

Passion

“If you
don't play,
you can't
score”



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Content + Colophon



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PASSION
Smulders Magazine

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When we look at the market we are actually doing quite well

Due to offshore projects that were postponed, we knew that 2018 would be a tough year. Compared to 2017, we have indeed had to make substantial sacrifices. The drop in the work volume is now over.

Because we were awarded the Triton Knoll and Seamade projects, the production capacity of Hoboken and Poland is already 80% full for the coming year. In Arendonk and Balen we start the construction of seven smaller substations for Moray East, Triton Knoll and Seamade. Up to mid 2019, these branches can therefore also count on a well-filled order portfolio. Moreover, we are waiting for a nice, big jacket project which is currently in the pipeline. If we get the green light, we definitely have a busy year ahead of us.

When we look at the market, we are actually doing quite well. Nevertheless, offshore is still a tough business. You have to be quite strong if you want to hold out. This also becomes clear when we look around us. Two renowned Dutch players have already indicated that they are withdrawing from the wind business. This only underlines how important it is to keep our quality and reliability of delivery at the high level customers expect from us. In that respect, too, it was nice to see that we continue to make progress in the field of safety.



We wish you, your family and friends a New Year in good health. Don't forget to take a break and relax. In the new year we will work together again with renewed energy. Our teams will be happy to be at your service again in 2019.

On behalf of the entire management,

Raf Iemants
Smulders Managing Director

Foreword

News

Siemens awards subcontracts for Triton Knoll Offshore Windfarm

Manchester based Siemens Transmission & Distribution Ltd. (STDL) has awarded its first major contracts as engineering lead for the electrical transmission system for Triton Knoll Offshore windfarm, based 33km off the Lincolnshire coast. The contract to build two Offshore Transformer Modules® (OTMs®) has been awarded to consortium Smulders Fabricom. The OTM® is an essential part of the wind farm and is significantly smaller in size and weight compared to conventional alternating current platforms.

Triton Knoll will have two OTMs® which will be installed onto a monopile foundations and ultimately connected to the national grid substation at Bicker Fen in Lincolnshire.

STDL will deliver the containerised high voltage equipment to the Smulders Fabricom yard in Hoboken with the consortium responsible for the design, fabrication, blasting and painting of the modules.

All works will be performed inhouse, at the Smulders' Belgian production facilities. Once assembled, the modules will be transferred to the ENGIE Fabricom yard where the containers will be mounted onto the OTM® platforms.

ENGIE, GeoSea and Smulders are building the offshore substations for SeaMade

The consortium of ENGIE Fabricom, Tractebel, Smulders and GeoSea has been awarded a contract for the construction and installation of the SeaMade offshore wind farms in the North Sea. The consortium will build the two high voltage substations, and their respective substructure, to be installed respectively in the Mermaid and the Seastar area.

SeaMade is the name of two combined offshore wind projects, Mermaid and Seastar, two offshore wind parks in the Belgian part of the North Sea. Mermaid has a capacity of 235 MW and is located approximately 50 km off the Belgian coast. Seastar is located closer to the mainland, approximately 40 km off the coast and has a capacity of 252 MW. SeaMade will consist of 58 SGRE (Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy)

wind turbines and provide green energy to supply about 485,000 families and reduce CO2 emissions with 500,000 ton a year.

Smulders will be responsible for the full engineering, procurement, fabrication and corrosion protection of the steel constructions for the topside and its respective substructures being Transition pieces and monopiles.



Theme

Crane pedestal

End customer

DEME

Client

Tideway Offshore Solutions

To finish a project in three months that would usually take four months

DEME was aiming to astonish the offshore industry with the realisation of the Living Stone. The ship, with a cable capacity of over 10,000 tonnes, had to become the most cost-effective cable laying ship in the world. Before it could demonstrate what it had to offer, DEME had to deal with quite some headwind. This resulted in barely enough time to construct a crane pedestal for the aft deck. Smulders nevertheless accepted the job. We completed it in three months instead of the usual four. By dividing the job among all Smulders locations, by applying parallel engineering and constructing, but mainly by continuously thinking in terms of solutions, together with our client.

