

Class, camaraderie... and a remarkable comeback!

Tara Anson-Walsh

at Marriott St Pierre, Chepstow

IN the world of sport, we so often celebrate those at the very top of their game — the moments in elite competition that command global attention and prestige.

But last weekend, as the Ryder Cup was being beamed on to screens across the country, another, humbler golf competition was quietly unfolding on the outskirts of the Welsh village of Chepstow, just across the River Wye from England.

There may have been no Rory McIlroy swing to marvel at, nor the spectacle of a controversial president flanked by his security entourage, but everything about the finale of the Daily Mail Foursomes, Europe's largest amateur golf competition, captured the true beauty of the sport.

And one suspects that if the raucous New York crowd had paused to see the sportsmanship on display here, Team Europe's post-victory press conference might have been spared the talk of abuse and hostility.

But first, a word on the winners and the resilience that carried them to victory. John Lee and Jim Bruce from Slaley Hall lifted the trophy in the men's competition. Their opponents from Birch Grove fought valiantly, and were four up with four to play, but the Northumberland pair dug deep, dusted themselves off and mounted a



Prize guys: John Lee (left) and Jim Bruce join Sue Howell (left) and Rosie Waller to show off the trophies

HUW EVANS

equally impressive performance. After storming to a five-up lead with five to play, the Taunton and Pickering team fought back valiantly, winning two holes, before Kendal ultimately held on to win 3&2.

'We could have finished earlier so we were relieved when we got it over the line,' Howell said.

'I did say that I am not jumping in the lake if we won like they do in the women's Opens. We wanted to win it for a friend of ours. She was here when we got through to the last eight last time, but sadly she died the year after — so this is for Jen.'

A special mention must go to Sandra Williams, who hit the first hole-in-one in the Daily Mail Foursomes finals in at least 30 years. 'It was a clean connection but I didn't actually think I'd hit it as well as the shot I'd hit that morning, because it was flatter,' Williams said, with a wide grin. 'It just avoided the bunker, rolled nicely on to the green, and just kept rolling and rolling towards the pin.'

Next year's finalists will be rewarded with even warmer conditions than the sunny Welsh weekend just gone. The finals will take place at Golf El Rompido in Spain, promising fierce competition and a taste of the Spanish sun. And, no doubt, more of the class, grace, and camaraderie that makes this event so special.

For more information on our 2026 event go to: mailgolf.co.uk

remarkable comeback, clinching victory on the first extra hole.

'We started strongly, then disappeared off the planet for about seven holes, and then finished strongly. They were playing really well, then out of the blue they started to struggle — that's

pressure,' Lee said. 'But the crowds have been great. It's quite nice to get the odd shot clapped, although we didn't get that many today!'

Bruce added: 'We've played against four different pairs from four different parts of the

country in the finals and enjoyed every one of them. The people we played against and their supporters have been exquisitely good.'

In the women's event, Sue Howell and Rosie Waller of Kendal Golf Club delivered an



Sunny delight: the glorious Golf El Rompido in Andalusia's Costa de la Luz will provide the setting for next year's Daily Mail Foursomes finals

RACING

DOMINIC KING at Longchamp

AIDAN O'BRIEN feared his fate, but just in case, he had one last lingering look at a giant TV screen, which had been enveloped by a rainbow. On this occasion, there was no pot of gold. Minnie Hauk, the brilliant filly he hoped was going to give him a third victory in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, had her pocket picked in the last 100 yards and the verdict of the photo-finish went to 16-1 outsider Daryz. Christophe Soumillon, Minnie Hauk's jockey, tried to offer an explanation

Arc agony for O'Brien as Minnie is pipped at post

but O'Brien — whose day began with a bang thanks to Diamond Necklace and Puerto Rico winning important juvenile races — knew no words would ease the pain. 'She did everything she could,' Soumillon reasoned. 'But Mikael (Barzalona, Daryz's jockey) just got me on the line.' O'Brien, typically, was among the first to congratulate the outstanding Francis-Henri Graffard, the trainer who

is based in Chantilly and enhances his reputation with each passing week. 'As a young boy, I dreamed of winning this race,' said Graffard. 'This is the best day of my career.' Daryz did not make his debut until April 6 but has come a long way in six months. His success was laced with poignancy, as it was achieved in the distinctive green silks of the late Aga Khan, who died in February. It was the Aga Khan family's seventh victory in

the Arc and their happiness was matched by connections of Asfoora, who became the first Australian horse to win a race in France as she scooted away with the Prix de l'Abbaye. It was nearly snatched away by a technicality. Trainer Henry Dwyer had arrived at Longchamp without his horse's identification passport and it needed an emergency taxi ride to fetch the documentation from Chantilly, arriving eight minutes before deadline. 'I've done that journey four times in the last three days,' said Dwyer. 'It's never taken less than an hour. Good old Uber managed this one in 52 minutes. We'll have a glass of champagne now.'