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Upcoming ASEAN golfers given rare invite to Maybank Championship Malaysia

Tournament announces details of ASEAN and MENA professional player line up for 2016

29 January 2016 - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Maybank Championship Malaysia today announced the participation of four ASEAN professionals - George Gandranata (INA), Koh Dengshan (SIN), Michael Tran (VIE), Zaw Zaw Latt (MMR) – at this year’s Maybank Championship Malaysia. Previously announced players that will be competing this year include Louis Oosthuizen, Martin Kaymer, Danny Willet, Kiradech Aphibarnrat and Thongchai Jaidee.

The tournament also announced the participation of Thruston Lawrence from the Middle East North African Tour (MENA) and newly turned professional, Low Khai Jei of Malaysia at the inaugural golf tournament that will be held at the Royal Selangor Golf Club (RSGC) from 18th – 21st February 2016.

The Maybank Championship Malaysia in 2016 will be one of only six events at which the European Tour members will participate in the Asian region. It is also one of only four tournaments that are co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour in 2016. The event will see a field of 156 players from around the world compete for a USD 3 million prize purse.

“With today’s announcement, another component of the player field make up for the Maybank Championship Malaysia, falls into place. The tournament is one of the richest co-sanctioned tournaments in the ASEAN region and is an exciting opportunity and valuable platform for both established champions and rising stars to make their mark. Offering exposure, a priceless experience and world ranking points that contribute to both The Race To Dubai and The Asian Tour Order Of Merit; it is part of our continuing efforts to ensure

that professional golfers from the countries that we operate, especially in Malaysia and across ASEAN are afforded every opportunity to prove themselves as professionals and role models,” said Tan Sri Dato’ Megat Zaharuddin Megat Mohd Nor, Chairman of Maybank.

George Gandranata

George Gandranata started playing golf at the young age of 13 and hasn’t stopped. During his college years at the prestigious University of California, Berkeley, Gandranata won an Athletic Scholarship as a Division 1 golf player. He has also won numerous titles such as Freshman of the Year, 2-time MVP, 2-time All-Pac-10 and Pac-10 Post Graduate Scholarship. Gandranata turned professional in 2012 and has been honing his game through the Asian Development Tour (ADT), claiming silver and bronze medals in team and individual category respectively in the 2011 South East Asian Games.

Currently ranked 129 on the Asian Tour Order Of Merit, Gandranata has several professional victories under his belt, such as 2014 Camry Invitational Golf Tournament, 2014 PGTI IGT LotusLakes, 2014 PGTI-IGT Modern presented by Linc Group, and 2014 Juara Independence Day Golf, Indonesia, just to name a few.

“I am very honoured to be taking part in the Maybank Championship Malaysia. With it being a co-sanctioned event by both the Asian Tour and European Tour, I think it’s really a great opportunity for me. I am very happy to get into the tournament. Hopefully I can play well and make the event promoters feel that they made the right choice by inviting me to the championship. I’m thankful for this,” said George Gandranata.

Koh Dengshan

Currently ranked 104 on the Asian Tour Order of Merit, the Singapore Polytechnic graduate turned professional in 2011. During his time as an amateur, Koh won the 2008 Malaysian Amateur Open. Further enhancing his skills through the ADT, Koh has had an impressive performance such as tying 3rd at the 2013 PGM MIDF KLGCC Masters and carding a second-place finish at the 2014 PGM LADA Langkawi Championship.

“I am very thankful for the opportunity and look forward to playing in the Maybank Championship Malaysia. I haven’t played at the Royal Selangor Golf Club before but I have been playing a lot on the Asian Development Tour (ADT) in Malaysia over the past couple of years. I hope the experience will help me when I tee off for this prestigious championship. I am planning to head there earlier to practise and familiarise myself with the golf course. It’s one of the biggest events on the Asian Tour Schedule and definitely a very important tournament for me. Missing out on the Asian Tour Qualifying School recently was disappointing but I will try to get back onto the Asian Tour by playing well in all the Asian

Tour events that I can get into, such as the Maybank Championship Malaysia,” said Koh Dengshan.

Michael Tran

Tran is the first professional golfer in Vietnam to play on the Asian Tour. The lone flag-bearer from Vietnam started playing golf at age 13 and has won the 2008 Vietnam National Amateur Championship. A player on the ADT, Tran claimed his big breakthrough at the 2015 Ciputra Golfpreneur Tournament where he defeated Singapore’s Lam Chih-bing on the first playoff hole.

“I am looking forward to play in the Maybank Championship Malaysia. Winning on the ADT last year has been a great boost of confidence for me. The game’s feeling good at the moment and I hope to be able to play my best golf in Kuala Lumpur in February. Hopefully I can bring on my ‘A’ game over to that week and compete well against the top players from Asia and Europe. It’s my first time playing in a co-sanctioned event so I am really looking forward to it,” said Michael Tran.