"Everyone was working to their strengths"

The Living Stone

Innovative technique and no less than 80 km of cable distributed across two carousels make the Living Stone the fastest and most effective cable laying ship in the world. Moreover, the ship is remarkably flexible. It is, for example, also capable of moving rocks thanks to a vertical fallpipe system that is able to reach depth of 1,000 metres. Thanks to the dual-fuel-engine, the Living Stone is the first cable laying ship that is able to sail on LNG (liquid natural gas) making it significantly cleaner than its conspecifics. The Living Stone is currently deployed for the realisation of the Hornsea project off the coast of English Yorkshire, the largest offshore wind park in the world.



From blasting to painting

The client for Smulders was Tideway, the specialist within the DEME Group for the installation of cables in the offshore industry. They were responsible for all technical installations on the Living Stone. Business Development Manager Rob Godden of Smulders: "I received a phone call from Ad van der Pennen, a Project Manager of Tideway, asking whether we would be interested in collaborating again. We met two days later for our first

meeting. That is typical Smulders. Our company deals with requests like these immediately. For the crane pedestal, Tideway was initially envisaging a simple tubular construction existing of a round pole with a flange to which the crane could be mounted. They hoped to realise that construction in one month, together with a boomrest. That was not realistic, especially when considering the engineering hadn't even started yet."

Ensuring maximum lifting capacity

Assistant Project Manager Ruben Koyen, together with Joost van Dun of Smulders, was responsible for the coordination of the production and the assembly of the crane pedestal and the boomrest. In addition, he was involved in the engineering part. Ruben says: "It became clear, quite early on, that the construction of the ship's lower deck was not strong enough for the construction Tideway had envisioned for the crane pedestal. In consultation with DEME's engineering bureau, Enersea, we decided on engineering a box section around the tube to provide additional solidity. This would also result in an increase of the crane capacity; no longer

limited to 20 tonnes but the full 85 tonnes."

Saving a month's time

Smulders conducted a planning study to determine how fast the crane pedestal and the boomrest could be constructed. "By, among other things, distributing the work in a clever way among the several Smulders locations, we came up with three months instead of the four, five months it usually takes." A first design was then made together with Enersea. "Based on that design, we immediately started ordering the steel, including the base for the crane pedestal: a tube with a length of 11 metres and a diameter of 3.5 metres that had

to meet all ship construction standards. Something that is not at all easy to get and we needed it within a few weeks' time. We usually order an element like that a few months upfront", said Ruben.

Engineering and building at the same time

He continues: "It is not unusual for us to already start the construction while the engineering is not completed yet. In our experience, it is perfectly well possible to commence the construction of the primary structure if the final details still have to be engineered. Trust and flexibility are extremely important at this stage in order to be able to shift quickly. Too much time would have been lost if we had waited, as it should be, for an official approval of every drawing."

Greater teamwork

Smulders engineered everything upper deck for the crane pedestal of the Living Stone. Enersea was responsible for the construction below deck. "There was great interaction between our people and those of Enersea during the process. We complemented each other. Enersea has a great deal of in-house knowledge about ship construction whereas welding details, for example, truly is one of our specialties", says Ruben. That does not mean Smulders had no experience with constructions in the shipbuilding industry, on the contrary. Rob: "We have already built, for example, the Goliath for GeoSea, a lifting platform for the installation of windmills.



"We sometimes had to work with drawings that were made that same day"



Rob Godden and Ruben Koyen from Smulders

“The great thing about the collaboration with Tideway was the open communication from the beginning”

In addition, we applied huge alterations to lifting platforms for this client. So, we were well-prepared.”

Practical thinking

Ruben continues: “To ensure that the weight of the crane could always be compensated for properly, we measured everything in a way that the horizontal bulkheads (the stiffeners) in the box of the crane pedestal ended up exactly above the horizontal bulkheads in the lower deck. As a result, we did not have to make any adjustments in the lower deck. That would have taken too much time.”

During the engineering, the Smulders-team gave Tideway the practical tip to adjust the inside of the crane pedestal. “The welders still had to work on it during the assembly on the ship. To make this possible, we eventually had the stiffeners in the box not

entirely run until the bottom and doors were made in the wall that could serve as a manhole. Those are the typical details that are sometimes overlooked by engineers of clients”, mentions Ruben.

