

Egyptian Open revamped

Region's oldest tournament set to join European Challenge Tour

Sixty professional golfers will line up with a selection of the Middle East's best amateur and professional players to contest \$200,000 in prize money when the new-look Egyptian Open – one of the world's oldest Open golf events – gets underway at Cairo's Mirage City Golf Course from November 5-8, 2009.

Although not part of the official 2009 calendar, the event will enjoy European Tour support when it attains full Challenge Tour status in 2010 and 2011, with the potential of achieving full European Tour status in years to come.

Egyptian Golf Federation (EGF) Chairman Ayman Hussein said: "Everyone at the EGF is both excited and delighted that our Open, which was first staged back in 1921, is back at the forefront of golf in the region.

"Legends Bobby Locke and Peter Thomson, who between them won nine Open Championship titles, competed here in the 1950s and we look forward to welcoming many future stars in the shape of the Challenge Tour players."

The Peter Harradine-designed 7,108-yard Mirage City Golf Course will provide a welcome test for the Challenge Tour stars who will bring down the curtain on their 2009 campaign at the end-of-season finale in Puglia, Italy, just one week earlier.

EGF Vice Chairman Mohammed El



(Left to right): Nick Tarratt, Gerard Bent (Egyptian Golf Federation Golf Manager), Ayman Hussein and Mohammed El Attar with the Egyptian Open Trophy.

Attar added: "While other cities in the Middle East have established their golfing credentials over the past two decades, we believe that with a golfing heritage that stretches back more than 120 years, a current complement of eighteen grass courses and a rejuvenated Open Championship, Egypt can position itself as one of the leading golfing destinations in the region."

Following the curtain-raising Pro-Am on November 4, the Egyptian Open will be a 72-hole event with no cut.

Golf has a historic relationship with Egypt dating back to 1882 and the building of the

Gezira Club. As well as the likes of Locke and Thomson, this year's competitors will be following in the footsteps of the legendary Gary Player who began his stellar career with victory on Egyptian grass back in 1955.

"With an international schedule stretching from Argentina to China, the Challenge Tour is accepted as the greatest proving ground for aspiring Tour professionals with the likes of Trevor Immelman, Henrik Stenson and Justin Rose graduating from the ranks," said Nick Tarratt, Director The European Tour International, Dubai Office.