

Azores Senior Open

Batalha Golf Course, Azores
Ponta Delgada, Portugal



28 Mar 2008 - 30 Mar 2008

Mason and Rocca expecting a tough task in the Azores

27 Mar 2008



Carl Mason, Costantino Rocca and Juan Quiros
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England's Carl Mason has spoken of the tough task he faces in bidding to get his season off to a winning start at the inaugural Azores Senior Open, the newest addition to the European Seniors Tour Schedule.

A strong Atlantic wind and undulating greens should make for testing conditions at Batalha Golf Club, the venue for the €325,000 tournament, which starts on Friday.

After the season-opening event, the DGM Barbados Open, Mason currently trails leader Bill Longmuir of Scotland – who is also in action in the Azores – by €28,435 on the Order of Merit.

Mason, Italy's Costantino Rocca and Spain's Juan Quiros dominated the Order of Merit last season, filling the top three places, but none were confident of mastering the conditions and contours at Batalha Golf Club.

Speaking after Thursday's Pro-Am tournament, Mason said: "I could certainly do with a bit less wind over the next few days – if it blows as hard as it did today, I'd probably be happy with a sub-80 score!"

"It was tough going out there, and some of the greens were quite hard to read, but it's the same for everybody. I only arrived on Wednesday night, so I haven't had much chance to practise. But I'm swinging well and striking the ball nicely, which is half the battle won."

The ever-smiling Rocca was in jovial mood, despite the potential pitfalls which await him and his fellow competitors on the 6,925 yards, par 72 course.

The Italian said: "Whether I win, Carl wins, Juan wins, or anyone else wins, we will all have fun on and off the course. We are like a big family here. We are all very competitive and want to do well, of course, but afterwards we will all shake hands and have a good time. We have a great spirit."

Rocca, like Mason, is making his maiden appearance of the season at the Azores Seniors Open, which is one of several tournaments added to this year's Seniors Tour Schedule.

The Azores, formed of nine Atlantic Ocean islands, joins Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic and India as one of five exciting new destinations added this year to an ever-expanding itinerary.

The Batalha Golf Course is located on the island of Sao Miguel, the largest of the Azores' nine islands. The course, which is renowned for its breathtaking sea views, is one of only three in the region – though construction on a fourth is due to start next year.

The English duo of Bob Cameron – whose namesake, coincidentally, designed the course – and Nick Job also feature in a strong field. The pair finished second and third respectively behind Longmuir at the DGM Barbados Open.

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