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The North America - Europe Golf Challenge in Japan



Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup 2014

Friday, 10 October 2014



FINAL REPORT

Organized by:



Title Sponsor:



Mercedes-Benz

Basic Facts

1. Background

Most of the Foreign Chambers of Commerce have their own golf competitions as part of their social activities. Some chambers, like the Swedish and the Finnish, also compete against each other regularly.

The idea of a Europe-U.S. annual golf event was first raised in 2002 in a discussion between Mr. Robert Grondine (ACCJ Governor), Mr. Richard Collasse (EBC Chairman) and Mr. Erik Ullner (EBC Vice-Chairman). The concept was to have an annual high-profile "Ryder Cup in Japan" that will draw the attention of the media and foster closer relations between the US and European companies in Japan. In Spring 2003 discussions were taken up again and a decision was made to go ahead, and thus the project got rolling in late April 2003. The first competition was played at Atsugi Kokusai C.C. on September 26, 2003. The second cup was played on October 1, 2004, the third on September 30, 2005, the fourth on September 29, 2006, the fifth on September 28, 2007, the sixth on September 26, 2008 and the seventh on 2 October 2009, the eighth on 1 October 2010, the ninth on 30 September 2011, the tenth on 28 September 2012, the eleventh on 4 October 2013, all at the same venue.

2. Title Sponsor

From the inauguration of the event, DaimlerChrysler was the title sponsor until 2007. As DaimlerChrysler AG was renamed as Daimler AG as of October 04, 2007, the name of the North-America - Europe Golf Challenge in Japan was re-branded in 2008 to Daimler & Chrysler Cup, as Daimler Japan and Chrysler Japan agreed to jointly co-sponsor the event in 2008 and 2009. As Chrysler withdrew from the event in 2010, Daimler continued as sole sponsor and thus the tournament was renamed Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup.

3. The Taskforce

To handle the planning and implementation of the event, the ACCJ and the EBC have appointed a taskforce. This year the taskforce consisted of Robert Melson, ACCJ Special Events Co-Chair (ACCJ), Aron Kremer, ACCJ Special Events Vice-Chair (ACCJ) and David Anderson, M.D., Alberta Japan Office (CCCJ) from the American side and Erik Ullner, EBC Treasurer, Joachim Hinne, DIHKJ and Clas G. Bystedt, FCCJ Executive Director from the European side. Mr. Bystedt was responsible for the web site, information to players and production of all material for the event.

The task force held several meetings (see page 3.), many of those with Mercedes-Benz Japan. The task force also exchanged hundreds of emails during the preparation period. The ACCJ members of the task force were responsible for recruiting North American sponsors, and the European members recruited European sponsors. The ACCJ was in charge of the bus transportation, the CCCJ took care of the trophies.

The task force got substantial support from Humza Ahmad and Misaki Kondo at the ACCJ and Anthony Chau at the CCCJ.

4. Date and Course Selection

The date selected for the event, Friday 10 October, was decided in March, after consulting chambers and Mercedes-Benz Japan. It has been considered an advantage to have a regular date for the event, i.e. the last Friday in September, whenever possible. However, the week of Friday, 26 September (which would have been the natural date) had three public holidays which would have made communication with players very difficult in the week of the event. Following option was Friday, 3 October but as that was the German Unification Day, it was not ideal for the title sponsor nor the German players. Thus, the following Friday, i.e. 10 October, was selected.

It was also decided to play the sixth event at the same course as the four previous events, i.e. Atsugi Kokusai Country Club. Last year's survey showed that 77% of the participants wanted to play the same course. The surveys over the years have shown a steady support for continuing at the same course; 72% in 2005, 74% in 2006, 76% in 2007, 77% in 2008, 78% in 2009, 73% in 2010, 77% in 2011, 84% in 2012 and 2013 and this year 88%.

The experiences from the first eleven events, and the fact that it would be much easier to organize it again at the same venue, made the decision easy. Mercedes-Benz Japan also supported the idea of using the same course. Also this year the course agreed to lower their fees so that only 1,000 yen from the cash sponsor money would be used for improved food service (3,000 yen in 2005-2010).

Due to reconstruction on the second nine holes at the East Course, this year we played the first nine at East course and second nine at the West Course. This caused some extra work, e.g. remaking of the course guide but worked out well in the end.

5. Play format & Team Competition

The maximum number of players in each team was basically fixed to 72, bringing a total of 144 players, i.e. 36 foursomes teeing off from all tees (shotgun start). But due to some late cancellations and two no-shows, actually only 140 players started in the competition, 68 for the North American team, 72 for the European.

The tournament was played using the Double Peoria ("shin-peria") scoring system which decides the handicap from 12 hidden holes on the day. Due to the difficulty to assign correct handicaps to all the players it is almost the only option. In 2005 we tried stroke play with actual handicaps, but it can be said that the system partly failed, based on the many negative comments in that year's survey.