Dividing work

All the locations of Smulders were involved in the production of the crane pedestal and the boomrest. Ruben: “The platforms and railings, the so-called secondary steel, were made by Spomasz in Poland. These were then painted in Arendonk and everything was combined in Hoboken. The boomrest was made in Balen and the preparation for machining the crane pedestal took place here as well. Everyone was working to their strengths which enabled us to deliver in a minimum amount of time.”

Daring to take the short route

Despite the demanding time constraints,

Ruben and Rob look back on the project with a feeling of satisfaction. Ruben: “Because of the pressure on the planning, we were not always able to take the official paths. We sometimes had to work with drawings that were made that same day. But I find it fascinating to see how quickly we can get something done, even though we have meanwhile grown into a considerably large organisation.” And this is not the first time, mentions Rob. “We did a similar project seven years ago, ‘the inclined fallpipe’, for Tideway. That project went the same way; with quite some obstacles that had to be overcome in the beginning and satisfied people afterwards.”

Special collaboration

“The great thing about the collaboration with Tideway was the open communication from the beginning. We were honest towards each other which allowed us to take action really quick”, Ruben looks back. Rob adds: “The openness and the way of working were almost old school. The mutual trust was extraordinary. No time was wasted on, for example, waiting for confirmations. We just kept on going. Striving to finish the job together without shutting down the work when a problem occurred. That was great. We are therefore really looking forward to the next project we can do with Tideway and hope to be able to execute that together in exactly the same way.”

All elements were eventually delivered as planned. The crane pedestal and the boomrest were placed onto the Living Stone in the beginning of September 2018. The crane was mounted on top of it on 4 October making the ship finally ready to show the offshore world its special skills.

“The openness and the way of working were almost old school”



The Living Stone, ready for departure



**"It's fascinating
to see how quickly
we can get
something done"**

Interview

Cees Engelbert Lead Coordinator Cable Installation System Tideway Offshore Solutions

“When we asked Smulders to cooperate with us for the supportive structures of the deck crane (crane pedestal and boomrest), we knew it was a difficult task. It had to be finished as quickly as possible so we could show our client what the Living Stone was actually capable of”, says Cees Engelbert of Tideway. “It essentially meant that we needed a constructor during the engineering phase who was thinking along with us so we could parallel engineer and construct. Not exactly an ideal situation but Smulders embraced the job and had the capacity to jump on board quickly. In retrospect, we couldn’t have opted for a better party for this project.”

As the Lead Coordinator of Tideway, part of the DEME Group, Cees was responsible for the development and the assembly of the Cable Installation Spread of the Living Stone. “In other words, we took care of the cable installation on the deck of the ship”, he explains. “DEME New Building in Zwijndrecht (Belgium) was responsible for the construction of the Living Stone itself. With a cable capacity of 10,000 tonnes, this is currently the fastest and most efficient cable laying ship in the world.”

Record cable length

The cable laying system of the Living Stone is the most innovative part of the ship. It was developed in-house by Tideway’s engineering department based on the experience the company gained during previous cable installation projects. “With the cable laying installation, we lift the speed at which offshore cables can be installed to an entirely different dimension”, says Cees proud. “In addition, there is

space on board for a record length of cables which means less interconnections, so-called joints, have to be made. Joints remain to be a risk factor and moreover, it takes a lot of time and money to install this offshore. That’s the reason why we try to avoid it as much as we can.”

Fastest cable laying ship in the world

“The Living Stone has two carousels, each with a capacity of 5,000 tonnes for cables varying in diameter from 70 to 300 mm. These two carousels allow us to work parallel with enormous lengths of cable and that is the main gain. While laying one cable, we are able to prepare the other one”, Cees explains. He makes the advantage tangible by giving an example. “Imagine, you have a wind park with 120 turbines.

A normal cable laying ship currently needs approximately 60 to 80 days to install array cables. The Living Stone is able to do the same in 40 to 50 days.

That saves 20 to 30 times the daily rental rate for a cable laying ship. A major saving.”