Zaw Zaw Latt

Latt carded a second-finish last year at the Myanmar Golf Tour and this reaffirmed his place at the top of Myanmar Golf Tour’s Order Of Merit. Latt has won a total of six victories at Bagan and Mandalay with two runner-up positions in 2014. On top of that, Latt has tucked two back-to-back victories at Hantharwaddy GC in Bago and Defense Services GC in Yangon under his belt.

Thriston Lawrence

Lawrence is one of the brightest stars among South African golfers and made his professional debut at the Scottish Hydro Challenge in 2014. Lawrence has previously won the MENA Tour Order Of Merit for 2015. The Mpumalanga-born player was the first to lift the Lytham Trophy. Lawrence is also the youngest two-time reigning South Africa Amateur champion, the first in 36 years to do so.

Khai Jei Low

Malaysia's homegrown rising star Low has just turned professional in 2016. Before turning professional, Low, age 19, ranked 181 in the World Amateur Golf Ranking and has been consistently ranked number one Malaysian Amateur. Low carded his maiden win at the Professional Golf of Malaysia (PGM) Tour's Orna Closed Championship in August 2015. Low's maiden win boosted his confidence in leading a six-strong Malaysian line-up at the Asia Pacific amateur Championship (AAC) a month later.

Early in January 2016, Low, whilst still an amateur, made the final two days of the Asian Tour Qualifying School. Though he did not make this season's Asian Tour, the experience he gained would undoubtedly be invaluable for his profession in golf, especially now as a professional.

For further details on announced players, upcoming events and other information related to the Maybank Championship Malaysia please log on the www.maybankchampionship.com.my

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About Maybank – Humanising Financial Services

Maybank is among Asia's leading banking groups and South East Asia's fourth largest bank by assets. The Maybank Group has an international network of 2,400 offices in 20 countries namely Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong SAR & People's Republic of China, Bahrain, Uzbekistan, Myanmar, Laos, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, Mauritius, Great Britain and the United States of America. The Group offers an extensive range of products and services, which includes consumer and corporate banking, investment banking, Islamic banking, stock broking, insurance and takaful and asset management. It has some 46,000 employees serving more than 22 million customers worldwide. (www.maybank.com)

About GlobalOne

GlobalOne (Emerald Evolution Holdings Sdn Bhd) is an executive lifestyle sports promoter and we create sports event ownerships.

We specialise in providing the full spectrum in sponsorship event management and have an excellent track record in planning and delivering on PGA European Tour golf events for Malaysia (Maybank Malaysian Open), Singapore (Singapore Masters) and Indonesia (Indonesia Open) since 1999. We have strong relations with sports governing bodies, the media and commercial sponsors and technical partners to deliver on the bottom line.

We assist all our clients to create strategic, high-return, best practice sponsorship to provide a strong, unified vision, across departments and stakeholders, of the broad range of marketing and business objectives that can be achieved through this sponsorship. We also form and maintain strong relationship with players' managers to source the best players. GlobalOne has staged a highly successful and prestigious tournament in Asia – the Maybank Malaysian Open, (2006 – 2015) which is co-sanctioned by the European Tour and the Asian Tour providing the event with Official World Ranking status.

The European Tour

The European Tour is committed to celebrating the game of golf from the origins of the professional game, building a proud history of achievement, sportsmanship and integrity as well as showcasing our diverse global talent and rich landscapes. The European Tour's innovative approach enables us to embrace the world, combining championships of tradition with new tournaments in the cities and countries of the future. The European Tour International Schedule, which from 2009 has incorporated The Race to Dubai, is a thriving global brand which, in 2013, will feature a minimum of 45 tournaments spread across all five continents of the world; the European Challenge Tour focuses on the up and coming players of the future; while the European Senior Tour provides a new start for champions celebrating their 50th birthday. The European Tour's corporate identity features the iconic silhouette image of six-time Open Champion Harry Vardon who gives his name to The Harry Vardon Trophy, presented to the player who is crowned European Tour Number One and winner of The Race to Dubai at the end of the season.

Asian Tour

As the official sanctioning body for professional golf in Asia, the Asian Tour leads the development of golf across the region, enhancing the careers of its members while maintaining a commitment to the integrity of the game. The Asian Tour, through its membership of the International Federation of PGA Tours, is the only recognised pan-Asian professional golf tour in Asia. This unique feature positions the Asian Tour at the pinnacle of professional golf in Asia; providing its events with Official World Ranking status. Visit us at www.asiantour.com, www.facebook.com/asiantourgolf, www.twitter.com/asiantourgolf, www.youtube.com/theasiantour and www.weibo.com/asiantourgolf.