

GOLF IRISH OPEN TRIUMPH



GULP IN CLASS...
Meronk gets his drink on after winning at Mount Juliet



Casey is latest LIV defector

By WILL PUGH

PAUL CASEY has joined the rebel LIV Golf tour — despite previously declaring he would be a “hypocrite” if he played the Saudi International.

Former Unicef ambassador Casey, 44, is due to tee up at the third Saudi-backed LIV event at Trump National Bedminster in New Jersey on July 29.

The Englishman’s decision is at odds with his previous stance, when he refused to play the European Tour’s Saudi International over concerns about the country’s human rights record.

In March 2019, Casey said: “It just didn’t sit well with me.”

“I’ve not talked too much about it — but certainly signing a deal and being paid to be down there, I would be a hypocrite if I did that.”

But world No 26 Casey, who has not played since March due to a back injury, now claims he is “excited” by the team-based LIV series.

He said: “I’m looking forward to the team element. Golf can very much be a team sport. I’m excited about it.”

Casey began his turnaround journey in 2021 having played the last two Saudi Internationals — which is now part of the Asian Tour. He said in November 2020: “I wasn’t comfortable going in the past but I have always been open-minded and willing to learn.”

He will join former Ryder Cup team-mates Graeme McDowell, Lee Westwood, Garcia and Ian Poulter on the controversial LIV Tour and will be part of the Crushers GC team, captained by Bryson DeChambeau.

It was claimed last week Garcia “disgusted” fellow pros, shouting at DP World Tour players: “This Tour is s***, you’re all f***ed and should’ve taken the Saudi money.”

By PAT POWER

ADRIAN MERONK made history in Ireland — and admitted there was no place he would have preferred to do it.

Meronk yesterday triumphed at the Horizon Irish Open at Mount Juliet, becoming the first Polish golfer to win an event on the European Tour.

He said: “I love it. I love it. I’m not stopping. I’m gonna keep going forward and it’s just another step for me. I’m super excited to win here in Ireland, such a great history. I can’t describe it.”

Meronk birdied the 15th and 16th and then holed from 25 feet on the par-five 17th for an eagle, as he carded a closing 66 to finish 20 under par in Kilkenny, three shots clear of New Zealand’s Ryan Fox.

South Africa’s Thriston Lawrence finished third on 16 under.

Scotland’s David Law, American John Catlin and Paraguay’s Fabrizio Zanotti shared fourth on 15 under to claim the three places on offer at The Open at St Andrews, which starts in ten days’ time.

Meronk — who had recorded three top-three finishes in last six starts — added: “It’s such a relief, to be honest.”

“I’ve been coming quite close a couple of times this year and to finally open the door is just a dream come true. That’s why we practise every day and I’m super happy.”

Asked about being a role model to a generation of Polish players, Meronk, 29, told Sky Sports: “I was imagining this picture yesterday, what it might look like and it looked exactly how I imagined it and it was an unbelievable feeling.”

“To hit such a good shot on the last hole, I’m super proud of myself and my caddie.”

Fox had earlier set the clubhouse target after a closing 64, the in-form Kiwi following four birdies on the back nine with an eagle on the 17th to briefly enjoy a two-shot lead, only to bogey the last after firing his approach over the green.

Fox said: “The shot on 18” was pretty much the only bad shot I hit today. Happened to be in between clubs, went for a draw and pulled it a little bit.”

“It’s been a weird week, really — shot 64 in the first round, didn’t miss a shot, and then the same today with a little bit of scrappiness in the mid-

BRUT 66

Meronk toasts his hosts after victory



CREW... proud Pole Meronk and his entourage celebrate

die. I got off to a little bit of a slow start today, made a couple of nice birdies on four and five and then got hot with the putter on the back nine.”

Offaly’s Shane Lowry — who birdied the last four holes on Friday to make the cut with a shot to spare — carded weekend rounds of 68 and 67 to finish in a tie for ninth.

Three-time Major winner and new-

ly-crowned US Senior Open champion Pádraig Harrington began his final round with five straight birdies and went to the turn in 30.

But he took seven on the tenth and eventually signed for a 69 to finish joint 30th in a group of seven, which also included Seamus Power.

Power finished with a 68 while Niall Kearney carded a 70 to finish on four under and tied for 58th.



MOVING ON... Lowry waves to the crowd after finishing his round

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

We St. Finians GAA Club, intend to apply for the following Retention Permission and Planning Permission at an existing GAA pitch facility at Rathscreehan, Newcastle, Co. Dublin. Retention Permission is sought for 1.560m² unmetalled drop-off area/carpark ancillary to the GAA pitch use and Planning Permission is sought for GAA pitch goal posts (2No. standard 8m high) coupled with 8m high ballstop nets to the rear of each goal post. Entrance improvements from the existing Newcastle Road (R120) to the site including widening existing gate from 4.2m to 6m with setback gate arrangement to improve sightlines. The planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of South Dublin County Council during its public opening hours of 9am - 4pm, Mon-Fri, and a submission or observation may be made to South Dublin County Council in writing and on payment of the prescribed fee (€20.00) within the period of 5 weeks beginning on the date of receipt by South Dublin County Council of the application.