



## 2009 LOUGH ERNE CHALLENGE

**April 2009:** Ireland's magnificent heroes Padraig Harrington and Rory McIlroy who compete in the US Masters this week are set to make golfing history this Summer when they play their first ever professional event in Northern Ireland to celebrate the opening of The Faldo Championship Course near Enniskillen.

The 'Duel on The Lough' challenge match will be played on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July over the newest golfing masterpiece by six times major champion Nick Faldo and will attract 4,000 fans and be screened on worldwide television.

The special appearance of Rory, hailed as a better striker of the golf ball than Tiger Woods at the same age, marks a poignant moment in the 19-year-old prodigy's career because he was immensely encouraged in his early days by Jim Treacy, owner of Lough Erne Golf Resort and is now its official representative at golf tournaments around the world.

And this week McIlroy makes his debut in the US Masters "It's my second trip to Augusta but first Masters week so it's a huge thrill to be here and I,m playing pretty well he commented".

Rory's return to Lough Erne this Summer reveals another intriguing connection with a mentor from those early amateur days because he will be testing his skills on the course fashioned by Nick Faldo who recognised the younger man's enormous talent when he won the 2004 Faldo Series event when he was just 14 years old. Thereafter he received invaluable personal coaching and advice from the superstar.

The friendly showdown between Padraig and Rory, great golfers as well as friends, will provide a fascinating and thrilling display for fans while raising funds for 12 charities in the Enniskillen and wider Fermanagh area. And while Padraig, ranked as one of the best golfers in the world with three major titles to his credit, will take the encounter with his young rival extremely seriously, there will be an element of fun to the occasion.

The Fifth hole will be laid out like a dartboard with each ring worth a specific sum of money. Each player will hit six balls to the target and wherever they land on the "board" will earn the appropriate amount for each of the 12 charities.



If either player holes-in-one during these attempts, then Lough Erne resort will donate \$1million to the charity.

The eighteen hole event match will follow the strokeplay format with each hole worth a specific sum. Whoever wins the hole takes the money. If the hole is halved the money is added to the next one and so on.

Rory, who won the Dubai Classic early in the 2009 season to earn his place in the top echelons of the international game, said: "I am looking forward to playing Lough Erne and enjoying the tussle with Padraig particularly as the event is aimed to raise money for so many good causes."

The good news for golfing tourists is that they can now book online to play the championship course after its official opening and take advantage of the superb facilities at the luxurious hotel and lakeside lodges.

Lough Erne Resort is located in the Gateway to North West Ireland with flight connections from Dublin, Belfast or Sligo as well as a ferry service from Holyhead or Stranraer to Dublin, Larne or Belfast.

#### **About Lough Erne Golf Resort**

Lough Erne Golf Resort opened in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, in October 2007. It is set on a 600 acre private peninsula nestled in between Lower Lough Erne and Castle Hume Lough. The privately-owned hotel has 120 guestrooms including 25 two and three bedroom Luxury Lakeside Lodges which offer private, fully serviced accommodation. Lough Erne Golf Resort offers The Thai Spa, The Catalina Restaurant for *à la carte* dining, The Blaney Bar and The Grazing Menu and The Garden Hall for afternoon teas. It offers world class facilities for private meetings and events. In summer 2009 Lough Erne Golf Resort will have the use of two 18-hole championship golf courses with the opening The Faldo Championship Course. Coinciding with this exciting launch, The Halfway House & Seafood Experience, a 34 seat dining experience overlooking lower Lough Erne and The Loughside Clubhouse with restaurant and bar will officially open. The Castle Hume Championship Golf Course is already open. Lough Erne Golf Resort is located just five minutes from Enniskillen (St Angelo) private airport. It is also easily accessible from Belfast International, Belfast City and City of Derry airports. All tills at Lough Erne Golf Resort accept Euro currency.



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## HARRINGTON AND MCILROY IN 'DUEL ON THE LOUGH'

### **Open Champion and New Golfing Sensation to Meet in Lough Erne Challenge**



Ireland's newest golf resort – Lough Erne – is to host a special event featuring Ireland's greatest ever golfer, three times Major Champion, Padraig Harrington and 19 year old Belfast man, Rory McIlroy who has taken the world of professional golf by storm. The inaugural Lough Erne Challenge was announced today (Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup>) at Lough Erne in

Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, by the Resort's owner, Jim Treacy.

