



THE JOHN ALDRIDGE CHARITY CLASSIC

Triple celebrations were held at Oceânico Group's Amendoeira Golf Resort last month, when Vicinitee attended the John Aldridge Charity Classic golf tournament in Portugal. *Chelsey Baker* reports

The week of sports commenced with the official opening of Amendoeira's €2.7m multi-function Sports Club. Celebrations reached a climax with the two-day John Aldridge charity Golf Tournament, created by the record-breaking goal scorer who enjoyed a glittering career with Liverpool FC and the Republic of Ireland international team.

Recently named the World's No.1 golf destination, The Oceânico Group's Amendoeira's Golf Resort was a magnificent setting for the event. This year the tournament was played over both the Faldo and O'Connor Jnr courses, with the clubhouse staging the prize-giving dinner where over €10,000 was raised for charity. The quality and the intensity of the golf was matched by the banter and fun between shots and at the '19th Hole' afterwards. The winning team was 'The Man from Nama', whose prize was free entry into next year's tournament.

Former Liverpool and Republic of Ireland midfielder Jason McAteer won the overall celebrity prize with a score of 63 points that earned him third place in the individual competition. Jason explains: "You come to Portugal and have fun, you pay your money to play and it all goes to three wonderful charities, and if you are on the first tee nursing a hangover, that's acceptable, because it's a fun event off the course and a competitive one on it."

The customary charity auction following the dinner raised over €10,000, with a pair of football boots donated by Liverpool and England star Steven Gerrard attracting the top bid of €1,700. There was also strong bidding for the boots of Liverpool and Spain striker Fernando

Torres, a shirt signed by the Republic of Ireland football squad and polo shirts signed by Open and US Open winner Pádraig Harrington and by Lee Westwood, the Portugal Masters winner.

Over the years the John Aldridge Classic has raised more than €60,000 for Aldridge's favorite charities; Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool, Temple Street Children's hospital, Dublin and NECI in Praia da Luz, Portugal. Aldridge explains that a cheque for £7,000 to Alder Hey has been used to set up four units helping children with terminal illnesses to spend the last two weeks of their lives at home with their families, in familiar and comforting surroundings.

The Sports Club is part of the award-winning Amendoeira Golf Resort and features a full size natural grass football pitch; two five-a-side astroturf pitches with floodlighting; six championship standard tennis courts (two floodlit); lawn green bowls – a crown and a flat green; jogging track; a clubhouse with changing rooms, catering facilities, meeting and treatment rooms; plus a gymnasium.

The resort facilities also include two stunning championship golf courses – one designed by Nick Faldo and one by Christy O'Connor Jnr – opened in October 2008 and already gaining worldwide recognition. The Sports Club is also adjacent to the par three Oceânico Academy course, with professional golf tuition, Amendoeira Golf Academy & Callaway Fitting Suite and driving range only a short buggy ride away.

Away from Amendoeira, Oceânico Group Ambassador Lee Westwood claimed the coveted Portugal Masters title at the Oceânico Victoria course



in true style. It was fitting that the award-winning course saw Westwood claim his first tour title in two years. "Lee's win is a great thrill for us all here. He has been an outstanding Oceânico ambassador and we are over the moon that he has taken this year's title," commented Gerry Fagan, Oceânico Group director and co-owner.

The Oceânico Group's investment spans all levels of golf. From the elite to grass roots golf, the company is responsible for eight courses in Portugal and is unsurpassed in commitment to golf in Portugal and Europe. With seven of its courses located in the Algarve,

Oceânico has taken quality and standard of golf to a whole new level in this region.

The Charity Tournament was a thoroughly enjoyable experience for golfers and non-golfers, with such a great atmosphere on and off the course it's no surprise that everyone had a smile on their face. One thing is certain – the John Aldridge Charity Classic is a fantastic few days, competitive but a lot of fun and I can't wait to come back again next year. ■

For further information on Oceânico Golf, visit www.oceanicogolf.com