

Mixed Fortunes for Déise Golfers at Fota Island



Waterford Castle's Kevin Phelan was among the 155 starters at the Irish Open in Fota Island

There was great Waterford interest in the Irish Open at Fota Island last week with West Waterford amateur Gary Hurley and Waterford Castle's Kevin Phelan among the 155 players to tee it up on Thursday last.

Both players got off to steady starts. Hurley carded a one over par round of 72 while Phelan signed for a level par round of 71 having been two under early on. A superb second round of six under par 65 left Hurley five under par and in contention for at least a top ten finish at the halfway stage.

However the West Waterford amateur finished an extremely disappointing third round of 10 over par 81 to topple down the leaderboard but recovered on Sunday with a 73 for a total of eight over par and a share of 73rd place.

Kevin Phelan was well supported by a band of Waterford golf fans including Liam McCarthy, Patrick McCarthy and family, Con Kelliher, Maurice Brosnan and Maurice Dennehy but unfortunately his second round of two over par 73 wasn't good enough to make the cut.



Finland's Mikko Ilonen won the Irish Open by a single shot from Italy's Edoardo Molinari

With Rory McIlroy also failing to advance to the weekend the Irish challenge rested with Graeme McDowell and Padraig Harrington. A level par third round of 71 left Harrington with too much to do and although McDowell played extremely well tee to green his failure to sink many short to medium putts ultimately scuppered his chance of success.

In the end Mikko Ilonen didn't have to be at his best on Sunday to claim the title. A one under par round of 71 was enough to give him a one shot win over Edoardo Molinari. McDowell finished best of the Irish in a tie for sixth, three shot behind the winner.

Michael Hoey's excellent closing round of 66 gave him a share of eighth place while Harrington and Gareth Maybin finished in a tie for 14th. Peter Lawrie finished in a tie for 33rd on four under.

Kevin Phelan will be hoping for better luck in the months ahead as he bids to retain the European Tour card he won in Spain last September.

With earnings on tour this season of just under €78,000 the Waterford Castle golfer is currently 136th on the Road to Dubai list. With 115 retaining their cards at the end of the season Phelan will be hoping to rediscover the form that saw him finish tied for sixth in the Tshwane Open in March.