The Lough Erne Challenge is a one day event to be staged on Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be a stroke play "head to head" between McIlroy, who is attached to Lough Erne and Harrington who, the previous week, will have attempted to secure a hat-trick of Open Championships at Turnberry in Scotland. A fund of \$300,000 will add to the competition between the established figure of Harrington and McIlroy who is widely recognised as the brightest talent to emerge in world golf since Tiger Woods. A limit of 4,000 tickets has been set for the event.

Jim Treacy said it was important that from the outset Lough Erne's qualities would be tested by the world's best. *"The fact that two of the most important and exciting figures in world golf are Irish and both of them are in the world's top 20 made it compelling to pit them against each other in this special event. We believe all golf fans and those with even a passing interest in the game will be attracted to the idea of seeing Padraig and Rory do battle."*



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*Northern Ireland golf fans in particular have been starved of this kind of opportunity for too long and we look forward to welcoming them to Lough Erne in July"*

The announcement was welcomed by Tourism Minister Arlene Foster. The Minister said: *"The development of the Lough Erne Resort is a source of great pride to all of us who come from the area. It is a striking example of what can be achieved with foresight and courage and to have an AA 5 Star Resort in Enniskillen is a huge benefit, not only to the local economy but to the whole economy of Northern Ireland.*

*"The establishment of this new event is further evidence of the confidence in the future of Northern Ireland tourism. Pádraig Harrington and Rory McIlroy's participation means the Lough Erne Challenge will generate significant television exposure in critical markets in Europe and across North America, putting Northern Ireland on the international map as a must visit destination for tourists and business travellers. Promoting the Lakelands area and surrounding region represents a great opportunity for the whole Northern Ireland tourism industry."*

The Lough Erne Championship course was designed by the legendary Nick Faldo. Many informed golf sources are predicting that it will quickly come to be recognised as one of the great lakeside courses in world golf. Faldo said it was exciting that his lakeside creation would be tested by two of the game's greatest exponents. *"Pádraig and Rory are among the very best in the world right now and they have massive global reputations which will help attract interest in Lough Erne and Fermanagh as a whole. I believe the golf course will emerge to be a top golfing location but it is important to emphasise the extraordinary beauty of the whole area and staging this event should help to bring this message to a wider audience. I look forward to officially opening the golf course."*

Speaking at the launch, Rory McIlroy said the event would be an important part of his summer. *"The opportunity to play against Pádraig on what is in some ways my home turf is exciting.*



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*He is a fantastic player – a real role model for someone like me starting out on my career. Jim Treacy has been a real support to me and I have watched the development of the Championship course at Lough Erne with great interest. It is spectacular. To play Padraig in the inaugural event will be very special."*

Padraig Harrington joined the press conference live by satellite link from Bay Hill, Orlando where he is preparing for the Arnold Palmer Invitational. He commented on the importance of the all island dimension to Irish golf and the particular value of playing at an exciting new venue in a corner of Ireland that has so much to offer. *"North West Ireland is a beautiful part of the world and while I don't know the Enniskillen area at all and have not yet seen the Lough Erne Golf Resort I am assured by those who have that it will be a wonderful addition to Ireland's golfing infrastructure. It is good to be promoting this part of the island through the establishment of this event and I hope the North's golf fans will come out to see myself and Rory compete on the shores of the Lough."*

The event will be filmed by European Tour Productions with delayed broadcast commitments already established in at least 13 countries including, Britain, the United States, South Africa and Germany.