The average score of the best 80 % of the players in each team was counted as the teams final score. In the event of a tie, the team with the best net player will win. If still a tie, the team with the best second wins, etc.

6. Individual competition & Prizes

In addition to the team competition it was also decided to establish the Best Net (24 prizes) and the Best Gross (3 prizes) winners, as well as the Longest drive (hole No. 13) and Nearest pin prizes (on all par-3). In addition, 17 prizes (the most expensive items) were drawn among all the participants.

7. After-Party @ Mercedes-Benz Connection

Also this year an After-Party was held at Mercedes-Benz Connection on Thursday, 16 October attended by about 70 persons, almost half of the players and many with their significant other. The party was free, all costs of the event were borne by Mercedes-Benz Japan.



Robert Melson Aron Kremer Joachim Hinne
David Anderson Erik Ullner Clas Bystedt



Tina Hutani of Mercedes-Benz Japan and EU Team Captain Marko Saarelainen.

Summary & Proposals

1. Title sponsor

Mercedes-Benz Japan has indicated that they are prepared to continue as title sponsors. Ideally, the event should have a cross-Atlantic link also regarding title sponsors, but if no American company (which would be interested to put in enough contribution) can be identified, the only realistic option is to continue with Mercedes-Benz Japan as sole title sponsor. For the image of the event it is also not desirable to change the (title) name of event too frequently.

• **Proposal: Re-confirm Mercedes-Benz Japan's (MBJ's) commitment to continue as a title sponsor. Members of the NA side shall create a target list of companies to approach about the possibility Co-Title sponsoring. The target list shall keep brand matching, sponsorship synergies and challenges, and MBJ's sensitivities in mind.**

2. Date of the event

Almost every year there have been typhoon concerns when we have played end of September/early October. Also, end of September is busy for many companies because of the half-year book closing in Japan and the week of Friday, 26 September has a three holidays (Monday-Wednesday). Therefore we should consider keeping the date at the first part of October.

• **Proposal: Friday 9 October, 2015. The task force needs to consult Mercedes-Benz Japan on this issue.**

3. Venue

Based on the participants' survey, where 88% (highest ever) expressed their wish to play at Atsugi again, and only 8% wanted to move (2% undecided), the taskforce do not see any reason to change the venue.

• **Proposal: Confirm Atsugi Kokusai C.C. and use same configuration as this year, i.e. the first nine of East Course and second nine on the West Course. As the West Course is longer and more difficult (on average this year almost 3 strokes higher than on the East half), the West Course should be further shortened if possible (this year we used Blue tees on East and white on West, although all tee markers were blue).**

4. Play format and pace of play

The Double Peoria ("shin-peria") scoring system has been used in ten of the eleven events. It is not a perfect system (much of a lottery) and there has been criticism in the surveys towards this scoring system. In 2005 it was decided to use stroke-play with actual handicaps instead, but as it was difficult to obtain correct handicaps from all the players and obviously, based on the results, several of the top ranked players had wrong handicap. Based on this experience it was decided to go back to shin-peria for the 2006 event, and has been used since. The average score of the best 80% of players in each team was counted as the team score.

This year it took about 6 hours to complete the competition. This was about same as last year. The pace of play seems not to have been any problem as 90% in the survey reported that the pace was good or that it was no issue.

• **Proposal: Same maximum number of players (144) as in previous years and use shin-peria play format.**

5. Who is eligible to play /counted in the scores?

The issue of professional golfers participating has been solved as it has been decided that they could participate but not win performance prizes and would not be included in team scores. This year no pros participated. Another issue that has been discussed, and also voiced in the survey, should beginners be allowed to participate. This year 12 players had a gross score above 120.

• **Proposal: no major changes to this issue but on the web site we should ask players who have newer shot below 125 to re-consider participation.**

6. Food and beverage service

Although the survey comments suggest that all participants are not happy with the food service, the survey data show that the ratings are improving. The food on the course got good ratings, 81% rated it excellent or good and none thought it was bad. The ratings for food at the party were more positive than in previous years, 89% excellent or good (80% previous year), 11% "average", none thought it was "not so good" or "bad". This year there were enough food and drinks at all rest houses on the course. This year we also had Warsteiner beer as one of the main sponsors, therefore there was plentiful of beer, also at the After-Party.

• **Proposal: No need for any major changes.**

7. Play fees

The participation fee consisted of two parts - a registration fee of 3,000 yen which was collected by ACCJ, CCCJ and EBC. The play fee, including lunch and party was 21,700 yen (an increase of 700 yen, reflecting the consumption tax increase) and paid directly to the club after play. In the previous years, to improve the volume and quality of food, and to get a reasonable profit out of the event, the organizers have paid 1,000 yen per participant to the club from the cash sponsor money.