Alternative crane plan

The enormous time pressure at the end of the project arose, among other things, due to the bankruptcy of the site in Bilbao (Spain) where the Living Stone would originally be built. On top of that, Tideway missed out on the second crane it had its eye on for the aft deck, in the very last moment. “For that reason, we eventually decided to shift with the crane we already had. We wanted to relocate the crane from the mid-section of the ship to the aft deck. To make this possible, an entirely new crane pedestal and a boomrest had to be constructed with the utmost urgency. The management of Tideway recommended talking to Smulders.”

Time gain

Cees himself was quite sceptical about this in the beginning. “Simply because Smulders

is not a shipbuilder but that appeared to be completely unjustified”, he says. “Smulders is flexible and thinks along which means it is possible to shift quickly. That was exactly what we needed. In order for them to be able to deliver as soon as possible, they distributed the work across the different Smulders locations. That produced a significant time gain.”

Enabling parallel working

Smulders also made parallel working possible. The construction already commenced during the engineering phase. “The 3D models were sent a couple of times per week from our design bureau Enersea to lemans in Arendonk. The engineers there refined the designs and ensured that any adjustments were immediately incorporated in the construction. In addition, we had weekly meetings in Hoboken. During those sessions, Smulders listened to the knowledge we provided as client and complemented our comments

with their own expertise in the field of steel construction. It was a complex process but Smulders delivered on their promises. And of course, when executing such process, you are facing problems that have to be resolved but the constructive approach of both parties made it possible to realise the entire project within the time and frameworks agreed upon.”

Thinking in solutions

Cees continues: “When problems occur, contractors often tend to waste a lot of time and energy in showing that they are not the cause. In such situation, Smulders thinks in solutions in order to lose as little time possible. That’s another reason why we were able to build both steel constructions in such a short timeframe. Believe me, I have consulted renowned crane manufacturers in the market who were unable to deliver in the time in which Smulders was able to. Those manufacturers always needed an extra month. Thanks to the in-house

knowledge Smulders has, it was also possible to make the flange for the base properly and quickly. Not in 10, but in 5 days. In addition, the quality of the specialist welding was always of a high standard.”

All’s well that ends well

On Monday 22 October, the Living Stone set sail to the Hornsea project in front of the English coast near Newcastle. The ship will be laying cables there for the largest windmill park in the world. “We wanted to demonstrate that this ship was able to do what we promised our client Ørsted and that’s exactly what is happening now”, Cees says satisfied. ■



“In retrospect, we couldn’t have opted for a better party for this project than Smulders”

Employee on site

Chantal Uylenbroek HSE Assistant at Smulders Projects

The HSE-department in Hoboken guards an important theme for Smulders: the safety at the site. A fulltime job given the type of work we do at Smulders and the size of the constructions we work with. "No two days are the same here, and that's also the fun part", says HSE Assistant Chantal Uylenbroek, who has been working at the department for quite some time now. "The biggest challenge is to keep all of the plates spinning. That requires establishing priorities while actually everything we do is important."

The HSE-department in Hoboken currently consists of five persons. Two of them deliver fulltime support to safe working at the site, two team members concentrate on the assessment of contract requirements and one colleague is focusing on the safety at the site in general. Chantal: "I am currently overseeing a project with monopiles in one of the halls. At the same time, I prepare new projects. I assess the documentation Engineering has prepared together with Production, list the safety risks and check whether these require supplementation of the work instructions. This all happens in close consultation with Engineering and Production."

Acting proactively

The variety is what Chantal appreciates most about her job. "During the preparation of projects, the work mainly takes place internally and once a project starts, there is a lot of contact with the client. You

regularly encounter matters that need to be addressed while making rounds at the site. A proactive attitude is essential in that case. It is not an option to wait until things go wrong eventually. In addition, it is important for us to think along with Production. Because safety is important but it also has to be possible to work: 'if you don't play, you can't score'. That's why I always try to figure out why people are doing something in a certain way. Based on these findings, I look for a safer solution, together with them, that is workable and also complies with the requirements we and our clients set. That is the way to ensure that something really changes quickly."

