

26 September 2018

Pro Golf Tour Finale: Jonas Kölbing wins, Craig Howie takes the overall victory

Jonas Kölbing is the major winner of the Pro Golf Tour 2018 final tournament. At the Castanea Resort Championship in Adendorf, Lower Saxony, the 33-year-old playing professional from Starnberg GC celebrated not only his first win on the Pro Golf Tour but, with this victory, also made it to 2nd place in the season ranking, thus achieving a flawless promotion to the Challenge Tour 2019. After 20 tournaments and 23,481.21 points, the Pro Golf Tour 2018 overall winner's cup was won by Scotsman Craig Howie who, with this, also advances to the next league of tour players alongside Kölbing. What's more, Frenchman Mathieu Decottignies Lafon, Scotsman Chris Robb and Pole Mateusz Gradecki, who finish the season in places 3 to 5, are also allowed to be promoted.

Adendorf – “You have to win – and then you do. How cool is that?!” Even he himself couldn't believe what he'd just managed to achieve: Jonas Kölbing started the final tournament of the 2018 season as number 7 in the Pro Golf Tour Order of Merit, opened the competition with a round of 70 and, on the second day, played his way to the top of the leader board with an excellent 65 strokes. The starting position was clear: if he still wanted to achieve his big goal—finishing in the Top 5 of the final Pro Golf Tour Order of Merit and, in doing so, being promoted to the European Challenge Tour 2019—then he also had to take a lead, even after 54 holes, and win the tournament. Kölbing has been playing on the full Pro Golf Tour since 2016 and has often come close to victory. Kölbing: “In the past years, there were five occasions where, upon teeing off on the 18th, I could have won, but five times I messed it up.” Not this time. He made up for his bad start to the final round, with bogeys at holes 1 and 3, with birdies on the 4th and 6th greens. His score of 7 on No. 7 then only served to motivate him even more: “My ranking really took a hit after the triple bogey on the 7th. And that's exactly what I've been training for all season: in reality, my strokes are always good, and I know every stroke in golf. But I often wasn't steady enough mentally. After failures, I felt sorry for myself, put many things down to luck or misfortune, and looked for excuses. This time, I said to myself: you still have so many opportunities!”

And he exploited these opportunities consistently: Kölbing put his name back at the top of the leader board with birdies on the 9th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 16th holes and, in the end, also won the direct dual against his fellow player, Julien De Poyen — who also would have needed to win the tournament to be promoted—with a final round of 71. With a total of 10 under par, he also came out ahead of Benjamin Rusch (70+67+71/-8), who took second place in Adendorf. The Swiss golfer would also have needed to win the tournament to gain his ticket to the Challenge Tour. “I was aware of how close it was but, even between me and Julien, today was no ‘man-on-man’ tournament,” said Kölbing. “The conditions were so difficult, the wind so brutal, that today was purely a dual with the golf course.” A dual which the golfer from Weilheim won in a very impressive manner.

Impressive is probably also a fitting description for the season played by Craig Howie, the overall winner of the Pro Golf Tour 2018. For the 24-year-old Scot from Peebles—a small town south of Edinburgh with 9000 inhabitants, the centre of which is formed by Peebles Golf Club—this was his first ever year playing as a professional. He turned



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professional last autumn with a handicap of +4.6, and not only qualified for one of the five promotion places for the Challenge Tour 2019 at the first attempt, but also effortlessly won himself the large overall winner's cup for the Pro Golf Tour Order of Merit at the end of the tournament. Here, Howie's secret to success is consistency. The champion may "only" have notched up one victory this season, which he achieved at the beginning of August at the Leipziger Golf Open but, having said this, he made the cut in 18 of the 19 tournaments in which he played this year and collected points. He entered into the Top 10 an additional seven times and proved himself through his good performance during the entire year. It was only during the NEW GOLF CLUB Matchplay Championship that he was forced to withdraw early due to injury, but his reserve of points was large enough to keep him ahead until the end of the competition and for him to proudly lift the Pro Golf Tour winner's cup.

"I'm delighted to finish the year as number one. It was my aim to get into the Top 5 and be promoted. It's very satisfying that I managed to achieve this as early as in my first season as a professional," said Howie. "The Pro Golf Tour was a fantastic platform for me to get into the Challenge Tour. The tournaments are really well organised and, likewise, the standard of play is as consistently high as the quality of the venues. I now feel well-prepared for the Challenge Tour."