In the survey, only 6% thought the fee was too high, whereas 16% thought that it could be even higher, 74% saw the fee was reasonable.

• **Proposal: Keep current fees for participants; 3,000 yen non-refundable registration fee to organizers and 21,700 yen play fees to the club.**

8. Registration, cancellation and number of players

The registration procedure worked well and all players sign up through the web site (not by separate emails or word of mouth). Also this year the registration fee was non-refundable and players were not signed-up before the fee was collected. For the EU players the MBJ Cup office collected the fees. Having the registration fee non-refundable caused many to sign up fairly late to avoid losing the fee.

This year the event had an almost full field, 140 players. For a split-down of participants per chamber, see page 8.

• **Proposal: Keep registration fee non-refundable, open registration in June, as this year. Urge the European chambers to promote the event.**

9. Information and material

The web site was very much appreciated, as well as the material produced for the event. Also the information (by email and web site) provided to participants seems to have been sufficient, and timely, no complaints in this respect. The web site will be kept online until next event and as soon as the date for the next event is decided, it will be announced on the site. Sponsor recruiting for next event should start on the web site early April.

• **Proposal: No need for changes; 2015 version of web site should be up on 26 May at latest; date and venue confirmed earlier.**

10. Sponsors and prizes

The sponsor categories remained same this year. The number of goods/service sponsors were at same level as last year, but total sponsor slightly value higher. Cash sponsorships remained on an unsatisfactory level, now only 430,000 yen (388,500 yen in 2013, 890,000 yen in 2012, 1,235,000 in 2011). Total sponsor value was estimated at about 11.4 million yen (10.4 million in 2013). Due to the low cash sponsoring the task force could not cover all expenses they had committed to (mainly for improved food service, logo golf balls and bus service) but some of the registration fees collected by ACCJ, CCCJ and EBC had to be used to cover these expenses.

• **Proposal: More efforts needed to recruit sponsors. Task-force members need to contact previous sponsors and potential new in early 2015. We should not commit ourselves to buy logo golf balls before we have secured enough cash sponsors.**

11. Charity component

This year the charity component, for the YMCA Challenged Children Project (CCP), also included two Charity Shots, on the par-3 7th (Warsteiner) and 10th (YMCA and Mercedes-Benz Japan). Same as last year, there were also charity boxes in the party room. The Charity activities brought in a total of 239,000 yen, compared to 150,000 yen last year.

• **Proposal: Same charity activities as this year. If substantially more cash sponsor money, give some to charity but keep some in a reserve fund.**

12. Party and prize ceremony

This year there were only a couple of comments in the survey about the party and prize ceremony, mainly related to prize distribution and lack of networking.

• **Proposal: This year the prize ceremony smoother than in previous years and took only 50 minutes, partly because of less (but enough) performance prizes. No significant changes needed although ideas on how to provide better opportunities for networking should be considered.**

13. Bus Service

The project has provided bus service for participants to and from the event since 2004. Since 2010 it has been free and highly appreciated by the participants, this year 32 players and staff used the service.

• **Proposal: Continue bus service as in previous years, if sufficient cash sponsor money is secured.**

Participants Survey - Comments

"Always a fun event with good people."

Statement from a North-American participant.

"It was my 4th time to participate and this event is the hi-lite on my yearly golf-calendar!!! I hope the organizers will keep this traditional event also in the future. "

Statement from a European participant.

"Thank you for every arrangements ! I really enjoyed to play golf with wonderful partners."

Statement from two Japanese participants

General Comments

- Thanks for all the preparation and communication of the event by the organization team members.
- Thank you to the task force, and everybody else who made this event possible.
- Afterparty is yet to see. Looking forward to it.
- Thanks for all of the efforts and support by Committee members. You guys are great!
- There should be more mixing of people between the foreigners and the Japanese particularly after the party.
- Really enjoyed the day. Thank you to all the committee for organising a great event Looking forward to next year's event.
- Thank you very much for your work and good preparations. I enjoyed playing although played poorly.
- Really great event and great job by the task force
- Thank you for putting in so much effort for organizing this event every year. As for question 5 above there are multiple reasons why I participate. One suggestion I could make: why not organize golf lessons (say five 1-hour sessions) in Tokyo for beginners or those who want a refresher course and who have enrolled in the tournament. I appreciate it takes extra effort for the organizers, but it would help the pace of play, provide more exposure for the sponsor and generally promote the sport of golf.
- As a first timer at this event I was very impressed with the organisation of everything to do with the day. I also know quite a few other ladies (and men) that will make the effort to join next year.
- Thank you for all your support.
- Thank you for a excellent event. I thank for the effort of everybody.
- Very good competition. Very good organization of tournament.
- It was a good event, thanks!
- I would like to bring more friends next time.
- Thank you for this cool event!!
- Thank you to the team organizing this tournament.
- Thanks a lot for organising this very good tournament! If my schedule allows I'll come back next year!
- Thanks for great work!!
- It was a great day out. Thank you ! I only wish you could fix my score next time ... LOL
- Very enjoyable event. Hope to join again next year!
- Was a lot of fun

