

# Celebrating a Very Special Week at the KPMG Women's Irish Open

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The 2023 KPMG Women's Irish Open concluded at Dromoland Castle yesterday in what has become its accustomed dramatic fashion.

Smilla Soenderby of Denmark won with an Eagle in a dramatic three way play-off down the 18th hole. That came after she had posted a course record 62 in playing her final round in 10 under par.

She was waiting in the club house for the best part of two hours while her rivals came down the stretch, faltering and rallying to secure their own play-off spots.

Ann Van Dam of the Netherlands had led the tournament after 54 holes last year and did so again this time around but a missed two foot putt on 17 meant she needed a birdie on 18 to stay in the mix.

Lisa Pettersson of Sweden finished Eagle, Birdie, Birdie, Par to make it three and the crowds all along the 18th fairway and gathered around the green could not believe their luck.

Over 10,000 came through the gates on Sunday, making for an overall attendance at the tournament of 30,000, a 20 per cent increase on that of 2022 which itself was 25 per cent ahead of what had been the target.

Large numbers followed the six Irish golfers that made the cut this year, up from one in 2022 but as Leona Maguire, Olivia Mehaffey, Sarah Byrne, Kate Lanigan, Beth Coulter and Emma Fleming's rounds finished the crowd stayed on in the glorious sunshine.

We had the privilege to be a partner of the tournament once again this year and to conduct the presentation ceremony on the 18th green as well as intimate interviews with the winner, last year's

champion, Leona Maguire, Olivia Mehaffey, Dame Laura Davies, Áine Donegan, Beth Coulter, Emma Fleming, Cian Branagan, celebrity Caddy Davy Fitzgerald and trophy designer Chupi Sweetman as part of the KPMG Clubhouse Conversations series as well as in the elegant surrounds of the Drawing Room of the Castle.

The atmosphere throughout the week was exceptional. This is a very special event for the players, the fans, the teams of people that make it all happen and the sponsors.

KPMG have committed the full weight of their excellence in managing events and every detail put in place by Forefront Sports and Dromoland Castle were pitch perfect.

Sports Direct, Amundi and Horizon were also heavily invested in making this tournament stand out and will no doubt be back for more when the tournament gathers in 2024 at Carton House, Fairmont in County Kildare.

The Fan Village was a big hit this year with Visit Clare potting on a great show alongside Golf Ireland, Dromoland Castle and Sports Direct in encouraging the thousands of young fans in the crowd to look at golf as a sport for them.

The effervescent Miriam Hand of Play in Pink was this year's Charity Partner raising money for Breast Cancer Research.

This is a special stop for the Ladies European Tour and noises are already being made now about the Solheim Cup returning to Ireland perhaps as soon as 2028.

The idea that the tournament was not played for a decade is almost unthinkable after two years of triumph and much of the credit for that goes to Cian Branagan of Forefront Sports who had the imagination and the courage to revive it with the support of Dromoland castle and KPMG.

Sport is an ever changing and ever moving feast but we need to celebrate the moments that really stand out and this past week was filled with them.