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Against doctor's advice: Ulenaers seals comeback victory

Genappe, Belgium – Kristof Ulenaers wins The Iron Duke Belgian Open 2026 only a short time after undergoing appendix surgery. The Belgian closes with a 69 and finishes at -13 overall, one shot ahead of compatriot Nathan Cossement and Velten Meyer (Germany).

Had it been up to his treating doctor, Kristof Ulenaers would probably have skipped The Iron Duke Belgian Open 2026. The 28-year-old had recently required emergency surgery on his appendix and for a long time was unable to walk or hit balls. Only a few days before his home event at Golf Club d'Hulencourt did the Belgian decide to tee it up.

"I only hit my first driver three days before the tournament," smiled the champion, whose biggest triumph to date came with victory at the Challenge de Cádiz on the Challenge Tour in 2021. "But I simply had to play. I felt that my game had been good in recent weeks. I like this course and really wanted to be here."

Second victory of the current season

Without placing overly high expectations on his own performance, the 28-year-old picked up where he had left off in a season that had already brought him victory at the Red Sea Ain Sokhna Open and numerous other top finishes. After rounds of 68 and 66, he started the final round in the lead and impressed with consistent and initially error-free golf. The former University of North Texas college golfer nevertheless briefly surrendered top spot, mainly due to the performances of Velten Meyer (64) and Nathan Cossement (66), who surged past with a string of birdies.

But while Ulenaers remained steady apart from a bogey on the 17th, late dropped shots halted the momentum of his closest rivals – and paved the way for a remarkable triumph. "Of course I wanted to play well. But to win now is a huge relief – also with a view to the Order of Merit and the next two tournaments," he explained. "All the birdies from Velten and Nathan certainly didn't make me feel any calmer. But I knew I had to focus on myself. So I just tried to keep going."

[Final results: The Iron Duke Belgian Open 2026](#)
[Order of Merit 2026](#)

Special thanks go to the officials and the many helping hands at Golf Club d'Hulencourt. The 18 holes of "Le Vallon" once again left a lasting impression on players and spectators. Earlier this summer, the club had already hosted the Hulencourt Women's Open on the Ladies European Tour and a First Stage event of the DP World Tour Qualifying School. At the end of September, the course will host the Hulencourt Masters Pro Golf Tour Grand Final for the first time.

Ulenaers was full of praise for the condition of the 18 holes of "Le Vallon". "I love the course. Driving is very important on this course. If you hit the ball long and straight



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here, you give yourself a big advantage. For me, it is one of the best courses in Belgium, if not the best. It separates the good ball strikers from the less accomplished ones and probably has the fastest greens of the entire season."

With his second win of the season, Ulenaers significantly improves his position in the race for the Pro Golf Tour promotion places and climbs to second in the Order of Merit. Dario Antonisse of the Netherlands leads the season standings heading into the decisive final stretch. The other promotion places are currently occupied by Philipp Mac-ionga (Germany), Switzerland's Mauro Gilardi and Max Schmitt (Germany).

After only a few days to catch their breath, the Pro Golf Tour players return to action from September 15 at the Russo Open @ Cleydael, before the Hulencourt Masters Pro Golf Tour Grand Final takes place from September 29 to October 1.



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