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 **Siem Fast-Tracked to Golf's Summit**

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German Marcel Siem's maiden European Tour victory at the dunhill championship was a triumph for the rewarding structure of European golf.

Thanks to a system that fast-tracks the continent's most talented players towards the top level, Siem reached the game's summit in just three seasons – after a journey that began on the Approved Third Level EPD Tour and followed an upward trajectory onto the Challenge Tour, before a final step up to The European Tour and his first tournament win in South Africa last weekend.

The idea of the Approved Third Level Tour structure is to provide the regional foundation to start the young touring professionals on the road to competing at the highest level.



Marcel Siem

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Siem has trodden a similar path. The 23 year old turned professional in 2000, joining the EPD (European Professional Development) Tour, that is played in and around Central Europe.

In his first season in the professional ranks he impressed enough to gain regular starts on the Challenge Tour the following year. That season (2001), the German extended the knowledge of his profession on the Challenge Tour, gathering experience on the circuit to equip himself for the rigours of the European Tour Qualifying School, where he secured the 36th and final Card for The 2002 European Tour.

Already he had gone from Third Level to top Tour in the space of two seasons – and his upward learning curve continued from there. Siem won €48,197 during his maiden European Tour season,

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Marcel Siem

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just missing out on retaining his card as he finished 131st on the Volvo Order of Merit. From there he visited the Qualifying School again, graduating in 16th place to rejoin The European Tour in 2003.



Marcel Siem

Last season Siem improved yet again – further confirming that the structure of European golf is a model to be proud of. Three top ten finishes on The European Tour International Schedule 2003 – at the Algarve Open de Portugal, the BMW International Open and the Turespaña Mallorca Classic – enabled the German to collect €23,159 on his way to a comfortable 95th on the Volvo Order of Merit.

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In securing his maiden European Tour title at the dunhill championship last weekend, after his thrilling sudden-death play-off with Frenchmen Gregory Havret and Raphaël Jacquelin, Siem completed a three season journey that was made possible by golf's rewarding structure.

“After turning professional after the Eisenhower Trophy in 2000 I went on to the EPD Tour, winning one tournament before moving on to the Challenge Tour. I managed to secure some invitations through my manager and I finished 79th on the Challenge Tour Rankings in 2001. At the end of the season I went to the Qualifying School and got my card and although I finished outside the top 115 in my first year I regained my card through the Tour School again.

“The experience of playing the EPD and Challenge Tours proved very, very useful – just what you need to learn what's required on The European Tour. These days you need to shoot about 20 under to have a chance of winning a tournament. It's really tough to get into the top 15 in the Challenge Tour Rankings.

“There are two important aspects – travelling around Europe and getting used to something that is vital in the life of a golf professional. Also it's really important to play 72 holes over four days. It doesn't compare playing 72 holes compared to 36. It means that players are generally more prepared for what faces them on The European Tour.”

Siem is a model of positive progress and is walking, swinging proof that the climb from the Third Level Tours, to the Challenge Tour and finally The European Tour is one that can be conquered.

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