

Puerto Rico wins fifth-straight Caribbean Junior Championship



San Juan, Puerto Rico (July 5, 2012) - The Puerto Rican Junior National Team is once again returning home a winner after defeating the best countries in the region at the 2012 Caribbean Amateur Junior Golf Championships. **Puerto Rico clinched the title after a third and final round on Thursday** which gave the team a total score of 160, solidly ahead of Trinidad & Tobago, which finished second with 144 points, and the Dominican Republic, which hosted the tournament at the Guavaberry Golf and Country Club and earned third place with 128 points.

The victory marks **an impressive and unprecedented fifth-straight Hank James Trophy** for Puerto Rico, which led the competition from day one, largely on the strength of its female players. The girls were absolutely dominant on the links, winning all three age groups by significant margins. In the 11-13 category, Diana Vélez and Valeria Pacheco placed first and second with scores of 224 and 234, respectively. Their closest competitor, Inecia Rolle, from the Bahamas, finished third with a 253.

Likewise, in the 14-15 group, **Yudika Rodríguez and Kristina Ortiz also took the top two spots**; Rodríguez shot 234 while Ortiz was not far behind with a 236. Not to be outdone, María Torres crushed the competition in the 16-17 category with a score of 226. Gabriela Santini took third place with a 253, just behind Christina Ferreira of Trinidad & Tobago, whose 247 was good for second place.

While the Puerto Rican boys couldn't quite match the girls' success, they

still put in strong performances that allowed the team to come away with the overall championship. In the 11-13 group, **Rubén Rodríguez placed third with a 233** while Gabriel Avilés' 239 was good for fifth place. None could catch young Trinidadian Sachin Kumar, whose spectacular final-round 67, the best of the tournament, led him to shoot an impressive 215 overall for the victory.

Meanwhile, in the 14-15 category dominated by Trinidad & Tobago's Wan Ju Lee (222), **José Cardona shot a strong 231 for the third-place finish**. His teammates Alberto Firpi (236) and Daniel Cabán (244) ended up in seventh and 10th place, respectively. Finally, in the 16-17 group, Puerto Rico had another top-three finisher in Frederick 'Fico' Thon, who shot 227. Sebastián Toro and Andrew Báez placed fifth and sixth, respectively, with scores of 234 and 243. Trinidadian Matthew Márquez shot a tournament-best 212 to take home the victory.

Overall, our young golfers had a fantastic showing this week in the Dominican Republic, and the Puerto Rico Golf Association is extremely proud of their championship performance. "I congratulate all our players and thank them for once again showing the world that we're producing extremely talented golfers," said PRGA president Sidney Wolf. **"These kids are not just the future of our sport, they're already having an incredible impact in the present,** and we look forward to them bringing home many more trophies for years to come."

The PRGA also highlighted the work Junior National Team manager **Marilina Silén**, and coach **Robert Birtel**, whose extraordinary work with and on behalf of each and every one of these players continues to bear fruit with victories such as this fifth consecutive Caribbean Championship, successfully organized by the Caribbean Golf Association (CGA) and hosted by FEDOGOLF.

By Alberto C. Medina – PRGA Staff Writer