The players will be playing for the Belleek Trophy which has been specially commissioned by Jim Treacy and will be manufactured in the world famous Belleek Pottery in Co. Fermanagh. *"The Trophy will be manufactured by one of Co. Fermanagh's longest established and most successful businesses giving further emphasis to what this County has to offer. We hope that this will become a biennial event played in different formats but always with some of the world's top golfers playing on what we hope will become one of the world's great lakeside championship courses. I am extremely excited that two of our own, Padraig and Rory are doing Lough Erne the honour of competing in its inaugural staging."*



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The event is being promoted and managed on behalf of Lough Erne Golf Resort by PLATINUM ONE Limited. **Further details on the event are being finalised and will be announced in the weeks ahead.**

**Ends**

**Further Information:**

**Johnny O'Shea, PLATINUM ONE - +353 87 6750059**

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**Tickets are now available to purchase online at**

[www.loughernegolfresort.com](http://www.loughernegolfresort.com)

Individual ticket £40

Family ticket (2 Adults & 2 Children U16 yrs) £100

On site catering facilities will be available at the grounds of Castle Hume Golf Course; come early & join in the atmosphere of the Lough Erne Challenge 'Duel on the Lough', what promises to be one of Ireland's best Golfing Events.

For Corporate Hospitality packages please contact our Events Team on +44 (0)28 6632 3230 or email [events@loughernegolfresort.com](mailto:events@loughernegolfresort.com)

**The Lough Erne Challenge Accomodation Package - from £469.50 Per Person**

Two Night Stay in a Lakeview Room

Full Irish Breakfast each morning

Dinner on your first night in The Catalina Restaurant

A VIP pass for The Lough Erne Challenge event including a 3 course Lunch on July 22nd

A Lough Erne Challenge gift

18 Holes of Golf for two on The Faldo Championship Course on the morning of July 23rd

Use of The Thermal Suite and Infinity Pool

The Collop Walk, located within the grounds of the Resort

Description : *Especially for all Golfing fanatics. Spend this very Special event with us, your own Haven right in the midst of all the golfing action*

Min Stay : 2

Please contact our Events Team to Book your Corporate Hospitality Package +44 (0)28 6632 3230 or email [events@loughernegolfresort.com](mailto:events@loughernegolfresort.com)



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**PADRAIG HARRINGTON**

Padraig Harrington is one of the world's top golfers. Following a very successful amateur career, including winning the Walker Cup in 1995 at Royal Porthcawl in one of his three Walker Cup appearances, he turned professional in September 1995.

Padraig made a great start to his professional career with a run of top 10 finishes and that all important maiden tour victory at the Spanish Open. Further top ten finishes saw him finish 11th in the Order of Merit for the year and secured him places in the Irish Dunhill Cup and World Cup teams. Such achievements were incredible in his first year as a professional.

A 5th place finish at the Open Championship in 1997 and 6 top ten finishes including second place at the Volvo Masters, saw Padraig climb to 8th position in the 1997 Order of Merit. He was once again selected for the Irish World Cup and Dunhill Cup teams and partnered Paul McGinley to victory in the World Cup, the nation's first for 39 years.

1999 saw Padraig fulfill one of his career ambitions - representing Europe in the Ryder Cup. He showed enormous resolve to finish in second position in each of the last two qualifying tournaments to secure a spot in the team. Padraig began 2000 by ending his run of nine runner-up spots since his first European Tour win, to claim his second title at the Brazil Sao Paulo 500 Years Open. Padraig finished the year by capturing the BBVA Turespana Masters de Madrid for his second victory of the year.

The 2001 season was definitely one of Padraig's best; which included finishing runner up on seven occasions and a dramatic win at the season ending Volvo Masters in Jerez.

In 2002, Padraig finished 5th at both the Masters and The Open and 8th at the US Open. Following on from a highly successful Ryder Cup, he proceeded to win the prestigious Dunhill Links Championship at St Andrews and ultimately finish second on the European Volvo Order of Merit. Padraig topped off a superb year by beating Tiger Woods in the final round of his own event, the Target World Challenge.

Harrington won twice more on the European Tour in 2003, at the BMW Asian Open and the prestigious Deutsche Bank SAP Open and he won again in Asia at the Omega Hong Kong Open in the early part of the 2004 Season.

A run of impressive performances in the United States was backed up on his return to Europe by victory at the 2004 German Masters. Harrington was also an inspirational member of the record breaking European team at the Ryder Cup that September.



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In 2005 Padraig moved up another level in the world game with 2 victories on the PGA Tour, winning at The Honda Classic in Florida and then claiming the Barclays Classic in New York

Padraig's 2006 season started in America where he strongly contended at the US Open, before also finishing 5th and followed that with a second place finish the following week at the Booz-Allen Classic. Further second place finishes at the French Open and BMW International events secured Padraig's fourth Ryder Cup appearance at The K Club. An impressive win at the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship set up the European Tour Order of Merit title, which was clinched in great style with a second place at the Volvo Masters. He then beat Tiger Woods in a play-off for the Dunlop Phoenix event in Japan. Padraig had by then established himself as one of the world's top players.

