



## PGA OF HOLLAND

The first of a monthly series that takes a random look at each member country in turn

# How Frank 'made friends' with the Federation... and Dutch golf blossomed

When PGAs of Europe conferences and, indeed, meetings of any sort, are staged to debate the progress of golf, two familiar faces usually to be found among the many, belong to Frank Kirsten and Jimmy van Heuven van Staereeling.

They have been without doubt, two leading supporters of the PGAs of Europe from its very earliest days, a factor that certainly contributes to the on-going progress of the PGA of Holland, whom they both continue to serve with devotion and distinction.

Frank has been at the helm as President and/or Chairman for some nine years, and a board member for twelve. Jimmy has been the inspiration behind the country's increasingly successful education programme since 1997.

While several individuals have played their part in taking the Dutch PGA forward to its present comfortable role within the low

country's sporting landscape, these two have provided the most consistently identifiable thread of administrative stability.

"Golf is now the third most popular sport in Holland, behind football and athletics," Frank Kirsten points out. There is a hint of pride in this statement, for very good reason. Golf was not up there on his country's sporting radar a decade ago. Much bridge building needed to be done if it were ever to get there.

Throughout the pro ranks, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction. The amateurs, in contrast, governed by the Federation, were all-powerful.

"The professionals were always complaining about shortage of money at that time," Frank explained. "Another source of annoyance, for instance, was that the Federation expected the professionals to pay to watch the KLM Open Championship."



So let's just say that relationships between the amateur and professional bodies were not good. Or, to put it in his own words: "**We were not even on speaking terms.** Setting up what I felt should be a 'normal' working relationship was my main priority at the time."

History now illustrates the value of good, old-fashioned diplomacy compared to what appeared to be an earlier policy of pros simply asking the Federation for some of their money. As a result, the amateur and professional bodies are now good friends, working together for the good of the sport for both the unpaid, and the paid, ranks.

PGA pros no longer pay to watch the KLM Open Championship. Important topics such as tournaments and training are dealt with amicably. They have an excellent joint-initiative with regard to a junior training programme in the clubs... And a nation's golf is prospering."

### Jimmy's Training Programme a Big Factor

During this period of growth, Frank regards the success of the Training programme alongside the excellent working relationship established

with Netherlands Golf Federation, as being their core achievements.

"We believe we have a very good education system," he stressed. "Helped by the PGAs of Europe and run by Jimmy..."

Such has been the obvious merits of Holland's two key administrators that Jimmy Two Vans (as he is affectionately known by some of his UK colleagues!!), has for some time been an active member of the PGAsE Education Committee while, in December 2005, Frank was co-opted onto the main Board, thereby putting their PGA in the forefront of decision-making.

As a PGA professional for some quarter of a century, Frank's route to a leadership role was via his work officiating at tournaments on the Dutch PGA Tour. To this experience, and a natural manner of quiet authority, could be added his prowess as a linguistic, with English and French in his repertoire.

### Order of Merit Schedule:

Holland has a range of Sponsors, covering membership needs, and Tournament Prize Funds. There are seven Order of Merit

*Pictured (left) is Ashland PGA Champion, Mark Reynolds (holding the Harlequin Cup) with Mr. Peter Rijnveldshoek (Ashland), on his left, and Frank Kirsten. Picture bottom left shows the Dutch trio who attended the recent Tournament Organisation Seminar at the Belfry, Frank Kirsten, Edwin Heenk and Constant Smits van Waesberghe.*

events, three of 72 holes, three of 36 and one matchplay. The Tournament season tees off later this month in Marbella, Spain, with a field of 70 Dutch PGA pros playing over 36 holes.

### Youth Conference Points the Way Ahead

An indication of the way that the progress of junior golf is escalating in Holland came at a recent youth conference staged on a Sunday. Some 90 clubs were represented..

The joint venture for youth is based at the National Academy for Physical Recreation.

The PGA of Holland's objective is to continue to upgrade its Education programme, to form Golf Team Holland whereby the young, talented players can achieve European Tour level.

Based in a small office 'at the heart' of Holland, near to Utrecht, they have just one full-time lady admin assistant looking after the day-by-day duties.



### PGA of Holland

#### The Figures of growth:

	2000	2007
Number of Facilities	116	150
Number of Amateur Players	140,000	260,000
Number of Professionals	380	575
Number of Trainees	40	40

#### Officials:

Chairman:	<b>Frank Kirsten</b>
Secretary:	<b>Wilfred Lemmens</b>
Head of Education:	<b>Jim van Heuven</b>
Head of Tournaments:	<b>Erik Kruyning</b>
Ladies Section:	<b>Marjan de Boer</b>



### QUOTE

"What we see for the future is to grow our PGA, to help Holland be stronger in competitions, and to show the public who we are, and that we are the best. Also to be more supportive of our membership in all of the various career services they require." Frank Kirsten