

August 17, 2024

## Special home victory: Kouwenaar wins Staan Open

**Westwoud, Netherlands** - Dutchman Koen Kouwenaar (-17) reaches the play-off at the Staan Open in the perfectly prepared Golfbaan Westwoud thanks to a final birdie. There he defeats Frenchman Mathieu Decottignies Lafon and celebrates his first title on the Pro Golf Tour. Tadeas Tetak and Clement Charmasson finish third.

The first victory on the Pro Golf Tour is always something special. But celebrating it at your home tournament could hardly be better. Dutchman Koen Kouwenaar enjoyed this home victory at the Staan Open. The local hero celebrated an impressive start-to-finish victory at the first tournament of the popular Dutch Swing. However, the competition at Golfbaan Westwoud did not make it easy for him. Kouwenaar had to go into extra time. A birdie on the last hole, a short par 4, was necessary to reach the play-off with the experienced Frenchman Mathieu Decottignies Lafon.

The 26-year-old Kouwenaar, in his first season on the Pro Golf Tour, faced Decottignies Lafon, six-time champion on the Pro Golf Tour. After the tee shots on 18, there was much to suggest that the 31-year-old Frenchman, who had already won the Pro Golf Tour Order of Merit in 2021, would win another title. Decottignies Lafon had a putt for eagle, while Kouwenaar's tee shot was in the green bunker. "Mathieu had a great tee shot, but probably wanted to hole the putt too much and putted it a little too far," said Kouwenaar, describing what happened on the 18th. The Dutchman holed his three-meter putt for birdie and his rival had to settle for second place after a three-putt.

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"I'm very relieved because I showed good golf in the moments I needed it," said a happy winner who had led from day one. "The first round was very good." Kouwenaar only needed 64 strokes (-7) in round one. He completed his start-to-finish victory thanks to rounds of 67 and 65 strokes. "I'm very happy because I've worked very hard and now it's paid off." By hard work, Kouwenaar was referring less to the many sessions on the driving range. He no longer hits 1,000 balls a day, as he did five years ago. "The mental aspect is the only reason why things are going better again. It's not about technique. If you manage to stay in the moment, then it works itself out."

Kouwenaar was once one of the best amateurs in the world. He then made his breakthrough at professional level in 2022 and won in his first year on the Alps Tour. The following year on the Challenge Tour, however, the Dutch talent fell into a slump. "My body just didn't feel as supple anymore." Kouwenaar blamed the crisis in form "100 percent" on the mental aspect. "It's easy with confidence. But most of the time you're not confident." He presented himself completely differently at the Staan Open in front of his home crowd. "The way I kept myself mentally under control this week was very pleasing."

He had no shortage of support anyway. "It was great. I knew a few people who were here. My girlfriend was there and supported me. That was really nice. My brother and father also came along." But Kouwenaar doesn't have much time to celebrate. The next Dutch Swing tournament is already on the program on 21 August with the Mono



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Gelpenberg Open. Whoever wins the special classification introduced especially for the three tournaments in the Netherlands will receive a starting place at the KLM Open 2025 on the DP World Tour.



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