Comments about the course and play

- Don't know if they lacked competent caddies, but our was the worst caddy I have expereined during 15 years in Asia. She had difficulties with her eyesight, she talked constantly and lousy advices, very old so could not catch up with us and not so supportive with clubs, driving the car etc. Lucky we had a great team in the ball, so we could enjoy ourself.
- Prefer to play at East course, but re-construction will be completed after 5 years, means play in next year will be also West course which is too long for senior players. Suugest that senior players such as 65 age use white tee, and the rest of pleyer less than 65 age uses blue tee. How do you think ??
- I would like to play with Non-Japanese players next year, because I played this year with the same European players again this year, but they happened to be Japanese people.

Comments about food and drinks

- I would like to request "Onigiri" at course snack bars. But great event overall.

Comments about prizes and prize ceremony

- Hi Guys, great tournament!! I would say you need to have a special prize for a hole in one!! Seriously I wonder if a sponsor would put up a hole in one prize? But anyway great competition as always, thank you.
- Perhaps if you have a reasonable percentage of ladies next year (say 20%) you could consider having a ladies Long Drive or a prize for the ladies' Best Gross....or both, ha, ha. Well done to all concerned.

Comments about the pace of play

- Great event but the pace of play was far too slow - marshalling needed.
- Considering the size of the field it was amazing...we teed of the 9th and seemed to sail around...hope it was the same for those following us!
- A bit too long, but, with a good company, it was fun, but my score was not too good.
- Slow play is to be strictly prohibited anytime.
- Enjoying the company of golfers

Comments about an alternative course

- Wherever the green condition is better.
- King Fields, Oak Hills, New Nanso, Eagle Point
- Tsutsuji gaoka CC

Planning and Preparations

Below we list the tasks and events in chronological order. Many, if not most items involved also others than the taskforce. From the ACCJ, Humza Ahmad and Misaki Kondo, from the CCCJ Anthony Chau and from Daimler Japan Hiroshi Matsumoto, and Sayoko Shimosegawa where very much involved in the planning and organizing of the event. Also Ms. Tokunaga and Ms. Tsuchiya from YMCA Japan were involved in the planning, and responsible for the execution of the charity component.

All the practical work related to the event - web site, registration procedures, information to and communication with players as well as design and production of the material (see page 5.), etc. - was handled by the Finnish Chamber of Commerce which acted as the MBJ Cup Office.

As this was the tenth tournament played with the same concept and at the same course, less meetings where required this time and many of the issues were handled through email.

April 2014 (date in parenthesis)

- (16) Mercedes-Benz Japan confirms title sponsorship for 2014
- (25) Wrap-up meeting at the CCCJ of the 2014 event, decisions on date, venue, registration fee, etc.
- (28) The 2014 web site at launched.

Sponsorship categories decided (amounts 1,000 yen)

Category	Cash	Goods/services (retail value)
PLATINUM	300	800 - >
GOLD	150	400 - >
SILVER	75	200 - 399
BRONZE	40	100 - 199

Categories and Contributions

Category	Cash	OR	Goods/Services (retail value)
PLATINUM *	300,000 yen	OR	800,000 yen and over
GOLD	150,000 yen	OR	400,000 - 799,000 yen
SILVER	75,000 yen	OR	200,000 - 399,000 yen
BRONZE	40,000 yen	OR	100,000 - 199,000 yen

June 2014

- (6) Task-force meeting with Mercedes-Benz Japan mainly regarding MBJ sponsorship and After-Party.
- (11) Announcement to chambers requesting them to announce the event to their members and add it to their event calendar
- (18) Email to all last year's players and sponsors annoucing opening of new web site and registration starting.

September 2014

- (16-19) Shipping instructions sent to goods/services sponsors.
- (26) Registration dead-line (was later postponed to 3 October as there were slots still available).
- (29) Email confirmation sent out to all participants.
- (30) Task-force meeting at Atsugi Kokusai C.C.; check new holes, sponsor placements, material and schedule check.

October 2014

- (2) Task-force meeting with Mercedes-Benz Japan; final check, discussions re. After-Party
- (5) Playing groups assigned.
- (7) Detailed event information, pairings, promotion of After-Party and a link to the information kit. B-0 and A-1 sized posters printed at Kinko's.
- (7-8) Pocket Guide, Score Cards, signboards printed and assembled at FCCJ.
- (9) Final email confirmation to players, reminder about After-Party. Preparations at the course; 'goodies' bags prepared, prize allocations, registration desks prepared, etc.