Despite having gained the European number one spot, there was plenty more to come from this popular Irishman at the beginning of 2007. He had a top 10 finish at the Masters and then became the first Irishman to win his national title for 25 years, before then becoming the first European to win a Major since 1999, when he won the 2007 Open Championship at Carnoustie after a dramatic last day. Despite visiting the water twice on the 72nd hole, Padraig shot a round of 67 to earn a place in the play-off with Sergio Garcia. Four holes later he deservedly became Champion Golfer of the Year.

2008 has been another unbelievable year for Padraig with some excellent performances on the European and PGA Tour. He finished third at the Northern Trust Open in California, and fourth at both the Zurich Classic of New Orleans and the Stanford St Jude Championship, together with a credible fifth place finish at the Masters. However, with a focus on the Major Championships, in July he made an incredible defence of his Open Championship title at Royal Birkdale, becoming the first European to successfully defend the Open title since James Braid in 1906. Three weeks later, Padraig went over to the US and won the PGA Championship at Oakland Hills, Michigan, in dramatic style, making him the first Irishman to win the event, the first European since 1930 and the first European to win back-to-back Major titles. Padraig was nominated as the 2008 European Tour, PGA Tour and PGA of America player of the year.



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**Representative Honours:**

Dunhill Cup: 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000

World Cup: 1996, 1997 (winning team), 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

Ryder Cup: 1999, 2002 (winning team), 2004 (winning team), 2006 (winning team)

Seve Trophy: 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005

**Individual Honours:**

1996            1st    Spanish Open

1998            1st    Irish PGA Championship

2000            1st    Brazil Sao Paulo 500 Years

                  1st    BBVA Open Turespana Masters de Madrid

2001            1st    Volvo Masters

2002            1st    Dunhill Links Championship

                  1st    Target World Challenge

2003            1st    BMW Asian Open

                  1st    Deutsche Bank – SAP Open

                  1st    Omega Hong Kong Open

2004	1st	Linde German Masters
2005	1st 1st	Honda Classic Barclays Classic
2006	1st 1st 1st	Alfred Dunhill Championship European Tour Order of Merit Dunlop Phoenix, Japan
2007	1st  <b>1st</b>	Irish Open  <b>Open Championship</b>
2008	3rd 4th 4th 5th  <b>1st</b>  <b>1st</b>	Northern Trust Open Zurich Classic of New Orleans Stanford St. Jude Championship The Masters  <b>Open Championship</b>  <b>USPGA Championship</b>
2009	T5th	Abu Dhabi Golf Championship



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### **RORY MCILROY**

Teen prodigy Rory McIlroy has set the European Tour alight since turning pro on 18th September 2007. Hard-hitting Rory was always destined to become a professional golfer since the moment he recorded a 40-yard drive aged just two-years-old. His first hole in one came when he was just nine and he played in his first professional European Tour event as a 16-year-old in 2005 at The Forest of Arden.

His amazing amateur career saw him conquer Ireland and Europe, before becoming just the second person to top the World Amateur Rankings in 2007.

Rory represented Europe in the winning Junior Ryder Cup team in 2004, before becoming the youngest winner of the prestigious West of Ireland and Irish Close Championships in 2005. The following year he successfully retained both Irish amateur titles and in August 2006 he won the European Amateur Championship

His amazing amateur career saw him conquer Ireland and Europe, before becoming just the second person to top the World Amateur Rankings in 2007. Rory represented Europe in the winning Junior Ryder Cup team in 2004, before becoming the youngest winner of the prestigious West of Ireland and Irish Close Championships in 2005. The following year he successfully retained both Irish amateur titles and in August 2006 he won the European Amateur Championship.

Rory shot into the public eye with his superb opening three-under-par 68 in the 2007 Open Championship at Carnoustie, the only bogey-free round of the day. He went on to tie for 42nd position and accept the Silver Medal as leading amateur.