Practical work instructions

According to Chantal, the work of HSE should also not stop at providing advice. "We sometimes work with 400 to 500 people per shift. Of course it is possible for us to put instructions for them on a piece

of paper, but that information also has to be received by the people and, for that purpose, we work closely together with Engineering. They make a description of the methods based upon which we are able to prepare a task-risk analysis. We translate this document for each task into an A4 with practical work instructions we discuss with the team."

One huge interplay

Although many constructions built in Hoboken have similarities, there are different challenges for every project. Chantal: "No day is the same. This is due to the fact that you are dealing with variable shifts and that there are deviations in the design for each project. Additionally, I work together with so many departments. Engineering and Production, obviously, but also Transport, the warehouse, HR, Maintenance, just name it. It's all one huge interplay. And on top of that, my

agenda is highly dependent on clients. It is immediately changed around if they do not agree with certain working methods or, for example, want to discuss certain alterations. But that variation is actually what makes my job so great."

Exciting

How exciting her job can be sometimes, shows when she tells us about a project that was completed recently in Hoboken. "A project with concrete main platforms. That was actually the first time we had such project here. The first ship with platforms arrived late in the evening. We then stayed on the ship until three o'clock at night to see what the best way was to unload such platforms, in close cooperation with the transport manager and the present team. Once we succeeded, the feeling of euphoria was obviously high. The final objective was to lower the platforms over the pained TPs during the production, while the process of

unloading was already critical on its own. There are new things to learn every day."

Safety culture ladder

In addition to guiding projects, Chantal is also working on the safety culture ladder of Smulders at the moment. This ladder is increasingly often required for tenders. "I am now performing culture measurements. That means we are looking at where we are as an organisation in the field of safety and which points could be improved. I have established work groups who are working on that right now at most locations of Smulders. The final goal is to reach mutual agreements so the same safety awareness exists at every location and for everyone within the organisation. From the higher management to the work floor." Chantal emphasises this will not be accomplished overnight. "Our people originally are more doers than preventive thinkers. It is a way of working we have grown accustomed to

here. At the same time, the process has to remain workable and affordable. It takes time to change that." Yet, according to her, important steps have already been made. "Inspectors of the client recently told me they witness improvement in certain matters, that the attitude of employees in the halls is changing and that employee address each other more and more often about unsafe behaviour. That's great." ■



Chantal Uylenbroek and Transport Manager Remco Marcus

"A proactive attitude is essential"

Have a look at our projects of 2018!

Civil & Industry



SGC 250
Client: Sarens

Offshore Wind

Deutsche Bucht
Client: Van Oord
Scope: topside & jacket



Projects

Noordkasteelbruggen
Client: Port of Antwerp



Norther
Client: Van Oord
Scope: topside & TP, 44 transition pieces



Offshore Wind

Projects



Hohe See

Client: EnBW

Scope: topside & jacket, 71 transition pieces

Kriegers Flak

Client: Energinet.dk & 50Hertz Transmission GmbH

Scope: 2 Gravity Based Foundations



Trianel Borkum II

Client: Seaway Heavy Lifting

Scope: 32 transition pieces

Health, safety & environment

— Safety culture ladder

A new expression in the Smulders' ABC explained

Decisiveness. Respect. Client orientation. Team work. Familiar terms? Certainly! And what about safety culture ladder, does that ring a bell? It will after reading this article. Where is this definition coming from? Why are we working on it and what are we looking to accomplish? You will find the answers below.

Safety is the number one priority within our industry: everything has to be safer, better and therefore seemingly even more complex. We have rolled out the basis for better safety at Smulders in the past years. That required everybody's efforts and was sometimes getting used to but it served an important goal: having everyone return home safe and healthy at the end of the shift! We have meanwhile been able to take many small and big steps in this field. Just look back; where were we a couple of years ago and where are we now? And don't forget, especially, the new challenges imposed upon production. We are rightfully proud of how much we have already been able to produce together in a safe manner.

The safety culture ladder

That collective pride gives us the strength to constantly push our boundaries. What more can we improve and how shall we handle it? That brings us to the safety culture ladder, a standard providing insight in the level of safety awareness within the organisation. The work activities we perform are constantly monitored and adjusted within the context of that ladder. However, the biggest difference can be made by means of our behaviour, of every individual, every manager and every executive specialist. And that is also an amazing challenge: how can you ensure someone's behaviour is changing and how do you make sure someone remains alert to safety while executing his job? We need all of you to achieve this!