Schedule on the day of play - Friday, 10 October, 2014

- 06.10 Bus departs from ACCJ
- 06.30 Taskforce arrive at the club
- 07.00 Registration desks open
- 07.25 Bus arrives at the club (on schedule)
- 08.15 Briefing to participants (on schedule)
- 08.32 Off for tees (on schedule)
- 08.45 Tee-off (on schedule)
- 14.50 Play finishes (10 min. ahead of schedule)
- 15.30 Party starts (on schedule)
- 16.15 Prize ceremony starts (15 min. behind schedule)
- 17:10 Prize ceremony ends (5 min. ahead of schedule)
- 17:30 Bus departs for Tokyo (on schedule)
- 18:30 The taskforce leave the club - mission completed



Enjoying the day on the course.

Information to participants

1. The Web site

The web site has its own domain: www.dccgolf-japan.com.
 The web site has proved to be rather instrumental in making the project successful. It has raised the profile of the event, given additional exposure to the sponsors and has been a very good tool in communicating with the participants, as registration, sign-up listings and sponsor recruitment were done through the site. Actually more than half of the sponsors signed up automatically through the web site, without any "sales effort" from the taskforce, ACCJ, CCCJ or EBC.
 The players sign-up procedure was handled separately for ACCJ, CCCJ and the Europeans as they required different instructions on how the registration fee was collected. After the player registered, he/she was sent an email confirming the registration and information on how the fee was collected.
 The structure of the site was changed during the project period to reflect the different phases of the project, i.e. the promotion phase, registration phase, the information phase and the "after-the-event" phase, including the After-Party and Participants' Survey.
 The web site has had about 265,000 page views between the launch (28 April) and 30 October 2014. The creation and maintenance of the web site was financially supported by Mercedes-Benz Japan.

2. e-mail information

Prior to opening of registration, two email where sent out, ie.
 • 16 June - Announcement to chambers requesting them to announce the event to their members and add it to their event calendar
 • 16 June - Registration open.
 Announcement to previous years players and sponsors about the opening of web site and registration starting.
 All participants received four email bulletins before the event, i.e.
 • upon registration - automatic confirmation.
 • 30 September - confirmation of participation, promotion of bus and notice of when further information will be sent.
 • 7 October - detailed event information, pairings, promotion of After-Party and a link to the information kit.
 • 9 October - final confirmation and promotion of After-Party

After the event, three emails were sent out:
 • 13 October - thank you, information on the event report on the web site and instructions on the participants' survey, final After-Party reminder
 • 23 October - After-Party report and survey reminder
 • 22 October - information on the results from the survey
 The group mail program was set-up so that it showed "Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup Office" as sender.

3. Information kit

The 6 page A4 size information kit contained information on how to get to the course, including a large map in English made for this occasion, other instructions, rules and the participants and groups (with company names and chamber affiliation of the players, see sample at right).

The files were placed on the server and links to these were sent in the email bulletin on 7 October. This allowed participants to download the file of their choice and did not have to receive a mail with a large attachment. This also allowed for the information to be constantly updated on the web site (e.g. with changes in groups) and available to the players in its latest version.

4. Information on the day

When players arrived at the course, they received their individualized Score Card, the Pocket Guide (which included a course guide made for the event) and the locker card. Giveaways from Mercedes-Benz Japan (MBJ Cup 2014 Anniversary cap, red for North American Team, blue for the European), a sleeve of MBJ Cup 2014 golf balls, airplane model from K&L Gates, discount coupon from Hafele and keychains from TaylorMade were also distributed (except for the cap, the giveaways were placed in the lockers).

Before start of play the players were gathered for a photo-shooting and a short briefing were the play format, main rules and charity shots were explained and also how to fill out the scorecard, check and sign it and how to return it after play (a scorer's desk was prepared in front of the club house).



Dear Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup Participant,
 This email provides you detailed information regarding the Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup on Friday, 10 October. Please read through this mail carefully and be well prepared for the event.