There, Frenchman Mathieu Decottignies Lafon, Chris Robb from Scotland and Pole Mateusz Gradecki, who finish the season in places 3 to 5 and who, in doing so, have also ensured promotion, will also be trying their luck in 2019. Gradecki secured himself 5th position with a strong final round in Adendorf as he achieved the best result of the day by a clear margin with 4 under par. It was only as a result of this that he ultimately remained ahead of Benjamin Rusch from Switzerland in the ranking, who finishes the season in 6th place in the Order of Merit and who must now place his hopes on the Qualifying School of the European Tour. Should one of his colleagues from the Pro Golf Tour who placed above him make the cut to the final stage here, Rusch—who is still in the Q School race himself—would be the first successor.

Detailed information surrounding the final of the Pro Golf Tour is listed at www.pro-golf-tour.com. What's more, photo galleries and video interviews of the winners are available on the Pro Golf Tour Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PGA.progolftour>.

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Castanea Resort Championship 2018

Pro Golf Tour tournament rankings, 24th – 26th September 2018, Castanea Golf Resort, Adendorf

Pos.	Player	Country	Par	R1	R2	R3	Total	Prize Money	Result
1	Jonas Kölbing	GER	-10	70	65	71	206	€7,800.00	7,800.00
2	Benjamin Rusch	SUI	-8	70	67	71	208	€4,680.00	4,680.00
T3	Allen John (Amateur)	GER	-6	73	66	71	210	—	2,522.00
T3	Maximilian Walz	GER	-6	70	68	72	210	€2,730.00	2,522.00
T3	Julien De Poyen	FRA	-6	68	67	75	210	€2,730.00	2,522.00
T6	Mathieu Decottignies Lafon	FRA	-5	73	65	73	211	€1,892.80	1,690.00
T6	Franck Daux	FRA	-5	71	66	74	211	€1,892.80	1,690.00
T6	Ross Cameron	SCO	-5	69	70	72	211	€1,892.80	1,690.00
T9	Maximilian Laier	GER	-4	76	65	71	212	€1,352.00	1,222.00
T9	Leonhard Astl	AUT	-4	68	67	77	212	€1,352.00	1,222.00
T9	Gregory Wiggins	ENG	-4	66	69	77	212	€1,352.00	1,222.00
12	Daniel Wünsche	GER	-3	70	71	72	213	€1,107.60	998.40

All the tournament results are listed at www.progolf-tour.de.

Pro Golf Tour Order of Merit – Final Order of Merit for the 2018 Season

Final results after the Castanea Resort Championship 2018 in Adendorf, the 20th tournament of 20.

Pos.	Player	Country	Result
1	Craig Howie	Scotland	23,481.21
2	Jonas Kölbing	Germany	22,236.29
3	Mathieu Decottignies Lafon	France	20,815.76
4	Chris Robb	Scotland	18,942.40
5	Mateusz Gradecki	Poland	18,368.81
EUROPEAN CHALLENGE TOUR 2019			
6	Benjamin Rusch	Switzerland	17,815.61
7	Hinrich Arkenau	Germany	17,027.82
8	Ondrej Lieser	Czech Republic	15,719.32
9	Julien De Poyen	France	14,649.46
10	Christopher Maclean	Scotland	12,667.39
11	Allen John (Amateur)	Germany	12,328.74
12	Franck Daux	France	12,275.81
13	Antoine Schwartz	France	11,978.53
14	Nicolas Maheut	France	11,942.21
15	Max Albertus	Netherlands	10,874.90
16	Michael Hirmer (Amateur)	Germany	10,744.30
17	Richard Jouven	France	10,258.63
18	Luca Galliano	Switzerland	10,199.57
19	Liam Johnston	Scotland	9,988.50
20	Max Kramer	Germany	9,939.04
21	Tomas Gouveia	Portugal	9,175.68
22	Maximilian Laier	Germany	8,927.95
23	Ross Cameron	Scotland	8,809.80
24	David Heinzinger	Germany	8,645.68
25	Leonhard Astl	Austria	8,496.06
26	Daniel Wünsche	Germany	8,196.73
27	Fabian Becker	Germany	7,930.73
28	Stanislas Gautier	France	7,888.39
29	Moritz Lampert	Germany	7,646.67
30	Maximilian Walz	Germany	7,626.70

All information is supplied without guarantee. The complete Order of Merit is listed at www.progolf-tour.de.

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