

Denmark win first Eisenhower Trophy in Ireland



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The team from Denmark poses with the Eisenhower Trophy (left to right): captain Torben Henriksen Nyehuus, John Axelsen, Nicolai Hojgaard, and Rasmus Hojgaard at the 18th green following the final round of stroke play at the 2018 World Amateur Team at Carton House Golf Club in Dublin, Ireland on Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018. (Copyright USGA/Steven Gibbons) USGA Museum

The team from Denmark poses with the Eisenhower Trophy (left to right): captain Torben Henriksen Nyehuus, John Axelsen, Nicolai Hojgaard, and Rasmus Hojgaard.

When: 8 September 2018

What: 31st World Amateur Team Championship for the Eisenhower Trophy

Where: Carton House, Montgomerie and O'Meara Courses, County Kildare/Dublin, Ireland

Rapid Recap

Denmark, bolstered by the stellar play of 17-year-old identical twins Nicolai and Rasmus Hojgaard, held off a surging field to win its first World Amateur Team Championship at 39-under-par 541 by one stroke over the USA.

The Danes claimed the Eisenhower Trophy in their 25th appearance as Nicolai Hojgaard, the 2018 European Amateur champion, posted a 7-under-par 66 and his brother Rasmus fired a 6-under-67 for a team total of 13-under-par 133 on the par-73 O'Meara Course. Teammate John Axelsen posted a non-counting 4-under 69. Previously, in 2010, Denmark had claimed the silver medal.

"It means a lot," said six-time Danish captain Torben Nyehuus. "Everybody is watching. It's just amazing. I was with the team in 2010 when we came in second, so this is just amazing. It's pretty nice to go one better."

Nicolai notched five birdies in his final nine holes and Rasmus logged three as they took the lead from a tightly-packed leaderboard. Four teams, Denmark, USA, Spain and New Zealand, were tied at 34-under as the last groups made the turn.

"I feel wonderful," said Nicolai. "This is a dream come true for all of us. I had a tough start to this tournament, so I was just trying to play some good rounds to help the team. I did that the last two rounds so this is perfect. This is the biggest team event we could have won and to do it with Rasmus is perfect. But, also with John, John is a great friend and we are all having fun. This is just wonderful."

The USA used a strong finish by University of Texas freshman and 2018 U.S. Amateur semifinalist Cole Hammer (7-under 66) and University of Southern California senior Justin Suh (4-under 69) to pass Spain for the silver medal at 38-under-par 542.

"It says a lot," said Hammer, the 2018 U.S. Amateur Four-Ball champion. "It speaks a lot to the way our team jelled and how much fun we had together. When you are having fun playing golf, good things happen. To medal in my first international competition, especially on a stage as big as this, is really special."

Spain took the bronze medal at 36-under 544. New Zealand, which held the lead through 36 and 54 holes, was fourth at 545, followed by Norway, Italy and Thailand tied for fifth at 548; England in eighth at 549, Canada in ninth at 550 and host Ireland and Germany tied for 10th at 553.

Although there is no official recognition, Spain's Alejandro "Alex" Del Rey was the low individual scorer at 23-under 267. He and England's Matthew Jordan shot the low scores in the fourth round at 8-under 65.

Quotable

Captain Torben Nyehuus, of Denmark: "We had a pretty good start and then two slow rounds and as we talked about it yesterday we thought we had to make 40-under-par, so we had to make 14-under-par today. So, the plan was if we could get all players in position to the last nine, hopefully it would show them to make some more birdies and that's really what happened."

Rasmus Hojgaard, of Denmark: “I am speechless to be honest! After the first nine holes today, we didn’t expect us to shoot seven and six under. We just tried to give ourselves chances on the back nine and holed some good putts. It is amazing to have my twin brother on the team as well. We have played alongside each other for 10 years and we keep helping each other so that’s great.”

John Axelsen, of Denmark: “I remember being at the opening ceremony and we stood there and talked, and I turned around to Nicolai and said ‘Yo, Nicolai I have a very good feeling about this World Am’. These guys just play so well, and I played well the first two days and they just played really well the last two days. It’s a team event and that really showed.”

Captain Tom O’Toole Jr., of USA: “I’m really proud of my guys. They played their hearts out. Like we said most of the week, we didn’t get some putts to fall but a lot of teams can say that. You can’t say enough about our guys’ effort. Super.”

Notable:

- Colombia’s Esteban Restrepo scored the first hole-in-one at the Eisenhower Trophy since 2010 on the par-3 seventh hole of the O’Meara Course using an 8-iron. He was 3-under on the tee and finished with a round of 5-under-par 68. Teammate Ivan Camilo Ramirez Velandia added a 4-under-68 and they posted a 9-under 137 to move up to 18th place.
- Denmark’s identical twins Rasmus and Nicolai Hojgaard had identical 9-under par scores of 208 through 54 holes.
- The last one-stroke margin of victory was in 1968 when the USA prevailed over Great Britain and Ireland (868-869) in Australia.
- New Zealand was vying for its first medal (fifth overall) since it won gold in 1992 with a four-player team of Phillip Taturangi, Michael Campbell, Stephen Scahill and Gordon Moorheard that broke the WATC scoring record by 11 strokes with an 823. At that time, three scores of four counted and the previous mark was 834 set by the USA in 1960 with a team that included Jack Nicklaus. The USA finished second that year with two Major winners on the team – Justin Leonard (1997 Open) and David Duval (2001 Open). Taturangi and Campbell finished one-two in the individual scoring.
- USA won its 26th medal (15 gold, nine silver and two bronze).
- Spain won its fourth overall medal and first since a bronze-medal finish in 2014.
- Defending champion Australia finished T-12th.
- The winning team gets custody of the Eisenhower Trophy for the ensuing two years and each player receives a gold medal. The second-place team receives silver medals and the third-place team receives bronze medals.