- 1. Participants Guide**
 The package includes general information, instructions how to get to the course, a map, rules, participants and groups, and much more. The guide is in pdf format and as the file is rather big (2.5 MB), please download it here: http://www.dccgolf-japan.com/pdf/MBJ_Cup-orientation2014.pdf
 - 2. Groups**
 The groups in the guide might still change due to cancellations, so please check your group when you arrive at the course. Especially those in the "extra" group, SC, are likely to be moved up if/when we get cancellations. The guide will be updated on the web site so you could check for the latest version on Thursday evening.
 The four teams were developed by taking a number of factors into account and the list has already been submitted to the club. Therefore changes are very difficult to make and the MBI Cup taskforce requests that all players accept these arrangements.
 - 3. Cancellations**
 If you for some reason have to withdraw, make sure to notify us. Please do so by replying to this mail. NOTE: We will not be able to read emails on Thursday afternoon when we do preparations at the club and on Friday so if you need to cancel, or have some questions then, do not email us, please call or send SMS to 090-2219-0636 (Class)
 - 4. Bus transportation**
 If you would like to use the bus service but are not sure if you have registered for the bus, please check the last column next to your name in the participants list on the web site. The bus ride is free.
- IMPORTANT**
- Please be on time and arrive at the club no later than 7:45. Better to come too early than too late - we have free use of the driving range!
 - If you arrive after play has commenced (08:45) you will NOT be allowed in the tournament.
 - Your spot in the tournament is NOT transferable.
 - Please check that your golf bag has a nametag with your name, as in the players list, clearly written on it. In case you do not have a nametag, ask for one when you arrive at the club and write your name on it.
- If you have invited registered guests and have not given their email addresses to us, they are not on this mailing list so kindly forward this mail to them!
- Best regards
 The Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup Task Force
 Robert Melson (ACCJ) Erik Ullner (EBC)
 Aeon Kramer (ACCJ) Joachim Hinne (EBC)
 David Anderson (CCCJ) Clas G. Bystedt (Administrator-sent this email)

Out course	Participants & Groups	In course
1A	Robert Melson (ACCJ) Erik Ullner (EBC) Aeon Kramer (ACCJ) David Anderson (CCCJ)	10A
1B	...	10B
2A	...	11A
2B	...	11B
3A	...	12A
3B	...	12B
4A	...	13A



Task-force member Joachim Hinne gives instructions before start of play.

Participants Survey

To be able to further develop this event, we made a survey among the participants. The survey was conducted between October 13 and 24, 2014. To encourage participants to complete the survey, two winners for two weekday golf rounds for four persons at Atsugi Kokusai C.C. were drawn among the survey respondents.

Survey Responses

The survey was announced to 112 participants. We did not have email addresses to some of the guests and the organizers were excluded from the total of 140 players that participated in the event.

We received 50 valid responses after removing multiple and incomplete entries.

Thus the response rate is 44.6%, which can be considered good and gives a high statistical significance to the results. 31 of the respondents represented Team Europe, 19 Team North America.

Survey Results

General opinion about the event

Advance information to players

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	45	90%	
Good	3	6%	
Average	2	4%	
Not so good	0	0%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Arrangements during the event

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	41	85%	
Good	7	15%	
Average	0	0%	
Not so good	0	0%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 48

The Course

Interesting/challenging layout

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	10	20%	
Good	34	68%	
Average	6	12%	
Not so good	0	0%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Course condition

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	17	35%	
Good	26	54%	
Average	4	8%	
Not so good	1	2%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 48

Food & Beverage Service

On the course

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	13	27%	
Good	26	54%	
Average	8	17%	
Not so good	1	2%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 48

At the party

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Excellent	18	39%	
Good	23	50%	
Average	5	11%	
Not so good	0	0%	
Bad	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 46

Pace of Play

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
No issue	5	10%	
Good	40	80%	
Marshalling	4	8%	
No beginners	0	0%	
Penalize	0	0%	
Other	1	2%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Main reason why I participated

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Exciting event	29	58%	
Expand network	6	12%	
Friend encouraged	9	18%	
I like golf	6	12%	
Prizes	0	0%	
Do not know	0	0%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Cost of participation

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Could be more	8	16%	
Reasonable	37	74%	
Too expensive	3	6%	
No opinion	2	4%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Play Atsugi Kokusai C.C. again?

Response	NO.	PCT.	Graph
Yes	44	88%	
No	4	8%	
Do not know	2	4%	

Total Number of Responses: 50

Report from the event

Participants

140 players participated in this event, including a record number of 15 ladies. The European team had 73 players, the North-Americans 69, which meant almost a full course. The players represented about 15 different nations. The Japanese made up the largest group, with 71 players (51%), followed by 20 Americans, 6 Canadians, 6 Finns, 6 Germans, 6 Swedes, 4 Brits, 3 Irish and 18 representing about 10 other nations. Counting by chambers the American Chamber had 43 players, followed by the Canadian with 20, Finnish with 17, Swedish with 16, German Chamber with 11, Italian with 5, British with 4, Irish with 4 and Dutch with 3.

Golfers of all levels took part, from scratch players to high handicappers and gross scores ranged from 67 (Gereon Sperling) to 146. One notable achievement - this year we had the first hole-in-one in the 12 years history of the event, by Kieron Cashell on the par-3 no. 10!