B-Safe

In addition to following the certification process, your contribution is indispensable if we truly want to make a difference.

For that reason, we recently revived B-Safe. This programme aims at working safe together by looking at each other, observing and addressing someone about certain (unsafe) behaviour. In a respectful, open and positive manner so remarks are taken into account in the future. The B-Safe programme is developed by people on the work floor. The input given for the observational rounds we are about to make together, is composed of input provided by several work groups.



Suggestions for improvement?

The end of November was marked by the annual safety week within the context of B-Safe. The programme included training about observational techniques. Wat should you pay attention to during a B-Safe tour? How do you assess behaviour? How to address a colleague? We have meanwhile been able to put all of that knowledge into practice

and we are curious about your experiences. Any suggestions for improvement are obviously more than welcome. You can report these to the person responsible for HSE at your location or send an email to: veiligheidscultuurladder@smulders.com

An introduction

Our sustainability ambassador

Evy has been working at Smulders for almost two years as Quality Control Secretary. She has now also accepted to be our sustainability ambassador, a function she takes over from Tim Balcaen after three years. As sustainability ambassador, Evy will first of all help filling the sustainability pages for the Smulders website, so we are able to show what we have already realised in this field the past years and what other activities are scheduled. In addition, Evy is committed to increase the sustainable awareness within our organisation. "There are so many techniques and innovations to work with", she says enthusiastically. "I am looking forward to start deepening my knowledge on the subject."

Evy continues: "When colleagues told me about this vacancy, I immediately applied. Sustainability really is a topic that deserves more attention. It is particularly important to enter into a dialogue about it. People, in my opinion, are largely unaware of the contribution they can make themselves."

You can always go and see Evy if you have a good idea to improve the environmental performances of Smulders. It is also possible to contact her digitally through [evy.hamblok@smulders.com](mailto:hamblok@smulders.com). "I cannot wait to start working with it", the new sustainability ambassador smiles.

"People, in my opinion, are largely unaware of the contribution they can make themselves."

Young talent

Junior Tender Manager

Nika Van der Wildt

Our commercial department in Arendonk was complemented over two years ago with a great colleague: Nika Van der Wildt. She had a little taste of Smulders during a holiday job, went on a trip around the world for a year and then started working for us as Junior Tender Manager. Deputy Commercial Director Wim Vaes about Nika: "She is a driven, hard worker who quickly picks up on things and is able to work remarkably independent for someone her young age. Moreover, she gets along great with all of her colleagues." All the more reason to get to know her a bit better.

What is your most important task, Nika?

"I coordinate the entire tender process. That commences with the receipt of a new 'invitation to tender' which sometimes consists of a hundred documents. That means reading the demands of the client, looking at the contract with the legal department, checking the technical requirements, ensuring a planning is made, requesting price documents and maintaining contact with the client until a final offer is available."

What was your introduction with Smulders?

"After I graduated in 2015 as commercial engineer, I worked at the commercial department for a month during a holiday job. Because I already had my diploma, Wim Vaes gave me a job that was more challenging than the regular holiday job. That was a good experience, on both sides. When I returned from my trip around the world, I was welcomed back."



So, your holiday job was a bit more than copying documents and getting coffee?

"I gathered, among other things, all tenders for offshore projects in an Excel file making them easier to compare at certain points. That was useful for the entire company. (She laughs.) I still use that information myself sometimes."

What was it like to return to Smulders after your trip around the world?

"It was great I already knew the colleagues because of that month of holiday work and had an idea of what my work would entail. That usually remains to be seen when you start somewhere new."

What do you like most about your job?

"The variety is the biggest asset of my job. You arrive here on Monday morning and have no idea what your week is going to look like. There are days I am in meetings all day and days on which I prepare documents and answer emails from behind my desk. In addition, I am in contact with all kinds of parties: clients, subcontractors, colleagues of other departments. You learn a lot from that."

What do you consider your biggest talent?

"I am very eager to learn and I appreciate it when other people take the time to answer my questions. If a colleague comes to me, I will always try and make the time to do the same. Even when I am busy. Just because I have experienced for myself how much time it can save if other people help you on your way."

