tour career.

Pravets Golfing Passport for the Juniors, Too!

The incalculable benefit to its nation's golf engendered by the Pravets initiative is not confined to established players.



HUNDREDS OF BULGARIAN CHILDREN ARE BEING INTRODUCED TO THE SPORT IN THE PRAVETS JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AS A DIRECT OUTCOME OF THE ANNUAL STAGING OF THE CHAMPIONSHIP AT THE FABULOUS FACILITY NOT FAR FROM THE COUNTRY'S CAPITAL, SOFIA.

As an important side-effect of the collaboration between the Pravets Golf and Spa Resort and the PGAs of Europe, development funding has been provided to enable junior golf coaching to be embraced into the country's school curriculum and as an activity for children during the summer holidays.

Launched and underway already for 2012, and with planned growth for 2013, demand for the junior golf coaching has substantially exceeded expectations – and judging by reaction to it in the vicinity of the capital – is expected to spread throughout Bulgaria as boys and girls are bitten by the golf bug.

Described by Pravets as *'designed to grow golf from grass roots level and provide opportunities for children in areas where golf would not normally be accessible'* the programme is being presented in two phases, namely the Schools Programme and a Summer Development Programme.

"This possibility has become a reality through generous funding by the PGAs of Europe," Pravets add.

During April and May, in the schools programme, 180 children took part in the eighteen, one-hour introductory sessions for ten children each while the summer activities are open to all-comers up to the age of 18 and are proving a big attraction.



Having been widely publicised, inviting children to take part in golf coaching and activities at Pravets and with an additional incentive of fully-paid, one-year junior memberships and a set of golf clubs each, for the two most promising participants, children and parents have responded eagerly.

Much of this enthusiasm for golf in Bulgaria was inspired by the staging of inaugural **PGA Professional Championship of Europe** at Pravets last year, an event that prompted tremendous national interest at many levels.

"This is further evidence that tournament activity can act as a fantastic catalyst for the development of golf in showcasing the sport in emerging territories to politicians, media and the public at large" said Ian Randell, the PGAs of Europe chief executive.

"Our collaboration with Pravets, and the way in which it is developing, matches exactly so many of the core principles of our operation and acts as a great template for other venues and regions to follow".