Sponsors and Prizes

The event had 23 sponsors, including the title sponsor Mercedes-Benz Japan. Thanks to this, we were able to supply tasty and refreshing food and drink throughout the day and had many quality skill prizes and drawing prizes to give away.

Apart from the beautiful Hoya crystal Cup to the winning team and a crystal trophy for the winner of the individual competition (from Mercedes Benz Japan), notable prizes included two Chanel J12 watch, a pair of First Class tickets to San Francisco from United, a pair of Business Class tickets to Europe from Finnair, a pair of Business Class tickets to any of their destinations from Turkish Airlines, a pair of Business Class tickets to the Honolulu from Delta. Warsteiner provided beer for the course and prize ceremony as well as for the After-Party on 16 October, and also donated 200,000 yen to qualify as Platinum sponsor. Hilton Odawara Resort & Spa, Hilton Osaka, and Conrad Tokyo all gave out excellent accommodations. International Solutions Group donated a large BBQ set, Philips seven home appliances, Hafele four table grills. TaylorMade, Loudmouth and Titleist golf goods. Coca-Cola provided soft drinks, Michelin 36 Michelin Guides and FusionGOL web hosting services.

The cash sponsors were; Asian Tigers Mobility, K&L Gates, Seiryu Asset Management Ltd. and Konigstedt. The cash contributions were very important as it enabled us to improve the drink and food service at the event, provide free bus service and cover other costs related to organizing the tournament (e.g. logo golf balls, trophies, etc.).

Apart from the trophies, Mercedes-Benz Japan also provided original Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup 2014 golf caps and one weekend of free test drives for their cars to winners of all four near pin and the longest drive competitions. Mercedes-Benz Japan also covered the cost for the administration, web site and costs for posters, signboards, pocket guides, scorecards, etc.

Charity component

This year the tournament's fundraising was again directed to the YMCA Challenged Children Project (CCP). In addition to collection boxes the effort included Charity Shots on the par-3 7th hole sponsored by Warsteiner and on the par-3 10th supported by Mercedes-Benz and staffed by Mercedes-Benz and YMCA. Those who donated 1,000 yen and hit the green got a Warsteiner original beer glass and bottle of beer on No. 7 and a sleeve of golf balls on No. 10.

The Charity activities brought in a total of 239,000 yen. The YMCA and the organizers very much appreciate your kindness and warm contribution to the Challenged Children Fund.

After-Party @ Mercedes-Benz Connection

Also this year and After-Party was held at Mercedes-Benz Connection on Thursday, 16 October attended by about 70 persons, almost half of the players and many with their significant other. The party was free for the participants, all costs of the event were borne by Mercedes-Benz Japan.



Results

Team Competition

Team Europe 75.8 strokes - Team North America 75.9 strokes

Note: the team score was calculated as average from the best 80% in each team.

Special Prizes

Near Pin Winners

- No. 5 - Vashdev Rupani, NA
- No. 7 - Ichiro Hashimoto, NA
- No. 10 - Kieron Cashell, EU (hole-in-one)
- No. 15 - Sakari Romu, EU

Longest Drive

Dean Rogers, NA



Best three net



Best three gross

Individual Competition - BEST NET

Pos.	Name	Team	Gross	HCP	NET
1	Gereon Sperling	EU	67	0	67.0
2	Henry Yamaguchi	NA	90	20.1	69.9
3	Joe Signorelli	NA	80	9.5	70.5
4	Yasuo Aso	NA	80	9.5	70.5
5	Sakari Romu	EU	81	9.5	71.5
6	Erik Ullner	EU	98	26	72.0
7	J.D. Della Pietra	NA	91	18.9	72.1
8	Ichiro Hashimoto	NA	90	17.8	72.2
9	Yasutaka Nakagawa	EU	83	10.7	72.3
10	Hiroki Ogawa	EU	89	16.6	72.4
11	Takashi Shimozato	EU	81	8.3	72.7
12	Takayuki Ichikawa	NA	94	21.3	72.7

* if same net score and handicap, older player wins.

Individual Competition - BEST GROSS

Pos.	Name	Team	OUT	IN	TOTAL
1	Gereon Sperling	EU	31	36	67
2	Dean Rogers	NA	37	37	74
3	Akihiro Oshima	NA	41	39	80
	Joe Signorelli	NA	39	41	80
	Yasuo Aso	NA	40	40	80
6	Nobuhiko Miyaji	EU	38	43	81
	Takashi Shimozato	EU	39	42	81
	Sakari Romu	EU	36	45	81
9	Kunihiro Okuda	EU	39	44	83
	Yasutaka Nakagawa	EU	41	42	83
11	Masashi Yamazaki	NA	44	40	84
	Shuichi Hirokawa	EU	41	43	84
	Hideo Iwasaki	EU	41	43	84
	Hiroshi Matsumoto	EU	40	44	84

Material produced for the event

1. Pocket Guide and Scorecard

When the participants arrived at the course they received the Pocket Guide and the Scorecard. The Scorecards had name, group and team on them (see samples below).

