

# SPEECH

for the Managing Director of a nationwide business  
sponsoring a golf tournament for the first time

*(specific references identifying the client have been removed)*

Ladies and gentlemen ...

It was Gary Player who once said that golf asks something of a player. It makes them loathe mediocrity. It seems to say: 'If you are going to keep company with me, then don't embarrass me'.

Well it's probably safe to say that there will be no mediocrity here over the next four days – and no embarrassment ... at least not a lot.

The players are top drawer. The club has firmly established itself on the British circuit within a decade. And the PGA is the oldest and best in the world. In fact the only fresh-faced addition to this tournament is our company.

Needless to say it's a privilege to be involved in this European Challenge Tour.

Was it really way back in February that the schedule began in Kenya and rolled through an A to Z of nearly two dozen countries from Austria to Zambia – from the Moroccan Classic to the Russian Open.

Now it's our turn with a golf tournament that sits alongside some of Merseyside's proudest sporting achievements.

For this is the area that produced the youngest ever English World Cup Player in Liverpool's Michael Owen.

It produced Ian Botham - who was born at Heswall on the Wirral ...

... world Light Heavyweight Champion John Conteh from Kirkby ...

... six-times world motorcycle champion Geoff Duke, from St Helens ...

... three times Grand National winner Red Rum ...

... and Charlotte Dod.

Charlotte Dod? That's another Wirral legend who almost invented the term "all rounder".

Lottie won the Wimbledon Ladies title five times before taking the British Ladies Golf Championship in 1904 and then picking up an Olympic Silver medal for Archery. Oh ... and she also played hockey for England.

So this is Merseyside ... the area that welcomes back a challenge tournament with which we are now proud to be linked.

It was less than ten years ago this golf club emerged from marshland to become one of the north's most picturesque parkland courses where even the 11 lakes manage to enhance the views without getting in the way of play.

The championship tees are over 7,000 staggering yards and the course records are impressive too – 64 for a professional and 72 for an amateur.

That's what our 156 golfers are chasing over the next four days – as well as the £75,000 prizemoney.

And I'm glad that we are associated with a tournament that provides emerging young quality golfers with such an established platform and proving ground to become world-class professionals.

English players - Warren Bennett and Mark Foster - have taken the championship title twice in the last five years – and perhaps one of the north's fastest rising stars Neil Price can become the third ... and claim the championship for Merseyside at the same time! That sounds like a piece of recruitment even we would be proud of.

I'm glad we found the European Challenge Tour. I'm pleased to be here and I look forward to a long association.

My thanks to the PGA, to the players, to our celebrity guests who have given us such quality golf and entertainment today ... and to Sky TV.

I'll leave the last word to golfer Gene Littler, who said that Golf is not a game of great shots. It's a game of the most misses. The people who win are the ones who make the smallest mistakes."

Good luck ... and thank you.