Rory went on to make the cut in his first professional event at the Quinn Direct British Masters, and finished third in his second professional event, the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship. These successes earned the golfing sensation enough money to virtually assure his place in the top 115.

Despite high expectations, Rory keeps a cool head on his young shoulders and lets his golf do the talking. In 2008 Rory exceeded his expectations by making it to the Volvo Masters at Valderrama and entering the elite of the top 100 in the Official World Golf Rankings. At the beginning of the 2009 season Rory was beaten in a play-off for the UBS Hong Kong Open title - this performance elevated him into the top 50 in the Official World Golf Rankings which has assured him a coveted place in the 2009 Masters Tournament at Augusta in April.

Rory's maiden victory came in the 2009 Dubai Desert Classic where he endured a nail-biting final hole and ultimately beat Justin Rose to the title by one shot.



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### FACTS AND FIGURES

Currently 17<sup>th</sup> in the Official World Golf Ranking.

Will be the first teenager this century to play in the Masters next month in Augusta – Rory is 20 in May.

Performed fantastically well in his first three events in America in early 2009, finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in the WGC-Accenture Match Play, 13<sup>th</sup> in the Honda Classic and 20<sup>th</sup> in the WGC-CA Championship.

Winner of the Dubai Desert Classic in February 2009 at just 19 years and 273 days old – the sixth youngest winner in European Tour history.

At the end of 2008 was the youngest player in the top-50 of the Official World Golf Ranking.

Prior to winning the Dubai Desert Classic had two near misses at the Omega European Masters and Hong Kong Open, where he lost in play-offs at the back end of 2008.

Finished the 2008 European Tour season in 36<sup>th</sup> place with €696,335.

Turned professional at the British Masters in September 2007, where he made the cut.

Secured his full 2008 European Tour playing rights in only his second professional tournament when finishing third in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.

Shot to prominence at the Open Championship in 2007 at Carnoustie where his opening three-under par round of 69 was the only bogey-free round of the day. Rory won the Silver Medal for Low Amateur at the end of the four days.

Prior to turning professional was the World's Number One Amateur with a handicap of +6.

Shot course record 61 at Royal Portrush in 2005.

Was the youngest winner of the West of Ireland and Irish Close Amateur Championships in 2005.

In 2006 retained both the aforementioned amateur titles and added the European Amateur.

Represented Europe in the victorious Junior Ryder Cup Team in 2004.



## THE FACTS

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**Owners:** Jim and Eileen Treacy.

**Director of Golf:** Andrew Campbell (MG., CGCS)

[acampbell@loughernegolfresort.com](mailto:acampbell@loughernegolfresort.com)

**Courses:** The Faldo Championship Course – opening July 2009

Castle Hume by various designers - opened 1992

### Course

**Measurements:** The Faldo Championship Course – 7,621 yards – Par 72.

Castle Hume Championship Course – 6,200 yards – Par 70.

### Lough Erne

**Architect:** The Faldo Championship Course has been designed by Nick Faldo, Europe's greatest golfer who amassed 42 titles during his playing career including six major championships. He still holds the record of being the leading points scorer for Europe in the Ryder Cup some 11 years after his last appearance. This year he will Captain the European Ryder Cup Team.

**Construction:** Work commenced on The Faldo Championship Course in Spring 2006 and the course is scheduled to officially open in the Summer of 2009. Tees and Green are built to USGA specifications and there is a fully automatic irrigation system to greens, tees, approaches and surrounds including the mown roughs.

**Course Location:** Located on the shores of Lough Erne in the county of Fermanagh.

3 miles west of the historic town of Enniskillen. Set on a peninsular between Castle Hume lough and Lower Lough Erne the layout has no less than 14 holes with views of the water.

**Facilities:** Lough Erne is fully cart pathed to enable year-round play. Fleet of Golf Buggies. Extensive practice facilities including driving range short game area, putting green and mini Himalayas.

#### **Membership**

**Options:** Lough Erne Members Club. (Golf Membership only)

Property owning options all available at various prices.

#### **Lough Erne**

**Golf Shop:** A well appointed open plan Golf Shop with a large range of both men's and ladies clothing and golf accessories including own label Lough Erne Golf Resort merchandise. Clubs, golf shoes and buggies are available for hire.

Ends

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