

# Orlando Sentinel

## Lake Nona pros looking for first win

The helicopters from Isleworth are scheduled to arrive at Lake Nona Golf and Country Club at 9:15 this morning. Then comes the opening ceremony. And then, five minutes past 11, a foursome that includes two of the top five players in the world will tee off.

It's just another opening day at the World Golf and Country Club Championship, better known as the Tavistock Cup.

The only event of its kind -- which matches pros from Isleworth against those from Lake Nona in a Ryder Cup style competition -- begins today once again, for the fourth time. At stake is a \$3.5 million purse, \$1 million of which will go to charity, a bunch of bonus money and prizes and, of course, a little bit of club pride.

This year's version of the Tavistock Cup, which returns to Lake Nona for the first time since the first one in 2004, is sure to be similar to the successful past versions of the event, which is a good thing for the organizers. Team captains Ernie Els of Lake Nona and Mark O'Meara of Isleworth lead a loaded 20-man field that includes 11 of the top 30 players in the world rankings.

Among those are the game's top player, Isleworth's Tiger Woods, and the game's fifth-ranked player, Henrik Stenson, who is representing Lake Nona and playing in the Tavistock for the first time. Another newcomer is Chris DiMarco, who joined Lake Nona partly because of his desire to compete in the Tavistock Cup.

"I've been on the Northeast side of town for 31 years, and we always wanted to do a north vs. south side of town match, but they just went ahead and did south vs. south," DiMarco said. "I wanted to be a part of it and so I made the effort to join Lake Nona this year."



"They've never won it, and so hopefully we can get the cup over there for them."

The teams tied in 2005 and Isleworth won the other two -- by a lot in 2004 and by a little in 2006. But Els, with newcomers Stenson and DiMarco, may have put together his toughest Lake Nona team yet.

"If you look at their team compared to ours, they look pretty strong," said Isleworth's Scott Hoch, who's returning to play this year after missing last year's Cup with a wrist injury.

All in all, though, the competitors say the Tavistock Cup is less about the actual competition and more about the wholeness of the event, which will be played, as in years past, in front of a private, exclusive gallery that will number in the low thousands. For the interested public, the only available ticket is offered through the Golf Channel, which will televise the Tavistock Cup live from noon-5 p.m. both Monday and Tuesday.

On both days, the players from Isleworth will likely hope that some things -- like their team winning -- don't change.

"We haven't lost yet," said Isleworth's Charles Howell, who will be playing in his fourth Tavistock. "Truthfully, the players are such good players, there's no bragging rights. It's just nice to be able to compete with players like this for two days."



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