"You are given opportunities here that take years of waiting anywhere else"

What do you appreciate most about Smulders as employer?

"You are sometimes thrown in at the deep end here, as in: swim! That is quite scary in the beginning but it does give you opportunities that take years of waiting anywhere else. It is also the quickest way to learn the finer details of the craft. In addition, Smulders is a real family business with a nice, loose atmosphere and a lot of laughter at times. Everything can be said here and you can even go to the Managing Director directly with questions without having to go through ten layers."

Any ambitions?

"Mainly to become more confident, so that I eventually am able to lead meetings with clients myself. If a client asks a question during the meeting, I sometimes still doubt too much in order to answer while I often think afterwards: I would have known that. I feel such a rookie when that happens. I sometimes have meetings with people whose years of experience exceed my age." ■



Robert Kaczmarek, Spomasz

Passionate about: golf

For Robert Kaczmarek, golf is the ideal way to let off steam after a long day's work. Since he got a taste of golf in 2010, you can regularly find him on the golf course. His handicap is 11.1, but that isn't quite enough for him yet. This says a lot about the dedicated Spomasz Economic-Finance Director.

What should your handicap be in your eyes?

"The target for next year is a one-digit handicap, that is less than 10. My dream is to attain a handicap under five one day, but that will be a huge challenge."

What else would you like to improve?

"I am not easily satisfied. Even when I win a match I can still be angry at myself for a swing that didn't go well or a bad 'put'. So, there is still plenty of work to do. In fact, I want to improve my overall game, but my focus is mainly on improving 'chipping' and 'putting'. (Editor's note: Chipping means the ball briefly pops into the air then hits the ground and rolls towards the hole. Putting is about giving the right last tap to get the ball into the hole.)"

Who do you prefer to play with?

"Golf is a game that is mainly played with yourself. You are constantly fighting with your own thoughts and that affects your hit and with it your score. That's why I often play golf alone. It is a way for me to talk to myself and relax after work. Golf is also a social event. With my friends, who are just as addicted to the game as I am, we regularly organise competitions. Those are the times when golf is mainly about the fun."

What made you lose your heart to golf?

"Eight years ago, there was a team building activity for the Polish Smulders branches on one of the golf courses here in the region. It was the first time I ever held a club in my hands. What a gift from heaven! Since then

you'll find me on the golf course whenever I can.

Is it about having fun or winning?

"About both and more. It is fun to play a game with friends and afterwards, while enjoying a good glass of beer, listen to all the golf jokes and stories. But in the end it is still a competition for me. I have to admit that, secretly, I always want to win. After all, it still feels great to be the best at something."

What is the most beautiful course you ever played on?

"Due to family commitments, I do not have much time to visit foreign courses at the moment, so I can only talk about Polish golf courses. The most beautiful one, in my opinion, is Modry Las, just outside Choszczno in northern Poland. This golf course was designed by Gary Player, a legendary South-African golfer. It is set in an incredibly beautiful natural landscape surrounded by tall pine trees, fens and fields of wild flowers."

Where do you hope to play again one day?

"On the Albatros course of Le Golf National in Paris, a beautiful and challenging course where the 'Open de France' was played and this year's 'Ryder Cup' will take place. The Tournament Players Clubs at Sawgrass in Florida is also a stunning course. Several major championships have been held there. It would be nice to be able to hit the green there one day."

Is there actually a parallel between golf and your work?

"Everything goes so fast in the world today. If you do not want to be overtaken by the competition, you must continue to develop yourself and your company. And there is always someone better than you. That's exactly the same in golf. Being successful requires perseverance and the drive to keep developing yourself otherwise you'll be out of the game in no time."

Why should colleagues try and swing the golf club?

"Oh, to understand the magic of golf, you must allow yourself the time at least a few times to play 18 holes on a golf course. It's that wind in your hair, the smell of cut grass, the kick of a great shot, hitting yourself on the head after missing a put and the adrenaline rush that you get when you score better than everyone else. Once you have tasted those sensations you are lost. No doubt about it." ■

Happy New Year!



"The future is bright"