The Pocket Guide (16 pages) contained greetings from the organizers and the title sponsor, instructions, rules, participants & groups and a hole-by-hole course guide which was remade for this event as we now used 9 new holes (West Course in). The back page had logos of all the sponsors.

The scorecard had a feature which was appreciated - as groups started on different holes, the scorecard had a yellow mark where the marker should start entering scores



Sample of new Course Guide

2. Information kit

The 6-page Information Kit was made as a pdf file so that each participant could download it and print out if needed. A mail with a link to the location of this file was sent out on 1 October. The kit included instructions, rules, participants & groups and a large size access map to the course. This map was also made for the event. The back page had again logos of all the sponsors.



Location Map

3. Posters and signboards

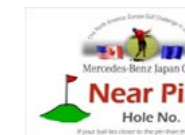
Two B0 (ca 115 x 140 cm) posters were made in-house and printed at Kinko's. A1 posters were also made as promotion boards at the near pin and longest drive holes, as well as for the hole sponsors (Chanel, Finnair, United Airlines, Delta Airlines, Turkish Airlines and Warsteiner). In addition A-1 sized signboards were made for the two registration desks, the scorers' desk, as well as signage to course and party room and a signboard for the YMCA charity shot.

4. Near pin and longest drive flags

Near pin and longest drive flags were also made with the event logo.

5. Cart signs

To enable participants to easily locate their cart (among 36) at the start, a number sign was made for each cart. On the reverse side (visible from inside the cart), essential rules and instructions were printed.



7. The logo

The original logo image was been designed by Tomo Bystedt in 2003.

Typesetting of the title is in Corpo A.



Mercedes-Benz Japan Cup 2014

Production costs

About 200,000 yen was spent on the material for the event, including printing of the B0 and A1 size posters at Kinko's, high grade paper for pocket guide and scorecards, panels and stands for posters, toners for the in-house color laser printer, near-pin and longest drive flags, cart signs, etc.. These costs were covered by Mercedes-Benz Japan, including design and assembly work (pocket guide, signboards and wine labels). Costs for hole sponsor panels and stands were covered by the sponsors. Mercedes-Benz Japan also produced two large size banners, one for the photo shooting (see cover photo), one at the club house entrance (which was later moved to the party room).



Longest Drive signboard (A1)



Information Kit (A4)



Scorecard

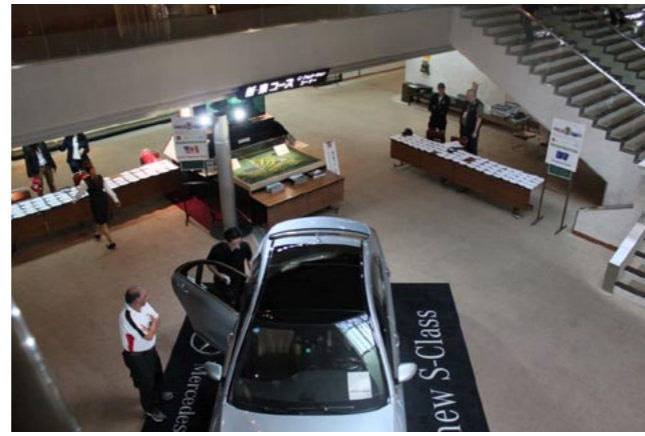


Pocket Guide (A6)

Event Photos



Entrance to Club House



The registration area in the lobby of the club house.



Task force member Erik Ullner at the EU registration desk.



Carts ready for ride out to the holes



Groups 1A and 1B on the first tee. From left: Katsushi Kurokawa, Hiroshi Matsumoto, Hiroaki Nagahara, Yasutaka Nakagawa, Marko Saarelainen(EU team captain), Mitsutoshi Saku, Toshinori Okuhara (NA team captain) and Yuya Suzuki



Ideally a golf ball should not go in a bunker, but definitely not a golf cart, even less so upside down... fortunately all escaped unhurt....



The Warsteiner Charity Shot on hole no. 8



The players could enjoy nice food and drinks on five different locations on the course (drinks on additional three).



Erik Ullner watches Joachim Hinne's putt on no. 10.



The Scorers' Desk welcoming the players after the round.



The buffet table



Tina Hutani of MBJ presents the Individual Winner's Trophy to Gereon Sperling. He was also the Best Gross with a great score of 67, four under par.



Tears of joy, the winner of the Chanel prize, presented by Yasutaka Nakagawa.



The winning European team.