

Beat: Sports

GOLF AND GLAMOUR: STARS FROM SPORT AND ENTERTAINMENT GATHER IN CHINA FOR WCPA

WORLD CELEBRITY PRO-AM ON RED CARPET

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Wing Yin Kum Aaron USPA News - [Haikou, 20 October 2016] Oscar winner Michael Douglas and Wimbledon champion Boris Becker are among a galaxy of stars from the world of sport and entertainment who have gathered for a week of golf and glamour at the 2016 Mission Hills World Celebrity Pro-Am on the tropical island of Hainan in China

Basketball Hall of Famers Allen Iverson and Yao Ming have also arrived at the Mission Hills Resort in the city of Haikou, together with Hollywood heartthrob Jeremy Renner "" Oscar-nominated for his lead role in The Hurt Locker "" and a host of footballing legends, including Manchester United stars Paul Scholes, Dwight Yorke, Lee Sharpe and David May and Liverpool greats Robbie Fowler, Luis Garcia and Gary McAllister.

These iconic athletes and entertainment stars will be gracing the fairways of the signature Blackstone Course at Mission Hills Haikou alongside golfing greats Gary Player, John Daly, Mark O'Meara and Rich Beem "" winners of 14 Major Championships between them "" plus an equally impressive foursome of LPGA stars Paula Creamer, Natalie Gulbis, Suzann Pettersen and Anna Nordqvist.

Local favourite Li Hao-tong, winner of the European Tour's Volvo China Open earlier this year, will make up the field of nine elite golfers who will be competing over two rounds of individual stableford from October 22-23 for a prize purse of US\$ 1 million "" with US\$250,000 going to the winner. The golfers will also be playing alongside their celebrity partners in a separate bid for the team title.

Speaking from the red carpet at the glittering opening ceremony for the fourth edition of the Mission Hills World Celebrity Pro-Am, former Manchester United and England international Paul Scholes commented: "I've only really started playing golf in the last three years since retiring from football." The midfielder then added: "I'll be very nervous this week, I'll be frightened to death!"

Six-time Major singles champion, Boris Becker, who in March teamed up with Mission Hills to launch the world's first Boris Becker Tennis Academy in China, said: "I've been a few times to Mission Hills in Shenzhen where we're working hard on my academy but this is my first time to Haikou and I'm excited to be here." The former world number one added: "I've been working hard on my golf game for this week and I would love to play with Mark O'Meara if I get the chance!"

When asked about his golf game, basketball superstar Allen Iverson said: "This is my first time playing but I'm a competitor so obviously I'll be giving it my all. We'll just have to wait and see."

Dr Ken Chu, Chairman and CEO of the Mission Hills Group, welcomed the star guests and reinforced the common purpose of this ground-breaking event: "With your presence here in Hainan, and your overwhelming support and enthusiasm, together we can help grow the game of golf in China. You are the icons that will inspire a new generation to take up golf and allow them to share in the enjoyment of this great game that we all love so much."

The biennial Mission Hills World Celebrity Pro-Am was established in 2010 as Asia's first and only pro-celebrity golf tournament. This sporting and entertainment extravaganza "" which reaches more than 26 television channels in Greater China and over 200 countries worldwide "" aims to popularise golf in China whilst also promoting Hainan Island as a tourist destination and supporting local charities.

Proceeds are being donated to The Nature Conservancy and the Hainan United Youth Association.

The World Celebrity Pro-Am continues its long-standing partnership with some of the world's leading brands including global services company, American Express; sophisticated Belgian beer, Stella Artois; luxury car brand Lexus's leading premium bottled mineral water, Tibet 5100 and world renowned Swiss chocolate, LINDT.

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