A NIGHT
TO REMEMBER

Middle East Golfer Awards function is a smash hit as a full-house witness and appreciate 19 winners who have contributed immensely to the game

The third Middle East Golfer Awards, the only awards ceremony in the region for the industry, was a resounding success as winners were identified and recognized in 19 different categories.

In front of an appreciative and full-house audience at the poolside of The Address Montgomerie, Abu Dhabi Golf Club, Abdullah Al Naboodah and Leisurecorp were adjudged winners of the three Grand Prix awards.

All the awards were based on achievements in the calendar year 2009. A majority of them – 10 out of the 19 – were chosen by Middle East Golfer readers through online polling. Nine awards were

decide by our panel of judges, which included Chris Vallender, the UAE National coach; Jeff O'Brien, President, UAE PGA, and Middle East Golfer Editor, Joy Chakravarty.

Abu Dhabi Golf Club, host venue of the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship and managed by Troon Golf, was voted the Best Golf Club (overall) in the Middle East, beating the challenge of the three other golf courses which host European Tour events in the region – Doha Golf Club, Majlis course of Emirates Golf Club and the Earth at Jumeirah Golf Estates.

Earlier, General Manager Ken Kosack had made another trip to the podium to pick up the Best Golf Course in the Region

trophy for the Peter Harradine-designed layout.

For Abdullah Al Naboodah, February 22 was a cause for double celebration. Not only was it his marriage anniversary, he was also recognized for his immense contribution to the development of the game in the UAE.

Abdullah, who won the Most Improved Golfer (Male) award last year for lowering his handicap from 17 to six in one calendar year, was honoured for Outstanding Contribution to Golf.

The panel of judges could not see beyond Abdullah, who was involved in almost every facet of the game. Apart from his normal business as Director of Saeed and

Mohammed Al Naboodah Group, Abdullah was involved with the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship and the Omega Dubai Desert Classic as a sponsor. He also hosts 'The Invitational', which is now being called the one of the best pro-ams in the world.

Apart from the glitzy events, Abdullah has spent considerable time and money to develop the game at the grassroot level, including sponsoring the UAE national team and various junior tournaments and programmes, as well as raising millions of dirhams for various needy charities.

In fact, the Al Naboodah UAE PGA Junior Series, which is adjudged the Best New Initiative of the Year, is also supported by Abdullah.

The European Tour visited the Middle East for four weeks in 2009, and we decided to institute a new award in appreciation of the organizers of these events, who have not only put the region on the golfing map, but also showcased the various courses and cities and given several memorable moments to the fans.

After a close battle, Dubai World Championship presented by: DP World was voted by our readers as The Best International Tournament of the Year.

And Earth, the magnificent host of the tournament, was a no-brainer when it came to naming the Best New Golf Development of the Year.

Calude Harmon III braved a bulging disc in his back to collect the Best Golf Academy in the Region for his hi-tech and well-equipped Butch Harmon School of Golf at the Els Club in Dubai Sports City.

Emirates Amateur Open was the hands

down winner in the Best Order of Merit Event category. Xerox Corporate Golf Challenge, which expanded to 12 events despite tough economic times in 2009, was the Best Corporate Event of the Year.

The Individual awards were won by Joel Neale (Best Amateur); Ahmed Al Musharrekh (Best Emirati Golfer); 12-year-old Faisal Mir Rizwan of Doha Golf Club (Young Player of the Year) and Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club's Stephen Hubner (Best Instructor).

Doha Golf Club won two awards – Best Service and the Best Designed Hole in the Middle East. The par-4 15th at the Peter Harradine-designed Doha Golf Club was the Best Hole last year, and that honour went to the exciting, reachable par-4 16th this time. There were several holes in contention, including the 18th at The Address Montgomerie, the 18th at Majlis, the stunning par-3 17th at Earth, the par-4 ninth and par-5 18th at Abu Dhabi Golf

Club, and the par-5 18th at Al Badia Golf Club were other holes which garnered a lot of votes.

For the second straight year, Al Badia Golf Club at Festival City walked away as the Best Clubhouse in the Region for its futuristic design and well-thought out functional spaces.

The equipment awards saw almost a repeat of last year, albeit with new models. TaylorMade won the Best Driver for R9, while Callaway's X-Series were the Best irons for the second year running. Winner by the biggest margin in the entire function was Odyssey White Hot putters, as they polled more than 60 per cent votes for the entire category of Best Putters.

Of course, such a function would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors. So, many thanks to Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, , AGMC-BMW, Spinney's, Officeland, 7Days, J.Lindeberg, ECCO and The Address Montgomerie.

The Winners

BEST WOODS
TaylorMade R9

BEST IRONS
Callaway X Series

BEST PUTTERS
Odyssey White Hot

BEST GOLF ACADEMY
Butch Harmon School of Golf

BEST CLUBHOUSE
Al Badia Golf Club

BEST SERVICE
Doha Golf Club

BEST GOLF COURSE
Abu Dhabi Golf Club

BEST DESIGNED HOLE
The 16th at Doha

BEST CORPORATE EVENT
Xerox Corporate Golf Challenge

**BEST ORDER
OF MERIT EVENT**
Emirates Amateur Open

**BEST NEW GOLF
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**
The Earth Course at Jumeirah
Golf Estates

**BEST NEW GOLF INITIATIVE
OF THE YEAR**
Al Naboodah UAE PGA Junior Series

**EMIRATI GOLFER
OF THE YEAR**
Ahmed Al Musharrekh

**YOUNG PLAYER
OF THE YEAR**
Faisal Mir Rizwan

BEST AMATEUR
Joel Neale

**GOLF INSTRUCTOR
OF THE YEAR**
Stephen Hubner

**BEST PROFESSIONAL
TOURNAMENT**
Dubai World Championship

**OUTSTANDING
CONTRIBUTION TO GOLF**
Abdullah Al Naboodah

**BEST GOLF CLUB
(OVERALL)**
Abu Dhabi Golf Club