

RE/MAX Long Drive Championship of St Omer, France

Saturday 10th May 2008

Konyk's Long Drive Pays Off

England's Dan Konyk, one of the European series longest serving competitors, made the long trip from his home in Yorkshire to St Omer in Northern France for the opening round of the RE/MAX European Championship and came away with his first ever victory.

A new format for the final stage's, based on that which will be in use in the RE/MAX World Finals, meant a nail biting climax to both the Senior and Open divisions. Last year's Ladies European runner-up, Suzanne Verbeek (Netherlands) showed great early season form and was well up with many of the Senior competitors in securing her place in the European Finals.

On a slight uphill but perfect grid into a gusting headwind, the Seniors division final went to a one-ball shootout when Jesper Hostrup (Sweden) and Henk Van De Berg (Netherlands) could not be separated on 251 metres (276yds). Jesper finally held his nerve to win the match.

In the Open division, French newcomers; Charles Riou and Yvan Tchemenian both made it through to the semi-finals but both fell to established stars; Konyk and Stef Gresel (Netherlands). The finals head-to-head shoot-out saw Konyk blast 317 metres (348yds) with his first ball and although Gresel went close with a final ball of 311m he could not find his 320m from earlier in the day. Konyk, therefore, took a deserved maiden victory and a RE/MAX European qualification spot .

Dan Konyk is joined by Riou and Gresel and Hostrup and Van De Berg in the Seniors and Verbeek in the Ladies in the RE/MAX Finals in September. Those players who decided not to make the trip to France must now be regretting their decision to stay at home. The weather, venue and grid were perfect for long driving and the number of those finals spots is decreasing.